



## Provider Assurance Report

North Dublin Service

<b>Name of Service Area:</b>	North Dublin
<b>OSV No:</b>	4413
<b>Name of provider:</b>	Tusla
<b>Chief Operations Officer:</b>	Mr. Jim Gibson
<b>Date of Request:</b>	2 December 2019
<b>Date to be returned</b>	3 February 2020

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**1. Unallocated Cases**

Please outline how the unallocated cases project has impacted on the waiting list in Dublin North. Please in your response include the following;

**Strong Governance** There are strong governance structures across North Dublin and the longevity of core staff has brought stability and consistency to practice. 'The front door' is the first point of contact for referrers who have concerns for the safety children. Referrals of known harm to children are an Area priority and elicit an immediate response to ensure the child's safety and protection.

**The 'Front Door'** is currently structured with a lead Principal Social Worker of two Screening Teams and three Intake/Initial Assessment Teams. There is a Principal Social Worker for five Child Protection and Welfare Teams and a Principal Social Worker for Partnership, Prevention and Family Support. The Area is shortly to undergo significant reconfiguration to align its structures to the Standard Business Processes. See Appendix I for the new structure.

**Prioritising Child Safety** is reflected in the loading of resources at the 'front door'. All referrals to the Child and Family Agency in North Dublin are screened by professionally qualified Social Workers to assess the concern and determine the most appropriate response pathway. These may include closure if inappropriate, diversion to Partnership Prevention and Family Support (PPFS) or other funded partner services to provide support where the threshold is not one of child abuse/neglect, or transfer to the Child Protection and Welfare team for Initial or Further Assessment. Cases are categories by risk as high, medium or low.

**Unallocated Low Closures Governance Project** In January 2019, there were approximately 1280 open low referrals awaiting closure in North Dublin. In spite of continual efforts by the Duty teams to reduce this number, it remained stubbornly high. The Area Manager convened an Unallocated Low Closures Governance Project on the 29-03-2019 to review the persistently high number of unallocated low cases awaiting closure.

There were seven dedicated internal resource led audit days (05-04-2019, 12-04-2019, 15-04-2019, 17-04-2019, 24-04-2019, 25-04-2019 & 26-04-2019) devoted to reviewing low closure cases, many of which only required managerial closure approval on NCCIS. The Area Manager, Duty PSW, PPFS Manager and the QRSI Manager continue to review and close cases on the local registers and NCCIS on a weekly basis.

In addition, two practice intensive days, on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019, were dedicated to reviewing low closures. Over 223 referrals were reviewed, with 55 requiring no further action to close, 21 diverted to Family Support Services and 93 requiring allocation at that time. Further dates are being set aside to facilitate practice intensive days on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February and the 4<sup>th</sup> March. An audit of open unallocated child protection and welfare cases on the aforementioned dates. The regional office continues to support this project.

**National Project Team** A National Project Team was set up in 2019 to review five Service Areas nationally with stubbornly high numbers of low closures. The Area Manager is the designated liaison person in the respective Areas. The national project team set a reduction target 20% by 31-12-2019. North Dublin has successfully met its target and

reduced its number to 594 or by 46%. The number of unallocated low closures stands at 501 as of 28-01-2020. This national project has been replaced by each Area Manager reporting on progress to their relevant Service Director and the COO, since January 2020.

**NCCIS** North Dublin was the last Area nationally to be selected for adoption of NCCIS. Significant challenges were encountered in getting a NCCIS Team Leader, leading to a cleansing backlog of twelve months. A Team Leader has recently accepted the post for NCCIS and will commence a data cleanse shortly. This will have a significant impact going forward and will cleanse NCCIS of cases waiting to closure and remove duplicates. The Team Leader will report to the Screening Principal Social Worker who will in turn report monthly to the Area Governance Group. A regional led support team, drawing on personnel from the region, are assisting the Area in cleansing and closures. The first meeting took place on 16-01-2020, with a subsequent meeting planned for 06-02-2020.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

The number of unallocated cases in North Dublin in the Child Protection and Welfare Service by priority level

There were 594 unallocated cases in the Child Protection and Welfare Service North Dublin as of 31-12-2019. The following breakdown highlights by category:

<b>Category</b>	<b>31-12-2020</b>	<b>28-01-2020</b>
High	3	0
Medium	153	92
Low	438	409

The number of unallocated children in care as of the 31/12/2019

There were 330 children in care on the 31-12-2019. 251 children were allocated a Social Worker and 79 were unallocated. To ameliorate the risk associated with unallocated children in care, 54 children were assigned a Social Care Leader or Social Care Worker to complete safeguarding visits. These workers were supervised by the line managing Social Work Team Leader. The remaining 25 unallocated children in foster care were reviewed by the respective Team Leaders. To ameliorate this risk, a protocol was developed whereby the fostering Link Social Worker conducted safeguarding visits with the aforementioned 25 unallocated children in care. There are no dual unallocated cases in North Dublin, with all foster carers having a Link Worker.

As of the 28-01-2020, the number of unallocated children in care reduced further to 57, with all children in residential care being allocated a Social Worker. 34 of this cohort are supported by either a Child Care Leader or Child Care Worker who is directly supervised by the line managing Team Leader. There are currently no dual unallocated cases, with all foster carers having a Link Worker. The remaining 23 children are supported by a Link Worker, who completes safeguarding visits with the child.

Staff vacancies continue to be a significant challenge in North Dublin and impacts on the Area's capacity to allocate all children in care a Social Worker. This has been risk assessed by the relevant manager's and is reviewed and monitored on the Area Risk Register. This issue has also been risk escalated by the Area Manager to the Regional and National offices.

The means by which the COO is assured of the reduction in unallocated cases in Dublin North

North Dublin continues to operate an unallocated low closures service improvement plan developed in March 2019, where focus has been on closing low cases that do not meet the threshold for social work intervention and/or diverting to PPFS or funded services such as Daughters of Charity and Barnardos.

