



**An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige**
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

Annual Report 2018

*This report is dedicated to the work and memory of our much-loved colleagues
Freida Delaney, Irish Youth Justice Service and Ger Banville, Finance Unit.
Rest in peace.*

Contents	Page No.
1. Foreword by the Minister	4
2. Introduction by Secretary General	6
3. Who we are and What we do	8
Part 1: Overview	
(i) Strategic Objectives	9
(ii) 2018 in Review	10
Part 2: Progress Achieved in 2018	
(i) Finance	14
(ii) Programme A: Children and Family Support	15
(iii) Programme B: Sectoral Programmes for Children and Young People	26
(iv) Programme C: Policy and Legislation	41

Appendices

I. Public Sector Duty	54
II. Publications in 2018	55
III. Overview of Energy Usage in 2018	57
IV. Management Board	58
V. Bodies under the aegis of the Department	59



FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER

I am delighted to welcome the publication of the seventh Annual Report of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Report outlines the progress made in 2018 across all areas of the Department's responsibilities.

Since my appointment in 2016 as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs I have had the privilege of working with the Secretary General and the staff in the Department in setting out our vision for the future work and direction of the Department. That vision reflects a commitment to deliver on key commitments in the Programme for Government, and also the Department's Statement of Strategy.

We continue to set a challenging and ambitious agenda, with the objective of effecting real improvements in services and, in turn, in the quality of lives of those children and young people who need our help and support. We are delivering on this agenda.

I am fortunate to have the support of the Government as we deliver on our policy objectives. The 2018 Vote provision of just over €1.38 billion represents an increase of €92 million over the previous year. It includes significant additional resources for Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and in childcare supports.

In 2018, we have delivered a comprehensive range of legislative and policy initiatives. One of the most significant aspects was in the area of Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare, where the Childcare Support Act was enacted in July 2018. For the first time in the history of the State, supports for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare have been placed on a statutory footing. In December, I signed the *Childcare Support Act 2018 (Commencement) Order 2018* and the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School-Age Services) Regulations 2018*, enabling School-Age Childcare services to register and participate in the new National Childcare Scheme. Other key legislative initiatives included work on the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill, which I aim to enact very soon. This legislation when enacted will create for the first time a statutory right for adopted persons and persons who have been the subject of an incorrect birth registration to birth certificate information and certain other information.

We also published a number of important strategies, including the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 in June 2018. This Strategy is a first for Ireland and for the world and was informed by the views of thousands of young people and by those who work with them and on their behalf. In November 2018, the Government unveiled 'First 5', Ireland's first ever cross-Departmental strategy to support babies, young children and their families. I was proud to take the lead on both of these very important strategies.

Finally, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work done by the staff of the Department and across the sector over the year. I also want to thank the staff of Tusla, the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Oberstown Children's Detention Campus for their commitment to the children and young people who most need their support. Together with others in the sector, whether statutory, private or voluntary, we can work to make Ireland an even better place for children and young people to grow and develop.

Dr. Katherine Zappone TD
Minister for Children and Youth Affairs.



INTRODUCTION BY SECRETARY GENERAL

I am pleased to introduce our Annual Report for 2018 which covers the seventh full year of work in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. It is published in accordance with section 4 of the Public Service Management Act 1997.

It was another extremely busy year, in which we worked hard to implement the priorities set out in our *Statement of Strategy 2016-2019*. We were busy right across our brief, from child protection and welfare, to childcare supports for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare, to youth services and to the difficult legacy issues from the country's past. For example, we:

- published our promised strategy for early childhood, *First 5 – A Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families*;
- published our *LGBTI+ Youth Strategy*;
- sponsored enactment of the Childcare Support Act 2018 and continued the detailed work on the forthcoming National Childcare Scheme, to be implemented later this year;
- worked closely with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency on a range of child protection and welfare measures, and supported the full roll-out of the National Childcare Information System;
- completed the transition of ABC to Tusla's Prevention, Parenting and Family Support Services (PPFS);
- developed a programme of action to deal sensitively with the burial of human remains at the site of the former Mother and Baby Home in Tuam;
- worked closely with other Government Departments and agencies on a number of cross-Government issues, and published a mid-term review of our overarching strategy in this area *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*;
- continued the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) for which the Department won a Civil Service Excellence Award for Citizen Impact;
- worked further to streamline the system of youth grants and rolled out a Youth Employment Initiative;
- analysed the potential implications of Brexit for our sector to ensure that all necessary steps are taken; and
- worked to deal with the emergence of evidence of illegal registrations of births.

These are just some of the things we did in 2018, at a time when we moved location over a single weekend with all of the planning and logistics that this entailed. This Annual Report describes much more fully the many issues that we dealt with during the year.

I thank colleagues in other Government Departments, agencies and the wider children's sector for their continued co-operation and support. Our work with them is vital to effective relationships, which help us to develop and deliver policies designed to support our children, young people and families.

We continue to work closely with our Minister, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, and to drive forward the commitments in the Programme for a Partnership Government.

As always, I am proud to record my great appreciation of the staff of the Department who work every day in many different ways to help improve outcomes for children and young people in Ireland. We will press ahead with the ambitious programme of development and reform which could not be achieved without them.

Fergal Lynch
Secretary General

Who We Are and What We Do

Mandate

The core function of our Department is to put in place a unified framework for policy, legislation and service provision across Government for children and young people.

In doing this, we focus on harmonising policy issues that affect children and young people in areas such as Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare, youth justice, children in care, child welfare and protection, adoption, family support, children and young people's participation, research on children and young people, youth work and cross-cutting initiatives for children.

The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 – *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* – provides the context for our own work as well as the agenda for our leadership of effort to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Our Mission – Why we exist

To lead the effort to improve outcomes for children and young people in Ireland.

Our Vision – Where we want to get to

We want Ireland to be one of the best small countries in the world in which to grow up and raise a family. A place where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard; and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

Strategic Objectives

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures is implemented	High quality Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare is accessible and affordable	Child welfare and protection systems are effective and responsive
Evidence-based policy is promoted and supported, and children and young people participate in decisions that affect their lives	High standards of compliance on governance and accountability are supported and enforced	Performance is improved through the effective alignment of resources

Our Values, Behaviours & Culture

We place children, young people and families at the heart of our work, aiming for better outcomes as the centre of policy development and service delivery

We value our staff and create an environment where they learn, develop and contribute to the goals of the organisation

We place outcomes for children and young people at the centre of policy and service delivery, informed by evidence

We support prevention and early intervention approaches

We seek to innovate and collaborate with other departments, agencies and sectors

We are accountable, open to change, customer-focused and respectful in our dealings with the public and work colleagues

We recognise the positive duty to ensure a human rights and equality approach to our work.

Part 1 - Overview

1. Strategic Objectives:

The work of the Department is underpinned by our Statement of Strategy 2016-2019, which includes six Strategic Objectives as follows:

- ***Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* is implemented**
 - *The publication of First 5, the Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families, realises a key commitment in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures and marked a major milestone in policy development for the youngest members of society.*
- **High quality Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare is accessible and affordable**
 - *The enactment of the Childcare Support Act in July 2018, marked the first time a system of support for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare has been placed on a statutory footing in this country.*
- **Child welfare and protection systems are effective and responsive**
 - *During 2018, the Department undertook considerable work regarding the scope of the review of the Childcare Act 1991.*
- **Evidence-based policy is promoted and supported, and children and young people participate in decisions that affect their lives**
 - *During 2018 the Department published the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020. The Strategy is a first for Ireland and for the world and was informed by the views of thousands of young people and by those who work with them and on their behalf.*
 - *The Department also continued to manage and progress Growing Up in Ireland: the National Longitudinal Study of Children.*
- **High standards of compliance on governance and accountability are supported and enforced**
 - *In 2018 all Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare schemes were administered successfully. Rules governing the schemes were revised to enhance governance and provide greater clarity for providers around compliance issues.*
 - *Work also continued on the detailed Policy Guidelines and a thorough Governance Framework for the National Childcare Scheme.*
- **Performance is improved through the effective alignment of resources**
 - *During 2018 the Department recruited 55 new staff, accounting for around 20% of employees in the Department. 13 employees or 5% of all staff were promoted through internal or external competitions. A number of specialist external recruitment competitions were also carried out to increase the Department's skillset.*

2018 in Review

Some key highlights in 2018 include:

In **January**, Minister Zappone announced funding of €3.2 million for the latest addition to the suite of pre-school supports for children with a disability provided under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). AIM Inclusive Play is a set of resources to support inclusive practice within pre-school settings. These resources, which include equipment, toys and materials, also support the development of coordination and audio, visual and tactile skills among all children, and in particular, children with a disability.

In **February**, the Minister announced the publication of application guidelines for the 2018 Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare Capital programmes. These guidelines were introduced to assist providers in making their applications for capital funding.

The Minister secured Government approval on 22 February for a revised General Scheme for a Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Guardian ad litem arrangements). The General Scheme reflects the Government's decision in December 2017 for a new Guardian ad litem service to be established within an executive office of her Department. It also addressed the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Children and Youth Affairs on the previous General Scheme.

The Minister also announced that the Department, Tusla and the INMO (representing Public Health Nurses) had reached an agreement at the Labour Court regarding the future recruitment of Early Years (EY) Inspectors within Tusla. Previously, EY Inspector positions had required candidates to be registered as a Public Health Nurse and hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 9 qualification (Masters Level). The Labour Court recommendation allows various professions to apply for these posts, including for the first time graduates from Early Childhood Education and Care, as well as candidates with suitable qualifications in social care, social work, psychology and education.

In **March**, Minister Zappone announced that up to 1,200 free training places were being made available to pre-school practitioners to ensure that their free pre-school services are inclusive and accessible to children with disabilities.

The Minister also announced details of the Selection Panel to oversee appointments to the Collaborative Forum for former residents of Mother and Baby Homes.

The Minister confirmed that funding of €620,000 was being made available to 31 Local Authorities to ensure that they are listening to young voices in the communities they serve.

In **April**, the Minister launched a new €2m fund to support 'ground-breaking and new proposals' to support disadvantaged young people. This fund was open to community,

voluntary and not-for-profit organisations delivering innovation in prevention and early intervention services for children and young people.

