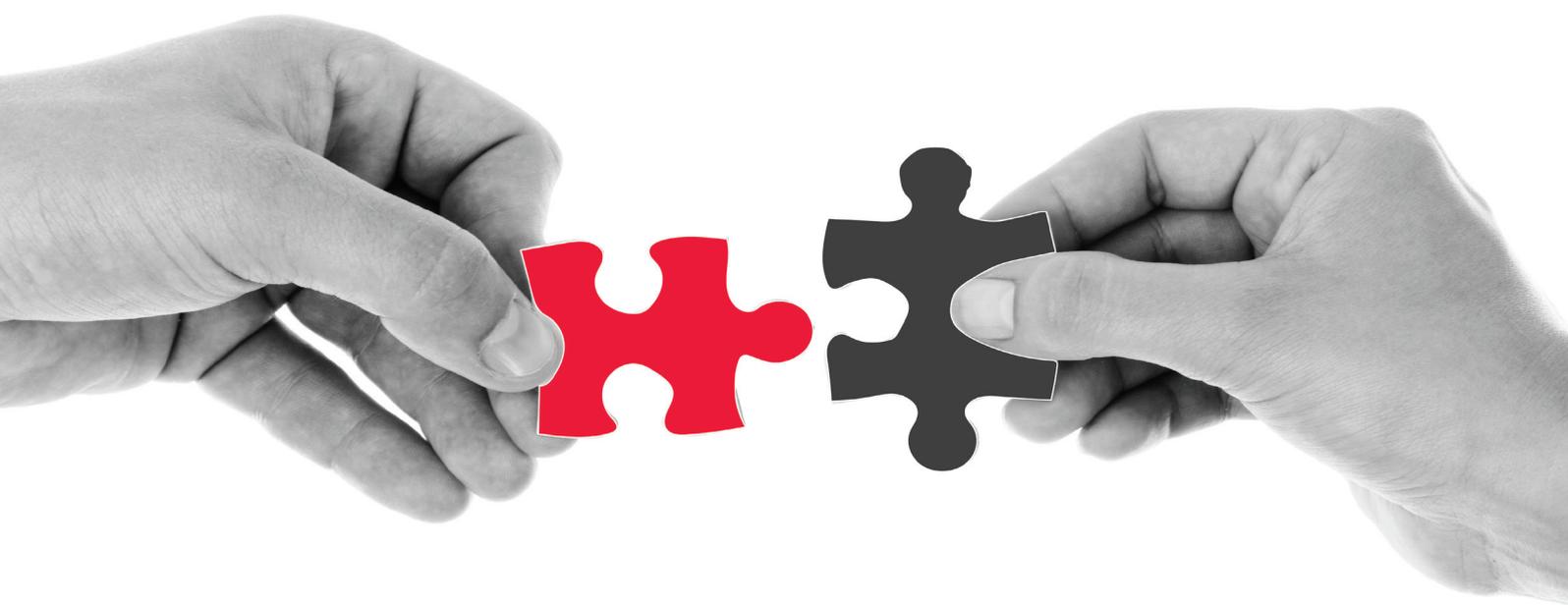


# Tusla – Child and Family Agency Research Needs Analysis Report Methodology Appendices



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**TUSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

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# Appendix 1: Interview Schedules

## 1.1 Tusla Management

### Tusla Research Needs Analysis – Interview Schedules

The Research Needs Analysis intends to cover three broad areas:

#### **Area One**

Firstly we need to discover Tusla's commitment to, value placed in and priority of research within the overall workings of the organisation. Therefore we need to examine:

1. Is research valued within the organisation? If it is valued, is it a priority? How is it a priority?
2. Tusla describes itself as a learning organisation (**defined as** an organisation that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself as a result of that learning). Research evidently has a key role in this process. How in your view might research contribute to this process?
3. Tusla has committed to promoting a culture of research within the organisation. Are there sufficient existing infrastructures within the organisation that can assist with this (in terms of the ability to share information and how this is achieved)?
  - a. If yes, what are they? Are there barriers to developing such infrastructures? How might these barriers be overcome, in your view? What are the dependencies to be aware of in developing a research culture in Tusla? (Are there barriers in other services or functions which may act as a barrier to research being embedded in the organisation, e.g. budgets for training, IT capacity, turnover of staff, etc.?)
  - b. Do you think that collaborations with Tusla-funded organisations may have a role in this process? Why/how might this be achieved?
  - c. What role does research have in influencing how Tusla operates? How would you ensure that research is used by Tusla to inform its operations?
4. Are there adequate resources for Tusla staff to engage with research? If not, what resources may be required?
5. What role, if any, does practitioner research have in Tusla? (**Practitioner Research** refers to research performed by individuals who also work in a professional field, as opposed to being full-time academic researchers.) Are there opportunities for staff to perform research?

