

Tusla (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/92438>)

Who we are

On 1st January 2014 the Child and Family Agency became an independent legal entity, comprising HSE Children and Family Services, the 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.

The Agency operates under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013

(<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2013/a4013.pdf>), 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 of the Agency 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.

There are over 5,000 staff working in the Agency.

New beginnings

Prior to establishment date, widespread consultation with stakeholders sought to capture the hopes, and indeed fears, 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 called for throughout the sector. It was felt that what was required was a new identity which captured 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 ‘tús’ + ‘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.

Our remit

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 educational welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education;
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child guide 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 providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions; and
- Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services

Our services

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;
- Early years services;
- Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services.

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