Minister Zappone also announced an increase of 13% in funding for the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme in 2018. The increase brought the allocation to €1.79m and was intended to provide small volunteer-led youth clubs with greater capacity to reach more young people during 2018.

The Minister also announced a €2m capital grant scheme for targeted staff-led youth projects and services across the country. This Scheme would provide funding for the purchase of equipment and the funding of small-scale projects including the upgrade of bathrooms and kitchens in youth services.

In **May**, Minister Zappone announced that a total of €6.87m in capital funding would be awarded to providers of Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare. The funding was provided for the creation of new places, natural outdoor play areas and for the essential maintenance and repair of services nationwide.

In **June**, the Minister launched the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020. The Strategy is a first for Ireland and for the world and was informed by the views of thousands of young people and by those who work with them and on their behalf.

The Minister also announced her next steps in progressing the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016. The legislation will create for the first time a statutory right for adopted persons and persons who have been the subject of an incorrect birth registration to birth certificate information and certain other information.

The Minister also announced the awarding of over €2m to 51 organisations across the country that are implementing diverse and innovative projects aimed at improving the lives of children, young people and their families in local communities and nationally.

In **July**, the Minister announced funding for children's play and recreation projects across the country. 26 Local Authorities will benefit from funding for projects under the Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation, for new and innovative play and recreation projects and the improvement of existing facilities. The total value of the Scheme is €250,000.

The Minister also published the report of the public consultation process on the options and appropriate courses of action available to Government in relation to the site of the former Mother and Baby Home at Tuam, Co. Galway. The first meeting of the Collaborative Forum on Mother and Baby Homes took place in July.

The Childcare Support Act was enacted, marking the first time that a system of support for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare has been placed on a statutory footing in Ireland, which provides the legislative framework for the new National Childcare Scheme.

The Minister also awarded a contract for the development of the IT system to support the National Childcare Scheme.

In **August**, the Minister announced her plans for building upon the work in creating a joined-up approach to Educational Welfare Services so that Ireland will remain an international leader for numbers of children finishing secondary school.

The Minister also announced children, parents and providers were set to benefit from improvements to the free pre-school Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) from September 2018. Eligibility for the Scheme was extended to two years (76 weeks) for children and childcare providers also received a 7% increase in payments for ECCE from September.

In **September**, the Minister announced supports for quality improvements in the Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare sector, including €1.2m funding to provide first aid training for every registered service in the country. The Minister also announced the introduction of a post-award bursary to support childminders who obtained a relevant QQI Level 5 qualification, which is a requirement for childminders to register with Tusla.

In **October**, Budget 2019 saw a 4% increase in funding for services to support children, young people and their families. The €127m package included additional resources for Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and allows for thousands of families to benefit from the increased income thresholds under the National Childcare Scheme.

The Minister announced that 39 organisations were successful in their applications for funding under the grant scheme for LGBTI+ Capacity Building initiatives for professional service providers who deal with young people. The Minister also announced a new fund of up to €1 million which will provide funding to voluntary youth services to support programmes that target young people to improve their employability and achieve their career goals.

The Government also approved Minister Zappone's recommendation for the forensic examination of the site of the former mother and baby home in Tuam, County Galway.

In **November**, the Government unveiled 'First 5', Ireland's first ever whole-of-Government strategy to support babies, young children and their families.

The Minister also launched a pilot programme for leaders in human and social services in Dublin's North East Inner City, which will link the latest research and thinking about how to improve social programmes to the collective planning and implementation expertise of participants.

In **December**, the Minister announced the appointment of Mr Pat Rabbitte as the Chairperson of the Board of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency with effect from 1 January 2019.

The Minister signed the *Childcare Support Act 2018 (Commencement) Order 2018* and the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School-Age Services) Regulations 2018*, enabling School-Age Childcare services to register and participate in the new National Childcare Scheme.

In summary, 2018 was a very busy and productive year for the Department. Numerous policy and legislative initiatives were advanced with the objective of improving the lives of children and young people. The work of the Department also required staff to discharge the full range of responsibilities of a Government Department in supporting the work of the Minister and the Government, and in discharging financial and other accountability objectives to the Oireachtas.

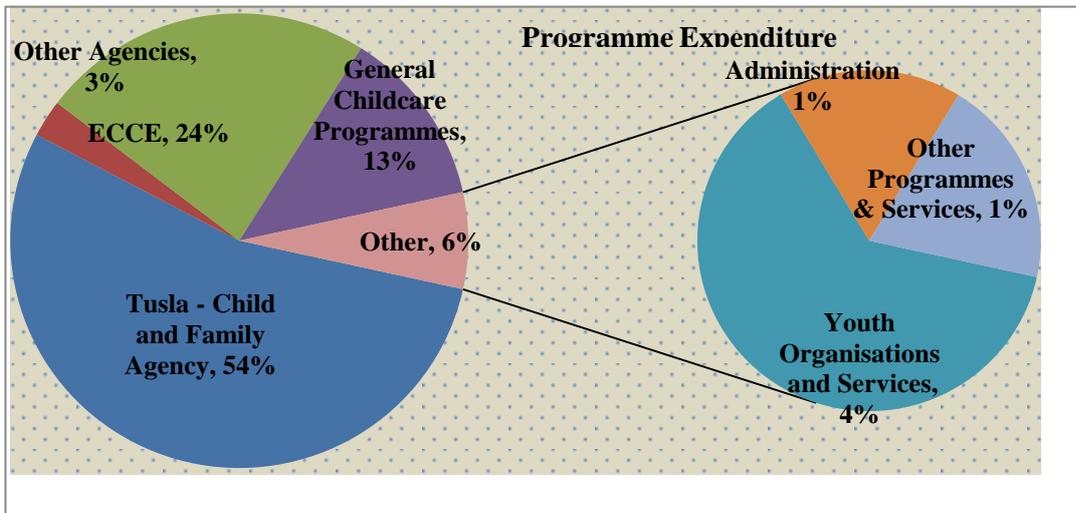
Part 2 of our Annual Report summarises the progress achieved during 2018 in respect of each of the objectives as set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy. These objectives are reflected in the annual Business Plans of relevant Units in the Department.

Part 2: Progress Achieved in 2018

Finance

The gross funding provision for the Department under Vote 40 in 2018 was just over \$1.4 billion which represented an increase of €92 million, or 7%, over 2017 funding levels. The actual expenditure incurred by the Department and its agencies was €1.38 billion. The expenditure in 2018 enabled a significant level of services to be delivered across three programme areas as follows:

		Outturn
		€000
Programme Expenditure		
A	Children and Family Support Programme	784,729
B	Sectoral Programmes for Children and Young People	577,233
C	Policy and Legislation Programme	24,924
Gross expenditure		1,386,886
Deduct		
D	Appropriations-in-aid	(23,669)
Net expenditure		1,363,217



Details of initiatives taken in 2018 under each of the three Programme headings are set out in the sections below.

Programme A: *Children and Family Support*

Introduction

This programme is designed to support and improve the existing service delivery arrangements and to protect and support the welfare of children, young people and families, including the oversight of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. In 2018, over €752 million was allocated to Tusla, an increase of 5% over 2017.

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency

Governance and Performance Oversight

The Department oversees compliance by Tusla with statutory and other governance provisions as set out in the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013, and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). In 2018, the Department engaged closely with the Tusla Executive and the Tusla Board in relation to compliance with statutory and non-statutory instruments.

Tusla provided monthly and quarterly performance reports to the Department on the delivery of its 2018 Business Plan and these reports have been the subject of detailed discussion and review. The Department meets on a monthly basis with the Tusla senior management team and the Minister meets on a quarterly basis with the Chairperson and the respective Chairpersons of the Tusla Board Sub-committees to review performance. In addition, the Secretary General meets with the Chief Executive Officer on a monthly basis.

Expert Assurance Group to Oversee and Advise on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the HIQA Statutory Investigation into Tusla's Management of Referrals

The report of the investigation into the management of allegations of child sexual abuse against adults of concern by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, undertaken by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) at the request of the Minister, was published in June 2018. The report recommended the establishment of an expert assurance group to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the report and advise the Minister on progress. The Expert Assurance Group (EAG) met five times in 2018 and submitted its first quarterly report to the Minister in December 2018. The EAG also considered the issues relating to Tusla included in the third interim report from

the Disclosures Tribunal.

The final report of research commissioned by the Department and based on administrative data on children listed on the Child Protection Notification System (CPNS) was submitted in March. Analysis of the research findings and dissemination through targeted briefing sessions took place throughout 2018.

The Department chaired an inter-departmental working group set up to explore the establishment of cross-agency centres to support children and families who have suffered from child sexual abuse. The model brings together the protection, health, therapeutic and policing services and puts in place child-centred services that minimise as far as possible any additional trauma for the child and their family and improve the efficiency and effectiveness for the child of child sexual abuse support services. A pilot service is due to open in 2019.

The Department continued to engage closely with the Department of Justice and Equality, the Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service (INIS) and Tusla on the relocation of unaccompanied minors, as part of its role within the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

Review of the Child Care Act, 1991

The review of the Child Care Act is a commitment within *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* and the Department is conducting preliminary research into those policy areas which fall under its remit.

The Department has already undertaken considerable work regarding the scope of the review, which has involved reviewing various reports (including system-wide historical reviews and reports from the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO), HIQA, and the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection), jurisprudence in the area, as well as developments in other jurisdictions.

In 2018 the Department prepared a series of papers in relation to specific aspects of the Act, including supervision orders, voluntary care, interim care orders and care orders.

The Department also consulted widely in the context of the Review of the Child Care Act 1991. This included a written consultation, which received a total of 40 written submissions on how best to review and reform the Act. Furthermore, the Department liaised closely with Tusla on the review and

it organised a series of regional consultations with Tusla front-line staff so as to gather their experiences of implementing the legislation in its current format. The Department also met with several other stakeholders to discuss relevant aspects of the review. The consultation process informed the extensive scoping work and the development of initial proposals.

Interdepartmental Working Group (IDG) on development of standards for Direct Provision

The Department contributed to the Interdepartmental Working Group (IDG), chaired by the Department of Justice and Equality, to develop standards for Direct Provision. The Department is focused on issues relating to children and assisted in the development of governance standards.

The Department also participated in the Interdepartmental Working Group established to conduct a review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015. The Group is led by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The report of the review was published in July 2018.

