

# Annual Report 2024



**40 Years and Counting - Building on Strong Foundations**



**Daughters of Charity**  
Child and Family Service

Meeting the needs of families in a constantly changing world





Meeting the needs of families in a constantly changing world

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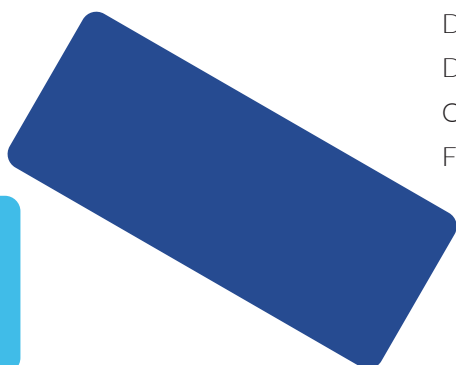
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# Chairperson's Report



I am delighted to welcome you to the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service 2024 Annual Report. This report is particularly significant for the organisation as we celebrated 40 years of providing services to children and families in November.

We strengthened our board further and were delighted to welcome Orla Gogarty who brings expertise in digital transformation and service delivery in mental health. The board spent considerable time and commitment on the development of the new strategic plan 'Empowering Futures, Bringing hope to Children and Families' in 2024. We are very grateful to David Kitching, Bassline Consultancy for his work on leading the consultations and the production of the final plan. Our strategy lays out a clear vision and roadmap for the organisation for the next 3 – 5 years and enables greater impact and growth across all services.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their tireless work and commitment and for their support to myself as Chair and to the organisation. Thanks also to the CEO, senior management, management and staff who have ensured that the mission of the organisation is at the core of the high-quality services delivered in 2024.

We cannot provide the services without the support of our funders to whom we are grateful. We continue to work in partnership with our colleagues in Tusla, DCEDIY, HSE and Pobal across the organisation.

Once again this year, our annual report continues to document the increasing adversity and challenges that children and families are experiencing in Ireland. As an organisation providing services for over 40 years to children and families most in need, the challenges are grave.

While there has been progress on the pay inequality issue, we must continue to advocate for this to be applied to all funded staff in our organisation and across the sector.

The cost of providing high quality, evidence-based services continue to increase. We must receive adequate and sustainable funding from the State to enable us to meet the increasing challenges that children and families are facing.

**Mr Ciarán Roche**

*Chair of the Board of Directors*

COMPASSION

RESPECT

FAIRNESS

HONESTY

JUSTICE

# Chief Executive Officer's Report



**2024 was a milestone year for the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service. We marked 40 years of supporting children and families and launched our new strategic plan “Empowering Futures: Bringing Hope to Children and Families” (2025–2027).**

This plan sets out a clear path for the future, focusing on children and young people, our dedicated staff, service excellence, organisational development, and our role as an advocate for families.

We supported 4,246 individuals (2,225 children and 2,021 parents/guardians) across the service in 2024.

Across all services, we experienced growth and rising demand. Our protective services supported 539 children through 309 referrals and 428 assessments with domestic violence increasing from 47% in 2023 to 50% in cases worked with in our assessment teams.

Dublin Safer Families received 79 referrals with concerning 15% of cases reporting the use of a weapon as a means of abuse. Our teams provided essential safety and support for those affected.

Our therapeutic child and family centres received 904 referrals, an 11% increase on the previous year, and delivered almost 31,000 activities ranging from one-to-one work group and online supports to case work support. There has been a 25% increase in referrals received to our centres since 2021, indicating that need is increasing in a post covid environment.

Early Childhood Development Service continued to provide high-quality care to 415 children and families. Within this, 98 children required additional supports which represents 27% of children attending and is an 8% increase on the previous year, 82 needed speech and language interventions, 19 were experiencing homelessness, and many were from families in direct provision or with English as a second language. Each child and family was met with compassion, tailored support, and opportunities to thrive.

Innovation and growth were also central to our work in 2024. We fully implemented our Salesforce system across early years services, developed new roles and services in Arklow, Jobstown, and Mosney, and established new assessment centres in Louth and Meath. Parent and toddler groups expanded to four centres, with plans to extend further in 2025, while

online webinars and parenting programmes offered families flexible and accessible support.

We also strengthened our voice at a national level, contributing to forums on family justice, parenting, early intervention, and children's rights. Through the “Save Our Services” CEO group, we played an active role in securing pay restoration for staff across the sector, a significant achievement that reflects the value of the work carried out every day by committed professionals.

The needs of families are becoming more complex. We are extremely concerned about the challenges that families are facing in a system that is failing them evidenced by child protection reports to Tusla holding steady as in previous year, parental mental health emerging as a key concern and 32% of cases in our assessment teams being unable to close due to ongoing safety and harm issues and requiring further safety planning.

The annual report identifies that families that are already struggling to cope are being re-traumatised through a failing, broken system.

An urgent whole of government approach is needed with a focus on supporting children and families early on and at all stages of their lives.

Despite this, we continue to see extraordinary resilience in the children and families we serve, detailed in the case studies in the report and remarkable dedication from our staff. These challenges highlight not only the urgency of systemic change, but also the importance of the work we do together to make a lasting difference.

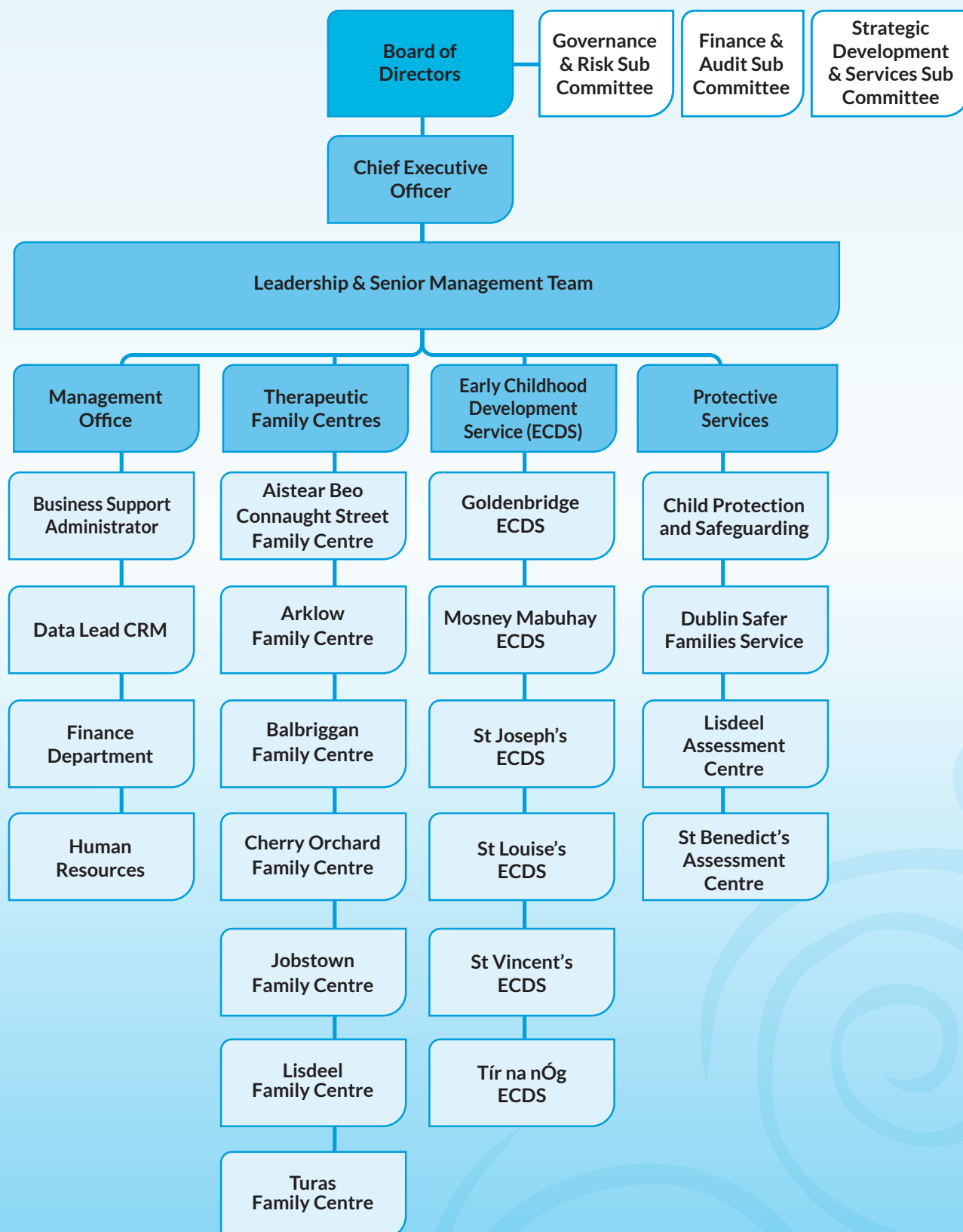
With over 40 years of service, a strong strategic vision, and a committed and skilled workforce, the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service is ready to embrace the future, empower families, and continue bringing hope where it is most needed.

**Dr Tracey A Monson**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# Our Mission, Vision & Values



# Organisational Structure





# Our Impact in 2024 at a Glance





# Who We Are and What We Do



## Assessment Service

- ◆ Our Assessment Teams work in partnership with Tusla. We only take referrals from Tusla social work departments.
- ◆ We will talk about what has happened to make us concerned and what is the impact on the child, including things that may be happening in the family that make the problem harder to deal with.
- ◆ The SOS model we use is a strengths-based approach and is designed to enable us to carry out child protection work with a rigorous focus on child safety and in partnership with children, families and their wider networks of support.
- ◆ We will empower families to create changes that may require a referral to one of our family centres for therapeutic intervention and / or refer families back to Tusla for a Social Work intervention.



## Dublin Safer Families Service (DSFS)

- ◆ We are a Domestic Violence and Abuse Service within the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service (DoCCFS).
- ◆ We work with parents and children to increase family safety and also prevent and stop violence.
- ◆ Families are referred to DSFS by the social work department.
- ◆ We work under legislation which strives to protect the rights, safety and welfare of children. We are particularly attentive to the impact on children (up to the age of 18) who experience abuse and violence.



## Early Childhood Development Service (ECDS)

- ◆ The DoCCFS provides quality childhood care and education to children between 2 and 6 years old. Our centres operate the ECCE scheme which entitles your child to 3 hours of free preschool education 5 days per week for 38 weeks of the year.
- ◆ The National Childcare Scheme (NCS) is also operational in all ECDS Centres.
- ◆ Our staff are professionally qualified and provided with ongoing training, support and supervision. All staff are trained in delivering the HighScope Preschool Curriculum.
- ◆ Children attending our service have the opportunity to play, learn, socialise and develop their independence skills in a safe, child centred, friendly and nurturing environment.