Risk Assessments requiring additional control measures have been completed and escalated to the Regional and National Offices, with the Chief Operations Officer (COO) being aware of the challenges and impact on service delivery associated with staff vacancies.

Performance and data activity in relation of open cases awaiting an allocated social worker are submitted to the Regional Office on a monthly basis. The COO can be assured by the steady decrease in cases awaiting allocation, as noted earlier in this report.

Whether this project will be extended into 2020

This project remains in place and will continue in 2020. Six dates have been scheduled for 2020: 24<sup>th</sup> January, 4<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. A review will take place thereafter and additional dates will be added if needed.

If so, the projected outcomes, including timelines of the project

The outcome trajectory of this project is to reduce the number of unallocated cases to double digit figures. All referrals are screened to assess the level of risk to the child/ren, as is standard procedure in this Area. As stated previously, children at serious risk of harm or imminent danger will continue to receive an immediate response. It is envisaged that cases awaiting closure by the line manager will also be completed in a timelier manner following the restructure of the 'Front Door' to realign it to the Standard Business Process and Signs of Safety. Cases will be closed, progress for further assessment or be diverted where the threshold is not met, but the family would benefit from community based supports.

### Assurance is required in the following areas:

#### 1. Recruitment/Resources

Please outline how the Dublin North Service Area benefited from recruitment initiatives and the pilot of the workforce development plan specifically to include:

**Comprehensive Review** A Comprehensive Review Group was established to review of staffing levels at the 'Front Door' in North Dublin. The group explored staffing levels, staff retention and recruitment strategies. The group proposed ambitious strategies, incentive and approaches to enhance staff retention and recruitment that will require action at local and national levels, including government. The comprehensive review report is approaching the final stages and is awaited by the local Area.

**Recruitment Campaigns** A bespoke recruitment campaign was undertaken for North Dublin in Q4 2019 although it yielded no additional Social Workers. A further recruitment campaign was initiated at regional level, with Team Leader interviews taking place 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020. PSW interview are scheduled for 31-01 and 07-02-2020.

**Local Initiatives** North Dublin has instituted a number of local initiatives with the aim of promoting staff retention and recruitment. The Area Manager advocated for a North Dublin bespoke Senior Social Work Practitioner (SSWP) competition in 2019 to retain experienced staff. This has come to fruition, with five Social Workers promoted to Senior SSWP to date. An additional six offers are being processed by Human Resources.

**National Initiative** A positive initiative spearheaded by the new CEO of Tusla, Mr Bernard Gloster, was the offer of Agency conversion to existing staff to short-term Tusla contracts. 27 agency staff subscribed to the conversion process and will be offered contracts. 5 workers declined the opportunity, citing financial loss and plans for personal travel.

**Children First Information Officers** CFIAOs and 'Front Door' staff have undertaken a number of information road shows in the Area to deepen key referrer's understanding of the Social Worker role, Children First, Signs of Safety and child protection thresholds. This initiative will continue in 2020.

**Additional administrative posts** The allocation of four additional administrative posts in North Dublin was a welcome initiative for the 'front door' and the unallocated closures project. This includes two Grade V social work administrative posts, a Grade IV and a Grade III to assist with non-core social work duties. This will alleviate the some of the administrative task currently undertaken by Social Workers.

**'LEAN' review** Under the Child Protection and Welfare Strategy a 'LEAN' review was undertaken in 2019 across three Areas, which included North Dublin. One of the key recommendations of the 'LEAN' review was the introduction of a Social Work Clerk role. The role will include new functions and responsibilities while including existing administrative tasks. This will ensure the standardisation of the Social Work Clerk role across all 17 Areas. Two pilot sites have been proposed, with North Dublin selected as one. It is envisaged that a Social Work Clerk will be assigned to every four social workers within the child protection and welfare service.

**Student Social Worker Initiatives** The Workforce Development Unit have supported developing a national standardised approach to the student social worker development and experience in Tusla as a measure to recruit new social work graduates into Tusla. North Dublin have welcomed and embraced this initiative with stronger alliances being formed with national and international academic institutions. There is a dedicated Professional Support Manager attached to the Area Manager's Office responsible for all students and has progressed a number of initiatives to enhance their experience. This includes induction packs, smart phone and laptops on arrival. Induction meetings and peer support sessions throughout the placement.

**University Links** North Dublin and Dublin North City, in conjunction with EPPI, have partnered with Trinity College to foster links and provide inputs on the social work courses with the aim of develop a better fieldwork understanding of the Child and Family Agency and encourage graduates to work with the Agency in the future.

**Exit Interviews** The loss of workers in North Dublin, and across the Agency more generally, fits within the national context of increased employment opportunities to professionally qualified Social Workers. All employees in North Dublin are offered the opportunity of completing the exit interview form, followed by an individual meeting.

Without exception, former employees have a very positive experience of working in North Dublin, feel supported by the managers and develop good working relationships with peers. Social Workers report leaving due to lifestyle choices, as they prepare to get married and plan a family. Some wished to move out of Dublin due to exorbitant housing costs or a desire to be nearer family. Others planned to go travelling or simply wanted a change of work environment.

Some of the main issues identified during exit interviews are excessive workloads; the pressures associated with court and slow career progression to senior grades more readily available in primary care, mental health, disability, hospitals, etc. The ubiquitous view shared by employees leaving the Agency is that Tusla is the most challenging, although professionally rewarding, environments to work in. Carrying a statutory child protection mandate brings additional responsibilities, pressures and scrutiny not replicated in other work environments. The aforementioned services seem to offer the attraction of more boundaried work practices and less pressures of work and responsibly.

**Dearth of Social Workers** One of the concerns for the Area is the dearth of available Social Workers nationally and the insufficient numbers graduating from universities annually. This is impacting on the Areas ability to carry out its statutory function and comply with regulatory requirements.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

The outcome of the comprehensive review of resources at the 'front door'  
As previously stated, the comprehensive review report is awaited from Regional Workforce.