The Department continued to respond to issues raised by the public and the Oireachtas relating to child welfare and protection. The Minister participated in the hearings by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Children and Youth Affairs with regard to Foster Care and responded formally to the report of its findings in early 2018.

National Child Care Information System (NCCIS)

In 2018, capital provision for Tusla included provision for the continued development and roll out of the NCCIS. The system was successfully rolled out nationally to all 17 Tusla areas in July 2018. Governance and management structures were established for the operationalisation of the NCCIS, recruitment for key posts commenced, and arrangements are in place to support good data quality management and to meet all reporting requirements.

Family Resource Programme and Counselling Services

In 2018, Tusla allocated core funding of €16.5m to the Family Resource Centre Programme, an increase of €3m over 2017. The additional funding of €3m was to support the 109 existing Family Resource Centres and for the expansion of the Programme with the inclusion of 11 new centres. At the end of 2018, there were 120 Family Resource Centres operational.

In 2018, Tusla provided funding of approximately €6m to support organisations providing counselling services. The majority of services to which Tusla provides funding are voluntary and they offer a range of counselling and support services to children and families.

Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV) Services

In 2018, Tusla allocated funding of €23.8m to Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence services - an increase of €1.7m over 2017. Throughout 2018, Tusla worked with partners in service provider organisations to implement obligations under the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)* and the *Second National Strategy for Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence services (2016 – 2021)*.

In 2018, this included funded DSGBV Services returning an agreed set of headline data quarterly on a standard retention survey template, commencing the scoping of an accommodation review of domestic violence services in the Dublin region and establishing an oversight group, provision of childcare for children resident in domestic violence refuges, advancing the work on the provision of services for children who witness domestic violence and progressing actions in the National Traveller and Roma Strategy.

Children's residential centres

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) inspects Tusla child welfare and protection services, foster care services and Tusla-run residential centres for children. The Department received 37 reports in 2018, based on HIQA inspections of 21 children's residential centres, 4 Special Care Units and foster care services in 12 areas. In addition, Tusla submitted inspection reports of 82 private and voluntary children's residential centre inspections. The National Review Panel and the Ombudsman for Children also published reports. Reports are reviewed and analysed to identify key issues. Key learnings are identified, including examples of good practice and areas for service improvement and input to policy development.

The Department analysed the monthly and annual data on key performance indicators submitted by Tusla. This analysis is used to monitor performance and identify trends, inform budget allocations, allow for international comparisons and identify service areas requiring improvement. It is also used to support the work of the Department, informing estimates discussions, workforce planning, and policy development.

Prevention and Early Intervention

To augment policy development and operational oversight capabilities, the Department draws on its reviews and analysis of the reports from Tusla, Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO), Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the National Review Panel, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research in relation to children's services.

The Department continued to lead on the development of innovations in the area of strengthening policy and organisation of provision in the area of prevention and early intervention. This has involved the continuous implementation and development of the infrastructure through *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) and the harnessing of innovations through the 'What Works' initiative. Advancements in these areas mutually reinforce and strengthen outcomes-based responses for children and young people.

'What Works'

'What Works', formerly known as the Quality and Capacity Building Initiative (QCBI), is an initiative designed by the Department to maximise the impact of prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for children and young people living in Ireland.

Four key strands have been identified to embed and enhance prevention and early intervention in children and young people's policy, service provision and practice. These strands are focused on information and knowledge, professional development and quality in children and young people's services.

The Department also commenced work on developing a 'What Works' Learning Framework. The Learning Framework identifies the range and type of investments that might be made as part of What Works' mission to enhance knowledge of, and skills in, prevention and early intervention at the levels of policy, practice and provision.

In line with this Learning Framework, the Department developed and commenced a pilot executive leadership programme for leaders in Dublin's north east inner city in collaboration with the University of Limerick. The first session of this innovative programme took place in November 2018.

The first phase of the Outcomes for Children Data Hub was also completed in 2018. This data hub is

an online interactive area-based geo-mapping system developed in collaboration with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. It is expected to launch in Q2 2019.

Under the Innovation Funding Measure, awards of over €2m were distributed to 51 organisations across the country to support the implementation of diverse and innovative projects aimed at improving the lives of children, young people and their families in local communities and nationally.

In November 2018 Minister Zappone announced the launch of a “Network Support Fund”, a *Quality and Capacity Building Initiative* (QCBI) measure supported through Dormant Accounts Funding. The goal of these awards is to support networks promoting evidence-informed approaches to prevention and early intervention services, so that those working with and for children, young people and their families are supported in doing the right things, in the right way and at the right time. This funding award scheme will continue in 2019.

Education Welfare Services (EWS)

A Task Group for the development of a policy blueprint to inform the future development of the Educational Welfare Service, including the School Completion Programme was established in November 2018. Membership of the group consists of representatives of the Department, the Department of Education and Skills, Tusla EWS and representatives from the three strands of the EWS.

Continuous support to the NTRIS Education Subgroup

The Department is a member of the Education Sub-Committee of the National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) Steering Group where it was agreed to undertake pilot programmes in 4 agreed areas which were designed to improve school attendance and retention amongst Traveller and Roma children.

The pilots in the four agreed areas (North Dublin, Tallaght/Clondalkin, Tuam, Co Galway and Enniscorthy, Co Wexford) are expected to commence in March 2019. Significant work was undertaken in 2018 on the Education (Welfare) (Amendment) Bill 2018 and the legislation has been passed by the Seanad. Communication is on-going with the Whip’s Office concerning the date the Bill will be taken in the Dáil.

Parenting Support Policy

In 2018 the Department conducted a preliminary investigation on the theme of parenting and family support. This included developing the Department’s role and remit in terms of parenting support. In

order to achieve this, an Open Policy Debate on parenting support was held in May 2018.

In November 2018 the Department established a dedicated Parenting Support Policy Unit to help realise the State's duty in supporting parents by leading out on the important work of co-ordinating policy direction and activity relating to parenting support.

Alternative Care Policy

Accommodation for Care Leavers

Funding is now available to Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) to acquire residential units to accommodate vulnerable young people leaving the care of the State. Where accommodation is provided under CAS, Tusla provides and, where necessary advocates for, additional independent living supports, in particular for the most vulnerable care leavers, in accordance with the individual's pre-agreed aftercare plan. In 2018, 10 care leavers were in occupancy of secure accommodation under the scheme while an additional 40 units, consisting of a mix of one and two bed units across the State, had been purchased or were sale agreed status. This is a resource that will continue to be of immense value to vulnerable young people in the future.

Indemnity for Foster Carers

Department officials worked with colleagues in the Office of Parliamentary Council (OPC), the State Claims Agency and Tusla to draft a Government Order that will bring foster carers within the terms of the General Indemnity Scheme. The draft Order is now at an advanced stage with the remaining technical matters resolved (subject to confirmation from the OPC).

Child Care Law Reporting Project

Research funding was awarded to the Child Care Law Reporting Project, following a competitive application process, to carry out a three-year research project into child care proceedings in Ireland. A grant agreement and governance structures, including a steering group with an independent chair, were put in place, in consultation with the Chief State Solicitor's Office. Two series of court reports have been published under the terms of the new agreement to date.

Guardians ad litem reform

In February 2018, the Government approved the drafting of the Child Care (Amendment) Bill to

facilitate the establishment of a new national Guardian ad litem (GAL) service within the Department. Significant progress was made in drafting the Bill during 2018.

The Bill will address significant inadequacies in the existing arrangements (Section 26 of the Child Care Act, 1991). It will establish a national system for service management and delivery of the Guardian ad litem service that will be accountable to the Minister and provide optimum assurance regarding the quality and sustainability of services into the future. The Bill will also provide for a presumption in favour of a GAL being appointed for all children in child care proceedings.

During 2018, a project team was put in place to manage the establishment of an Executive Office within the Department.

Children First

Children First Inter-Departmental Implementation Group (CFIDIG)

Following commencement of all remaining provisions of the Children First Act on 11th December 2017 the Department continued to work closely with the CFIDIG during 2018. This Group includes representatives from every Government Department, the HSE, Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

The CFIDIG played a key role in the preparation of Sectoral Implementation Plans as required under the Act to ensure consistency of implementation of Children First across the public sector. The Department's own Sectoral Implementation Plan and Child Safeguarding Statement were developed and are available on the Department's website.

The Children First Guidance was updated later in the year to include a specific reference to the need to consider online safety in the context of completing child safeguarding statements. This addendum has been published to clarify that organisations providing relevant services to children should consider the specific issue of online safety when carrying out their risk assessment and preparing their Child Safeguarding Statement.

Special Rapporteur on Child Protection

The 11th Report of the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection was disseminated to all relevant Government Departments for appropriate action in relation to recommendations. The report was

presented to Government and published in December 2018.

Child Protection Agenda of the Health Sector of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC)

The Department continued to participate in the cross-border child protection officials group. This group, which is under the auspices of the health agenda of the North South Ministerial Council, was established to co-operate on a range of child protection matters.

Youth Justice

Bail Supervision Scheme

The Bail Supervision Scheme (BSS), which was established on a pilot basis in June 2017, continued to operate from the Dublin Children's Court. The scheme provides the court with the option to grant bail to a child, rather than detaining the child, during remand proceedings with conditions set by the court. 28 cases were dealt with over 2018. By maintaining a number of young people in the community on the Bail Supervision Scheme there is a reduction in the need for detention places. This approach is also in keeping with the key principle of the Children Act 2001 that the detention of a child should only be imposed as a last resort. A Review and Evaluation of the Scheme began in 2018.

Research Evidence into Policy, Programmes and Practice

The Research Evidence into Policy, Programmes and Practice (REPPP) Project in partnership with University of Limerick responds directly to objectives identified in the *Tackling Youth Crime – Youth Justice Action Plan, 2014-2018*, in particular the need to significantly improve the evidence base to inform policy and programme and practice decision-making in the area of youth justice.

Work underway through the REPPP in 2018 included:

- evaluation of the Bail Supervision programme to indicate whether the programme has made an impact on the behaviour of young people impacted by the programme.
- development and promotion of evidence base in relation to youth crime policy making in Ireland. The Greentown National Prevalence Survey Report 2017 (a study into the involvement of children in adult criminal network) was completed and published in December 2017, and two further case studies [Bluetown and Redtown] were completed in 2018.