6. Are you aware of any initiatives to support research skills development for Tusla staff (for example, university programmes, professional bodies)?
7. What percentage of budget should be assigned to the commissioning of research (total budget/directorate budget/service budget)?
8. Would you support a doctoral research programme for Tusla staff?

### ***Area Two***

We would like to examine the participant's views on research priorities, gaps in research, policy and legislative development nationally and internationally that may require research in the future. The focus here is on the participant's **own area of work in the first instance, and knowledge of other areas (if they have it) in the second.**

- Gaps in research
  - Research priorities specific to their area
  - Legislative/policy development that may require research.
1. Have you identified gaps in existing research in the area of your work? If yes, what are they?
    - a. What research is needed to fill those gaps? (Gaps in both Irish and international research.)
  2. Are you aware of any current or emerging policy or legislation in your area that may require research? (Both Ireland and international developments.)
  3. Are you aware of any potential issues in your area nationally or internationally that may necessitate research?
  4. What, in your view, are the short to medium-term research priorities in your area of work? (Rank in order of importance.) Can you expand on why?
    - a. What are the long-term research priorities? (Again, rank order.) Can you expand on why?

### ***Area Three***

Area three is designed to examine Tusla's use of research and evaluation in service design and planning, decision making, service delivery and development of policy – which is one of Tusla's strategic objectives.

1. Is decision making, planning, service delivery and the development of policy within Tusla underpinned by evidence; either through research or evaluation? (**Evaluation is defined as:** an assessment or appraisal of the degree of success in meeting goals and outcomes of the organisation, service, programme, population or clients)
  - a. In your view, how often is research or evaluation used to inform these processes? (decision making, planning, service delivery and the development of policy)?
  - b. On balance, which method do you think is more favoured to inform these processes (decision making, planning, service delivery and development of policy) – research or evaluation? Why do you think this is the case?
  - c. In your view, what else is needed in the areas of research or evaluation to inform:
    - i. Decision-making processes
    - ii. Planning
    - iii. Service delivery
    - iv. Development of policy?
2. What kind of information is needed?

## 1.2 Tusla-Funded Organisations

Given that this study is a research needs analysis for Tusla, and bearing in mind your organisation's interaction with Tusla, we have a few questions to ask about research.

We would like to examine your views on research priorities, gaps in research that may require research in the future, and collaborations in research.

- Gaps in research
  - Research priorities specific to their area
  - Research partnerships/collaboration
1. Have you identified gaps in existing research in the area of your work? If yes, what are they?
  2. What, in your view, are the short to medium-term research priorities in your area of work? (Rank in order of importance.) Can you expand on why?
  3. What are the long-term research priorities? (Again, rank order.) Can you expand on why?
  4. Do you think that collaboration on research projects which share a common focus between your work and Tusla (a research partnership) would be useful?
  5. If yes, are there resources and infrastructures in place to achieve this?
  6. If no, what needs to be done to realise/enhance such collaboration?
  7. What resources do you think Tusla could bring to such partnerships?
  8. What resources can your organisation bring to such partnerships?

### 1.3 Government Departments and HIQA

Given this study is a research needs analysis for Tusla, and bearing in mind interaction between Tusla and key government departments in a number of different areas, we have a few questions to ask about research.

1. Are there any current research projects in your department that may relate to Tusla's responsibilities?
2. How do you think research from your department can advance Tusla's knowledge?
3. How you think research from Tusla can advance your department's knowledge?
4. Is there, to your knowledge, any system in place to share research between your department and agencies like Tusla? **(Expand on answer. If No, do you think such a system would be useful? Etc.)**
5. Bearing in mind your department's work and Tusla's role, are there any areas of research that you think Tusla should focus on?
6. Do you think that collaboration on research projects which share a common focus between your department and Tusla (a research partnership) would be useful?
7. If yes, are there infrastructures in place to achieve this?
8. If no, what needs to be done to realise such collaboration?

## Appendix 2: Surveys

### 2.1 Tusla Staff Survey

#### Information on Survey

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey will take approximately 7–8 minutes of your time. As it is important you are aware why this research is being undertaken and what it involves, further information is set out below.

#### ***What is this research about?***

The survey is part of a research needs analysis being conducted for Tusla to identify and prioritise the research development needs of the organisation. This survey is being utilised to incorporate the views of Tusla's staff around what they believe are the research needs of the organisation and possible issues or areas they have identified as needing further study. This survey has been developed to capture the views of all staff within the Tusla organisation, and while some staff members may have participated in interviews for the purposes of this research, we welcome their participation in this survey also.

In the context of this needs analysis, research is thought of as ‘a process through which we attempt to achieve systematically and with the support of data the answer to a question, the resolution of a problem, or a greater understanding of a problem’ (Leedy, 1997: 5).