## Family Centres

- ◆ No two families are the same; we know parenting can be a challenge, and we are here to help. We know that it's easy to feel confused, isolated and helpless when family problems arise. We aim to bring hope to children and families that their situation can improve.
- ◆ We accept referrals from Families, GP, Public Health Nurse, Schools, Tusla Social Workers and other professional services.
- ◆ Our services include - Home Visits, Walk & Talk, Online Support & Sessions, Summer Projects, Drop-in Facility, Group Work and Tailor-made approach to meet family's needs.
- ◆ Areas worked with can include parent / child relationship issues, school refusal, bullying, parenting support and anxiety.
- ◆ Work with children in care and attachment and resilience skills.

# Feedback From Families We've Worked With

“

*Thank you! Your assessment precipitated a change in our son's life for the better.*

“

*My child has loved coming here and it helped them so much.*

”

*Keep up the good work and superb support. Thank you!*

“

*As parents we were given the skills to parent our sons behavioural issues. This was invaluable and empowered us as parents to know the correct way to respond / react to problems arising on a daily basis.*

“

*I can't believe how much you do for the kids it's amazing!*

*Heroes are hard to find in the world around us, but in Turas, my son and our little family found our hero in staff name.*

”

*I learned to keep myself calm and have more understanding of my needs.*

”

*Our worker was very patient with us and our child could open up to him and his colleague and was comfortable to trust them.*

”

“

*It helped me know who I am, good things about me, how strong I am. It helped me believe in and respect myself. It makes me bold and takes away the fear in me.*

*A wonderful centre of underestimated brilliance. Full to the brim of the most, caring, supportive, understanding, non-judgemental staff.*

”

*Everything was explained nicely and clearly, very nice, always in touch, and very supportive. I was very pleased with the service given.*

”

*The minute I walked in the door of this centre I got a great feeling.*

”



# Compliments and Complaints





# Celebrating 40 years of supporting children and families 1984 – 2024 and Launch of Strategic Plan ‘Empowering Futures – Bringing Hope to Children and Families’

## Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service – 40-year celebration (1984- 2024)

On the 7th November 2024 the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service came together with members of the Daughters of Charity community, colleagues, supporters, funders and children and families to celebrate 40 years of the organisation providing services in Ireland.

The event was held in Croke Park in the heart of Dublin city. It was chosen as a fitting venue as it was just around the corner from the first service of the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service, the Sacred Heart Home, in Drumcondra. There was a wonderful energy and excitement as we welcomed 170 people to join with us to celebrate.

The focus of the day was a look back at the wonderful history and legacy of the organisation, while positioning for the future.

On the day our new strategic plan ‘*Empowering futures, Bringing Hope to Children and Families*’ was launched, setting out a clear roadmap for the organisation to continue to meet the needs of children and families in a constantly changing world.

The day was opened by a welcome message from Minister Roderic O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Youth, Disability, Equality and Integration, who took time from his very busy schedule in the run up to election week to record a touching tribute



and welcome. The Minister spoke of the wonderful legacy of the organisation and how it played an essential role in meeting the needs of children and families over the past 40 years. He paid tribute to the committed and professional staff teams working across the organisation.

We were privileged to have the Ombudsman for Children, Dr Niall Muldoon to launch our strategic plan for the next 3 years ‘*Empowering Futures, Bringing Hope to Children and Families*’. The strategic plan focuses on 5 key objectives, The Children, Young People and Families we serve, Our Valued Teams, Excellence in Our Services, An Effective Organisation, Influence and External Relations.





Dr Muldoon highlighted how the organisation is needed now more than ever and discussed some of the challenges facing children and young people in Irish society, including access to mental health services, assessments of need and early intervention and prevention and the housing and homelessness crisis. He highlighted that while Ireland is a rich country and in general children and young people's lives have improved over the past 20 years, there is a significant investment and commitment required by Government and the State to children, young people and families to stop the current downward trend.

Our Chief Executive Officer Dr Tracey Monson paid tribute to the staff, members of the Board and supporters past and present that had contributed to the organisation over the past 40 years, and paid special tribute to Mr John Furey, RIP, former chair for his wisdom and visionary leadership.

The Strategic Plan, its development and its 5 objectives were discussed in more detail, highlighting how each enabled the organisation to fulfil its mission and vision, underpinned by the values of honesty, justice, dignity, respect and compassion.

Mr Eifion Williams, Service Director for Commissioning in Tusla then spoke about his work with the organisation over the years, specifically in the area of commissioning and securing pay increases for staff through the WRC. He highlighted the strong partnership between the DoCCFS and Tusla and the importance of our continued work together.

To close the morning, the participants were treated to a trip down memory lane, by Sr Goretti Butler, the founder and first director of the organisation and Mr Ciarán Roche, co-founder and current chair of the Board. Ciarán and Sr Goretti mapped the history of the service, from its first beginnings in Drumcondra and the various services and developments over the years, to its current status, as an organisation of over 180 staff, operating across 17 locations. The passion, vision and humility of Ciarán and Sr Goretti was a true inspiration to everyone in the room and was a wonderful reminder of the legacy and impact of the DoCCFS as we face into the future.

In the afternoon there were fire side chats with two service users one who had experienced the residential and foster care service in the DoCCFS and a parent who attended the therapeutic family centre service. Both spoke of the positive impact the service had made in their lives and DoCCFS staff were moved to hear about the work that had



*The focus of the day was a look back at the wonderful history and legacy of the organisation, while positioning for the future.*

been done to make a difference to the lives of these families. There was also a fire side chat with Colette O'Donovan who was one of the original team members in the Child and Family Service and has been working with the service over the years training and mentoring staff in the Marte Meo programme. A child also gave his feedback based on his experience of attending the service and he was also featured in a video giving the audience a tour of the family centre he attends.

In the afternoon there were presentations on the work in the assessment centres, Dublin Safer Families, the ECDS and the HighScope curriculum which is in operation in all ECDS centres. Bernard Gloster, CEO of the HSE, also sent a video message congratulating the service on 40 years in operation and there were video presentations bringing the voice of the child and the work with families to life.

The day was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with the past and to empower and re energise the organisation as we face into the future and implement our new strategic plan.



# Early Childhood Development Service - ECDS



# Early Childhood Development Service (ECDS)

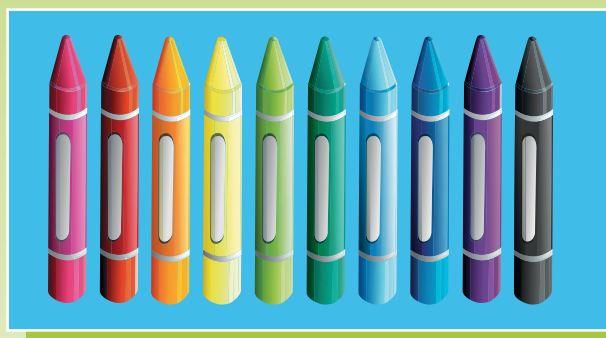
In 2024 the Early Childhood Development Service (ECDS) continued to provide high quality care and education services to children and families attending the local centres. The ECDS has evolved to become a whole family support service rather than a sole focus of education and school readiness.

ECDS centres have carried out home visits, ran parent /toddler groups, signposted families to our DoCCFS family centres and provided parenting webinars for families attending the service. In some ECDS centres the therapeutic family centres have run groups and provided play therapy interventions for children attending the early years centre. Staff have also trained in interventions such as Theraplay, Capacitor, HighScope and Marte Meo so they are better equipped and skilled to deal with the complex issues that face families in an ever-changing society.

All centres were involved in the strategy development and attended the strategy launch in November at an event which also marked the forty-year celebration of the organisation. It is evident that the role of an ECDS worker and ECDS Centre Manager have developed and evolved to meet the needs of families and to include more support to the family, advocacy work, the provision of advice and information, as well as signposting families to other organisations in areas especially families that have limited or no networks and are socially isolated.

The ECDS centres continue to be hives of activity and there is a high demand for the service with long waiting lists for centres. From the outcome measures completed with Trinity Research in Childcare Centre (TRiCC) there is evidence that after attending the ECDS children are school ready and able to manage the transition from pre-school to primary school. The children have developed independence, social and coping skills and are able to resolve conflict and manage their emotional regulation.

The use of the HighScope curriculum supports children's development in all these areas and the ECDS workers are trained to implement the curriculum while keeping the child at the centre of the work, supporting the child to make choices and plan their learning in the centre. In some areas

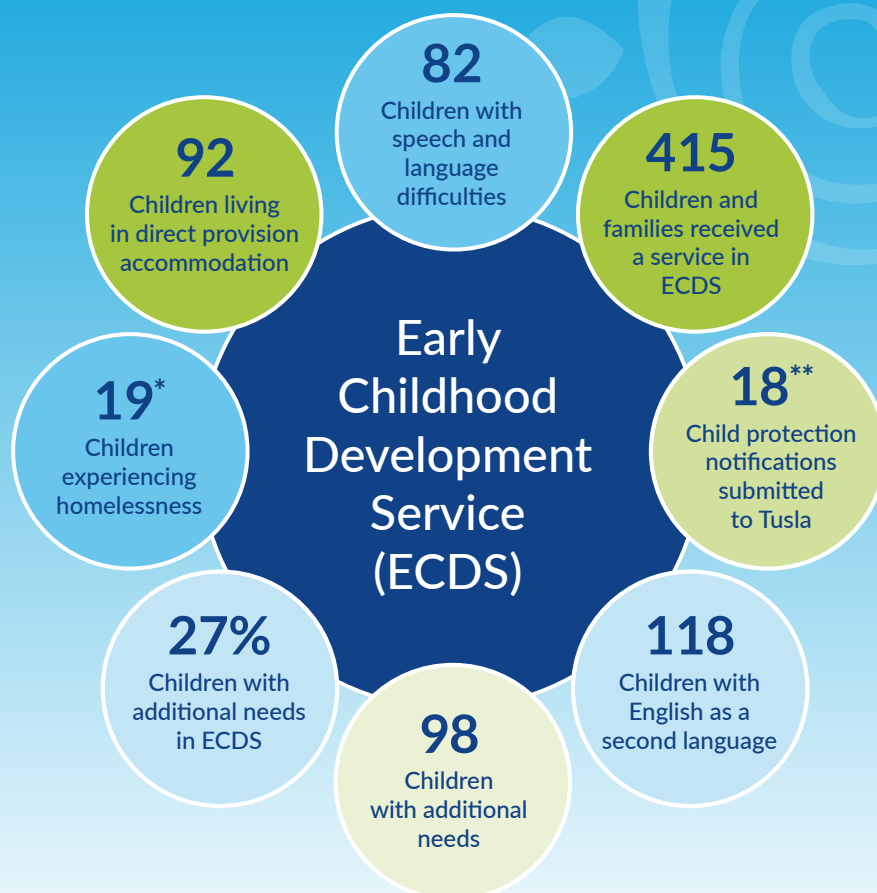


where the DoCCFS offer family centre support there is no community childcare provision which is something that the DoCCFS would like to address if funding was provided so a more wraparound service for families could be provided in areas such as Swords, Balbriggan and Arklow. There continues to be increases in the number of children presenting with additional needs and speech and language difficulties and an increase in children attending with English as a second language. More complex issues such as children experiencing homelessness and being in direct provision have also seen an increase in 2024.