Oberstown: monitoring report on the Review Implementation Group

The Minister established a Review Implementation Group in March 2017 to ensure the implementation of recommendations from a number of reviews of Oberstown Children Detention Campus. The Group produced a report in December 2017 which collated the recommendations from all of the reviews. An action plan was developed and this, along with the *First Report on the implementation of Review Recommendation Action Plan (May 2018)*, were published on the Department's website in June 2018.

Youth Crime Policy and Programmes (Department of Justice and Equality)

The Youth Crime Policy and Programmes Division (YCPPD) is staffed by officials from the Department of Justice and Equality and is co-located with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. In 2018, approximately €12 million was allocated by the Department of Justice and Equality to the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) to support Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs), and a number of other youth diversion, community-based projects.

New Youth Justice Strategy

Tackling Youth Crime: Youth Justice Action Plan 2014–2018 (YJAP) focused on achieving better outcomes for children and young people who require targeted, strategic attention because their behaviour has led to their involvement in the youth justice system. The focus of the Plan was to continue the downward trend in crime and in turn to reduce the necessity for detention. The YJAP came to close at the end of 2018 and YCPPD have begun work on developing a new Youth Justice Strategy. The development of the Strategy will be guided by an inter-departmental Steering Group which is chaired by Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality, David Stanton TD.

The focus of the Strategy will be on the best interests of the child and it will take an inter-agency and child-centred approach across a range of programmes and agencies, including detention, probation, diversion, child welfare and protection, mental health, educational and community and family services, with precise actions and commitments with timescales.

Action Research Project

IYJS, with the University of Limerick, designed and developed an Action Research Project (ARP) to work with some 15 selected GYDPs. The objective is to move beyond the testimonial and anecdotal

evidence that projects work well and provide a good service, to capture precisely what specific interventions work best, document this evidence, and roll the learning from this out across all the projects over a period of years. The actions will include:

- examination of what makes for a successful relationship between a young participant and a Youth Justice Worker (success being understood as facilitation of real change in the young person's attitudes and life that would not otherwise happen);
- articulating the contribution that a GYDP makes in tackling crime in a community; and
- assessment of the contribution that 'up-stream' agencies and interventions can make to crime reduction and making appropriate recommendations.

GYDP Annual Conference

In November 2018, the first Garda Youth Diversion Projects Annual Conference in recent years took place in Trim, with over 300 people in attendance. The conference was a great success and will be held on an annual basis. The discussion and recommendations made were recorded in the Conference Report and will inform future development of the GYDP network.

Programme B: Sectoral Programmes for Children and Young People

Introduction

The aim of this Programme is to continue to support the provision of both universal and targeted services for the care, development and wellbeing of children and young people. Over €502 million was invested in Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare programmes in 2018, an increase of €86 million (20%) on expenditure in 2017, and almost €60 million was invested in youth organisations and services.

First 5

A Whole of Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families (*First 5*) was launched on 19th November by the Taoiseach, Minister Zappone and other members of Government. The publication of the Strategy realises a key commitment in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and marks a major milestone in policy development for the youngest members of society.

The Strategy is a ten-year plan to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families. It uses evidence to identify goals, objectives and the specific actions required across Government to support children (and their families) in the early years of life. *First 5* commits to major initiatives on family leave, children's health services, parenting supports, child-friendly communities and Early Learning and Care services among a broad range of actions.

Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare

In 2018 all Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare schemes were administered successfully. Rules governing the schemes were revised to enhance governance and provide greater clarity for providers around compliance issues. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme was expanded to a full two-year programme and enhanced capitation payments were made to service providers. Targeted capital funding was made available to support capacity and quality service provision and Programme Support Payments were made to providers.

2018 also saw the first full year of the enhanced supports for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare introduced in September 2017. These supports included a universal payment for children under three years of age to offset Early Learning and Care costs for families, in addition to significantly enhanced targeted supports. Uptake of these payments exceeded the target.

Supports were also made available to services in respect of their General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) obligations.

The Department worked with the Department of Justice and Equality (DJE), the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) and City/County Childcare Committees to develop Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare services for families living in Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROCs).

Regarding communications, 2018 saw the introduction of an Early Years Newsletter which was sent to the 4,500 services around the country, some enhancement of the Early Years Forum chaired by the Minister and the establishment of a dedicated Labour Employment Economic Forum subgroup on Childcare.

Focus on Quality

A new dedicated Unit was created in the Department in 2018 to drive various quality initiatives including the continued roll out of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), the development of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) structure for the sector, the regulation of School-Age Childcare and major reform in the Childminding sector.

Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)

AIM is a model of supports designed to ensure that children with a disability can access the ECCE programme. An independent review of AIM's first year was carried out in 2018 and it highlighted that AIM is performing well in its primary goals of making pre-school settings more inclusive overall, through supporting children with disabilities to participate meaningfully in mainstream pre-school and by providing continuous professional development for pre-school practitioners. AIM, and the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) initiative within AIM, won several awards in 2018 including the 2018 Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Award in the 'Citizen Impact' category.

In the 2017/2018 ECCE programme year, 4,107 children received 6,618 targeted AIM supports across 1,956 settings. In addition, universal AIM supports have reached much greater numbers of children.

During 2018, 6,500 AIM Inclusive Play packs were distributed to over 4,000 settings throughout the

country. These packs included toys and materials to encourage coordination and audio, visual and tactile skills for all children.

In Autumn 2018, 798 pre-school practitioners graduated from the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) higher education programme. This programme is designed to support the inclusion of children with additional needs in pre-school settings.

A Therapy Demonstration Project commenced in 2018 with 75 Early Learning and Care settings joining 75 schools to pilot an “in preschool/school therapy support model”. In this model, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists support staff to provide optimal and early interventions at the level each child needs. The pilot is based in Community Health Care Organisation Area 7 (Kildare, West Dublin & Dublin City) in collaboration with the Department of Health, the HSE, the Department of Education and Skills and the National Council for Special Education. The pilot is being evaluated with an interim report due in August 2019.

Childminding

The support and development of the childminding sector is a key area of focus for the Department. In 2018 the preliminary groundwork for future development of the sector was commenced with the publication of the report of the working group on reforms and supports for the childminding sector. This report will inform the actions and objectives of the Childminding Action Plan which will be finalised in the first half of 2019. The recruitment process for a new National Childminding Coordinator post commenced to assist the Department with this work.

Qualifications of the workforce

In order to work in the sector, all staff must have a minimum of a QQI level 5 qualification in a relevant area of study. The Department processes applications from workers who wish to have their qualification recognised in order to confirm their eligibility to work in an Early Learning and Care setting. In 2018, over 1,300 such applications were received and processed. The Department also worked with the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in the establishment of new criterion guidelines for level 7 and 8 courses and is working with QQI on a review of the Level 5 and 6 qualifications.

In 2018 the administration of the ECCE Higher Capitation process (whereby ECCE settings delivered by a graduate receive a higher level of payment) was transferred to Pobal, with the Department

retaining policy responsibility and oversight.

School-Age Childcare

In 2018, final preparations were made to enable the regulation and registration of School-Age Childcare (SAC) services to allow them to participate in the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) later in 2019. Much of the developments were informed by the report of the Working Group on School-Age Childcare Standards which drafted School-Age Childcare Quality standards. These will be the subject of public consultation in 2019. The Department worked with Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate to ensure the smooth registration of SAC services, commencing in February 2019.

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate and Department of Education and Skills (DES) Early Years Inspectorate

The Department worked closely in 2018 with both Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (EYI) and the DES Inspectorate (which the Minister commissioned to inspect ECCE services). One of the objectives was to coordinate efforts between the inspectorates and seek to streamline their activity as much as possible. A joint inspectorate event, chaired by the Department, was held in Farmleigh in July bringing together the staff from both Inspectorates. The Department also chaired an Operational and Systems Alignment Group (OSAG) to bring all agencies together that interact with the sector to improve communications and to coordinate the timing of inspections to prevent disruption to services.

The second key objective of cooperation between the Department and Tusla's EYI is in terms of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Tusla's Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) was co-launched by Tusla and the Secretary General of the Department in September 2018. The process of regulation and registration of School-Age Childcare also involved significant work between the Department and Tusla.

2018 saw the job description of Early Years Inspectors in Tusla being revised to allow recruitment from a wider group of professionals including graduates from Early Childhood Education and Care programmes.

International Affairs

The Department has responsibility for the coordination of International Affairs related to Early Learning and Care. The European Semester which is the annual cycle of fiscal and economic

coordination within the EU, sees Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) issued to countries on areas where the Commission feels significant progress needs to be made. Early Learning and Care featured as part of CSR2 for Ireland in 2018.

The Department also conducted an analysis on the potential impact of Brexit on Early Learning and Care, particularly surrounding staff qualifications.

The Department produced briefings on a range of issues and attended meetings with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Union Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care and the British-Irish Council (BIC).

CPD & Training Supports

An outline of a national continuing professional development (CPD) plan for the Early Learning and Care (ELC) sector was developed in 2018. This aims to support the ELC workforce to deliver higher quality services and ultimately to benefit children and their families. Part of the plan was piloted in 2018 through the provision of two courses (Hanan and Lámh) through Better Start as part of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The courses attracted a pilot CPD payment to facilitate staff attending the training. Interest in participating in the training was very high as too was the completion rate. An evaluation of the process is underway to determine its effectiveness.

Independent Review of the Cost of providing Quality Childcare in Ireland

Crowe Ireland was commissioned by the Department in Autumn 2017 to undertake an Independent Review of the Cost of Providing Quality Childcare in Ireland. The brief included:

- analysing the current costs of providing childcare and the factors that impact on these costs;
- the development and delivery of a model of the unit costs of providing childcare that allows analysis of policy changes and variation in cost-drivers, including the potential impact of professionalisation; and
- providing an objective, high-level market analysis of the childcare sector in Ireland, including analysis of fee levels charged to parents.

An approach and methodology were decided upon in partnership with the Department and a number of key activities have been undertaken. The draft final report, cost modelling tool and guidance are in

the final stages of internal review. Once complete, outputs will be subject to external peer review. The report and cost modelling tool will be finalised in 2019.

Early Years Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare Capital Programme

The Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare Capital Programme 2018 provided €6.86 million for the creation of 1,253 new ECCE places; 697 new 0-3 places; 807 new School-Age Childcare places; 111 essential maintenance and repair projects; and 157 natural outdoor play areas.