#### ***What am I going to be asked about?***

In this survey you will be asked about:

- How research is perceived, developed and managed by Tusla as an organisation;
- How research is used in your specific area of work, and your views on what research is required in your area of work;
- How you as a frontline worker in Tusla interact with research for the purpose of your job;
- Your research training needs as a Tusla staff member;
- More general questions around national policies, issues and changing demographics that may in your view require research in the future.

#### ***How do my answers count?***

Taking part is voluntary, but your answers will greatly help us to find out about the research needs of the organisation in terms of areas requiring research now and into the future. Your answers will inform Tusla and will assist the organisation in developing research infrastructures and coordination to support improved service delivery and inform policy development. Your answers will form part of the final report, which will provide recommendations to Tusla.

***How will the information be treated?***

This is an anonymous survey and will not be linked to your email address. In the event that you can be identified by providing your job role and geographical area of work, the reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

***Who would I contact?***

This study is being undertaken by a research team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland, Galway on behalf of Tusla. To find out more about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on +353 91 495 791 or by email: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie).

Your time and the information you provide is much appreciated.

---

**Background Information**

**1. In which geographical Tusla area (or closest geographical area) do you currently work?**

*Click on arrow to display options*

Carlow/Kilkenny/South Tipperary

Cavan/Monaghan

Cork

Donegal

Dublin North

Dublin North City

Dublin South Central

Dublin South East/Wicklow

Dublin South West/Kildare/West Wicklow

Galway/Roscommon

Kerry

Louth/Meath

Mayo

Midlands

Mid-West

Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan

Tusla Headquarters

Waterford/Wexford

**2. Which of the following best describes your job role?**

- Social Worker
- Social Care Worker
- Family Support Worker
- Psychology and Counselling Staff
- Nursing
- Other Health Professional
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Other Support Staff
- Management VIII +
- Administration
- Other (please specify)

**3. In relation to Social Work, Social Care and Educational Welfare roles, please indicate what level your job role is.**

- Area Manager
- Principal Social Worker
- Team Leader
- Senior Social Work Practitioner
- Social Worker
- Social Care Manager
- Social Care Leader
- Social Care Worker
- EWS Regional Manager
- Senior Educational Welfare Officer
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Other (please specify)

## Research in the Tusla organisation

**4. Do you see Tusla as a learning organisation? (i.e. promotes a culture in which there is a commitment by staff to use research, including research skills and methods, to promote the process of learning and in which individual learning can be transferred into organisational learning)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**5. If you answered yes to Q4, can you give some examples of Tusla as a learning organisation?**

**6. Does Tusla promote the use of research in your day-to-day work?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**7. If you answered yes to Q6, can you give some examples of how Tusla promotes the use of research in your day-to-day work?**

**8. What do you think needs to be done to promote the use of research in your day-to-day work? (Please tick all that apply.)**

- Access to high-quality online and hard copy resources
- Easy-to-use practical tools and guides
- Online and face-to-face learning events
- Online networking and exchange forums (with other practitioners)
- Regular research and policy updates
- Tailored support for specific needs
- Training in research skills
- Dedicated research bank tailored to my area of work
- Other (please specify)

## Your interaction with research for the purposes of your job

### 9. Do you use research in your day-to-day work?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

### 10. Have you undertaken any research-specific training in terms of research methods courses or modules?

- Yes
- No

### 11. If you answered yes to Q10, did your research training occur as part of a... (Please tick all that apply)

- Certificate course
- Undergraduate degree
- Masters degree
- PhD degree
- An internal Agency project
- In-service training course provided by Tusla
- Training course provided by professional body
- Other (please specify)

### 12. How long ago did you participate in research training?

- Less than 1 year ago
- Between 1–2 years ago
- Between 2–3 years ago
- Between 3–4 years ago
- Between 4–5 years ago
- Over 5 years ago
- N/A

**13. What types of research sources do you use, if any? (Please tick all that apply.)**

- Google or other search engine equivalent
- HSE libraries (physical or online)
- Online academic databases (for example, soc index, psycinfo)
- Reports from research undertaken by specific organisations (for example, Barnardos)
- Other library sources (accessed in person or online, for example university libraries, Barnardos library)
- Other (please specify)

**14. When searching for research, do you look for research that is based on evidence? (Research that is based on sound research, not opinion.)**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Other (please specify)

**15. What type of research presentation would assist you most in your day-to-day work? (Rank in order of preference: 1 being your most preferred and 4 being your least preferred.)**

- A full report
- A report summary
- A policy brief
- An explanatory video

**16. If you would prefer a mix of formats, please indicate your preferred mix below.**

**17. Do you have opportunities to undertake research through the course of your work? (Choose one option.)**

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Yearly

**18. Do you have the confidence to undertake research?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Other (please specify)

**19. Would you like to develop your research skills?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**20. If you would like to develop your research skills, what areas would you like to develop? (Please tick all that apply.)**