Many children attending the ECDS are on waiting lists for assessment of need, speech and language and psychological support, it is very challenging for families attending the ECDS when these basic interventions are not provided for children in the early years of their life when timely interventions can have greatest impact.

In ECDS in 2023 19% of children presented with additional needs. This figure increased to 27% in 2024.





\*The figure of 19 children across the six ECDS centres does not include hidden homelessness such as families living with extended family members, sharing living space with other families or family living in sub-standard accommodation with overcrowding, poor ventilation, damp and poor accessibility for prams/ buggies and wheelchairs.

\*\*In 2024 there were 18 CPWRFs (Child protection and welfare referrals) submitted to Tusla from the six ECDS centres, also 25 child protection concerns were logged in the ECDS centres.



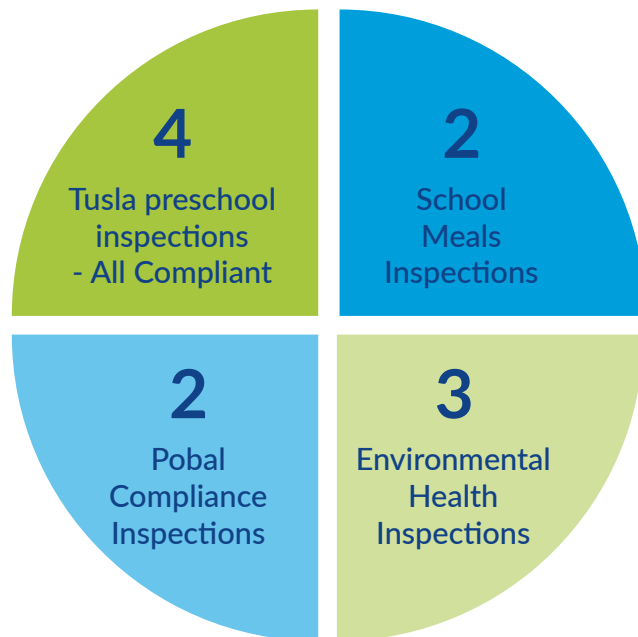


## A High-Quality Compliant Service

Pre-school provision is a highly regulated sector, with Early Childhood Development Centres being subject to a number of Inspections to ensure compliance and good governance is in place for all centres. The ECDS is subject to regular Tusla Pre School Inspections, Environmental Health Inspections as centres provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks for the children attending, as well as Pobal compliance visits. School meals inspections, and Early Years Education Inspections, in 2024 the following inspections took place across the service.

“

*The ECDS  
is subject to  
regular Tusla  
Pre School  
Inspections*



# Case Study for the Early Childhood Development Service



## Supporting a Family: Going above and beyond

*All names have been anonymized to protect the identity of the clients.*

Over the past two years, one of our Early Childhood Development Centres has supported a young girl and her mother through an incredibly challenging period marked by grief, trauma, and isolation. Last summer, the family experienced the sudden death of the child's uncle—her mother's only sibling in Ireland. This devastating loss left both mother and daughter heartbroken. Our team provided emotional support, worked closely with social workers, and offered a compassionate space for both to process their grief.

Just weeks later, the child's father—though separated from her mother—also passed away. This second loss was overwhelming. The mother, a migrant with no close family or support network in Ireland, was left navigating single parenthood, grief, and addiction recovery—largely alone and with limited English.

She struggled to navigate the system to have her brother's body released for cremation. She also lacked the funds for the funeral. Our team supported her through every step helping with application paperwork, sending emails on her behalf, and advocating for her needs. The lead teacher reached out to a local funeral director, who kindly intervened to ensure her brother's cremation could go ahead.

When the ashes were available the mother was unable to collect them so the centre manager and centre staff collected them on her behalf. This mother was finally supported to bring her brother home.

This story reflects the depth of support we provide—not just to children, but to entire families during their most vulnerable moments. We strive to provide a wraparound service to families to support them on their life journey and this example illustrates that the early years' service can be involved from cradle to the grave in our work to support families.







40 years and counting – the memories of a parent who attended an ECDS centre as a child and now her own child is attending the same centre.

I've always had great memories of the nursery, even when we left and we passed by staff outside of the school they remembered everybody and always had time to stop for a chat. Years later when I was in transition year, I did 2 weeks work experience in the nursery and was amazed how good the staff were with the children and decided that's what I wanted to do after I left school as I could see the passion staff had.

Over the years as my nephews attended, I always loved collecting them from the nursery everyone was always so kind and welcoming and I always loved going for a visit. I never even questioned when I had my own daughter where I would send her to pre-school as I always knew exactly, I would be sending her to Goldenbridge nursery. I couldn't wait for her to experience the same memories I had once made many years ago. My daughter absolutely loves her teachers they are all amazing and very supportive. Each and every member of the staff have played a huge role in helping my daughter gain confidence and teach her things she needs in life and I will be forever grateful to this amazing team of girls who go above and beyond for every child in the centre. Goldenbridge nursery has always been a very special place for my family, and I hope we can continue our traditions into the future.

This parent has now gone on to study and complete their QQI level 5 qualification in Childcare and now is working in the centre as an AIM worker and this demonstrates the importance of building strong foundations and the influential role that our centres have in the lives of the local communities we serve.

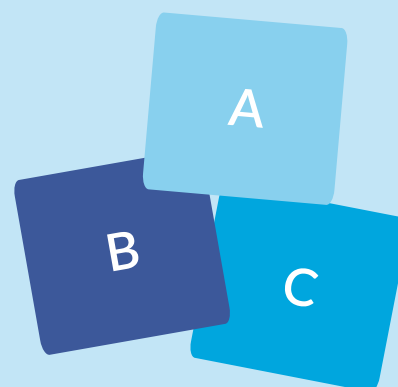






## ECDS Emerging Trends

- ◆ Increase in parents requesting an extra year in our ECDS centres as there is often no place for their children with additional needs in local primary schools. There is an increase in over age exemptions being applied for.
- ◆ Increase in pre-school children presenting that are not toilet trained and toilet training is often instigated and supported by the ECDS staff training.
- ◆ Increase in families from new communities coming to centres, often with no family support. The ECDS is often first point of contact with services and provide a lot of support, advice and information to these families.
- ◆ Increase in the number of families experiencing homelessness, particularly in the city centre and those leaving direct provision services. Families are granted leave to remain in Ireland but cannot find a place to live outside of the campus and experience homelessness.
- ◆ Overall, there is an increasing demand for more parenting support as families' lives become more complex. There is less support available from extended family and long waiting lists for assessment and support services.
- ◆ Increase in challenging behaviour reports in the ECDS centres due to the challenges families are experiencing and inability to access supports.





# Therapeutic Family Centres

In the therapeutic family centres, there was an 11% increase in referrals in 2024 across our eight family centres which is in line with our mission and values to meet children and parents where they are at and to make our referral process as easy and accessible as possible.

The amount of information required from referrers at the initial point of referral has been reduced to support ease of access and be a trauma sensitive document. Digital technology has been incorporated into our new referral form by using a QR code to access our referral policy document. The reduction in paper will help offset our carbon footprint into the future. The feedback has been positive from our stakeholders regarding the ease of referral.

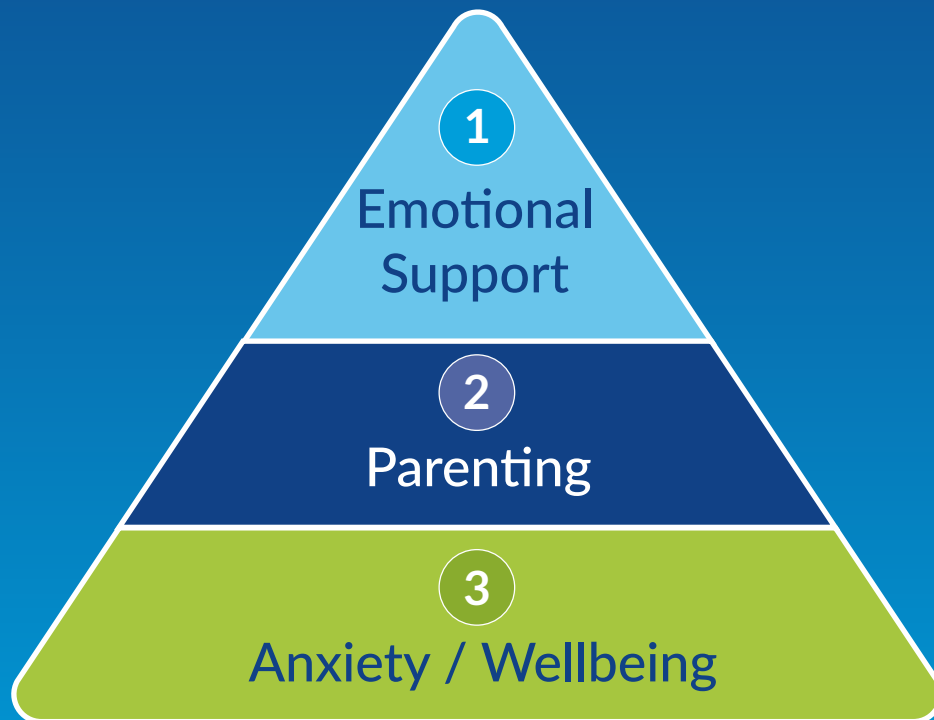
Following a referral form being submitted, further information is gathered when the case has progressed to allocation, this further information is to ensure the most appropriate mode of therapeutic support is meeting the client's needs, where they are at.



Scan here to meet a family worker and see what they do.



# Top Three Reasons for Referrals in 2024

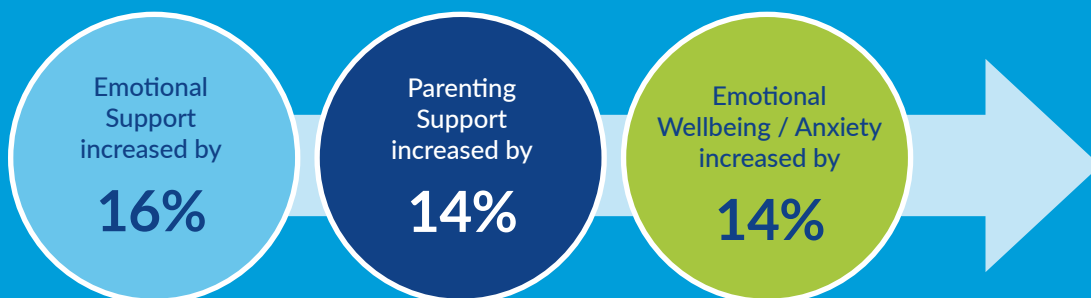


Other reasons for referral included behavioural difficulties, trauma, family support, children in care and child emotional abuse.