Programme Support Payment

A Programme Support Payment of €18.7 million was provided to services to contribute towards the administrative costs associated with the operation of the Department funded programmes.

National Childcare Scheme (NCS)

The Childcare Support Act was enacted in 2018. The Act provides the legal basis for the National Childcare Scheme. The new scheme established by the Act will replace all existing targeted childcare subvention schemes with a single streamlined scheme. The National Childcare Scheme is a critical piece of infrastructure which will enable investment in accessible, high quality and affordable Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare over the next decade.

Appointment of external IT developer

Underpinning the National Childcare Scheme is an information and communications technology (ICT) system which will be fundamental to the operation of the Scheme. The Department conducted a full open public procurement tendering process in 2018, and the contract for developing this system was awarded to Codec. Significant progress has been made on the development of the system in association with Pobal and Department officials.

Completion of detailed NCS system specification

Detailed specifications for the NCS ICT system were drawn up in 2018. These described every individual element which the ICT system will be required to have for the Scheme to function properly. This meant that development work could be started and progressed by Pobal and the external software developers, Codec.

Completion of formal Agreement with Pobal for programme development

A Statement of Work (SOW) was agreed between the Department and Pobal for the development of the National Childcare Scheme and was signed in July 2018. The purpose of this SOW is to ensure that each party's respective roles in the development and implementation of the Scheme are clearly defined and that the service is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Approval of programme plan, launch date and launch approach

A comprehensive Programme Plan for the NCS project was approved by the Project and Executive Board in July 2018. This included a launch date and the launch approach. The launch approach will involve maintaining the current childcare schemes for a year to ensure a smooth transition to the National Childcare Scheme for parents and service providers.

Publication of Supplementary Request for Tender (SRFT) for parent support service

Pobal will be administering the National Childcare Scheme on behalf of the Department. The administration of the scheme will focus on the two key stakeholders within the scheme; the service providers and the applicants. The functions related to the service provider side will operate within Pobal, whilst the parent-facing functions will be performed by an outsourced provider. To this end, Pobal published a Supplementary Request for Tender for the Provision of Managed Business Process Support Services to Pobal with a view to entering a contract with an outsourced provider by the end of the first quarter of 2019.

Completion of first draft of NCS Policy Guidelines and Governance Framework

Good governance is a key objective of the National Childcare Scheme. The focus is to ensure that it will be robust, with clear, well-defined eligibility rules set down in legislation, and strong underlying administrative systems and structures. Work advanced on these issues in 2018 to ensure that the new Scheme is fit for purpose. Detailed Policy Guidelines and a thorough Governance Framework were close to finalisation by the end of 2018 and will form a solid foundation for the Scheme.

Publication of Communications and Engagement Strategy; Training Strategy and Integrated Communications and Training Plan

A Communications and Engagement Strategy for the National Childcare Scheme was published in February 2018. This Strategy outlines how the Department will communicate about the development,

launch and implementation of the Scheme. It will ensure that the key messages of the Scheme are communicated in a clear, timely and consistent manner, that they are accessible to all audiences and stakeholders, that they meet the identified needs of key stakeholders (including hard-to-reach groups), and that they assist in achieving the identified targets and outcomes required to develop and launch the Scheme successfully. The strategy is supported by a Training Strategy and a comprehensive Communications and Training Plan which was also completed.

Approval of Scheme name, logo and branding

In 2018, the Scheme's name, logo and branding were developed.

Under the auspices of the Communications and Engagement Strategy and Plan, a comprehensive awareness campaign for parents and the general public was developed in 2018 and will begin in 2019. The nationwide campaign will advise parents on how they can avail of subsidies under the ACS and will include digital, print, radio and outdoor content as well as attendance at national events throughout the year. The campaign will run alongside a campaign for childcare providers, also developed in 2018. The campaign for providers deals with the operation of the Scheme, as well as training and information supports for providers and other key stakeholders. Through both of these campaigns, parents, childcare providers and stakeholders will be given timely and user-friendly information, resources and support. The Plan commits to over 600 training sessions for providers and stakeholders scheduled to be delivered nationwide in 2019, as well as a suite of training materials which will be available to access online.

Enhancement of NCS subsidy rates and child deduction

The National Childcare Scheme (NCS) will examine an applicant's net income to determine the amount of subsidy they will receive. The Scheme's thresholds were raised in 2018 as part of Budget 2019, the lower to €26,000 and the higher to €60,000. These increased thresholds will mean that thousands more families will benefit from the National Childcare Scheme once launched at the end of 2019.

Under the new Scheme, extra deductions will be made from an applicant's net income when determining their level of subsidy if they have more than one child. (this is called the Multiple Child Discount). Budget 2019 raised the amount to be deducted for applicants with two children, and for those with three or more children. Such applicants will now be entitled to greater levels of subsidy

under the Scheme.

Approval of NCS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was approved during 2018 for the NCS. The Framework will support the assessment of the Scheme to monitor whether it is successful in meeting its objectives.

Youth Reform & Participation

Play and Recreation

In 2018, 29 play grounds and facilities in 26 Local Authorities were awarded funding under the Play and Recreation Capital Grant Scheme to support new and existing play and recreation facilities for children and young people. This included the provision of new facilities and equipment, with an emphasis on the use of innovative design and the utilisation of non-traditional play spaces, or the refurbishment of existing play facilities.

In addition, the Department continued to support National Play Day and National Recreation Week through the provision of funding to Local Authorities under the Play Day and Recreation Week Scheme.

The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in decision-making, 2015-2020

The Department continues to play an important role in leading Government efforts to ensure that children and young people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

The Third Annual Report on Implementation of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making, 2015-2020* was compiled in 2018 and shows that 93% of the agreed actions have been implemented or are in progress. The Report demonstrates a positive picture of implementation across all Government Departments and State Bodies. A mid-term review of the Strategy has commenced and a revised 2-year action plan for 2019 and 2020 commenced. The Department has also established a network of contact points from Government Departments and State Bodies with commitments in the Strategy to improve engagement and maintain focus on the priority actions. The network met twice during 2018 and will continue to meet over 2019.

Young Voices in Decision Making

Hub na nÓg is the Department's centre of excellence to support Government Departments, State Agencies and non-governmental organisations in giving children and young people a voice in decisions that affect their lives, with a focus on seldom-heard children and young people. Hub na nÓg has progressed a number of key actions to support Government Departments and Agencies in their work under the Strategy and in 2018 Hub na nÓg developed and delivered training in collaboration with:

- 1) Sport Ireland for five national sporting bodies and organisations;
- 2) The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) to develop participation methods for use in the inspection process training;
- 3) The Arts Council for Creative Associates appointed to support the Creative Schools Initiative, which is part of the Creative Ireland Programme of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The Department continues to work across local and national Government to build, develop and sustain structures and processes which enable high quality participation opportunities for children and young people, with a particular focus on ensuring seldom-heard young people are included.

Working with Hub na nÓg, the Department collaborated on the development and conducting of a number of consultations with children and young people in 2018, including consultations on:

- 1) the Strategic Plan for the Heritage Council;
- 2) the Cruinniú na nÓg programme;
- 3) Oberstown Standards;
- 4) the voice of the child in Adoption proceedings;
- 5) a change process for the Garda Youth Diversion Programme.

Comhairle na nÓg

Comhairle na nÓg continues to thrive in all local authorities with the support of the Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund. €620,000 was awarded under this fund to 31 local authorities in 2018 to assist in the continued support and development of this organisation. In May 2018 an event was held for the Comhairle na nÓg co-ordinators. This event hosted 80 co-ordinators and was a successful day of networking and presentations, with a powerful presentation by Leitrim Comhairle na nÓg on their

national campaign ‘Use your brains, not your fists’.

The National Executive of Comhairle na nÓg started its two-year term on the theme of Equality in School and is working on a set of guidelines for schools with the primary audience being teachers. The National Executive meets once a month on a Saturday in the Department to progress their business. The Comhairle na nÓg National Showcase took place on 22 November in Croke Park with 460 Comhairle members in attendance. Members from all 31 Comhairlí showcased their work from the year and presented on how they are providing a voice for protecting the rights of young people and informing decision makers countrywide of what is important to young people in Ireland.

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI+) National Youth Strategy 2018-2020

The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018 - 2020 was published on 29th June 2018 and is a world first. It is a key commitment as part of the 2016 Programme for Partnership Government and is making a significant contribution towards the Government's broader commitment to continue to strive for the full inclusion of LGBTI+ people in Irish society. It is a 3-year Strategy that is strongly action oriented with the mission to ensure all LGBTI+ young people are visible, valued and included. Over the course of the development of the Strategy, almost 4,000 young people were consulted.

Following publication of the Strategy a series of early implementation measures were announced and delivered. 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) received funding for the provision of new and additional youth services to address gaps and 14 ETBs received funding to enable mapping of current LGBTI+ youth service provision at ETB level.

€156,388 was distributed for capacity building measures for youth, health and social service professional groups and organisations. 39 organisations across 16 counties were successful in their applications for LGBTI+ Capacity Building initiatives and have received funding under the grant scheme, including youth services, family resource centres, sexual health centres, addiction services, equality organisations, arts therapy organisations and traveller organisations. A number of national organisations are also included, such as Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Gaisce, Focus Ireland, Irish Red Cross, Girl Guides, LGBT Ireland, BelongTo, Gender, Orientation Sexual Health, HIV (GOSHH) and the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI).

In December 2018, a competition was opened to young people up to the age of 24 to design a sticker

for a wide range of organisations and businesses to use to declare their support for diversity, inclusion and visible representation of public support for LGBTI+. The sticker will be rolled out in 2019.

Creative Ireland

The Department continued to support the implementation of the cross-Government Creative Ireland Plan and the Creative Youth Plan, which aims to enable the creative potential of every child and young person. The Department commitments in the Creative Youth Plan span across the Early Years, Youth Affairs and Participation areas of service delivery, and also include continuous professional development and direct supports to services.

The Department, through Hub na nÓg, is supporting the Voice of the Child initiatives across a range of actions in the Plan; including informing the development of “Cruinniú na nÓg” - a national day of creativity for children, and “Creative Schools”. The Department has appointed a Creative Youth Participation Project Officer to Hub na nÓg to support delivery of these Actions.

