

## Child and Family Agency - Serving Children, Supporting Families



By Gordon Jeyes, Chief Executive, Child and Family Agency.

Welcome to the Child and Family Agency, Tusla for short. A new Agency, a new name and a fresh start.

I look forward to working with you, being held accountable by you, supporting you and providing the occasional challenge.

As an Agency we will give a clear account of our actions, maximising our impact in the context of the resources and staffing made available to us by the taxpayer.

The creation of Ireland's Child and Family Agency clarifies and streamlines our accountabilities and provides the opportunity to pick up the pace of the reform programme which has already started. There are also opportunities arising from the new coalition of services, working with Family Resource Centres and addressing cross cutting issues such as school admissions and attendance for children in care. I am determined to **tell it as it is**. Where there have been failings they will be openly acknowledged and the emphasis will be on learning.

Where there is criticism which is not justified it will be countered. I will work with you to raise the bar of our

accountability and in so doing provide the opportunity to our partners in the provision of services to children to also raise their game in the provision of services which are effective, cost efficient and proportionate to the needs and interests of children and the strengths of families. This will sometimes mean being prepared to take an advocacy role, accepting that such an approach increases the pressure and scrutiny on us. However, family services in the community, education welfare services and social work and social care services in Ireland do fare favourably in comparison with neighbouring countries and do so at a far higher rate of productivity.

I am proud to be associated with the work you do and look forward to continuing our vibrant conversation about service improvement.

I look forward to working with colleagues both within the Agency and in partner agencies to deliver a service which is accountable, consistent and transparent. Our aspiration is to be a service which espouses values such as justice and courage. But aspiration is not enough and we look forward to being judged on behaviour reflecting those values. Putting Children First Always.

### Tusla ...

*Prior to establishment date, consultation was undertaken around the development of the new Agency.*

*An overriding theme emerged from this process – that the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013 presented a unique opportunity to start anew and for child and family services to work together in partnership to transform the way in which we provide support and help to children and families in Ireland.*

*The name Tusla emerged as a fitting logo for the Child and Family Agency. While the word borrows from the Irish words 'tus' + 'lá', Tusla is a completely new word reflecting a shared desire for a new beginning, forging a new identity. A new word, a new way of working.*

### Responsive and Inclusive...

*"The setting-up of this Agency will mean that for the first time child protection and associated services will be together under one dedicated agency with clear lines of management, more integrated models of working and a ring-fenced budget"*

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs,  
Frances Fitzgerald, T.D**

## New Beginnings...

This is a historic year. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014 the Child and Family agency became an independent legal entity, comprising HSE Children & Family Services, Family Support Agency and the National Educational Welfare Board as well as incorporating some psychological services and a range of services responding to domestic, sexual and gender based violence.

The Child and Family Agency is now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children. It represents the most comprehensive reform of child protection, early intervention and family support services ever undertaken in Ireland. It is an ambitious move which brings together some 4,000 staff and an operational budget of approximately €600m.

The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, a progressive piece of legislation with children at its heart, and families viewed as the foundation of a strong healthy community where children can flourish. Partnership and co-operation in the delivery of seamless services to children and families are also central to the Act.

The establishment represents an opportunity to think differently, where appropriate to behave differently and to seek a wide range of views regarding the most effective way of working together to deliver a wide range of services for children and families. An approach which is responsive, inclusive and outward looking.

Prior to establishment date, widespread consultation with all stakeholders sought to capture the hopes, and indeed fears, which key influencers had regarding the new Child and Family Agency. Many held the view that a mere realignment of services and the amalgamation of a number of bodies would not be enough to deliver on the fresh start so much called for throughout the sector. It was felt that what



*Speaking up :  
A responsive, inclusive, accountable  
agency*

was required was a new identity which captures a new sense of purpose shared by all those who together will deliver children and family services going forward.

Consideration was given to the aspirations for the agency and many themes emerged – A new beginning, an opportunity, a challenge. From debate and conjecture, the name Tusla emerged as a fitting logo for the Child and Family Agency. While the word borrows from the Irish words 'tus' + 'lá', Tusla is a completely new word reflecting a shared desire for a new beginning, forging a new identity. A new word, a new way of working.

Finally, this UPDATE Tusla newsletter is the first in a series of regular communications planned for staff of our new Agency. Our new website [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) will also go live at the end of January and finally, details of the official launch of Tusla, Child and Family Agency will be communicated to you shortly.