The number of approved WTE posts in the Child Protection and Welfare Service

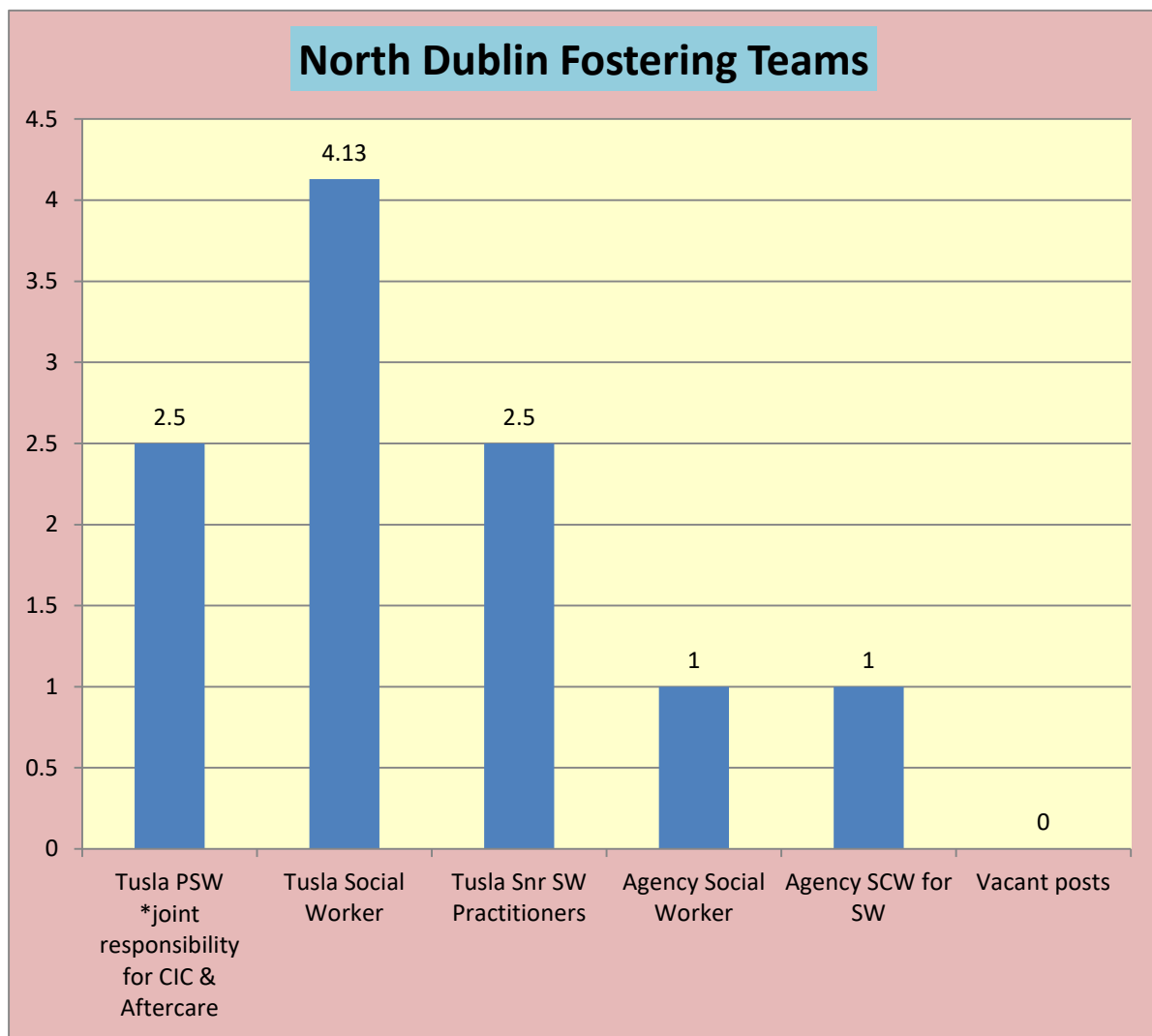
Posts	Occupancy
Tusla PSWs	2
Tusla Team Leader Posts	13.3
Tusla SSWP	7.5
Tusla SW	25.93
Tusla SCM	1
Tusla CCL	2
Tusla SCW in admin	0.8
Tusla SCW	2.6
Tusla FS Practitioners	9.1
Tusla CFSN Co-ordinator	3.6
Agency SW posts	8
Agency SCW in SW post	6.6
Agency SCL in SW post	1
Agency Project Worker in SW post	1
Vacant TL	1
Vacant SW	11
Vacant SSWP	2
<b>Total Posts</b>	<b>98.43</b>

*\*Includes PPFs Teams*

The number of new posts approved since September 2019 (if applicable)

There were no new approved position numbers attached to the Child Protection and Welfare Service since September 2019. There were thirteen vacant Social Work posts and a vacant Team Leader post in September 2019, with two additional vacant posts on the PPFs teams. These figures do not capture the flow of agency workers in and out of the service since that time.

The number of approved WTE posts in the foster care service



The Fostering Team is the most stable and experienced team in the department and is managed by two Principal Social Workers, who also have responsibility for Children in Care, Aftercare. This has brought greater cohesion, consistence and compliance between CIC and fostering.

The number of posts filled in the foster care service since September 2019

A Fostering Team Leader has been added to the fostering service since September 2019. An Agency Social Care Worker currently occupies a Link Worker post vacated on fostering.

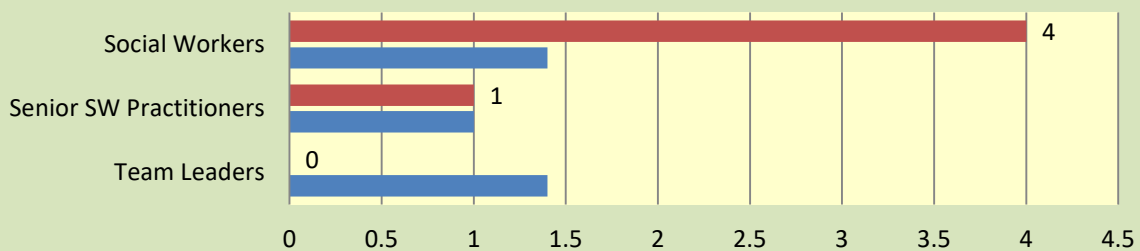
The number of filled posts in the Child protection and Welfare Service since September 2019

The Child Protection and Welfare Service had one vacant Team Leader post, fourteen vacant Social Work posts and two vacant post on the PPFS teams in September 2019

The two posts on the PPFS teams are now filled, as of 28-10-2020.