Youth Reform

The Department established a Youth Reform Unit in June 2017 to reform youth funding schemes for the benefit of young people. A key priority of the Youth Reform Unit is to implement the Recommendations of the Value for Money and Policy Review of Targeted Youth Funding Schemes which includes the design of a single targeted youth funding scheme to replace four current schemes. In July 2018 the Minister briefed the Government, setting out the High Level Scheme Outline of the Targeted Youth Funding Scheme to replace the four current schemes from 2020. Development of the new scheme outline has been informed by significant stakeholder engagement and by a series of sample developments. In 2018 a series of consultations took place with managers, practitioners, the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and members of Boards of Management from the youth services sector regarding information on the new scheme. In addition 23 sample services were funded to test core components of the new scheme with a particular emphasis on enhancing the role of ETBs as the mid-level governance system and sampling a range of performance oversight tools and enhanced outcome measurement. These sample services will be integrated into the new scheme from 2020.

Various communication initiatives in relation to the new scheme were implemented in 2018. This included various meetings with stakeholders and presentations at relevant fora. The Department also designed and disseminated a newsletter about the programme of reform that received strong positive feedback.

2018 has also included significant focus on measurement within the new scheme and to this end the Minister issued an open call for submissions on measurement options in mid-2018. This open call culminated in a two day 'Measurement Conversation' event with key stakeholders in November 2018. Approximately 200 professionals and young people from ETBs, Youth Services and other Government Departments attended the event and positive feedback was received. The findings from this work will be progressed by the Measurement Advisory Group within the Department to further inform the development of the scheme implementation process.

Over 2018 the Department also worked with the Centre for Effective Services to develop an Area Profile, Needs Assessment and Service Requirement tool for use within the new Targeted Youth Funding Scheme. The purpose of the Tool is to enable a systematic and quantified assessment of needs to inform judgements about priorities for service provision. As such, it is a critical component in an evidence-informed approach to providing well targeted services to young people. The tool was co-designed with 6 ETBs.

Youth Affairs

Youth Programmes

The overall budget for the youth sector in 2018 was €58.9m in current expenditure. The level of funding supported the delivery of a range of youth work programmes and services by the voluntary youth work sector for all young people, including those from disadvantaged communities.

In 2018 the allocation for the Youth Service Grant Scheme was €10.65m while the allocation for targeted youth services was €35.14m.

15 new or augmented projects commenced over the course of 2018 (8 new and 7 augmented).

On 31st October 2018, the Minister announced a new fund of up to €1 million for the Youth Employability Initiative. The aim of the Initiative will be to target 16 to 24-year olds, specifically 16 to 18-year olds who are not currently in employment, education or training to assist them on their

progression to employment. The Initiative is specifically designed to support projects that emphasise additionality and non-duplication of services currently provided by youth projects.

In April 2018 the Minister announced a capital grant scheme for targeted staff-led youth projects and services across the country to fund small capital projects, such as the upgrade of bathrooms and kitchens in youth services. Grants totalling €1.74m were awarded.

Governance

The Department met with the 5 largest recipients of Youth Service Grant Scheme (YSGS) funding in the summer of 2018 and, in response to the 2017 Internal Audit Report of the Youth Service Grant Scheme carried out by Mazars, it was agreed to meet twice a year from 2019 to improve Governance and financial oversight. It was agreed that future meetings could discuss any financial or governance difficulties which the organisations may be experiencing. The 2018 meetings were also an opportunity for the Department to outline its expectations of the organisations in receipt of the YSGS.

In March 2018, the Minister became aware that there were deficits in the governance arrangements in Scouting Ireland. The Department was involved in advising the Minister as matters progressed throughout 2018; including the commissioning and overseeing the implementation of an independent report by Ms. Jillian van Turnhout.

The Department oversaw the continued development of 21 Reformed Youth Funding Scheme Sample Projects. The Department continued its engagement with the 16 local Education and Training Boards (ETB) and their national representative association, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI).

EU/International engagement on Youth Affairs

The Department continued to represent Ireland at the Youth Working Party in Brussels, supporting the work of the EU Council of Ministers for Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS). The Austrian Presidency successfully managed agreement on a Partial General Approach to the European Solidarity Corps 2021 to 2027 at the Youth Council Meeting on 26 November 2018. In addition, the new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, entitled "Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people" was adopted at that meeting. Representatives from the Department also attend Erasmus+ programme Committee meetings in Brussels with their colleagues from the Department of Education and Skills.

North-South cooperation

As one of the accountable departments for the Children and Young People's component of the PEACE IV programme, the Department continues to work with officials from the Department of Education in Northern Ireland to support and improve the lives of young people in Northern Ireland and in the border region, on a cross community and cross border basis. The Department continued to fulfil its North-South Education and Training Standards (NSETS) Committee responsibilities. Following a review of the NSETS Committee, its terms of reference were finalised in December 2018.

Programme C: Policy & Legislation

Introduction

The aim of this programme is to oversee key areas of policy, legislation and inter-sectoral collaboration to improve the lives and well-being of children and young people. Some €25 million was invested in order to achieve these goals in 2018.

Legislation

The legislation progressed by the Department in 2018 is summarised below:

The **Childcare Support Act 2018** was signed into law in July 2018. The Act provides the legislative basis for the establishment of the National Childcare Scheme which will replace the existing targeted programmes for Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare. The scheme will offer a single, easy to access system of financial subsidies towards the cost of Early Learning and Care and School-Age Childcare for families in Ireland.

The drafting process of the **Child Care (Amendment) Bill** was progressed to an advanced stage in 2018. The main objective of the Bill is to ensure that the Guardian ad litem service can be provided to benefit the greatest number of children and young people, so that their voices can be heard in child care proceedings and that this service will be of high quality and sustainable into the future.

The review of the **Child Care Act 1991** continued to progress during 2018. The Department received over 40 written submissions from various stakeholders. The Department also held a number of regional consultations with Tusla, consulted with other stakeholders and officials in neighbouring jurisdictions and developed a number of policy papers.

Work continued on the **Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill 2016**, in preparation for Committee Stage in Seanad Éireann, and specifically in relation to reviewing the provisions of the Bill to ensure consistency with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Statutory Instrument (S.I. No. 8/2018) - Adoption Act 2010 (Register of Gender Recognition of Intercountry Adoptions)(Fees) Regulations 2018 and **S.I. No. 7/2018 - Adoption Act 2010 (Section 85) (Fees) Regulations 2018** were completed and came into operation in January 2018.

These Regulations prescribe the fees required to obtain copies/extracts of entries in the register of gender recognition of intercountry adoptions and the Adopted Children Register, respectively. They also prescribe the fees for searching the index of the Registers.

Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School-Age Services) Regulations 2018 were completed and came into operation in February 2019. These Regulations set out the various requirements to be complied with by a person applying to register with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, as a school-age service, and by persons carrying on school-age services.

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures

A whole of Government approach is a key element of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020*. The Department has responsibility for coordinating the implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, but individual commitments remain the responsibility of the relevant Departments.

Implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* continued across Government and all elements of the implementation infrastructure continued to meet regularly. Children and young people continued to be engaged in the process and SWAN Youth Service presented at the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium in February.

In June 2018 the mid-term review of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* was completed.

The National Advisory Council for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* developed a work plan in 2018 containing priority areas for progression. These areas included child poverty, prevention and early intervention, homelessness, rights and equality and learning and development. The Department worked with officials across Government to advance the priorities included in the Advisory Council's work plan. Ms. Tanya Ward, CEO of the Children's Rights Alliance was appointed as the new Chairperson to the Council in April, replacing Dr. Owen Keenan. In addition, five new members were also appointed to the Council in November.

The Children and Young People's Policy Consortium represents the keystone in the implementation infrastructure for *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*. The Consortium is tasked with overseeing and driving the effective implementation of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* within the respective spheres of responsibility, across departments, agencies and sectors.

Children’s Rights Alliance

The Department allocated funding to the Children’s Rights Alliance in 2018 to assist the Alliance with their agreed 2018 work programme. The Alliance assisted the Department with the development of work on amendments to the Child Care Act 1991, submissions on the National Early Years Strategy, the National Childcare Scheme, and work on *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and its associated strategies and the whole of Government Approach to Child Poverty amongst other important issues. More information regarding the Children’s Rights Alliance can be found on their website: <https://www.childrensrights.ie>.

Children and Young People’s Services Committees

Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) are a key structure identified by Government to plan and co-ordinate services for children in every county in Ireland. There are 27 CYPSC established and there is also a National Coordinator in place. In 2018, the CYPSC initiative was co-funded by the Department, Tusla and the Department of Health.

CYPSC undertook various projects in 2018 with each CYPSC receiving approximately €38,000 in funding. See www.cypsc.ie for more details.

Child Poverty

Work continued in advancing the Whole of Government response to reducing the number of children living in consistent poverty. Building on the work carried out to date, the Department, in conjunction with the National Advisory Council and other key Government Departments, continued to progress the six key actions contained in the Whole of Government paper on tackling child poverty. The plan arising out of this paper identifies six priority areas for actions (assigned to different Government Departments), namely: 1) providing universal access to general practitioner care for those under 18 years; 2) reducing the cost of education; 3) housing; 4) affordable childcare; 5) labour activation; and 6) the provision of in-work benefits. Throughout 2018, the Department’s focus was on affordable childcare.

In November 2018, the Minister hosted a high-level workshop focusing on child poverty which deliberated on how the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework could help to end child poverty and hunger in Ireland. The keynote speaker at the event was Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on the Sustainable Developmental Goals. The main theme of

the workshop was the importance of eradicating child poverty and hunger, as well as the need for cross Government work to achieve this.

Further progress was made on reducing the number of children living in consistent poverty. The latest SILC data (Survey on Income and Living Conditions), released by the Central Statistics Office in November 2018, confirmed this, with a reduction in the consistent child poverty rate from 10.9% in 2016 to 8.8% in 2017. The figures for 2018 will be available in Q4 2019.

North East Inner City Initiative

The North East Inner City Initiative (NEIC) arose from the Kieran Mulvey Report, published in February 2017. The Report identified four priority areas for Dublin's North East Inner City: tackling crime and drugs, maximising educational/training opportunities and creating local employment, creating an integrated system of social services, and improving the physical landscape in the area. The NEIC Initiative outlined the actions that should be taken to help with the regeneration of the area.

