



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,  
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige  
Department of Children, Equality,  
Disability, Integration and Youth

# Research & data project on children in care & adults who were in care as children.



# DCEDIY / Tusla Working Group

## Purpose

To recommend to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth how the recommendation from the Ryan report, and the need for longitudinal research into the lives and experiences of children in care and leaving care, can best be met through the development and use of existing data and research sources and/or additional primary research.

## Key Facts

- Established November 2020
- Comprises both DCEDIY & Tusla officials
- Has met on 12 occasions to date
- Received presentations & inputs from a variety of key stakeholders
- Produced a number of outputs

## Working Group Membership

Invited Attendee	Role	Agency
<b>Sadhbh Whelan (Chair)</b>	Child Care Performance and Social Work Unit	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>Clare Farrell</b>	Research and Evaluation Unit	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>Vanessa Moore</b>	Alternative Care Policy Unit	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>Deborah Kenny</b>	Minute taker and Secretariat to the WG	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>Angela Palmer</b>	Research and Information Specialist	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>Ciara Murray</b>	National Manager Performance Reporting and Information	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Ger Brophy</b>	Chief Social Worker	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Colette McLoughlin</b>	National Operations Policy Implementation Lead	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Marian Brattman</b>	Interim National Manager for Research	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Pat Osborne</b>	National Manager Service Experience Innovation and Development	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Mark Conroy</b>	ICT Data and Analytics Manager	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Stephen McLoughlin</b>	Data and Information Management Lead, ICT Data & Analytics Team	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>Angela Feeney</b>	National Research Office	Tusla, Child and Family Agency
<b>William McNamara</b>	National Liaison Lead for Aftercare Services	Tusla, Child and Family Agency



# Aim & Approach

## Aim

To generate new knowledge about the lives, experiences and outcomes of children and young people in care and beyond, and the factors influencing those experiences, through a combination of primary research and strengthened administrative data collection and analysis.

## Approach

- Taking account of developments already underway
- Dynamic, informing policy
- Five inter-related elements
- Phased & incremental - each phase building on the previous one

## Five Elements

1. Responsibility for the project
2. Continued support to strengthen systems data
3. A study of those who left care ten years ago
4. A longitudinal cohort study of young people leaving care
5. Further bespoke research on children in care and aftercare



# 1. Responsibility for the project

Core to the approach is that DCEDIY will lead on the overall planning and oversight of the project. Lead responsibility for this project will reside within the Department, with Tusla as a key partner, drawing on its expert ICT and research input to guide the overall project and to deliver specific elements of the project.

## Rationale

- There is a need for a structure in which to locate the study
- Departmental oversight of the Ryan Report recommendation and how it is fulfilled
- Essential that the structure includes some expertise from within Tusla ICT and research



## 2. Continued support to strengthen system data

DCEDIY will continue to support Tusla's ambitions in the development of ICT and data systems. This project requires focused attention on developing the capacity of system data to track individual pathways over time and to conduct further analyses of the data by the designation of dedicated funding and expertise.

### Rationale

- Significant IT developments since Ryan, which need to be capitalised upon
- The NCCIS is constantly developing and the capability of the system is becoming more sophisticated
- Current education and children in care pathfinder project, links administrative data, a proof of concept project



## 3. A study of those who left care ten years ago

A once off study of young people who left care ten years ago, which will collect primary research data from respondents on key domains and explore the potential for administrative data linkage.

### Rationale

- Speaks to the Ryan Report recommendation
- Provides data and insights quickly to inform service delivery and policy developments
- Aftercare services have developed significantly in the intervening years but acknowledgement that important insights that can be gained from this cohort's opinions and experiences
- Important insights to guide the design of the longitudinal study



## 4. A longitudinal cohort study of young people leaving care

A study of a representative cohort of young people leaving care over a ten-year period commencing when the young person turns 16.

### Rationale

- Responds directly to the Ryan Report recommendation
- While there is much data available on children in care, there is much less on those using aftercare services
- First wave of data collection will generate timely cross sectional data on the young person's experiences
- 16 is a critical juncture in a young persons life as they transition to adulthood



## 5. Further bespoke research on children in care and aftercare

Additional bespoke primary research among children in care and young people in aftercare to complement improved system data and provide them with an opportunity to have their voices /views heard.

Topics of interest could be decided by stakeholder inputs

### **Rationale**

- Facilitates insights into the experiences of children in care (where such insights on those in aftercare are provided by the longitudinal study)
- To add value to what is known from improved administrative data
- Such cross sectional research has the potential to be responsive to policy or service issues in a timely manner





Development of a project plan, which will include:

- Establishment of governance structures
- Mechanisms for stakeholder and service user consultation
- Decisions on timelines
- More detailed work on design and costings