6.6 Social Work Posts were filled on the Screening & Duty Intake teams, with 2 Senior Social Work Practitioner and 5.4 Social Work posts remaining vacant. The Team Leader post remains vacant and a further loss of 0.6 Team Leader post, as of 28-10-2020.

### Screening & Duty Intake Vacancies as of 28-10-2020



	Team Leaders	Senior SW Practitioners	Social Workers
Duty Intake	0	1	4
Screening	1.4	1	1.4

■ Duty Intake ■ Screening

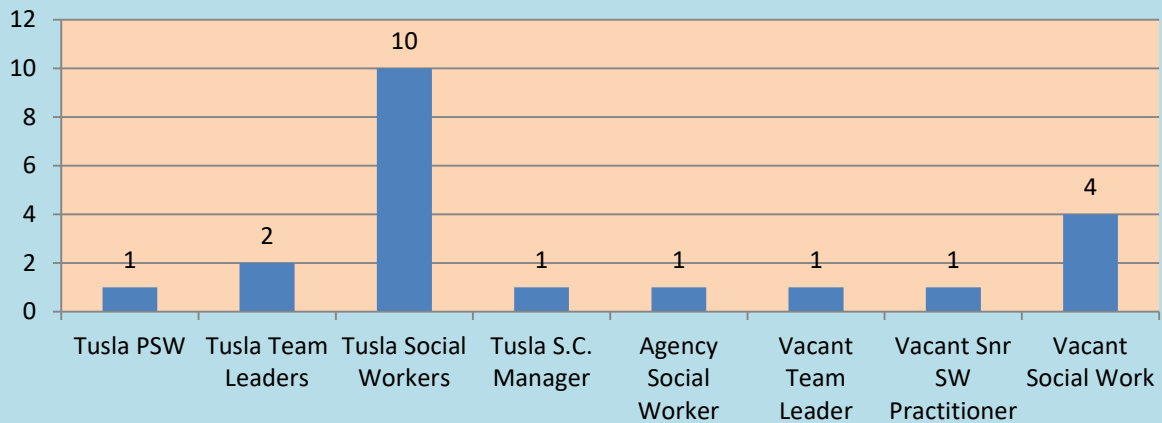
A breakdown of vacancies per function (Child Protection and Welfare Service structure and Foster Care Service) as of 31/12/2019