In 2018, the Department provided continuous leadership of North East Inner City Initiative (NEIC) and considerable input to the work programme and on progressing actions contained in the Mulvey Report. An NEIC Annual Report has been published on achievements to date.

ABC Programme

The Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme is a prevention and early intervention initiative targeting investment in effective services to improve the outcomes for children and families living in certain disadvantaged areas.

In November 2017, DCYA initiated a process with stakeholders to consider options for sustaining the work of the ABC Programme within a new vision for a community-based prevention and early intervention programme from 2019 and beyond. Following these consultations, the decision was taken to transfer the current ABC Programme to Tusla, as part of the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support (PPFS) Programme.

The Department managed the conclusion of the original ABC Programme and its transition to Tusla from 1 September 2018. The Department commenced re-design of the programme in consultation with stakeholders and set up a working group to advise on transitional arrangements and the design of

the future programme. Funding was secured to continue the ABC Programme in 2019 and a final national evaluation report on the ABC Programme was produced in November 2018, showing the positive contribution the programme has made in improving outcomes for children and families.

Adoption Policy

The Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017 was commenced in October 2017. The primary purpose of the Act is to give effect to Article 42A (Children) of the Constitution, in so far as it relates to adoption.

One of the main provisions of that Act is that the Adoption Authority of Ireland or the court must ascertain the child's views and such views to be given due weight having regard to the age and maturity of the child.

In 2018, the Department completed a consultation with children and young people who were adopted or currently going through the process of adoption to seek their opinions on how they would like to have their views heard in their adoption proceedings before the Adoption Authority or the court to inform the drafting of regulations under the Act.

The Minister also accepted an amendment to the legislation in the Seanad to initiate a review and consultation, no later than 10 months after the passing of the Act, in respect of the potential introduction of open or semi-open adoption in Ireland. The Minister initiated this process on the 17th May 2018.

The review will include a public consultation and legal and policy analysis. A report on the findings of the review will be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas not later than 18 months after its commencement, i.e. by 15 November 2019.

The Department engages with the Adoption Authority of Ireland through regular meetings and formalised reporting on governance matters with regard to its statutory obligations under the Adoption Act 2010 and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016. The oversight agreement between the Department and the Adoption Authority of Ireland, as required in the Code, was updated in 2018.

Work progressed on amendments to the Adoption (Information and Tracing) Bill, 2016, in particular to take account of stakeholder feedback regarding privacy provisions and the release of information.

In May 2018, the Minister announced the discovery of evidence of illegal registrations in the files of a former adoption society, St Patrick's Guild. She indicated that Tusla, the Child and Family Agency would commence the process of making contact with the individuals concerned in the 126 confirmed cases of illegal births registrations. An illegal registration is where a child is placed with a couple or individual who is not the parent, but the birth is then registered as if the child had been born to that couple or individual. In light of this discovery, the Minister instructed that an analysis of a sample of files within the custody of the State (i.e. with Tusla or the Adoption Authority of Ireland) be undertaken. The analysis of records is being carried out by Tusla, and the Adoption Authority of Ireland, and overseen by an Independent Reviewer, Marion Reynolds who is a former Deputy Director of Social Services in Northern Ireland. The review group first met in summer 2018 and the work continued throughout the year. The final report is due to be submitted to the Minister in 2019.

Mother and Baby Homes

The Commission of Investigation (Mother and Baby Homes and certain related Matters) was supported to progress its independent investigations in accordance with its terms of reference. The Commission submitted its Fourth Interim Report to the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs in December 2018.

In responding to the Commission's discovery of juvenile remains at the site of the former Mother and Baby Home, in Tuam, Co. Galway, the Minister secured Government approval for a phased excavation, exhumation and an identification programme. This approach was supported by best practice in terms of expert technical and human rights advices and, most importantly, was informed by the voices of survivors, families and the local community of Tuam. Relevant expert reports and the outcome of a facilitated consultation were published on the Department's website.

A Collaborative Forum of Former Residents was established in July 2018 as a progressive response to the theme of "nothing about us without us" which emerged from consultations with former residents of these institutions. The Forum was designed to empower former residents to actively contribute to the development of solutions on matters of concern to them and their families. The Forum's membership was appointed following a public call for expressions of interest and an independent selection process. Submitting its first report in December 2018 was a significant achievement for the Forum and reflects the intensive investment of participants in this new approach to dialogue and

engagement.

Research and Evaluation (REU)

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)

In 2018, the Department managed and progressed Growing Up in Ireland: The National Longitudinal Study of Children (GUI) which, since 2006, has tracked two cohorts of children for the purposes of studying factors that contribute to, or undermine, the well-being of children in contemporary Irish families. More information on GUI can found at <https://www.growingup.ie>.

Statistics

The Department launched the Statistical Spotlight Series, a series of short publications focused on particular topics that use available statistical data to highlight trends or patterns. Other statistical outputs that occurred in 2018 included:

- The finalisation of a report on Departmental data needs.
- The progression of work on a methodology report to accompany ‘*An indicator set for Better Outcomes Brighter Futures*’ and the further disaggregation of data originally included in that report.
- Progress in transformation and modernisation of the dissemination of the ‘*State of the Nation’s Children*’ publication from a biennial series of hard copy releases to a ‘live’ document that will be available on-line and will automatically update as new data becomes available in a user-friendly format that also satisfies Open Data requirements.
- Initiation of a Pathfinder Project to link the GUI study with administrative data held in the CSO’s Administrative Data Centre (ADC). This will provide an additional insight into the lives of those in the GUI study and their interaction with the State.

Evaluation

Evaluation was carried out on various policy areas and schemes administered by the Department, including:

- A spending review of the National Childcare Scheme (NCS) that was published as a Focused Policy Assessment.
- Progression of a Focused Policy Assessment of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Higher Capitation payment, for completion in 2019.

The Department's Goal-sponsored Evaluation Training Programme was progressed during 2018, with the first pilot delivered and content refined for a second pilot, which will be delivered in early 2019. This programme is part of the Goal Programme on Public Service Reform in Ireland and Northern Ireland and will provide a model for evaluation training across the Civil Service.

Evidence into Policy Programme (EIPP)

The Department initiated five policy priority research projects under the Evidence into Policy Programme which aims to meet the Department's strategic research and evidence needs, and to support the research-to-policy cycle. Deliverables completed in 2018 included:

- The completion of a literature review and proposed research design specifications for a pilot to improve Engagement and School Completion of Traveller and Roma students, for the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS).
- The mapping of the administrative process for the payment of a bursary to pre-school practitioners who participated in the AIM-related continuous professional development training scheme.
- The issuing of a survey seeking the opinions of the pre-school practitioners who participated in the AIM-related continuous professional development training scheme.
- The issuing of a supplementary request for tenders for a two-phased research and data gaps analysis to support the evidence-informed implementation of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy.
- Through the Irish Research Council's COALESCE call, a proposal for a study for '*Understanding pathways to involvement in criminal and/or anti-social behaviour among young people*' utilising GUI data.
- The initiation of scoping requirements for a commissioned study to establish a nationally representative baseline scenario of 21st century parents' self-conceptualisations; perceptions; practices; and views on parenting supports and support needs.

The Department established corporate units with specific responsibility for ICT, Data Protection and Procurement.

Corporate Governance

Risk Management

The Department's Risk Management Strategy aims to have proactive management-led behaviours and processes to help achieve our strategic and operational objectives. The Department's Governance Framework outlines the overall approach to Risk Management as part of the system of internal controls and business management. DCYA also maintains a centralised record of risks in a Risk Register. The Register is the primary tool for risk tracking, containing the most up-to-date overall system of risks and the status of any risk mitigation actions.

The full Management Board functions as the Department's Risk Committee. The Secretary General, as Accounting Officer, has ultimate responsibility for risk management as part of the system of internal controls. The Risk Committee met four times in 2018 for the purpose of:

- overseeing the system of risk management in the Department, and embedding risk management effectively;
- considering corporate risks and reviewing their ongoing management;
- reviewing reports detailing high scoring risks across MB areas, and considering whether mitigation and management measures are appropriate and adequate.

Governance of Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

The relationship between Government Departments and bodies under their aegis is determined primarily by:

- the underpinning legislation establishing the body; and
- the requirements set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The public bodies funded through the Department's Vote and for which the Secretary General is the Accounting Officer, are as follows:

- the Child and Family Agency ('Tusla'), established in January 2014 under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013;
- the Adoption Authority of Ireland (AAI), established in November 2010 under the Adoption Act

2010;

- the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO), established in 2004 under the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002; and
- the children detention schools established under the Children Act 2001.

The Department also provides the primary source of funding for Gaisce, the President's Award. Gaisce is a limited company set up under the Companies Acts.

In general, the relationship between the Department and the respective bodies under its remit, including on governance matters, is managed by the relevant unit or division within the Department. This includes oversight of the functions of the body and the respective responsibilities of the Minister, Secretary General as Accounting Officer, Board and Chief Executive. It also involves all related parliamentary support to the Minister on matters relating to the governance of the body.

The relationship between the Department and those bodies under its aegis varies in terms of the nature of the work and scale of operation of each body and its governing legislation.

Internal Audit and Audit Committee

The mission of the Department's Internal Audit Unit is to provide independent, objective assurance on the system of internal controls and consulting services designed to add value and improve the Department's operations. It helps the Department accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

The Department's Audit Committee has an independent role within the Department to oversee and advise on matters relating to the operation and development of the internal audit function and the business control, governance and risk management environment. The Committee met on five occasions during 2018.

