

Tender/ Call for Proposals:

To establish a Framework and conduct an Evaluation of the EPIC School Pilot Project regarding children in care 2025-2026

Deadline for applications: 5pm, Friday 8 August 2025

Background and Project Overview

EPIC, Empowering People in Care, has 25 years of experience working with children in alternative care (foster care, residential care, special care). EPIC's Education Project is funded by Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) and aims to raise awareness of the situation of care-experienced children in schools, build the capacity and knowledge of teachers to support children in care, engage the Department of Education on the situation of children in care in schools and increase collaboration between professionals in the care and education sectors. The Education Project Advisory Group is composed of representatives of the Department of Education Inspectorate, NEPS, ETBI, NCCA, TESS, Tusla, EPIC, school leadership, foster care and the care-experienced community.

With the support of TESS and other key education stakeholders, EPIC has developed a toolkit called Take Care, to help schools better understand and support children and young people in care. Take Care consists of a youth-centred resource and an accompanying school guide. Developed with care-experienced children and young people, the resource provides insight into their school experiences and the challenges they face. The school guide provides information about the care system and gives practical guidance on how schools can better support care-experienced children. The toolkit is intended to empower the whole school community – leaders, teachers, and non-teaching staff – by providing the tools to uphold the rights of care-experienced students and ensure they have the support they need to succeed in education.

EPIC will pilot the use of the [Take Care Toolkit](#) in a fixed number of schools (primary and post-primary) over the academic year 2025-2026 and is seeking a consultant to set up a monitoring and evaluation framework and conduct an evaluation of the pilot programme.

Pilot programme outline

The Pilot programme will have two strands. Strand 1 will focus on awareness-raising and general capacity building in schools. EPIC will work with 10 schools with the aim of applying the guidance from the Take Care resources across the school. A 'community of practice' will be established to bring together the principals and care champions¹ from each school for sharing of expertise and experiences. Strand 2 will be centred around a small number of individual case-studies of children in care. This will be a child-focused model of support bringing together those relevant to the education of the young person both from the school and care settings. Those included could be the principal,

¹ The role of Care Champion role will be developed in the school as part of the project. This staff member would have a lead role in information-sharing and advocating for children in care within the school.

year head, school care champion, social worker, social care worker, foster carer, and the Education Welfare Officer.

A monitoring and evaluation framework is needed to provide an understanding of the implementation, outcomes and impact of the pilot programme in terms of effectiveness; to understand the experience of the teachers and principals using the toolkit to support children in care; and to assess the impact for children in care. It will establish the key performance indicators to be tracked over the course of the academic year, the methodology for monitoring progress and any action research elements to explore how schools, foster carers, social workers and other agencies interact in providing wraparound support to young people as they move through care and education. It will also seek to document any needs for extra resourcing for care-experienced young people in school. It is envisaged that the framework will be in place for the start of the programme beginning September 2025.

Key resources

[Take Care Resource](#)

[Take Care School Guide](#)

Care to College | An Exploratory Study on Care-Experienced Students' Educational Journeys
<https://www.epiconline.ie/library/care-to-college/>

CSO Frontier Series Output: Educational Attendance and Attainment of Children in Care, 2018 – 2024
www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/fp/fp-eaacc/educationalattendanceandattainmentofchildrenincare2018-2024/schoolattendanceofchildrenincareandallchildren/

Scope of Work

Project Description

Develop a framework to:

- to assess the impact for children in care and the experience of teachers and principals using the Take Care toolkit to support children in care.
- carry out action research as part of the pilot, exploring how schools, foster carers, social workers and other agencies interact in providing wraparound support to young people as they move through care and education.
- document the needs for extra resourcing for this group of young people i.e. the funding required to provide timely assessments; compensatory education supports, tuition etc.
- capture the experiences of stakeholders in the project including teachers, principals, non-teaching school staff, social worker/social care worker, foster carer as appropriate.
- Identify the characteristics of initiatives, practice, engagement and interventions with the most positive impact as well as the characteristics of those that were less successful or unsuccessful, and set out key learnings to inform future developments

- consider the characteristics of the pilot in terms of type of school (geographic distribution, DEIS/non-DEIS, primary/ post-primary, school size, school readiness, etc)

Deliverables

- Evaluation and Monitoring Framework
- KPIs and methodology for tracking progress
- Work with EPIC to finetune the framework and to review progress over time
- Attend Project meetings as required
- Interim report at end of the first school term
- Final report at end of the school year

Timeline

The pilot project will run from September 2025 to June 2026. The framework should be in place for the outset of the pilot project in September 2025 and an assessment of the results provided July/August 2026.

Skills and Expertise

- Proven ability to develop and implement monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
- Knowledge and experience of the Irish education system at primary and post-primary level
- Commitment to work in partnership with EPIC and key stakeholders.

Scoring:

1. Understanding of the purpose of the Pilot Programme (10%)

- Demonstrates a clear understanding of the aims of the project
- Provides evidence of knowledge on best practices in school and M&E frameworks

2. Methodology and Approach (40%)

- Clearly outlines an appropriate methodology for evaluation
- Includes innovative or evidence-based approaches to evaluation
- Demonstrates feasibility and practicality of the proposed approach
- Addresses ethical considerations in the evaluation process
- Strategy for engaging with EPIC and TESS and schools
- Approach to ensuring student, teacher and principal voice is prioritised in the evaluation

3. Experience and Expertise (15%)

- Relevant experience in an education context
- Demonstrated expertise in monitoring and evaluation
- Proven track record of conducting evaluations and delivering actionable insights

4. Value for Money (15%)

- Clear and justified cost breakdown

- Demonstrates efficiency in resource use while maintaining high-quality outputs

5. Reporting and Deliverables (20%)

- Proposed framework
- Clear structure outlining the phases of the project and timeline for deliverables

Application Process

1. Proposal to include an outline of how you would approach this project and estimated costings: maximum 2 pages.
2. A link to, or copy of, your portfolio or samples of past work that is similar in content/style or process.
3. Resume

Email your proposal to: education@epiconline.ie

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