## Support for children and parents – a whole family approach

Our family centres continue to respond by running children's groups for anxiety and building resilience. Social skills and socialisation camps also carried out during school breaks and holidays for children attending our family centres as many children struggle with the lack of routine and structure.

The therapeutic family centres continue to support parents individually and in groups using therapeutic approaches such as Circle of Security, Marte Meo therapy, Theraplay, Capacitar, Parenting When Separated, Parenting Children with Additional Needs, and the Solihull Approach to name a few of the programmes we use.



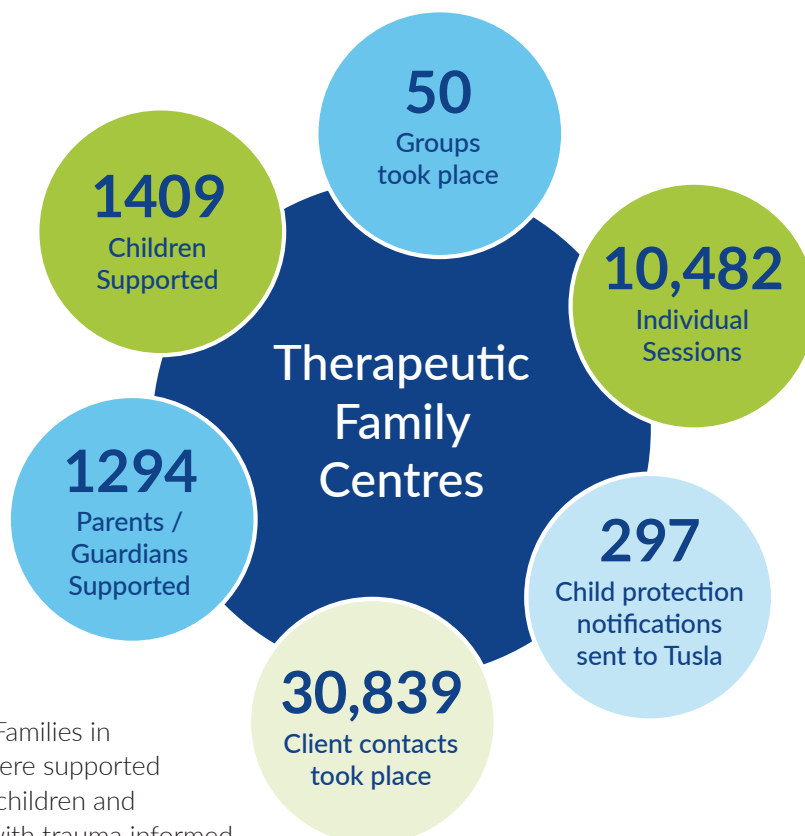
An increase in all three of the top reasons for referrals to the therapeutic family centres in 2023 was noted again for 2024.



Various supports are offered to parents in the form of individual therapeutic parenting support, therapeutic parenting group support as well as regular parental review meetings to support the work with the referred child. Over 31,056 activities took place within our therapeutic family centres during 2024. 10,482 individual sessions took place in the family centres.

Session activities include face to face, online support and sessions, walk and talk sessions, drop-ins, group work, telephone support and outreach sessions with children and parents.

Across the family centres, 50 therapeutic and psychoeducational groups took place to support parents, children and families. Families in the international protection programme were supported with therapeutic groups running for both children and parents with a specific focus on working with trauma informed responses to help families with their traumatic experiences. These groups were facilitated both in person and through webinars. These groups are open to all clients attending our service and to those on our waiting lists that are deemed appropriate.



Scan this QR code to visit one of our Family Centres



## What is a Meitheal Meeting?

The word Meitheal comes from an old Irish word to describe how neighbours came together to assist in saving crops or other tasks in the local community.

Meitheal is a way of working to ensure that children and families receive support and help in an integrated and coordinated way that is easily accessible and timely. Meitheal meetings bring together people and services who want to support a child or parent so that they can make changes to their life that they want and need.



Attending Meitheal meetings is a vital part of the support that the service provides for families, to ensure there is a wraparound support network in place to meet the families' needs when required. The centres in Jobstown and Lisdeel Family Centres attended the majority of Meitheal meetings.





## Case Study: Supporting Emotional Wellbeing and Rebuilding Trust - Building on Strong Foundations in the Therapeutic Relationship

*All names have been anonymized to protect the identity of the clients.*

A young person was referred for support due to significant challenges related to emotional wellbeing, persistent anger, conflict within the home, and a strained relationship with their primary caregiver. Their early development had been impacted by multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including exposure to domestic abuse, parental addiction, and the long-term absence of one parent. These experiences contributed to difficulties with emotional regulation, selective mutism, and interpersonal trust.

The young person presented with high levels of distress, emotional withdrawal, and resistance to verbal communication, particularly in the home or authority-led settings. The relationship with their remaining parent was marked by frequent conflict, miscommunication, and emotional disconnection. Previous attempts at intervention had not resulted in meaningful or sustained progress. The young person's reluctance to engage was compounded by a history of negative encounters with clinical services, leading to deep-seated distrust and minimal participation in structured support environments.

### Approach and Intervention

A trauma-informed, person-centred approach was adopted, with a primary focus on creating a psychologically safe and trusting environment. This foundation enabled meaningful therapeutic engagement with a young person who had previously shown resistance to support services due to past negative experiences.

### Therapeutic Engagement and Relationship Building

Over an 18-month period, the young person engaged in 52 one-to-one sessions. The therapeutic relationship was developed gradually through shared interests, consistent boundaries, non-judgemental listening, and respectful exploration of thoughts, behaviours, and emotional experiences. This relational approach enabled the young person to begin expressing long-held feelings of mistrust, isolation, and a sense of being misunderstood by peers, adults, and professionals.

### Advocacy and Support for Autonomy

Although initially sceptical of professional input, the young person began to demonstrate trust by actively seeking support and advocacy in key decision-making forums. They were supported to participate in multi-agency meetings and to express their views on education, wellbeing, and personal goals. Recognising that mainstream education was no longer a supportive environment—primarily due to feelings of being disrespected by teaching staff—the young person was guided toward alternative pathways. These included access to youth diversion schemes and life skills programmes, chosen in alignment with their own preferences and needs. This collaborative and empowering approach allowed the young person to regain a sense of agency and to make informed choices about their future, while still being held within a safe and consistent therapeutic relationship.

### Progress, Impact, and Outcomes

The young person's underlying difficulties with low self-confidence and selective mutism, particularly within the home environment, were closely linked to internalised feelings of shame





## Case Study: Supporting Emotional Wellbeing and Rebuilding Trust - Building on Strong Foundations in the Therapeutic Relationship

*All names have been anonymized to protect the identity of the clients.*



and a perceived inability to communicate effectively with their main caregiver. A pivotal moment in the intervention was a final joint session, during which the practitioner advocated on behalf of the young person. This session provided the primary parent with valuable insight into their child's emotional experience and fostered greater empathy and understanding. Parallel support was also offered to the parent throughout the intervention, contributing to improved family dynamics.

A notable reduction in anger and aggression was observed during periods of consistent therapeutic engagement. Conversely, these behaviours tended to intensify when there were breaks in service, highlighting the importance of sustained and consistent engagement in the therapeutic process. By the conclusion of the intervention, the young person had begun to demonstrate increased openness to ongoing mental health support, expressing that they felt respected, heard, and genuinely valued within the therapeutic relationship.

### Conclusion

This case demonstrates the significant positive impact of consistent, empathetic, and appropriately challenging therapeutic intervention for a young person experiencing complex emotional and relational difficulties. A trauma-informed, relational approach—grounded in trust-building, creative communication methods, and systemic involvement—proved essential in supporting the young person's emotional growth and development. Through gradual engagement, advocacy, and collaborative planning with both the young person and their caregiver, the intervention enabled the development of self-awareness, emotional insight, and improved relational functioning. The young person's increased openness to support and enhanced emotional expression highlight the resilience that can emerge when individuals are provided with a safe, attuned, and supportive therapeutic environment.

This case reinforces the value of flexible, relationship-based practice in addressing the long-term impact of early adversity and promoting sustained emotional wellbeing.



## Case Study: Therapeutic Support - Building on Strong Foundations

*The names of some members of this family have been anonymized to protect their identity.*

**Though some of the names of this family have been changed all of us who attended our service conference last year will vividly remember the interview held by the Head of Operations with the mother of this family Fiona.**

At the conference Fiona spoke with great gratitude of her experience of attending Aistear Beo-Connaught Street Family Centre. In recent contact with Fiona, in preparation for this case study, she spoke about her shyness and that she was very wary of speaking on that day but the support of her family worker and her wish to share her experiences motivated her to speak at the conference.

She noted how the conference arrangements reflected her experiences of the service, that rather than standing on a podium, herself and another participant were sitting on comfortable chairs to facilitate a fireside chat. She noted that it had felt safe to share her experiences and that she had really wished to acknowledge the work carried out by the service and to highlight the wonderful workers involved in this.

This family's journey with the service began with a referral to the Family Centre from their son's school identifying concerns for his sister and for Fiona given his behaviours at home. Of her contact with the Centre Fiona noted her initial call from the Manager of the Centre and how prompt this response was and that she felt listened to and cared for. She noted that this paved the way for their engagement with the Family Worker. In the initial work with her son, Fiona noted how the Family Worker helped identify his strengths and resilience. Fiona's sons engagement with the service was appropriately quite short. However, in contact with parents the need for additional support for the family was identified. The Mental Health services involved with this boy had identified the need for parents to attend an NVR Group which father, Paul, was able to attend however Fiona was unable to attend that group and she noted she felt blamed by services about this. The Centre in keeping with our role to provide a responsive systemic service to families offered Fiona an individual NVR programme, thus ensuring that both parents would be similarly resourced. Fiona noted the great advantage this individual NVR programme which she felt was tailor made to them. Fiona was encouraged to share resources with Paul and there were shared meetings to aid parents' positive communication with Luke. Though there remained some ongoing difficulties parents identified that they felt much better resourced in this.

Parents then referred their son to the Family Centre. He had attended a number of services previously and had found services frustrating and was wary of services. Fiona noted the efforts made by the Family Worker to engage him. Starting where he was at which initially involved him in making pizza as he loves pizza. He attended 18 sessions and then chose to close. He expressed that his sessions in the Family Centre were a positive experience, and he had felt heard when he made the choice to end.

