

## **Expert Panel for the Children's Fund—Terms of Reference**

### **1. Purpose:**

An Expert Panel for the Children's Fund will be established as a reference and advisory group to provide expert guidance and direction to the Child Rights Policy Unit (CRPU) of the Office of the Minister for Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth in the development of the Children's Fund. The Panel will provide impartial and independent advice and practical options on the use of the Children's Fund in respect of supporting disadvantaged children.

### **2. Proposed Terms of Reference:**

The function of the Expert Panel will be:

- 1) To guide, support and advise the Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division on the design of criteria for determining how and on what the Children's Fund is spent.
- 2) To provide informed, impartial and independent advice to the Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division concerning development of the remit of the fund, in terms of who should benefit from it and what outcomes are being sought for those beneficiaries, and concrete proposals for the practical use of the Fund. This will include:
  - a) Initial facilitated workshop to identify potential target groups and the specific problem(s) that can feasibly be addressed by the Fund (with potential actions to be developed by the Panel in subsequent phase.)
  - b) As part of the facilitated workshop, the Panel will determine the guiding principles and methodology by which they will translate the above into concrete proposals for expenditure under the Fund.
  - c) Once target group and problem(s) to be addressed have been identified, there should be a consultation with relevant children / young people if required as part of the process for determining potential actions / expenditure under the Fund.
  - d) Presentation by the panel of a detailed proposal to the CPTGD on a number of options (2 to 3) and rationale for same
  - e) Panel Members may also be asked to participate in launch event / communications around the Children's Fund.

The above Terms of Reference will be subject to review and development.

### **3. Composition of the Group**

The Expert Panel will comprise relevant personnel within the academic or professional field whose research and policy development/delivery expertise crosses the range of issues related to childhood disadvantage. Relevant units within the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth were consulted and nominated relevant personnel. The criteria for selection were:

- A high level of experience and expertise in relation to one of the noted factors or (consequences of childhood disadvantage (Child Poverty, Child Protection and welfare and Ethnic Minorities))
- A high level of experience and expertise in addressing these issues within recent and current research or experience in programme development/delivery

The Expert Panel may, from time to time, convene sub-groups or virtual working groups, as required, to consider issues and questions relevant to the progress of the development of the Children's Fund.

It should be noted that in relation to the commissioning of aspects of work for the development of the Children's Fund a conflict of interest may arise if members of the Academic Expert Panel wish to tender for such work.

#### **4. Roles and timescales**

Professor Sheila Greene will chair the Panel and will feed all communication from the panel to the Secretariat Janice Donlon of the Child Policy and Tusla Governance Division.

##### Proposed workplan:

- By 28<sup>th</sup> February - Initial workshop- 2/3 hours duration in person to set out objectives and to decide on methodology
- By – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of panel ?online/in person –target group should be identified at this point and progress to scoping issues to address and how to address them
- By 30<sup>th</sup> April- 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of panel ? online/in person- draft proposals to be discussed and narrowed down to 2 or 3 to refine for recommendation
- By mid June- 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of panel- formal presentation by the Panel to the Division on the recommended proposals