## Welcoming Change...

### **Barnardos:**

*This is a vital way to start 2014. The last few years have involved a huge amount of work in child welfare and protection services in Ireland. A lot of people have worked tirelessly to make those services better for the children they serve. There's new management now, and a dedicated sense of purpose. We still have a way to go but there is much to be hopeful for in 2014."*

*Fergus Finlay, Director*

### **Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services:**

*"The Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services welcome the establishment of a new agency with its emphasis on a more integrated approach to childcare, family intervention and support. Our Early Childhood Development Service and Family Centre Service look forward to working closely with the new agency and allied services in the best interests of meeting the needs of children and supporting parents."*

*Liam O Dalaigh, Director*

### **EPIC – Empowering People In Care**

*EPIC welcomes a new era in services to vulnerable children, with a child centred approach and a focus on children's best interests and on listening to their views and concerns. EPIC looks forward to continuing and strengthening our partnership with as we work together to bring about better outcomes for children in care."*

*Jennifer Gargan, Director*

### **ISPC**

*The ISPCC welcomes the launch of the new Child and Family Agency and sincerely hopes that it will prove to be another vital step in ensuring a higher quality of service provision, a greater level of inter-agency cooperation and coordination, and ultimately a safer environment for children to grow up".*

*Ashley Balbirnie Chief Executive*

## New Ways of Working...

*"The Child and Family Agency offers us all a real opportunity to recast child welfare (in its broadest sense), child protection and family support services into a single, cohesive, integrated and accountable delivery system. It is a very welcome development towards the modernization of our child welfare and protection services."*

**Norah Gibbons, Chairperson, Child and Family Agency**

## Finance ... a note to staff

### Changes in Bank Payments Processing (SEPA)

With the introduction of SEPA on February 1<sup>st</sup> and the transition to this new electronic payment mechanism, Ulster Bank as the HSE's corporate banker, has advised that HSE and CFA staff may experience some changes to the timing of pay credits to their bank account from January 10th.

There will be **no change** to your pay date but the time of day at which funds are credited to your account by your bank may vary from your past experience.

Ulster Bank has advised that the timing of funds reaching your account on your payday will depend on who your bank/financial service provider is.

It is therefore, recommended that you contact your bank/financial services provider if the exact time of day at which funds will be received is a significant issue for you or your financial arrangements.

## Who we are...

Under the Child and Family Act, 2013 the Child and Family Agency is charged with:

- supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families;
- offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed in order to deliver these supports to children and families, and provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families;
- responsibility for ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education;
- ensuring that the best interests of the child guides all decisions affecting individual children;
- consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency's policies and services;
- strengthening interagency co-operation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs;
- undertaking research relating to its functions, and provide information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services



## What we do ...

The Child and Family Agency's services include a range of universal and targeted services:

- ◆ Child protection and welfare services
- ◆ Educational Welfare Services
- ◆ Psychological Services
- ◆ Alternative care
- ◆ Family and Locally-based Community Supports
- ◆ Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence



## Our Chief Executive and Board...

### **Gordon Jeyes Chief Executive**

UK's first Director of Children's Services and provided advice to governments in Scotland and at Westminster on the development of Children's Services. Former Chair of the Anti-Bullying Network and a member of the SEED Review Group on Youth Crime Member of the Ministerial Strategy Group on Continuing Professional Development (Teachers) and the National Youth Justice Strategy Steering Group. Led the critical incident response to the Dunblane school massacre in 1996. National Director, HSE Children and Families Service. from 2011 -2013. Awarded an OBE for services to Children in 2011. Co-author of the Revision of Scottish Teachers Conditions of Service for 21st Century. Executive Chairman of Scotland's first urban regeneration company. Member of National Oversight Group (England) for Electronic Common Assessment Framework.

### **Ms. Norah Gibbons – Chairperson**

Worked for many years in social work in both the statutory and voluntary sector in the UK and Ireland. Director of Advocacy of Barnardos from 2005 to 2012. Member of the Commission to Inquire into Child abuse 2000-2009. Chaired the Confidential Committee of the Commission from 2000 to 2005, and the Roscommon Child Abuse Inquiry in 2009. Co-chaired the Independent Child Death Review Group with Dr Geoffrey Shannon from 2011 to 2012. Currently a member of Acknowledge Forum of Historical Abuse Inquiry in Northern Ireland. Formerly the Chairperson of the board of Action Alcohol Ireland and was a member of the Taskforce on the Establishment of the Child and Family Agency.