The experience of feeling heard by the Family Centre was something Fiona highlighted. She traced this from the initial call with the Manager to the care and attentiveness shown to her and her family by the Family Worker. She noted the differences between this and their experience of other services. She noted that their experience of other services had been that there was just one model of work offered, and it had often felt more like a textbook intervention than a

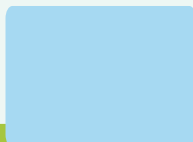
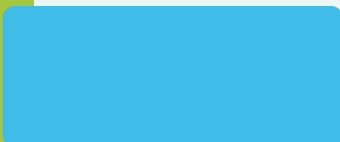
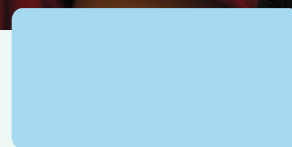
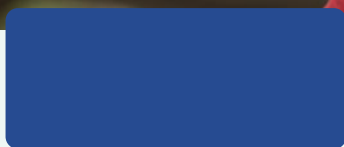


## Case Study: Therapeutic Support - Building on Strong Foundations

*The names of some members of this family have been anonymized to protect their identity.*

live resource. She spoke of her experience of feeling blamed by other services. She stressed that in comparison in the Family Centre the Family Worker provided a range of support which was attuned to their needs. She noted how it was evident that the Family Worker really listened to them and gave time to reflect between sessions and asked the questions they needed to be asked which opened up their experiences and widened their perspectives. Fiona noted the sense of hope they got from their engagement with the Family Centre and how they were perceived as a family unit with strengths and potential and throughout were shown respect and compassion.

Fiona also noted the time given for this work, and that this reinforced the sense of being seen and heard and valued and gave them the opportunity to make the changes they needed to make. Fiona's ongoing acknowledgement of the work undertaken by the Centre is testament to how our work can make such a difference even in situations in which there are some ongoing complications.





## Trends in Therapeutic Family Centres

- ◆ Increase in children and parents impacted by trauma was a theme during 2024. A 'trauma working group' was set up in 2023 and continued throughout 2024 to support our organisation to become trauma aware, informed, sensitive and responsive. Therapeutic training took place during 2024 to equip our staff to manage referrals where there is early childhood trauma.
- ◆ Increase in children presenting with mental health concerns i.e. anxiety and emotional support / wellbeing remains the highest reason for referral to our family centres, it accounts for 50% of primary reasons for referrals during 2024.
- ◆ Online webinars developed and delivered to parents throughout 2024, this model to be developed further during 2025.
- ◆ The Therapeutic Family Centres used a variety of interventions to support families depending on the reason for referral and the issues identified in the work. The type of interventions may vary from a specific approach such as play therapy, psychotherapy, family therapy, art therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy and sensory work to the use of specific programmes such as Non-Violent Resistance, Parenting programmes, Circle of Security and Signs of Safety.

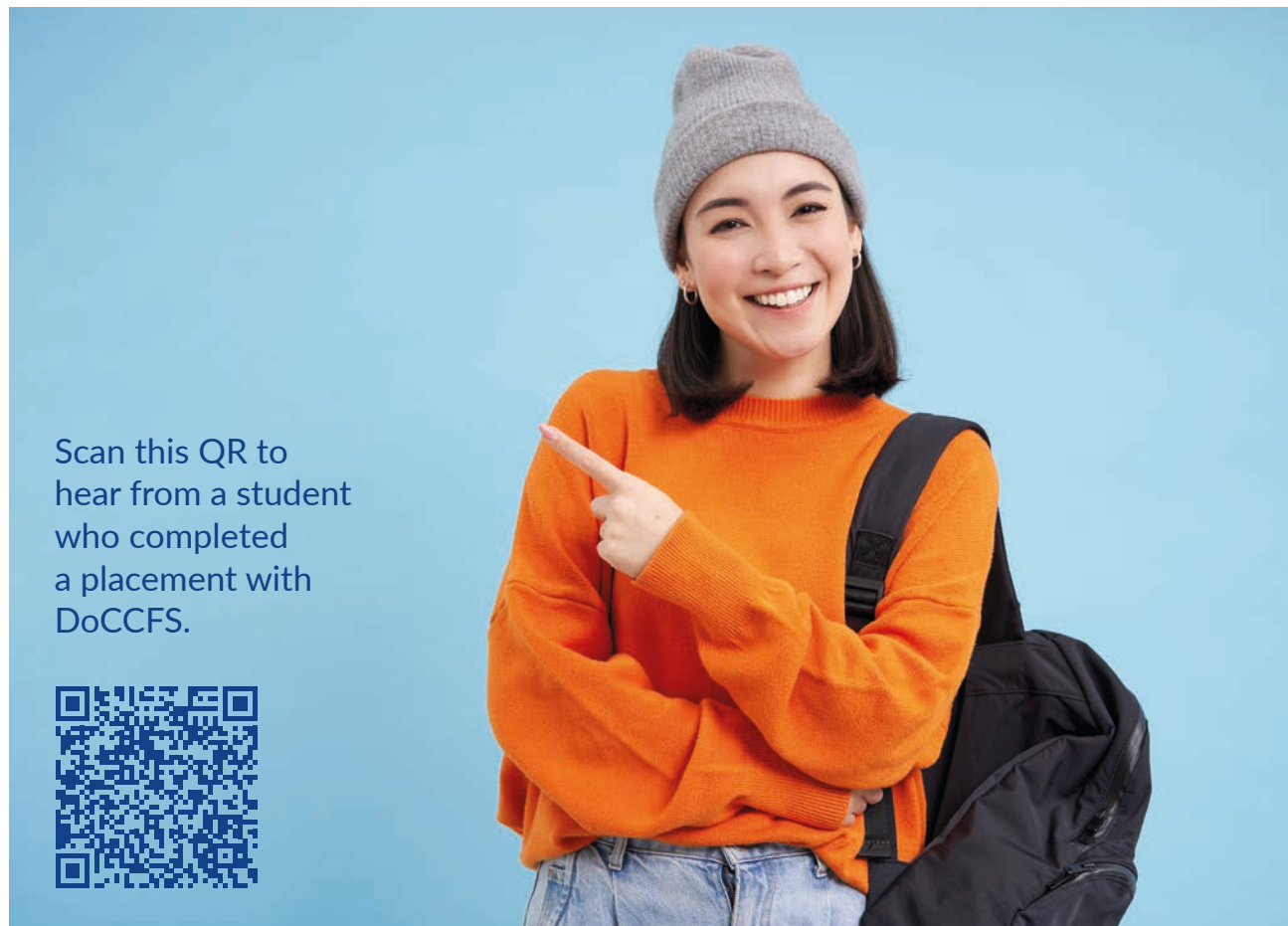
*The Therapeutic Family Centres used a variety of interventions to support families depending on the reason for referral and the issues identified in the work.*



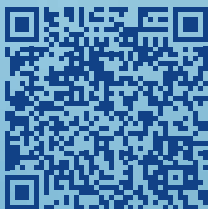
## Student Placements

DoCCFS continues to be an organisation of learning. In 2024, our centres accommodated students to support their studies by providing placements in our family centres. These placements provide students with experience in working a case, running groups, planning an intervention, organising outings and summer projects all under the supervision of experienced staff to guide and support the student.

Below is an account of a student who completed a placement in one of our family centres describing her experience.



Scan this QR to  
hear from a student  
who completed  
a placement with  
DoCCFS.



## Challenges for Therapeutic Family Centres in 2024

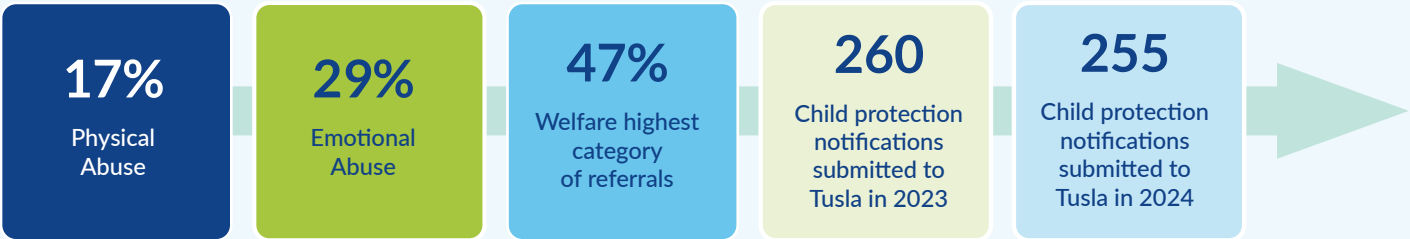
- ◆ Long waiting lists in some centres.
- ◆ Accessing funding for training opportunities.
- ◆ Seeking funding to expand the teams so that more families can access services especially in areas which have limited support services and in rural areas with poor public transport connections.





# Child Safeguarding

Work was completed on updating all the child safeguarding statements across the organisation and these are displayed in all DoCCFS centres, and the child safeguarding policy was also reviewed and updated. Of the Welfare issues arising in 2024, for the first half of the year, Mental Health of Child/Teen were the largest number of child safeguarding reports, alternatively followed by Parenting Issues and Self-Harm of Child/Teen. It was noted that the largest number of Welfare issues escalated to Tusla was Parenting Issues followed by Mental Health of Adults and at the end of 2024, the highest referrals was for Mental Health of Adults followed by Parenting Issues.





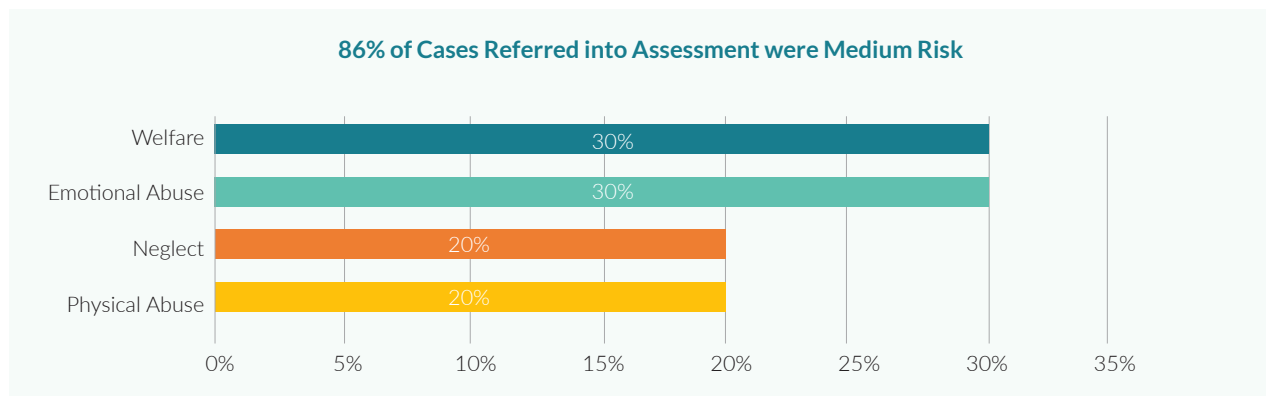
# Protective Services



The Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service provide an assessment service for Tusla Social Work Departments in Dublin North and Dublin North City. The assessment service carries out Initial Assessments on families where child protection concerns have been identified. Two Assessment Centres continue to work closely with Principal Social Workers and Team Leaders in Tusla from Dedicated Contact Point, Assessment and Intervention teams.