### North Dublin Screening Teams

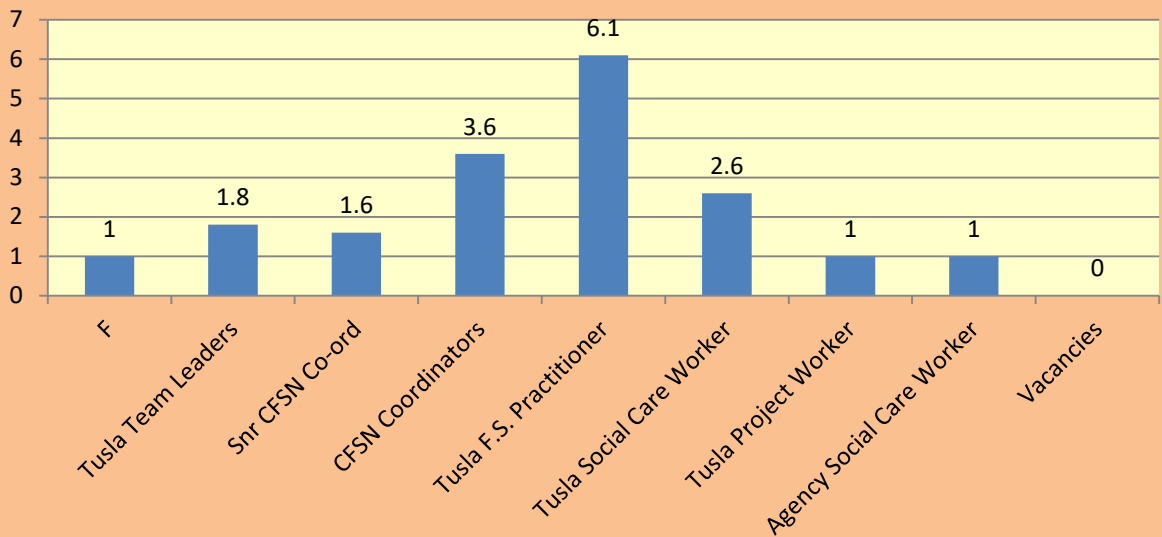




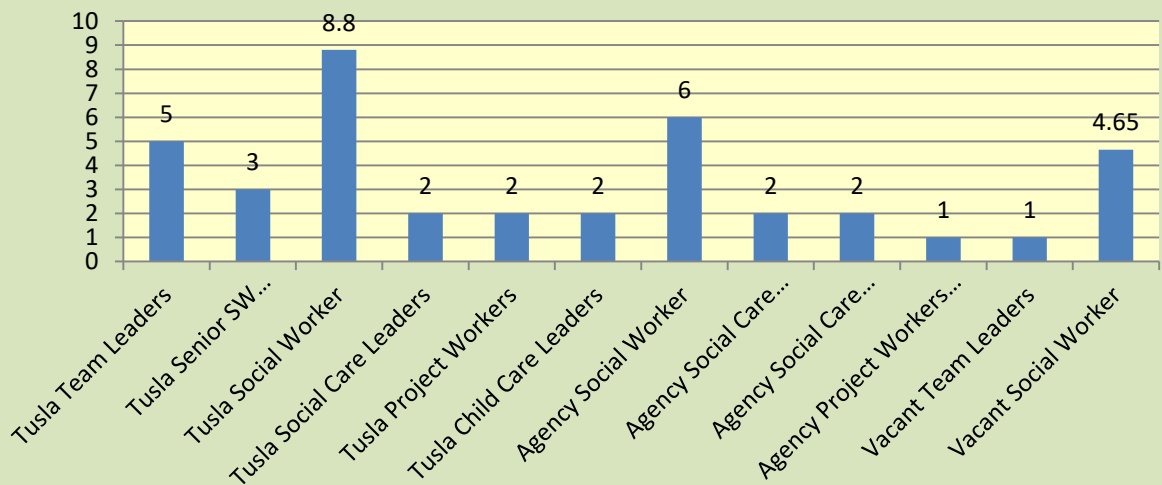
### North Dublin Duty/Intake Teams



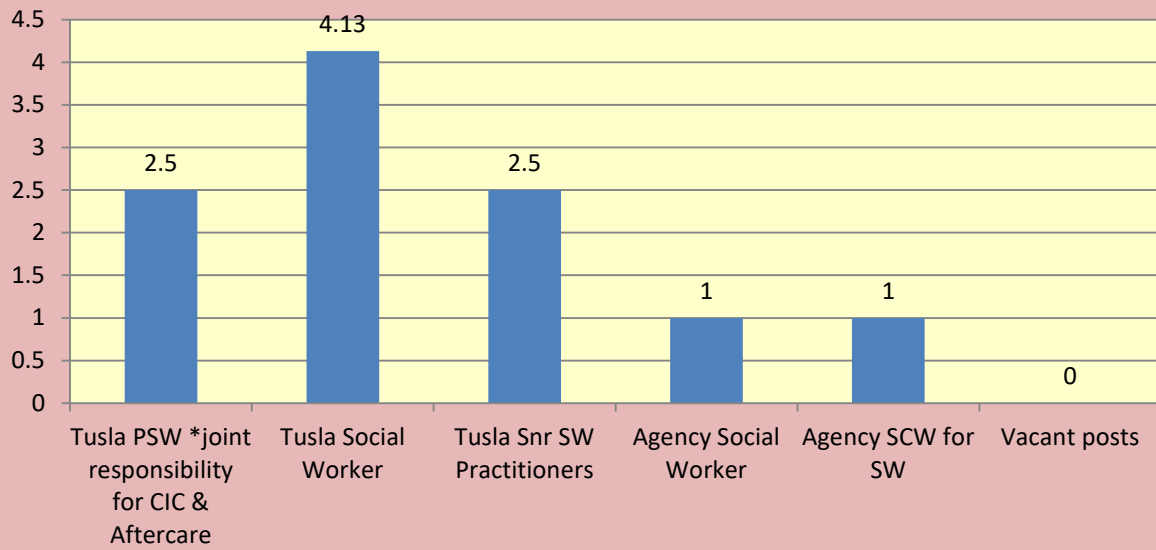
### North Dublin PPFS Teams



### North Dublin CP&W Teams



## North Dublin Fostering Teams



### Specific initiatives employed to ensure effective use of resources

North Dublin completed a Commissioning Report and completed to two meeting with stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of the needs of the Area.

The Commissioning Report informed of a review of Service Level Agreements with funded agencies in the Area to re-orientate service to meet burgeoning local needs.

PPFS has a growing role at the 'Front Door' as cases are diverted for Family Support Services. PPFS has weekly meeting with Duty to ensure cases are diverted and support is provided in a timely manner.

The Meitheal process is increasingly being used in North Dublin 377 referral to date.

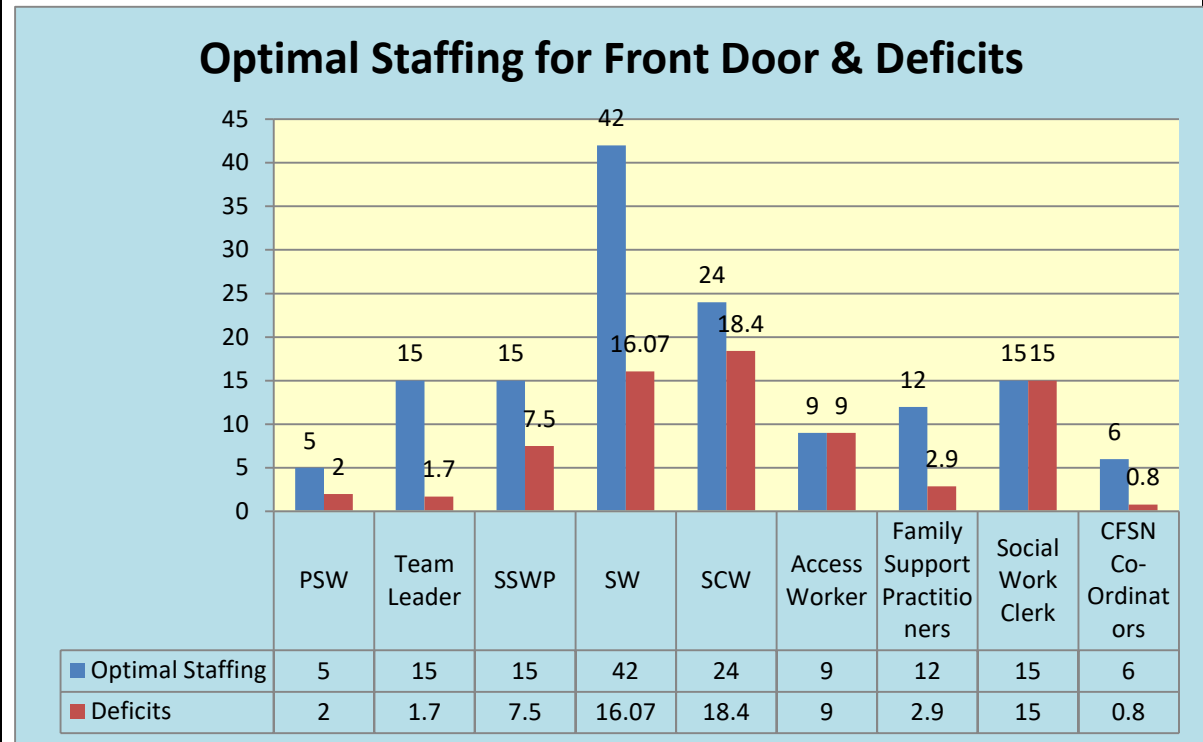
North Dublin has implement the national RED process

North Dublin has developed an optimal staffing matrix to accompany the realigning of 'Front Door' services consistent with the Standard Business Process. The following staffing structure benchmarks current staffing levels and highlight the need for additional resources in North Dublin to meet the growing demands of increasing population.