- Introduction to research methods
- Research study design
- Qualitative research methods (Introduction)
- Qualitative research methods (Advanced)
- Quantitative research methods (Introduction)
- Quantitative research methods (Advanced)
- Legal and ethical issues in research
- Writing a research paper for publication
- Implementation of research findings
- Evaluation methods – process, outcomes and cost-benefit evaluation
- Knowledge around interventions in terms of identifying what works
- Systematic/literature review skills
- Meta-analysis
- Other (please specify)

**21. In your role, do you have the opportunity to engage with research?**

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Yearly
- Other (please specify)

**22. What, if anything, constrains Tusla staff from engaging with research? (Please tick all that apply.)**

- Lack of time
- Difficulty in accessing research (for example, limited access to computers with internet)
- Difficulty in accessing appropriate research (for example, online journals)
- Lack of clear, collated information
- Lack of research skills
- Other (please specify)

**A focus on the research needs of your particular area of work**

**23. In the course of your day-to-day work, have you identified gaps in research that require further study?**

- Yes
- No

**24. If you answered yes to Q23, can you elaborate on what those gaps are?**

**25. What, in your view, are the immediate research priorities in your area?**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**26. In your view, what type of research response do each of the three immediate priorities you have identified require? Practitioner research (research performed by individuals who also work in a professional field, as opposed to being full-time academic researchers), Academic research, etc.**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**27. What, in your view, are the medium to long-term research priorities in your area that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**28. In your view, what type of research response do each of the three medium to long-term priorities you have identified require? Practitioner research (research performed by individuals who also work in a professional field, as opposed to being full-time academic researchers), Academic research, etc.**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

### Future Research Needs

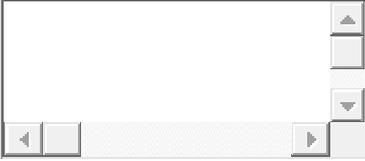
**29. Are you aware of any developments in your area of work that may in your view necessitate research in the future (new legislative or policy areas, potential issues nationally or internationally, etc.)?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**30. If you answered yes to Q29, please elaborate.**

## Further Information

**31. We would appreciate any further comments you may have.**



We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you are interested to speak with us or to provide further information on the answers you provided throughout this survey, we would very much like to hear from you. Please contact the research team via: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

## 2.2 Survey of Tusla-Funded Organisations

### Information on Tusla

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time. As it is important you are aware why this research is being undertaken and what it involves, further information is set out below.

Tusla has responsibility for the provision of the following wide range of services:

- Child Welfare and Protection Services, including family support services;
- Family Resource Centres and associated national programmes;
- Early years (pre-school) Inspection Services;
- Educational Welfare responsibilities, including School Completion Programmes and Home School Liaison;
- Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services;
- Services related to the psychological welfare of children.

One of the specific functions of the Agency is to ‘undertake or commission research relating to its functions’.

Tusla is committed to being a learning organisation providing evidence-informed services. As part of that commitment Tusla is in the process of developing a research function and has pledged to promote a research culture across the organisation in support of its corporate strategy.

Tusla’s research strategy supports all of the strategic objectives in its corporate plan and gives effect in particular to any and all objectives which are aimed at building knowledge, skills and capacities.

#### ***What is this research about?***

The survey is part of a research needs analysis being conducted for Tusla to identify and prioritise the research development needs of the organisation. This survey is being utilised to incorporate the views of organisations that are funded by Tusla on what they believe are the research needs of the organisation and possible issues or areas they have identified as needing further study.

The survey has been developed to capture the views of all organisations that are funded by Tusla, and while some organisation members may have participated in interviews for the purposes of this research, we welcome their participation in this survey also.

Given that this survey is about research in the Tusla organisation, we ask that, if possible, you provide information that pertains to services which are solely funded by Tusla.

### ***What am I going to be asked about?***

In this survey you will be asked about:

- Your views on what you think Tusla's research priorities should be
- Gaps in research in your area of work
- Research partnerships/collaboration.

### ***How do my answers count?***

Taking part is voluntary, but your answers will greatly help us to find out about the research needs of the organisation in terms of areas requiring research now and into the future. Your answers will assist the organisation in developing research infrastructures and coordination to support research into the future. Your answers will form part of the final report, which will provide recommendations to Tusla.

### ***How will the information be treated?***

This is an anonymous survey and will not be linked to your email address. The reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

### ***Who would I contact?***

This study is being undertaken by a research team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland, Galway on behalf of Tusla. If you require any further information about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on +353 91 495 791 or by email [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie).