Our Assessment Service use the Tusla National Model, Signs of Safety Framework (SOS). This is a relationship-grounded, safety organised approach

to child protection practice, created by researching what works for professionals and families in building meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children. The main components of this model include identifying the harm to the child and the impact on the child; creating a robust safety plan which involves using the family's support network; identifying with the family, their network and professionals what needs to happen next. On completion of the Initial Assessment the worker will often refer families to our own Child and Family Service including Family Centres and Dublin Safer Families who carry out therapeutic interventions with both children and families.



## Feedback From Parents & Professionals

*I cannot praise the worker highly enough. Her professionalism and help to me and my family was amazing, a big thank you to her.*

Parent

”

*I have been working in Ireland for 14 years and I was genuinely getting to a point where I was so fed up with the lawlessness and lack of follow through that I see on a day-to-day basis. I have yet to come across a service who has been as dedicated as the work you have done on this case. You have restored my faith and given me some hope for the future.*

Social Worker

”

*Thank you for everything you have both done for me and my daughter. I know I was a bit of a pain sometimes, but I am grateful that you could see I've changed from the person I was all those year ago, honestly thank you.*

Parent

”

*Our caseworker was fantastic, the in-person sessions were well managed, and they made themselves available by phone also for all the bumps and issues during our assessment. Thank you for your hard work and availability during this tough time for our son.*

Parent

“





## Trends in Assessment Service

- ◆ Increase in numbers of IAs (Initial Assessment Reports) completed in 2024 compared to 2023. There were **428 IAs completed in 2024** compared to **394 in 2023**, which is an **increase of 9%**.
- ◆ Increase across the Assessment Service of Domestic Violence cases. In Dublin North City (Lisdeel Assessment) and Dublin North (St Benedict's) over half of their cases have domestic violence present.
- ◆ Increase in Dublin North City, of the 36% of cases where DV was unknown at referral stage, 18% were discovered to have domestic violence present.
- ◆ The importance of networking and developing good working relationships was further highlighted in the work, especially in the area of drug use of parents where it is essential that there is cooperation with Medical Social Workers, Public Health Nurses, GPs and Drug Addition Services.
- ◆ The Assessment Service also supported Tusla social workers and students to visit the centres and shadow our workers with joint home visits and input on the use of the Signs of Safety model.
- ◆ Our Managers and Acting Managers in the Assessment centres delivered training in Signs of Safety for the ECDS and Therapeutic Family Centres.
- ◆ 32% of assessment cases were returned to Tusla with the recommendation to stay open as no safety could be established. This supports the overall findings in our work that families are struggling and are experiencing significant need across centres dealing with issues such as homelessness, undiagnosed additional needs, long waiting lists for services for children with additional needs, drug use and adult mental health difficulties.



### Dublin North City & Dublin North

- ◆ 47% Cases had DV present in 2023
- ◆ 58% Cases had DV Present in 2024



### Dublin North IA's

- ◆ 26% Children with additional needs
- ◆ 23% Children with behavioural difficulties
- ◆ 17% Children with emotional problems
- ◆ 13% Children with a learning disability



### Dublin North City IA's

- ◆ 61% of Families referred were Irish
- ◆ 39% of Families were from other nationalities including African, Irish Traveller, Roma and Russian
- ◆ 42.6% showed parental substance misuse
- ◆ 5 Unborn babies referred for prebirth assessment





# Dublin Safer Families Service

Dublin Safer Families Service (DSFS) works with families where there is Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based violence. Dublin Safer Families works with the victim, children and the perpetrator within a systemic model.

The goals of the work are to increase family safety and to prevent violence. There is a referral pathway from Dublin North and Dublin North City into Dublin Safer Families from Tusla Social Work (SW) departments and our own Assessment Service. Tusla SW Department also agree for all referrals into Dublin Safer Families, to remain involved or to become involved in a case again, if needed while the case is open to Dublin Safer Families.



## Trends for Dublin Safer Families in 2024

- ◆ Threat of Death risk is a factor in 23% of cases worked with by DSFS in 2024.
- ◆ Parents separated and living together increased in 2024 to 13% from 11% in 2023.
- ◆ There was a slight increase in reported Sexual Assault in cases by 2% in 2024.
- ◆ There has been a notable increase in the presence of coercive control in referred cases from 2023 to 2024.
- ◆ The use of weapons as a feature was reported in 15% of cases. Weapons that are being used include hammers, frying pans, knives, needles, forks, wet towels, and cords from mobile phones. Objects are also thrown at victims which include toasters, mobile phones, plates, cups, knives and televisions.

Dublin Safer Families provided a total of 180 individual hours of training to professionals across various sectors. Over 28 hours of preparation went into these training sessions to meet the needs of the attendees. Trainings provided to Tusla, An Garda Síochána, DACT Gardai, Assessment Workers, Domestic Violence Practitioners with Tusla, Family Support Teams, Social Work Practitioners, Academics and Students at UCD, Dublin.



## Feedback from Victims, Perpetrators & Social Work

“

*Working with you has changed our lives, everyone opened up and we learnt things about each other. We are now a happy family, thank you so much for everything you did for us.*

*Victim*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your unwavering support and guidance. Your efforts have made a significant positive impact and I am truly grateful.*

*Victim*

”

“

*My mam is much calmer and I think that is because she is working with DSFS.*

*Child*

*It is the first service that I have come to that has listened to me about the domestic violence in my own childhood.*

*Perpetrator*

”

“

*We know we can make contact and talk through a case with ye and this is really important and helpful to us as social workers.*

*Social Worker*

“

*“I feel really comfortable coming here to talk about my feelings.”*

*Child*



“

My suggestion would be to have more publicity about the work DSFS do as it really could save lives. Thanks to the FW for all her help on my case.

Perpetrator

“

We do not know what we would do without your service.

Social Worker

“

It is the first service that I have come to and been listened to about the domestic violence.

Victim

Your advice about keeping a log was invaluable.

Victim

”

“

We keep advocating for your service and more of it with our Principal Social Workers.

Social Worker

I was nervous coming but you were very chill. You were like a normal person. You understood me. You helped me with the social worker, such as communication. I wouldn't have gotten this far without you. You taught me how to manage situations. I handle situations better because of you.

Perpetrator

”



## Dublin Safer Families Service present at WWP-EN Annual Conference

Dublin Safer Families Service are members of Working With Perpetrators European Network alongside 69 other groups spanning 34 European countries. The network includes perpetrator programmes, researchers as well as victim support services. The WWP EN is a Europe wide network of organisations that work with Perpetrators and has developed a series of European Standards aimed to create consistency across Europe in Perpetrator Work in order to build and develop greater safety for children and families. Significantly at the end of 2024, DSFS have begun work on using the Impact Toolkit research instruments with the European Network for a 1-year pilot programme.

In October 2024 DSFS were selected to present their work at the WWP EN Annual conference entitled - 10 years of change- Exploring next frontiers of ending domestic violence. Dublin Safer Families presented a workshop in Berlin called 'Domestic abuse and Systemic work: Dublin Safer Families Service's model of working with victims,

children and perpetrators,' outlining their work with victims, children and perpetrators.

This workshop focused on an overview of the work of Dublin Safer Families Service with reference to the systemic approach in relation to Domestic Violence and Abuse. The workshop was well attended and participants expressed interest in the model used and particularly the fact that work is conducted with Victims and Children as well as Perpetrators. This offered a unique perspective for participants as most attending work solely with perpetrators.

Participants expressed interest in how the various elements of the work are balanced within a Systemic Model of Practice and how this supports safety. Interest was also expressed in terms of how this approach meets the WWP EN stated objective for Perpetrator Work to link in with Victim and Children's support services in an effort towards greater cohesion among services as a means of supporting safety and minimising risk.



# Digital Transformation

Our CEO undertook an Executive MBA in 2022 – 2024. DoCCFS was selected by her MBA consulting team to assist them in assessing the change readiness in executing a digital transformation strategy, as an objective of their strategic plan ‘Supporting Families, Changing Lives’.

The study took an action research methodology approach involving direct engagement with staff and Senior Management Team of the DoCCFS over a 5-month period (Jan – May 2024), a detailed literature review, a review of company & industry documents and case study examples in the not-for-profit sector.

The objectives of the study were to: Identify challenges/barriers and enablers/choices in executing change. The aim of the study was to add value in the following ways:

- ◆ The DoCCFS will successfully and efficiently implement positive change in the organization to ultimately benefit the vulnerable people it serves. Through implementation of the recommendations of the project it will support staff becoming skilled in this area.
- ◆ The project will serve as a valuable reference for other not-for-profit organisations executing change in the digital transformation landscape.

The MBA consulting project team developed a detailed roadmap and implementation plan for DoCCFS in implementing digital transformation across the organisation as it develops its new strategic plan.

“

*The objectives of the study were to: Identify challenges/barriers and enablers/choices in executing change.*



# A Research Informed Organisation – Outcomes for Children and Families

Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service have been working with Trinity College Dublin (Trinity Research in Childhood Centre- TRiCC) for 10 years to develop and implement Outcome Measures surveys with the children and families attending our services, Therapeutic Family Centres, Early Childhood Development Services and Dublin Safer Families. Surveys measure areas such as school readiness for the ECDS, parental stress, coping and resilience skills and parental mental health and this information assists the organisation in reviewing the effectiveness of the interventions, programmes in use and positive outcomes for families.

In 2024, the service reviewed the Outcome Measure surveys that were currently in use with input and feedback from the outcome measure champions in each centre. TCD also conducted a survey with all staff for their views on the Outcome Measures. From this survey information, TCD made some changes to streamline the surveys, to make them more user friendly for both staff and more importantly for children and families. Two of our workers, have been trained using SPSS to analyse data being inputted into the system from the surveys so this work can be carried out in house for the service.

The DoCCFS continued working on the Outcome Measures and the plan for 2025 is to pilot online surveys with four of our centres, DSFS (Dublin Safer Families Service), two Therapeutic Family Centres and one of the Early Childhood Development Service. The new streamlined surveys will be rolled out across the service and staff will be trained in early 2025 so the new surveys can commence in the second half of the year. Below is a report from Trinity College on the work over the last 10 years.

## **From Vision to Impact: 10 Years of Partnership to Enhance Services for Children and Families**

This year marks a decade since data was first collected as part of the research partnership between the Daughters of Charity Child & Family Services (DoCCFS) and researchers at Trinity Research in Childhood Centre (TRiCC), Trinity College Dublin. Since then, almost three thousand families have shared their experiences of attending

services so that we can evaluate the effectiveness of the various therapeutic support programmes on offer to children and their parents. Our findings have been used to guide service design and delivery within the organisation. They have also been shared more widely at conferences and in academic articles so that our model of practice can inform other providers of similar therapeutically-orientated family services. Here we highlight some of our key findings over the course of our collaboration.