Screening Teams: Dedicated Point of Contact	Occupancy
PSW	1
Team Leader Posts	3
SSWP	3
Social Workers	12
Social Care Workers	3
Social Work Clerk	3

Child Protection & Welfare Teams	Occupancy
PSWs	3
Team Leader Posts	9
SSWP	9
Social Workers	27
Social Care Workers	9
Access Worker	9
Social Work Clerk	9

PPFS Teams	Occupancy
PSW	1
Team Leader Posts	3
SSWP	3
Social Workers	3
CFSC Coordinators	3
Family Support Practitioners	10
Social Care Workers	12
Social Work Clerk	3



In summary, there are 73.3 deficits highlighted above, however; 16.6 social work posts are currently filled with various combinations of non-social work grade workers. Conversion of agency non-social work grade will ameliorate the costs of filling the deficits to achieve optimal staffing levels in North Dublin. Deficits, with the growing population of North Dublin, are having a significant impact on the ability of the Area to fulfil statutory requirements.

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**2. PPFS and pathways to community based early intervention**

Please outline how children and families in Dublin North benefited from the review and strengthening of PPFS and pathways to community based early intervention.  
Please specifically include in your response:

PPFS is an integral part of the front door services in North Dublin, as it receives diverted cases from the screening teams where the level of risk does not reach the threshold and the family would benefit from support to increase the level of functioning. PPFS works in partnership with families and offer significant family support to families in need.

In addition to North Dublin's primary remit of child protection, Tusla North Dublin operates the PPFS programme which aims to help children and families who are experiencing challenges to resolve them or prevent them developing into a crisis requiring social work intervention. The PPFS team facilitate a number of comprehensive and accessible low, medium and high prevention services including Meitheal; Parenting 24Seven website; Parent Support Champions; Creative Community Alternatives and funding for child, youth participation and parental projects.

North Dublin has 4 Child and Family Support Networks where Tusla work collaboratively with statutory, voluntary and community services to strengthen families and communities, help families to achieve their potential and keep children safe from harm.

North Dublin has a comprehensive record of success in early intervention and prevention service in 2019 with:

- 1,423 Children receiving Family Support Services through 22 commissioned services
- 542 Parents attending Tusla Commissioned Parenting Programmes
- A total of 559 Meitheal/FSS requests being processed
- 23 children supported to remain at home with wraparound supports through Creative Community Alternative programmes
- Creation of two sensory clubs and a sensory garden supporting children with autism
- Development of 2 Homeless Information Hubs

PPFS management and staff have been significantly supportive in assisting with the unallocated cases project. The PPFS PSW has assisted with case audits, closures of cases; diversion of cases and identification of cases which required social work involvement.

The Regional Children First Information Officers engaged locally with specific target groups of mandated reporters to increase their knowledge of Children First, Mandated Reporting and Signs of Safety in efforts to reduce the number of referrals received by North Dublin which do not meet the threshold for social work involvement. This engagement is ongoing.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

Use of RED process

In September 2019 PPFS in consultation with the North Dublin Duty Screening Team and oversight by the Area Manager developed a local Practice Matter re; Protocol for diverting cases from Duty Screening to PPFS.

This protocol set out the following procedure:

If a referral does not meet SW threshold no initial assessment required (SW divert to PPFS)

- Screening SW closes referral as step down to PPFS
- Screening SW completes closure letter to referrer with PPFS leaflet
- Screening SW completes closure letter to family with PPFS leaflet
- PPFS worker tracks referral after 5 working days on accepted receipt of diversion
- PPFS worker notifies screening PSW by email if no intervention accepted by family for NCCIS purposes

If an intake has been completed but case is now closing to SW with support from PPFS. The screening SW consults with their Line Manager and decides one of the following options (SW step down to PPFS)

- Screening SW completes FSS referral
- Screening SW completes Meitheal request
- Screening SW forwards case mapping to PPFS and through RED a PIP is completed to identify appropriate intervention
- Screening SW closes case
- PPFS worker notifies Screening PSW if family do not engage in intervention

Tusla North Dublin has a comprehensive record of success in diverting and stepping down cases from screening to PPFS in 2019 with

- 126 children diverted away from the Front door service of North Dublin in Q3/4 2019

#### Use of Meitheal process

Tusla Dublin North has a comprehensive record of success in its use of the Meitheal Practice Model in 2019 with

<b>Total Meitheal Requests Received</b>	<b>Meitheal Request diverted from SW</b>	<b>Meitheal Requests diverted to Single Agency Response</b>	<b>Meitheal Requests progressed to Meitheal meetings</b>	<b>Meitheal requests closed</b>
547	193	307	35	205

#### Implementation of national RED process practice guidance

In addition to the ongoing diversion of cases to PPFS, red meetings occur with voluntary organisations; Barnardos and Daughters of Charity; but not to the level recorded by PPFS.

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**3. Retrospective Cases**

Please outline how the national service improvement project for the management of retrospective cases has impacted on the management of retrospective cases in Dublin North Area.