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## **Background information**

### **1. What kind of service does your organisation provide with financial support from Tusla?**

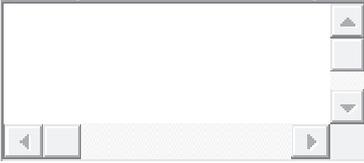


## **A focus on the research needs of your particular area of work**

### **2. In relation to the types of services funded by Tusla, as outlined in the introduction, are you aware of gaps in research in such areas that may require further study?**

- Yes
- No

**3. If you answered yes to Q2, can you elaborate on what those gaps are?**

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**4. What, in your view, are the immediate research priorities in your area (aligned to Tusla) that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**5. What, in your view, are the medium to long-term research priorities in your area (aligned to Tusla) that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

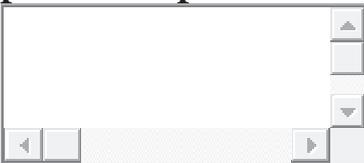
Priority Three

### Research Partnerships/Collaboration

**6. What are your views on the value of collaboration (a research partnership) on research projects which share a common focus between your organisation and Tusla?**

- Great Value
- Some Value
- No Value
- I don't know

**7. If valued, what needs to be done to support collaboration/research partnerships?**

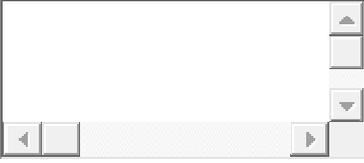
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**8. If valued, what resources can your organisation bring to such collaboration/research partnerships?**

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## Further Information

**9. If you have any further thoughts on the development of a research strategy for Tusla, please use the space below.**



We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you are interested to speak with us or to provide further information on the answers you provided throughout this survey, we would very much like to hear from you. Please contact the research team via: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

## 2.3 Survey of School Completion Programmes

### Information on Survey

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time. As it is important you are aware why this research is being undertaken and what it involves, further information is set out below.

#### ***What is this research about?***

The survey is part of a research needs analysis being conducted for Tusla to identify and prioritise the research development needs of the organisation. This survey is being utilised to incorporate the views of organisations that are associated with Tusla on what they believe are the research needs of the organisation and possible issues or areas they have identified as needing further study. The survey has been developed to capture the views of all organisations that are associated with Tusla, and while some organisation members may have participated in interviews for the purposes of this research, we welcome their participation in this survey also.

In answering the survey, SCP staff are encouraged to consult school staff, including Home School Community Liaison teachers, on their views.

#### ***What am I going to be asked about?***

In this survey you will be asked about:

- What you think Tusla's research priorities should be
- Gaps in research in your area of work
- Research partnerships/collaboration

#### ***How do my answers count?***

Taking part is voluntary, but your answers will greatly help us to find out about the research needs of the organisation in terms of areas requiring research now and into the future. Your answers will inform Tusla and will assist the organisation in developing research infrastructures and coordination to support research into the future. Your answers will form part of the final report, which will provide recommendations to Tusla.

#### ***How will the information be treated?***

This is an anonymous survey and will not be linked to your email address. The reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

#### ***Who would I contact?***

This study is being undertaken by a research team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland, Galway on behalf of Tusla. If you require any further information about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on +353 91 495 791 or by email: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

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## Background information

**1. What kind of service does your organisation provide?**

### A focus on the research needs of your particular area of work

**2. Through the course of your organisation's work, are you aware of gaps in research relevant to Tusla's work that may require further study?**

- Yes  
 No

**3. If you answered yes to Q2, can you elaborate on what those gaps are?**

**4. What, in your view, are the immediate research priorities in your area that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**5. What, in your view, are the medium to long-term research priorities in your area that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

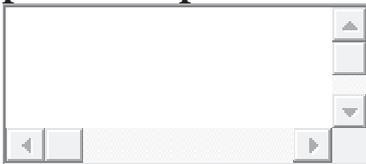
Priority Three

## Research Partnerships/Collaboration

**6. What are your views on the value of collaboration (a research partnership) on research projects which share a common focus between your organisation and Tusla?**

- Great Value
- Some Value
- No Value
- I don't know

**7. If valued, what needs to be done to support collaboration/research partnerships?**

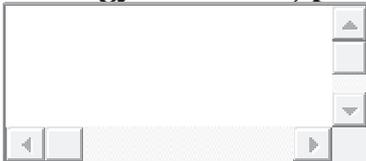
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**8. If valued, what resources can your organisation bring to such collaboration/research partnerships?**

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## Further Information

**9. If you have any further thoughts on the development of a research strategy for Tusla, please use the space below.**

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We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you are interested to speak with us or to provide further information on the answers you provided throughout this survey, we would very much like to hear from you. Please contact the research team via: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

## 2.4 Survey of Family Resource Centres

### Information on Tusla

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time. As it is important you are aware why this research is being undertaken and what it involves, further information is set out below.

As you are aware, one of Tusla's main functions is to support all Family Resource Centres (FRCs) and associated national programmes, through the Child and Family Agency's Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme.