Completed Internal Audit reports are circulated to the Secretary General, Management Board and the Audit Committee. In 2018 fourteen such reports were circulated to the Committee, and discussed at their meetings:

- Internal Report into Incident of Theft

- Risk Management Policy and Process in DCYA
- Review of Governance Arrangements in respect of Tusla
- Review of Implementation of Recommendations in relation to Honesty Box Procedures
- Review of Bank Reconciliation, Petty Cash & CC Controls
- Procurement Processes and Controls
- Desktop Review of Documented Financial Policies and Procedures
- AIM (Access and Inclusion Model)
- Transaction Audit
- Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for Commissioning Arrangements – ABC (Area Based Childhood) Programme
- SLAs for Commissioning Arrangements – Early Years
- SLAs for Commissioning Arrangements – Youth Organisations & Services
- ECCE and Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP) High Level follow up review on 2014 and 2015 reports
- Review of Business Continuity and Technical Disaster Recovery Management

Risk management is a standing item on the Audit Committee’s agenda and some suggestions were made to the Department’s Risk Committee during the year. In the course of 2018 the Audit Committee sought and received presentations from the heads of a number of DCYA business units and in accordance with its Charter, met with the external audit team from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Human Resources and Learning and Development

In 2018, the Department supported:

- Tusla with a range of HR matters including the development of Tusla’s Multi-annual Strategic Workforce Plan, the departure of the Tusla CEO and engagement with education stakeholders with regard to the supply of graduates with qualifications in the area of social work;
- the Irish Youth Justice Service and Oberstown Children Detention Campus with regard to a number of complex HR matters relating to terms and conditions on the Campus; and
- the Ombudsman for Children's Office and the Adoption Authority of Ireland with a range of HR matters relating to issues such as recruitment and the terms and conditions of their staff.

In 2018, the Department enhanced its provision of learning and development opportunities for staff. The prioritisation of learning and development opportunities was informed by corporate, unit and personal needs identified to support the delivery of the Department's goals and objectives. The Performance Management and Development System was an essential component in planning learning and development needs throughout 2018. There was a significant increase in the number of training interventions provided in 2018. Learning and development opportunities were provided in areas such as, but not limited to, GDPR, facilitation skills, diversity and unconscious bias, corporate governance, procurement, and dignity at work. The Department continued to support *One Learning*, the centralised shared model for learning and development in the civil service. Staff attended a range of *One Learning* courses on subjects such as ICT, risk, management development and project management.

The Department recruited 55 new staff in 2018, accounting for around 20% of employees in the Department. 13 employees or 5% of all staff were promoted through internal or external competitions. A number of specialist external recruitment competitions were also carried out to increase the Department's skillset.

The Department also commenced a number of pilot programmes which included a Mentoring and Coaching Programme to which approximately 80 employees were assigned as mentors and mentees.

Following on from the publication of the 2017 Employee Engagement Survey results, the Department invited all DCYA employees to consultations which led to the development of an Action Plan, and also informed the development of the DCYA People Strategy 2019 – 2021, which was finalised in 2018.

Record and Content Management

Paper records have been moved to secure offsite storage thereby improving security and access. Planning for a new electronic content management system has commenced.

Facilities Management

One of the larger internal projects undertaken in 2018 by the Department was the successful move from the Department's Headquarters in Mespil Road, Dublin 4 to a new, purpose built building in

Miesian Plaza, 50-58 Baggot Street Lower, Dublin 2 in May 2018. This was the culmination of many months of careful planning and was successfully delivered without interruption to business and services.

Appendix I

Public Sector Duty

The Department acknowledges the positive duty imposed on it by Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 to have regard to human rights and equality in the performance of its functions.

Under Section 42, a public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to—

- (a) eliminate discrimination,
- (b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- (c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

Our work embodies proactive consideration of equality and the human rights of children and young people in the development of policy and legislation. Examples of this include the Access and Inclusion Model for children with disabilities to avail of pre-school services; engagement with representatives of the Traveller and Roma community to increase participation of children from those communities in pre-school services; and the LGBTI+ National *Youth Strategy* 2018 - 2020.

The Department is committed to protecting the dignity and respect of staff working for the Department. The Department endorses and implements the Civil Service Dignity at Work Policy which aims to promote respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace. Every member of staff is made aware that all forms of bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment are unacceptable and that every member of staff has a duty to behave in an acceptable and respectful manner.

In our Customer Service Action Plan and Charter we state our commitments to our customers. We meet these by -

- giving our customers the best possible service and advice;
- treating customers in a proper, fair, impartial and courteous manner;
- aiming to ensure that rights to equal treatment set out by equality legislation are upheld in the delivery of our services; and
- aiming, where possible, to meet any special needs our customers may have.

Appendix II

Publications in 2018

- First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families, 2019-2028
- First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families, 2019-2028 (Summary)
- First 5, Report on the National Consultation with Young Children
- American Institute for Research (AIR) Executive Summary
- American Institute for Research (AIR) Youth Work Report
- Final Report National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF)
- Human Rights Issues At The Former Site Of The Mother and Baby Home, Tuam, Co. Galway
- Family And Household Structure In Ireland
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Annual Report, 2017
- Monthly Update on Issues relating to Mother and Baby Homes, February 2018
- Report on consultations with children and young people on Cruinniú na nÓg
- LGBTI + Consultations Report
- LGBTI+ Strategy - Summary
- Monthly Update on Issues relating to Mother and Baby Homes, March 2018
- Consultation on the Options and Appropriate Courses of Action available to Government in relation to the site of the former Mother & Baby Homes
- LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, 2018-2020
- Environmental Analysis: A review of relevant literature and data to inform the development of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, 2018-2020
- Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus - Recommendations According to Themes
- Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus - Overview of Themes

- Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus - Interim Report
- Updated Action Plan from Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus
- Appendix A: Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus - Action Plan
- Final Report of the Review Implementation Group Of Oberstown Children Detention Campus
- Review of Scouting Ireland
- Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group Annual Report 2017
- Scouting Ireland: Terms of Reference
- Out of Hours Services
- Monthly Update on Issues relating to Mother and Baby Homes, July 2018
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs Child Safeguarding Statement
- Children First Sectoral Implementation Plan
- Advisory Council Focus Group on BOBF Mid-Term Review
- Monthly Update on Issues relating to Mother and Baby Homes, August 2018
- A review of early years education focused inspection: April 2016, June 2017
- Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme Final Report
- Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme Final Report Appendices
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures E-zine
- Mid-term Review of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures
- Growing Up in Ireland: The lives of 13-year-olds
- Growing Up in Ireland Key Findings: Cohort '08 at 9 years old:

No 1. 9-years-old and their families.

No 2. School and learning

No 3. Health and physical development

No 4. Relationships and socio-emotional well-being

Appendix III

Overview of Energy Usage in 2018

This section sets out the energy usage in the Department of Children & Youth Affairs for 2018 and the steps taken to improve our energy performance. Returns are made to the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) on an annual basis and the 2018 performance is detailed below.

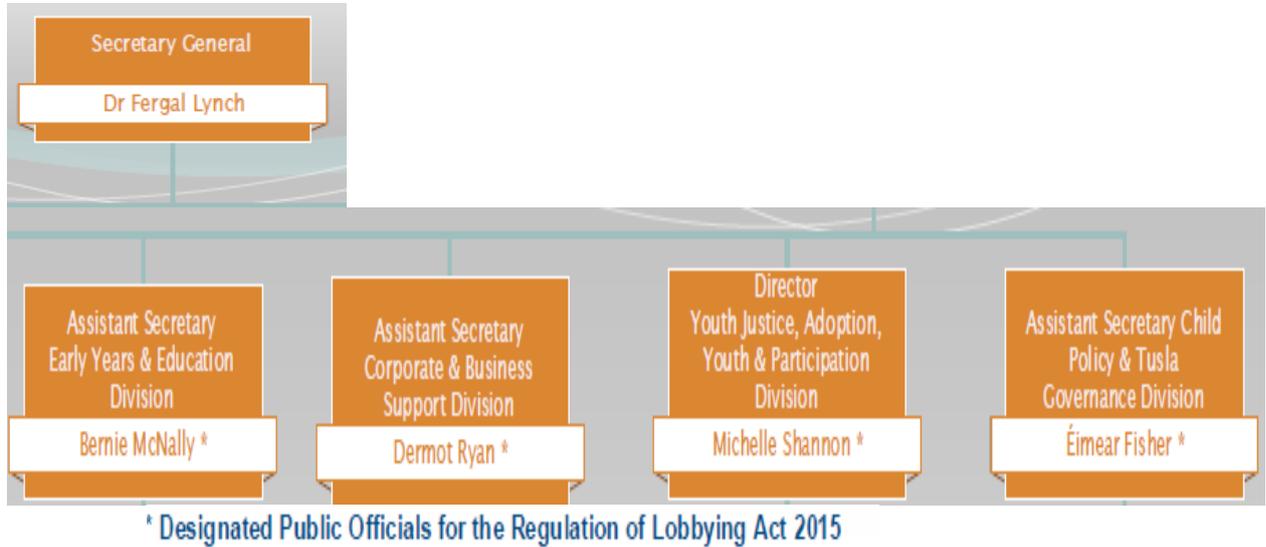
Agencies of the Department are responsible for reporting their own energy consumption to the SEAI and their consumption is not included in these figures.

Location/Year	Electricity kWH	Gas kWH	Total kWH	Total kWH/FTE
Headquarters, Mespil Road / Miesian Plaza Baggot street.				
2018	389,543	394,521	784,064	2938.57

The main initiative taken during 2018 was the Department's engagement in the OPW Optimising Power@work campaign. Quarterly meetings were held with the Aramark representative to discuss results of their monitoring programme, and take advice on how best to further reduce energy consumption.

Appendix IV

Management Board



The Department has 27 Units headed by a Principal Officer or equivalent grade. Areas of responsibility organised by function to deliver on corporate objectives are set out in the Department's [organisation structure](#) which is published on the Department's website.

Appendix V

Bodies under the aegis of the Department

Bodies under the aegis of the Department and associated Commission

Tusla, Child and Family Agency

Mr. Fred McBride*
Chief Executive Officer
Heuston South Quarter
St. John's Road West
Kilmainham,
Dublin 8.

*Until October 2018
Mr Pat Smyth Interim
CEO from October 2018

Adoption Authority of Ireland

Ms Patricia Carey
Chief Executive Officer
Shelbourne House
Shelbourne Road
Dublin 4.

Children Detention Schools

Mr Pat Bergin
Director
Oberstown
Lusk
Co. Dublin.

**Office of the
Ombudsman for Children**

Dr. Niall Muldoon
Ombudsman for Children
Millennium House
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1.

**Commission of Investigation into
Mother and Baby Homes
(& Certain Related Matters)**

Judge Yvonne Murphy
73 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2.

Gaisce, the President's Award

Ms Yvonne McKenna
Chief Executive Officer
Ratra House, North Road
Phoenix Park
Dublin 8.