Our evaluation measures have helped us understand who is engaging with DoCCFS services so we've been able to capture the diversity of participating families. While about 76% of participating families are Irish, the remaining parents represent over 80 national identities. We've also considered how families experience life in Dublin and found that about 60% report that their household faces challenges financially making ends meet.

Our evaluation measures have also helped us to examine psychosocial changes in families from initiating to completing their engagement with DoCCFS. Some of these measures are broadly applicable to different services, like our assessments of parent-child relationship and parent mental health which were completed by parents at both ECDS and Family Centres. We found statistically significant increases in parent-child closeness, decreases in parent-child conflict, and increases in parent mental health. Other measures are specific to certain DoCCFS programmes. For example, the school readiness scale in ECDS showed how children are

statistically significantly more prepared to succeed in a school environment having completed their early years' service. Another example relates to DSFS and the measure of conflict tactics that demonstrates statistically significant decreases in all psychological and physical abusive behaviours in relationships by the time of service completion.

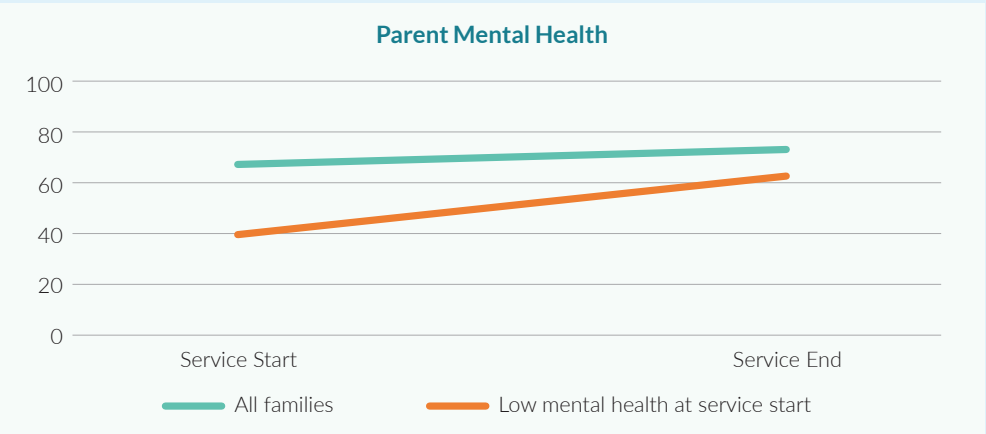
Below, we depict changes to parents' mental health and parents' feelings of conflict and closeness with their children from the start to the end of the services. In addition to looking at the changes for all of the families who participated in the surveys, we also looked at families who reported greater challenges at the start of service engagement.

Here we see that the families with greater challenges at the start of service engagement, showed greater improvements at the end of service engagement. This was also demonstrated statistically by observing greater effect sizes. From seeing this pattern in much of our data, we've learned that **families who need services the most also benefit the most from their time with DoCCFS.**

Finally, we want to thank all of the DoCCFS staff and families who supported this collaboration. We recognise that these evaluation measures are only possible because of the time and consideration given by both staff and the families who complete them. Thank you all for your continued support!

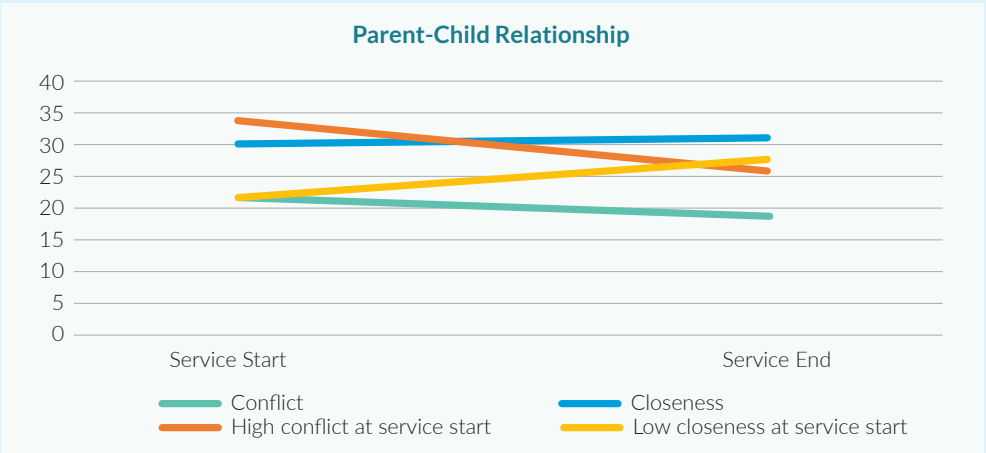
**Figure 1 Changes in Parent Mental Health.**

Here we see changes in parent mental health on a scale of 0 to 100, where a higher score indicates better mental health. We see the average mental health score increase for all families and we see the greatest improvements for parents with low mental health at the start of their engagement with DoCCFS services.



**Figure 2 Parent-Child Relationship.**

This scale measures the parent-child relationship through parent's perception of closeness and conflict with their child. While some level of conflict is normal in parent-child relationships, higher closeness and lower conflict may support children's development. Here we see conflict decrease and closeness increase for all parents from the start to end of their engagement with DoCCFS. We also see greater changes for parents with higher conflict and lower closeness at the start of service



# DoCCFS Strategy

## Empowering Futures: Bringing Hope to Children and Families 2025-2027

2024 saw the completion of our service strategy *Supporting Families, Changing Lives – 2019-2024*, this strategy provided a road map to develop our services and grow and strengthen our evidence base.

Our new strategic plan, built on the success and growth of 'supporting families' and was developed with all our stakeholders, board, staff, children and families and funders in 2023/2024.

In 2023 and into 2024, work commenced on the development of a new service strategy to provide a roadmap for DoCCFS for the next three years. Given many challenging events in the world at present with wars, cost of living crisis, political unrest and negativity, the service wanted to focus on bringing hope to children and families in the work being undertaken across the centres with efforts in place to support families where they are at and encourage all service users to reach their full potential to live a happy and fulfilled life.

The CEO established a strategy steering committee consisting of senior management, management and staff across the organisation to guide the development and implementation of the new strategic plan.

A series of preparation workshops were carried out with the senior management and centre management teams by the CEO focusing on identifying the market position of DoCCFS, conducting a strategic mapping with other organisations in the sector, the competitive advantage of the organisation. Further preparation workshops focused on blue ocean thinking, SWOT and Pestle and other strategic engagement tools.

The Head of Operations and Senior Service Managers met with centres individually to gather

perspectives and inputs on areas of needs and focus for a new strategic plan. Staff surveys and questions on local need, blue ocean thinking and gaps in service delivery were also discussed as well as current challenges, positive outcomes and improvements in service delivery.

Bassline was appointed to develop and compile the strategic plan and to carry out the pre planning workshops and consult with staff and managers which was invaluable in forming the groundwork of the strategy. A detailed staff and board survey was carried out and focus groups with staff. Surveys were conducted with service users and funders to inform the strategic plan.

There were a number of meetings with the Senior Leadership Team to drive the strategy forward and to develop a culture of collaborative working with all staff so there was a sense of ownership and investment in the finalised strategic plan. All staff teams had input into the new strategic plan and reports and feedback from all the consultation meetings were prepared and incorporated into the new strategic plan **"Empowering Futures: Bringing Hope to Children and Families" 2025-2027**.

The strategy steering committee remains in place as an advisory group during the lifetime of the Strategic plan to ensure successful implementation. The strategic and service development sub committee of the Board of Directors receive ongoing traffic light implementation reports and monitor progress.



Empowering futures sets out five objectives:

**1** The children, young people and families we serve

**2** Our valued teams

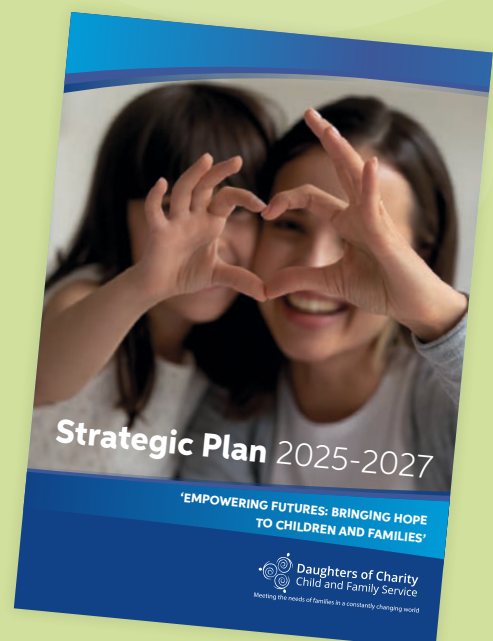
**3** Excellence in our services

**4** An effective organisation

**5** Influence and external relations

Empowering Futures is an ambitious strategy. It is developed based on evidence of 13 years of work with Irish universities, that indicate that families presenting to our services experience greater adversity and challenges than the general population. Our research and evidence confirm that the families that work with us that need support the most benefit the most. Empowering families is underpinned by evidence and 'meeting families where they are at'. We commit to working with families for as long as they need it. Influencing policy and advocating for our families to decision makers drawing from 40 years of evidence will form a core development of our organisation for the lifetime of the strategy.

Scan here to view our  
Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027



# People and Skills

- ◆ Our organisation employs approximately 166 staff members in direct frontline and support roles.
- ◆ In 2024, we implemented SAGE HR to enable a streamlined approach to managing employee documentation.
- ◆ As part of our commitment to transparency and equity, we published our Gender Pay Gap report this year. Women represent 94.4% of our workforce, with men accounting for 5.6%. This gender balance is reflective of broader trends in the sector, and we remain committed to ongoing monitoring and action to support equality and inclusion across all roles.
- ◆ Our annual staff turnover rate stands at 9.3% in 2024, with five of these departures resulting from retirements. This highlights an emerging trend that will require strategic attention in the coming years, and succession planning will become a focus area. Ensuring the continuity of leadership and the retention of critical organisational knowledge and skills will be central to our HR strategy moving forward.



# Supporting our people

- ◆ Employee wellbeing remains a core priority of the DoCCFS. This year, we launched a series of eLearning Courses focused on **Managing stress and Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace**. These initiatives are designed to foster a resilient, healthy workforce and promote a supportive work culture.
- ◆ The service is exploring options to make this a permanent staff support in 2025 and the service will upskill staff so that this support can be made available to all teams especially with the high levels of trauma that many of our families are experiencing and requesting support with by our centres.
- ◆ Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) continued to be a vital support mechanism for our staff over the past year and continues to be a great source of support for personal and work-related issues. The continued promotion of the EAP highlights our organisation's commitment to employee wellbeing, professional development, and long-term sustainability.
- ◆ Through our EAP programme, group reflective practice sessions were introduced in our assessment centres. These sessions offer staff a structured opportunity to reflect on their professional experiences, understand the emotional impact of their work, and build personal and team resilience.
- ◆ In 2025 we will develop a people and skills strategy to support the implementation of the strategic plan and ensure we continue to attract, recruit and train staff to deliver the high-quality services to children and families.