In addition, Tusla has a specific responsibility to 'undertake or commission research relating to its functions'. Tusla is committed to being a learning organisation providing evidence-informed services. As part of that commitment, Tusla is in the process of developing a research function and has pledged to promote a research culture across the organisation in support of its corporate strategy.

Tusla's research strategy supports all of the strategic objectives in its corporate plan and gives effect in particular to any and all objectives which are aimed at building knowledge, skills and capacities.

#### ***What is this research about?***

The survey is part of a research needs analysis being conducted for Tusla to identify and prioritise the research development needs of the organisation. This survey is being utilised to incorporate the views of all FRCs that are funded by Tusla on what they believe are the research needs of the organisation and possible issues or areas they have identified as needing further study.

#### ***What am I going to be asked about?***

In this survey you will be asked about:

- What you think Tusla's research priorities should be;
- Gaps in research in your area of work.

#### ***How do my answers count?***

Taking part is voluntary, but your answers will greatly help us to find out about the research needs of the organisation in terms of areas requiring research now and into the future. Your answers will assist the organisation in developing research infrastructures and coordination to support research into the future. Your answers will form part of the final report, which will provide recommendations to Tusla.

#### ***How will the information be treated?***

This is an anonymous survey and will not be linked to your email address. The reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

**Who would I contact?**

This study is being undertaken by a research team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at National University of Ireland, Galway on behalf of Tusla. If you require any further information about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on +353 91-495791 or by email: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

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**Background information**

**1. In which city/county are you based?**

**A focus on the research needs of your particular area of work**

**2. In relation to the services provided by your FRC, are you aware of gaps in research in such areas that may require further study?**

- Yes
- No

**3. If you answered yes to Q2, can you elaborate on what those gaps are?**



**4. What, in your view, are the immediate research priorities in your area that may require research?**

Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

**5. What, in your view, are the medium to long-term research priorities in your area that may require research?**

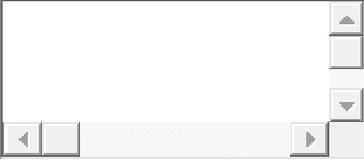
Priority One

Priority Two

Priority Three

## Further Information

**6. If you have any further thoughts on the development of a research strategy for Tusla, please use the space below.**



We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you are interested to speak with us or to provide further information on the answers you provided throughout this survey, we would very much like to hear from you. Please contact the research team via: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)



# TUSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

### Information for Young People

The UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at NUI Galway is currently involved in a research project for Tusla – Ireland’s Child and Family Agency. The main purpose of the study is to help Tusla to plan their research priorities over the next number of years.

In order to understand what those priorities should be, we would like to include the views of young people in this research. We would like to find out what participants believe are major concerns affecting young people in Ireland.

Your answers will help us to find out about issues facing young people in Ireland today and will help inform Tusla of issues requiring possible research in the future. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

This is an anonymous survey, and the reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

To find out more about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on 091 495791 or by email: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie)

**We would like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Citizen Participation Unit for their help and support in developing and distributing this questionnaire.**

We want to hear your views!

*Please tell us the top three things that concern young people in Ireland.*

1.

.....  
.....  
.....

2.

.....  
.....  
.....

3.

.....  
.....  
.....



Thank you!

*Tusla is an organisation that supports children, young people and families.*



## 2.6 Parents' Survey

### Information on Survey

Dear Participant,

Answering this question will take approximately 5 minutes of your time. As it is important you are aware why this research is being undertaken and what it involves, further information is set out below.

#### ***Who is running the study?***

This study is being undertaken by a research team at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway on behalf of Tusla.

#### ***How do my answers count?***

Taking part is voluntary, but your answers will greatly help us to find out about issues facing families in Ireland today, and will help inform Tusla of issues requiring possible research in the future.

#### ***How will the information be treated?***

This is an anonymous survey, and the reporting of the information provided will respect the anonymity of all participants.

#### ***Who would I contact to find out more about the research?***

To find out more about the research, the research coordinator in the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre in NUI Galway is Dr Rosemary Crosse, who can be contacted on 091 495791 or by email: [rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie](mailto:rosemary.crosse@nuigalway.ie).

### Tusla Overview

#### ***What is Tusla?***

Tusla is Ireland's dedicated Child and Family Agency, with responsibility for improving well-being and outcomes for children. To that end Tusla is charged with:

- Supporting and promoting the development, welfare and protection of children, and the effective functioning of families.
- Offering care and protection for children in circumstances where their parents have not been able to, or are unlikely to, provide the care that a child needs. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the Agency is required to maintain and develop the services needed in order to deliver these supports to children and families, and to provide certain services for the psychological welfare of children and their families.
- Ensuring that every child in the State attends school or otherwise receives an education, and for providing education welfare services to support and monitor children's attendance, participation and retention in education.
- Ensuring that the best interests of the child guide all decisions affecting individual children.