Four new Principal Social Workers were recruited national, with one being assigned to each of the four Regions to manage retrospective abuse allegations (SART) in place in 2019. North Dublin has links with the SART regional service and there have been no current concerns identified with retrospective cases. Two CASP workers have been identified within North Dublin to assist with compliance with CASP implementation and rollout by June 2020.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

The number of retrospective cases awaiting allocation by priority level as of 31/12/2019:  
4 cases: 1 medium & 3 low (Live Figures) for North Dublin

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**4. Audit of Garda Notifications**

Please outline what follow up has been completed with An Garda Síochána in relation to the above audit (dated 08/07/2019) in the Dublin North Area.

**Child Abuse Notifications** Meetings take place with An Garda Síochána (AGS) every six weeks, in line with the national joint protocol, to discuss cases currently requiring a co-ordinated approach. Child abuse notifications are also discussed that these meetings. Managers from Screening/Duty have and will continue to give briefing sessions in Garda Stations and share information thresholds to ensure appropriate referrals to Tusla.

**Children First Information and Advice Officers (CFIAO)** have rolled out Children's First with relevant stakeholder and meetings took place on 13-09-2019 and 14-10-2019. Briefings with AGS will be rolling out in 2020, with the dates to be confirmed by An Garda Síochána.

**Workforce Development** The Workforce Development Unit is designing a new training programme for Social Workers and Gardaí.

**National Children's First Liaison Committee** NCFLC meet with AGS to review complex cases.

**Senior Management Liaison Forum** SMLF meets with AGS to discuss matters arising. The SLMF agreed Terms of Reference include:

1. Review joint working arrangements to ensure good practice in respect of notification, information sharing, case management and policy and procedure implementation
2. Advise local operational managers on matters of policy and law
3. Review complex child protection and neglect cases as required
4. Resolve any area of difficulty that may arise in local joint working arrangements
5. Advise the National Children First Liaison Management Committee of any operational matter that may have implications for national joint policy and procedures

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**5. Supports/training initiatives to staff who complete initial assessment and safety planning.**

Please outline what supports have been put in place to support good practice and consistency in approach in relation to the completion of initial assessments and safety planning.

Four practice intensive days were carried out in North Dublin in 2019. Two of these intensives focused on Intake Records and low unallocated cases referred to Tusla North Dublin. The other two intensive days focused on Initial Assessments, safety planning, networks and trajectories. It was very evident from these practice intensive days that North Dublin operate quite a good approach in relation to the completion of initial assessments and safety planning which has been hugely guided by the introduction of the national approach to practice Signs of Safety.

North Dublin have undertaken to partake in four practice intensives in 2020 in addition to every team in the Area undertaking group supervision in their monthly team meetings.

The Area Manager returns Area Implementation Plan to the National Office on compliance and progress. Risks are identified and feedback is provided by the National Office to the local Area.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

Specific initiatives

- ✚ PPFS' increasing role in the Front Door and supporting families
- ✚ Review of Service Level Agreements with funded agencies in North Dublin
- ✚ Practice Matter: Protocol for Stepping cases down to PPFS from Screening
- ✚ Krafty Kids Sensory Groups x 2
- ✚ Sensory Garden
- ✚ Homeless Hubs
- ✚ Parent Support Champions
- ✚ Parent Led Autism Network
- ✚ Cyber safety networks
- ✚ New Family Resource Centre in Balbriggan
- ✚ Development of Student Social Worker placement coordination
- ✚ Bespoke campaign to recruit social workers and principal social workers
- ✚ North Dublin practice intensives
- ✚ Children's Fora that adheres to the Child Participatory Strategy

How you are assured of the impact of these initiatives on practice and outcomes for children

Social workers are reporting greater confidence with Signs of Safety, as is evident from NCCIS and paper files. In respect of the low closures project; children and families that do not need the intervention of statutory social work services are being closed or diverted to voluntary support services. Approximately 1,200 referrals are received by North Dublin on

a quarterly basis. The statistics of PPFS; 307 receiving single agency response and 205 closed indicates potentially good outcomes for children.

**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**6. Review of current service delivery model**

Please provide an update in relation to this review:

The Area Manager; the Area Managers Office and the Area Management team, have been significantly involved in reviewing the current service delivery model within North Dublin over the last 12 months with a plan to restructure the front door service delivery model; that will allow for a more seamless flow of referrals in and out of the system. However, this restructure will realign the department with Standard Business Process model. The optimal staffing levels previously referred to in this report are necessary to maximise the efficacy of the service.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

The key findings of the review

Please see information already provided in this report on current staffing deficits and optimal staffing levels required to meet the current demands of North Dublin.

What measures have been put in place to date to address the findings of the review

- ✚ Links developed Social Work Universities in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
- ✚ Employment of social care workers and social care leaders to fill vacant social work positions as a temporary basis.
- ✚ Social Workers awaiting CORU registration are employed as Project Workers.
- ✚ Bespoke campaigns to employ social workers.
- ✚ Retention of experienced staff by promotion to Senior Social Work positions.
- ✚ Standardised social work student experience.
- ✚ New staff offices have been procured in Blanchardstown and a move in date has been agreed for Q1 2020.
- ✚ New staff offices have been identified for Balbriggan and is being progressed through estates.

The expected impact on service delivery arising out of the findings of the review in Dublin North

Implementation of the recommendations of the review, including the comprehensive review and the LEAN review, will deliver greater efficiency and a more responsive service to child and families in North Dublin, as the population continue to grow and demand the demand for services increases. A better resourced Front Door will ensure only referrals that meet the threshold are accepted, with cases either closed or diverted to community based service. Early Intervention, Family Support and PPFS are critical strands to ensuring families arrest declining functioning, regain equilibrium and autonomy. The realignment of the Front Door will minimise the change of social workers for children and families. The Signs of Safety framework provides an invaluable matrix to assess family functioning and build safety through organic family networks. The expected impact for the Agency is one of reduced referral rates and targeting resources where they are required the most.



**Assurance is required in the following areas:**

**7. Specific Area initiatives as outlined in the Service Improvement Plan for ND**

**a) Realignment of the 'Front Door'**

North Dublin is in the process of realigning the 'Front Door' services in consort with Standard Business Process. An optimal staffing matrix provides the necessary staffing levels to provide a safe and efficient service to children and families in North Dublin.