# Staff Training 2024

The DoCCFS continues to be committed to staff training and development. The service strives to keep up to date with best practice and innovation in working with children and families. Building on the strong foundations of our staff training and qualifications here is a sample of some training undertaken by our staff in 2024.





# Sustainability Green Initiative

- ◆ Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service are committed to sustainability and green initiatives across the service and to reduce our carbon footprint. Since 2009, the organisation has shown a 50% improvement in reaching the 2030 Energy Emission targets. All our centres are committed to recycling waste and reducing food waste and packaging.
- ◆ The organisation offers a bike to work scheme, tax saver rail tickets, staff carpool where possible and we promote the use of public transport across all our locations. Flexible working has been introduced where service delivery allows, we have increased our online sessions, webinars and online training to reduce the need to travel to centres.
- ◆ Across the service all printers automatically go into energy saving mode when not in use.
- ◆ ECDS are no longer using paper files and have moved their new files to our CRM system.
- ◆ DoCCFS is continuously reviewing energy consumption in all centres, this can be challenging as some of the centres are shared buildings with other services. We have changed lighting to LED in some centres and are committed to upgrading all our centres lighting to LED in 2025/2026. We are committed to using recycled paper and purchasing IT equipment from Green IT which refurbishes old laptops helping our services to reduce its carbon footprint. The DoCCFS are committed to our Environmental Social Governance (ESG) responsibilities as a responsible and ethical employer however, funding and resources are required to ensure we can comply. We endeavour to progress whatever actions we can within the limitations of our current resources.



# Networking, Interagency Work & Committees

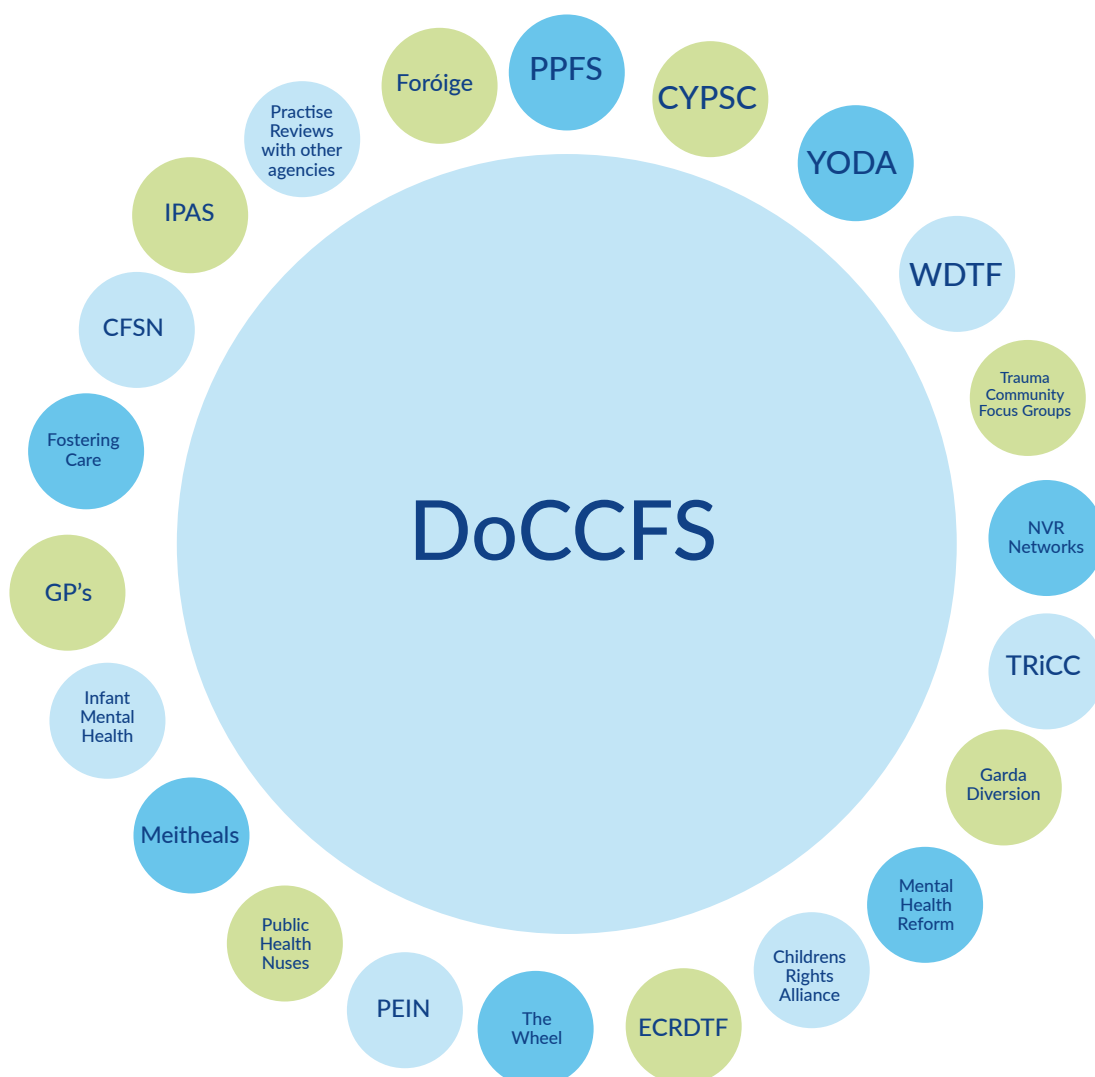
## All areas of the DoCCFS network with a variety of agencies as part of our work.

This may involve attending meetings, co-work cases, co-facilitating groups with other agencies, taking part in case review, Meitheal meetings, child and family network meetings, child protection case conferences and many other activities to ensure where possible a seamless wraparound service is provided to children and families.

The service also provides training input, professional visits and contributes to national policy and

strategies as they relate to children and families. All DoCCFS centres work with the local community to advocate for families to meet their needs and to signpost families to appropriate supports where needed.

The following diagram outlines the variety of networks and agencies that the service interacts and works with as part of our work to meet the needs of the children and families.



# Governance & Compliance 2024

Public Policy Area	Specific Details	Results Intended to Secure	Designated Public Officials Lobbied	Department
Children & Youth Affairs	Invitation to Minister O’Gorman to attend 40 year celebration.	That Minister O’Gorman would attend and speak at the event ‘Celebrating 40 years of Meeting the Needs of Children and Families’, in Croke Park.	Rodric O’Gorman, Minister Tom Sheppard, Special Adviser	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Budgetary Matters	As members and allies of Mental Health Reform, a letter was written to An Taoiseach to prioritise funding for Mental Health services as part of Budget 2025.	Increased funding for Mental Health Services.	Simon Harris, An Taoiseach	Department of the Taoiseach
Children & Youth Affairs	A letter sent to An Taoiseach in relation to the implementation of updated policy of the mental health bill.	Improved policy and legislation in relation to the Mental Health bill.	Simon Harris, An Taoiseach	Department of the Taoiseach
Budgetary Matters	A letter sent to An Taoiseach in relation to sustainability of the community and voluntary services from The Wheel.	Increased funding for the Community and Voluntary Sector.	Simon Harris, An Taoiseach	Department of the Taoiseach

HIQA Inspection	Lisdeel Assessment Centre were part of a HIQA inspection in DNC.
Tusla preschool inspections, School Meals inspections, Pobal compliance inspections, Environmental Health inspections.	Early Childhood Development Service were inspected as reported under ECDS section in this report.





# Our Funders



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí  
Department of Social Protection



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



An Oifig um Chosaint  
Idirnáisiúnta  
International Protection  
Office



# Financial Summary 2024

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT Year Ended 31 December 2024	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Income</b>		
Tusla - Child and Family Agency	7,014,390	6,471,777
Other income	1,615,328	1,458,558
<b>Total income</b>	<b>8,629,718</b>	<b>7,930,335</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Remuneration	7,292,890	6,509,973
Infrastructural & Maintenance Costs	604,197	592,262
Service Provision Costs	266,025	241,661
Information technology & Communication and Administration Costs	263,771	343,114
Insurance, Legal & Professional and Accountancy	133,723	184,265
Recruitment & Development Costs	90,569	77,751
Depreciation / Amortisation	12,059	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>8,663,234</b>	<b>7,949,026</b>
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(33,516)</b>	<b>(18,691)</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b> Year Ended 31 December 2024	<b>Notes</b>	<b>2024</b> €	<b>2023</b> €
Tangible Assets	1	68,333	-
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	2	262,502	135,774
Bank		3,503,872	2,605,620
		3,834,707	2,741,394
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	3	(2,511,790)	(1,384,961)
<b>Net current assets</b>		1,322,917	1,356,433
<b>Net assets</b>		1,322,917	1,356,433
<b>Capital and Reserves</b>			
Income and expenditure account	4	1,322,917	1,356,433
<b>Total equity</b>		1,322,917	1,356,433



# Notes

## 1 Tangible Assets

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Costs:</b>		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Additions	80,392	-
At 31 December 2024	80,392	-
<b>Accumulated Depreciation:</b>		
At 1 January 2024	-	-
Charge for the year	12,059	-
At 31 December 2024	12,059	-
<b>Net Book Value:</b>		-
At 31 December 2024	68,333	-

## 2 Debtors

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Debtors	262,502	50,290
Amounts due from related parties (see note 4)	-	85,484
	262,502	135,774

## 3 Creditors

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade creditors	54,022	61,509
Other creditors and accruals	498,464	546,955
PAYE/PRSI	234,021	150,412
Deferred income and restricted funds	1,725,283	626,085
	2,511,790	1,384,961

#### 4 Reserves

	2024 €	2023 €
Opening balance 1 January	1,356,433	1,375,124
Deficit for the financial year	(33,516)	(18,691)
At end of year	1,322,917	1,356,433

#### 5 Related party transactions

During 2024 contributions from Daughters of Charity to Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service amounted to €141,211. (2023: €85,484).

Amount due were paid prior to the year end 2024 (2023: €85,484).

# Notes



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# Notes







**Daughters of Charity Child and Family Service,**

**Registered Office: Suite 9, Northwood House, Northwood Crescent, Northwood, Dublin 9, D09 WV82**

**[www.docchildandfamily.ie](http://www.docchildandfamily.ie)**

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[www.linkedin.com/company/daughters-of-charity-child-and-family-services-doccfs](https://www.linkedin.com/company/daughters-of-charity-child-and-family-services-doccfs)

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