- Consulting children and families so that they help to shape the agency's policies and services.
- Strengthening interagency cooperation to ensure seamless services responsive to needs.
- Undertaking research relating to its functions, and providing information and advice to the Minister regarding those functions.
- Commissioning services relating to the provision of child and family services.

The Child and Family Agency's services include a range of universal and targeted services:

- Child protection and welfare services
- Educational Welfare Services
- Psychological Services
- Alternative care
- Family and Locally-based Community Supports
- Early Years Services
- Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based-violence Services

## Parents' Views

**1. In which city/county are you based?**

**2. Given what we have described Tusla's role to be, please outline three issues affecting families in Ireland that you believe Tusla should think about in their plans for future research (i.e., three issues affecting families that need to be prioritised for research).**

1.
2.
3.

Thank you for taking the time to answer this question.

## Appendix 3: Interview Analysis Templates

### 3.1 Tusla Management

#### AREA 1 – Research Culture

- How do they use research currently? (Short description)
- Is research valued? Yes/No; expand on answer.
- Enablers to the use of research.
- Barriers to the use of research.

#### AREA 2 – Gaps and Priorities

- Identified gaps in research.
- Priorities for research – short and long-term.

#### AREA 3 – Capacity and Collaboration

- What capacity for research do they have?
- Developments in research capacity.
- Barriers to developing a research capacity.

Views on collaborative research: Is it viable/achievable? Yes/No

Enablers to developing collaborative research relationships

Barriers to developing collaborative relationships

Miscellaneous points made

Please analyse, bearing in mind:

A categorisation of research requirements based on clusters or themes aligned to Tusla services and functions and prioritisation of these research requirements in these areas.

What research is required in each of the following areas?

- Child protection and welfare
- Alternative care services
- Family and community support
- Educational welfare services
- Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence

And

What research is required in each of Tusla's functional areas? (Finance, Legal, HR, Communications, etc.)

## 3.2 Tusla-Funded Organisations

### Gaps and Priorities

- Identified gaps in research.
- Priorities for research – short and long-term.

### Collaboration/Research Partnerships

- Views on collaborative research / research partnerships: is it viable / achievable? Yes / No.
- Enablers to developing collaborative research relationships.
- Barriers to developing collaborative relationships.
- Miscellaneous points made.

## 3.3 Government Departments and HIQA

- Thoughts on collaborative research?
- Current research projects in your department that relate to Tusla.
- Research in your department that can advance Tusla's knowledge.
- Research in Tusla that can advance your department's knowledge.
- Research which Tusla should focus on.
- Thoughts on the establishment of a research partnership.
- Barriers: what is needed to further a research partnership?

## Appendix 4: Survey Analysis

### 4.1 Parents Survey Analysis

As seen in Appendix 2, section 2.6, parents were asked to identify three issues affecting families in Ireland today. Table 1 below presents answers given by parents (n=362), and the figure shown reflects the percentage of overall responses given.

| <b>Tusla-related issues identified</b>   | <b>% of responses given</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Alternative Care</b><br>(fostering and adoption, post-adoption )  | 1.3                         |
| <b>Parenting Support</b><br>(effective parenting, parenting skills/courses, parents with addictions, single parents, support for new parents, separating parents, working parents, diversity of parents, language barriers )   | 4.2                         |
| <b>Domestic Violence</b><br>(violence; alcohol abuse)  | 0.9                         |
| <b>Childcare</b><br>(costs/affordable, quality, options/choices, after-school, working families, early years, social interaction)  | 3.9                         |
| <b>Early Intervention</b><br>(Parents early intervention, health, education and well-being)  | 1.1                         |
| <b>Child Protection/ Neglect</b><br>(child safety, well-being and health, neglect, protection, care, abuse, child in care, safety, waiting time, timely manner assessment, children at risk)   | 4 / 1.3                     |
| <b>Family Support</b><br>(support services, voices of the children, parents' rights, welfare, coordination of support work, bereavement, marriage breakdown, care needs, improvement of family life and home environment, youth activities, access to services/communication/development, support services for crises, direct provision, child support, resilience, outcomes, new family dynamics, separation and divorce) | 5.2                         |

Table 1: Issues Identified by Parents

The principal Tusla-related issues identified by the respondents pertain to: child protection and neglect (5.3%), family support (5.2%) and parenting support (4.2%). While the percentage of parents' response rates may seem low based on the number of respondents and the fact that three issues per respondent was standard, it is important to note that responses given in some cases were not specific to Tusla's role or responsibilities, which means that some data is not pertinent to this study.