### **Mr. PJ Fitzpatrick**

PJ is a Partner with Praesta Ltd, Ireland's leading provider of executive business coaching and mentoring services. He is a non executive director of the Family Support Agency and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service and a former non executive director of the Irish National Stud Company, the Commission for Victims of Crime and the Health Service Executive. He was the first Chief Executive Officer of the Irish Courts Service from 1999 until the end of 2008 where he successfully managed its establishment as a new, independent, statutory agency and led and implemented a major programme of change and modernisation, which transformed courts and courts administration nationwide. Prior to joining the Courts Service he was Chief Executive of the Eastern Regional Health Board, then the largest health authority in Ireland. He previously held a number of senior management positions in 3 other health boards in Ireland.

### **Ms. Gary Joyce**

Managing Partner of Genesis, a leading Irish management consultancy that specialises in strategy and brand-led change. Prior to co-founding Genesis, she was a founding partner of Dimension, Ireland's first integrated marketing communications company. Former Chairperson of ACC Bank and currently a member of the Governing Authority of Dublin City University. Member of the board of Dublin Bus and a number of private and not-for-profit organisations. Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants and Advisors and the Marketing Institute of Ireland.

### **Mr. Noel Kelly**

Manager of the Preparing for Life programme delivered by Northside Partnership. Preparing for Life is an evidence based early intervention programme funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropy. Very considerable previous experience as a primary school teacher and a Home School Community Liaison Coordinator. Previously, co-ordinator of an early school leavers initiative; and education co-ordinator for the Northside Partnership

### **Ms. Sylva Langford**

Former Director General of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in the Department of Health and Children. Prior to this, she was an Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Justice and Law Reform. She has had extensive experience in policy and legislative work across a broad range of government areas and has a professional background in social policy and social work. Chair of the Citizens Information Board, Adjunct Professor at the School of Applied Social Sciences UCD College of Human Sciences and was a member of Task Force on the Establishment of the Child and Family Agency.

### **Ms. Ita Mangan**

A barrister with considerable experience in public policy. Chair of the Advisory Group on Tax and Social Welfare. Legal and Social Affairs consultant in both the voluntary and statutory fields. She has extensive experience in governance and policy gained through membership of a number of Boards and Committees, including in particular, the Residential Institutions Redress Review Committee and the Commission of Investigation into clerical abuse in Dublin Archdiocese and Diocese of Cloyne.

### **Mr. Rory O'Ferrall**

Partner and Head of Corporate Recovery, Deloitte & Touche up to 2008; Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and Fellow of the Association of Business Recovery Professionals. Public Interest Director Irish Nationwide Building Society, 2009 – 2011; Director Quinn Group (ROI) Limited April 2011 – July 2012; Director Quinn International Property Management Ltd and a number of companies within the 'Property' Group April 2011 – present. Former President of the National Youth Council. Considerable expertise in strategy, forward planning, change management and reorganisations.

### **Dr. Noelle Spring**

Development Director with the Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF). Prior to working with KHF, she worked as a Project Officer with the Combat Poverty Agency and a Community Worker and Social Worker with the HSE (formerly the Eastern Health Board). This latter role included working with the St. Helena's Community and Family Resource Centre in Finglas South. A graduate of Social Work from Trinity College Dublin, she was conferred in 2011 with a Doctorate in Education by St. Patrick's College of Education in Dublin. Her doctoral thesis focused on absenteeism at Primary School Level in an area designated as disadvantaged.

### **Gary Ó Donnchadha**

Gary Ó Donnchadha is Deputy Chief Inspector in the Department of Education and Skills. His responsibilities include overseeing the development and implementation of the Inspectorate's annual inspection programme and supporting the Inspectorate's advisory and policy work. Gary has been with the Inspectorate since 1998. An important focus of his work in recent years has been supporting the reform and redevelopment of inspection models for both primary and post-primary schools and working with the Inspectorate's senior management group on strategic developments in quality assurance. Gary served as Ireland's representative on the Board of Governors of the European Schools from 2007 to 2012. Before joining the Inspectorate Gary was a primary teacher, part-time lecturer with UCC and served as an education officer with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).