**b) Governance Groups**

North Dublin instituted two governance groups in the Area to monitor compliance, identify gaps in service and direct target resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

**c) Integrated Case Management Group**

North Dublin and Dublin North City facilitate the Integrated Case Management Group that meets monthly to review mutual cases with the Mental Health, Disability and Primary Care Services. The aim of the group is to remove blockages for young people accessing services in a timely manner.

**d) Child Protection Notification System**

North Dublin CPNS has two PSWs who facilitate discussions with families, utilising the Signs of Safety Framework. Meetings are arranged as required. Audits of CPNS for trends and commonality are completed by the CPNS PSWs.

**e) North Dublin 2020 Self-auditing Schedule**

North Dublin is developing a 2020 self-auditing schedule, with randomised file selection for validation purposes by a designated PSW.

**f) Quality Improvement Framework**

PSW's are making steady progress with the Quality Improvement Framework (Well Led, Safe and Child Centred) for their respective areas of responsibility. Trackers are being used to monitor implementation and compliance. This Area Learning Plan: North Dublin consults regularly with staff to assess learning needs and is currently implementing a training programme with Regional Workforce Planning.

**g) Signs of Safety**

- I. Practice workshops are being delivered at team level in 2020
- II. The rollout of Signs of Safety will continue in North Dublin, with staff being released to attend the two and five day workshops. Attendance at the Signs of Safety Practice Leader call back will be prioritised for Practice Leaders.

**h) Caseload Management**

The effective use of the Caseload Management tool will continue to be used by managers to ensure staff have manageable caseloads. This is reviewed in supervision with the Area manager.

**i) Creative Communities Alternative**

North Dublin operates the CCA in the Area and entered into a service level agreement with two partner agencies to deliver flexible and imaginative interventions with families.

**j) NCCIS**

The recent acceptance by a Team Leader to the NCCIS post will progress data cleansing that is essential for the system to provide reliable data as needed. The Regional Office has been most helpful in provision additional resources, with staff assisting with closures and data cleansing. This project will continue and the Area is most grateful for the assistance being provided by the regional office.

**k) Collaboration with An Garda Síochána**

**i. Child Abuse Notifications**

Meetings take place with An Garda Síochána (AGS) every six weeks, in line with the national joint protocol, to discuss cases currently requiring a co-ordinated approach. Child abuse notifications are also discussed that these meetings. Managers from Screening/Duty have and will continue to give briefing sessions in Garda Stations and share information thresholds to ensure appropriate referrals to Tusla.

**ii. Children First Information and Advice Officers**

CFIAOs have rolled out Children's First with relevant stakeholder and meetings took place on 13-09-2019 and 14-10-2019. Briefings with AGS will be rolling out in 2020, with the dates to be confirmed by An Garda Síochána.

**iii. Workforce Development**

The Workforce Development Unit is designing a new training programme for Social Workers and Gardaí.

**iv. National Children's First Liaison Committee with An Garda Síochána**

NCFLC meet with AGS to review complex cases.

**v. Senior Management Liaison Forum with An Garda Síochána**

A schedule of 2020 meetings has been sent to An Garda Síochána is awaiting confirmation.

**l) Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC)**

North Dublin is coterminous with two CYPSCs, Dublin City North and Fingal County. With a targeted focus on strategic interagency cooperation and collaboration, both CYPSCs have established a strong interagency membership comprising statutory, community and voluntary services in the respective across the Area. A number of initiatives are in progress across the Area and are being spearheaded by the CYPSC coordinators.

The North Dublin has had sight of the DSC SIP plan and values shared learning from other Areas to improve service provision and enhance governance structures.

**Please clearly provide the following data/information:**

The implementation of self-audits and how the findings of these audits have contributed to service improvement

The following self-audits have taken place in 2019/2020; 4 practice intensive audits and an audit of children in residential care in line with placement of children regulations. An audit of up-to-date voluntary consent; statutory visits undertaken to children in care, out of date

statutory visits; recording of complaints by children in care and trends; audit of chronologies of children in care files; a review of CPCC IA audits.

How the findings contributed to service improvement:

1. Reduction in low duty cases awaiting social work response as either closed, diverted or allocated
2. Identification of cases requiring social work response and CPCC referral
3. Identification of good practice, gaps and pressures in ensuring statutory functions for children in residential care are carried out and service improvement actions as a result
4. All children in voluntary care have an up-to-date reception into care consent
5. Greater governance and recording of statutory visits undertaken to children in care and where out of date visits are identified, measures are put in place to ensure this is addressed
6. Complaints register tracks complaints received by the LORSI officer
7. Identification of absent chronologies on children in care records; measures put in place to assist; ensuring as part of the student social work placement experience a student social worker should be tasked with undertaking and learning this important task

#### The implementation of the area learning plan

North Dublin has ongoing engagement with the Workforce Development Unit in respect of the learning need priorities in North Dublin.

North Dublin carried out a training needs analysis in 2018 and recommendations of such cover 2018 to 2020; due for review in Q.4 2020.

North Dublin track staff's completion of all mandatory training; Children's First; GDPR; Health and Safety and Complaints handling through record keeping on staff supervision files. A register is also kept on staff's completion of Children's First.

Supervisors and supervisees training is being scheduled with Workforce Learning and Development Team for 2020 for staff in North Dublin.

#### The effective use of case management

Workers are complying with the National Caseload Management tool. Managers complete the required paperwork and the Area Manager completes the CM4 and has highlighted that due to staff vacancies, there are a number of workloads that require to be reduced.

#### The timely completion of notifications of suspected abuse to An Garda Síochána

Collaboration with An Garda Síochána has been embedded as standard practice in North Dublin to ensure, inter alia, the timely completion of notifications of suspected abuse to An Garda Síochána. This is overseen by the PSWs and managed through supervision between the frontline worker and the respective Team Leader.

Appendix I

Proposed Realigned Front Door Structure for North Dublin