## 4.2 Family Resource Centre Survey Analysis

Table 2 below outlines the research priorities identified by the Family Resource Centres (n=38) which participated in this study. Respondents were asked to identify gaps in research and three priorities for research going forward. As with the overall findings of the study, the priorities in the case of the FRC survey emerged from the gaps identified. The figure shown reflects the percentage of overall responses given.

| <b>Research priorities identified</b>  | <b>% of responses given</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Prevention / Early Intervention</b><br>(importance of preventative services for children and families, long-term value of the preventive family support practices of FRCs, early intervention support programmes)   | 39                          |
| <b>Resources/Funding</b><br>(costings for service provision, resources necessary to successfully implement full programme, funding to fully support children and families in need, resources needed to operate FRCs appropriately, funding – how best is it utilised, funding and staffing necessary to maintain good-quality services for individual FRCs, as the needs vary so much )  | 36                          |
| <b>Foreign Nationals</b><br>(needs of foreign nationals living locally)  | 13                          |
| <b>Life Course</b><br>(importance of a whole life focus in FRCs, accurate profile of population for service provision, benefits of a whole-family, cradle-to-grave approach to service delivery, value of intergenerational work for children )  | 17                          |
| <b>Disability / Special Needs</b><br>Identification of gaps in services for children with disabilities in rural Ireland, transitions for people with disabilities.   | 9                           |
| <b>Evaluation / Outcomes</b><br>Benefits of a non-statutory organisation in supporting families. What is working well in early intervention and what needs to be changed? Soft outcomes of work that are not always captured in quantitative reporting. Impact of supporting families in local communities; home-based targeted family support service evaluations are required. Outcomes in terms of best-practice measurements required. | 87                          |
| <b>Parent Supports</b><br>Parenting needs assessments required, parenting programmes evaluation and identification of successful programmes in this area required.   | 13                          |
| <b>Collaboration</b><br>The outcomes of statutory and Community Services working within same organisations. The role played by wider community in supporting families and research on whether/how families/individuals fall between the gaps when agencies do not work collaboratively.  | 26                          |

Table 2: Family Resource Centre Survey Analysis

As is evident from Table 2, 87% of responses voiced a need for evaluation and outcomes research and indicated that this issue is both an immediate and medium/long-term priority. In total, 39% of participants suggested research gaps in relation to prevention and early intervention, with 35% emphasising that this issue requires an immediate priority focus in their area. Resources and funding were highlighted as requiring further research by 36% of the respondents, all of whom indicated that this issue was both an immediate and a long-term priority.

### 4.3 Youth Survey Analysis

Given that the youth survey (n=259) was not aligned specifically to Tusla's role or responsibilities, it was decided to code the issues raised by the youth according to the five national outcomes of the 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014–2020' (BOBF).

#### **Comhairle na nÓg**

##### ***Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental well-being.***

Issues included lack of sporting and leisure facilities; mental health; drug, alcohol & smoking; obesity and healthy eating

*Number of Responses: 226*

##### ***Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.***

Issues included general stress with the education process, mainly centred on exam pressure

*Number of Responses: 122*

##### ***Safe and protected from harm.***

Issues included sexual health education in the context of harm reduction or prevention; social media issues in terms of bullying; and self-harm arose in a limited context, as did general safety concerns.

*Number of Responses: 84*

##### ***Economic security and opportunity.***

Issues included employment now and in the future; money; and homelessness

*Number of Responses: 80*

##### ***Connected, respected and contributing to their world.***

Issues included adult perceptions; some agency issues; transport; Wi-Fi; acceptance by peers; gender and equality issues; LGBT

*Number of Responses: 83*

#### **Seldom-Heard Voices – Group One**

##### ***Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental well-being.***

No issues

*Number of Responses: 0*

##### ***Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.***

One reference to education

*Number of Responses: 1*

##### ***Safe and protected from harm.***

Issues included arguing; death; kidnapping & paedophiles; and generalised concerns

*Number of Responses: 16*

##### ***Economic security and opportunity.***

Issues included money; poor people; homelessness

*Number of Responses: 9*

***Connected, respected and contributing to their world.***

Issues included discrimination; relationships

*Number of Responses: 5*

**Seldom-Heard Voices – Group Two**

***Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental well-being.***

Health mentioned in a general context

*Number of Responses: 2*

***Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.***

Education mentioned in a general context

*Number of Responses: 4*

***Safe and protected from harm.***

Men mentioned in a general context

*Number of Responses: 1*

***Economic security and opportunity***

Issues included housing; money; jobs

*Number of Responses: 3*

***Connected, respected and contributing to their world.***

Family mentioned in a general context

*Number of Responses: 1*

**Seldom-Heard Voices – Group Three**

***Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental well-being.***

Issues included general mental health issues; drugs, alcohol and smoking

*Number of Responses: 8*

***Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development.***

Issues included general education pressure

*Number of Responses: 5*

***Safe and protected from harm.***

Issue raised was bullying

*Number of Responses: 2*

***Economic security and opportunity***

Issues included money; family status; jobs; the future

*Number of Responses: 9*

***Connected, respected and contributing to their world.***

Issues included ageism; being judged and accepted; social networks

*Number of Responses: 7*



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