Embedding a Children’s Rights Approach into the new Child and Family Support Agency
27 February 2013

The National Gallery of Ireland, Merrion Square West, Dublin 2. (access via Clare Street)

In 2013, the Government will introduce legislation to establish a new Child and Family Support Agency. The setting up of the new Agency is a significant development which will shape child and family services for decades to come. The purpose of this symposium is to learn about plans for the new Agency and understand how children’s rights, including a prevention and early intervention approach, will be translated into the structures, governance, design and service delivery of the Agency.

This symposium has been organised by the Children’s Rights Alliance, the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway and the Prevention and Early Intervention Network.

Programme

9:30am  Registration
9:40am  Opening and Introduction, Paul Gilligan, Chair of the Children’s Rights Alliance
9:45am  ‘The Role Children’s Rights will Play in the Vision for the new Agency’
        Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD
10:05am ‘Rights, Responsibility, Respect – the new 3Rs for Ireland’s Children, Creating an Agency to Deliver’
        Gordon Jeyes, CEO Designate, Child and Family Support Agency
10:35am Q&A
10:50am Tea/Coffee and Pastries/Fruit
11:20am ‘Listen to Our Voices’, Young People from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs’ Voice of Children in Care Implementation Group
11:40am ‘Learning from the Past: Embedding a Children’s Rights Approach into the Governance and Structures of the new Agency’
        Dr. Geoffrey Shannon, Child Law Expert
12:10pm Q&A
12:20pm Panel Response and Q&A, Chaired by Professor Pat Dolan, Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
        • Jim Breslin, Secretary General, Department of Children and Youth Affairs
        • Jennifer Gargan, Director, Empowering People in Care (EPIC)
        • Catherine Ghent, Gallagher Shatter Solicitors
        • Toby Wolfe, Start Strong and Prevention and Early Intervention Network
1:30pm Close by Professor Pat Dolan, Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
Speaker Biographies

Jim Breslin
Jim Breslin was appointed the first Secretary General of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in July 2011. This followed the creation for the first time of a full Government Department to take charge of the improvement of policies and services for children and young people. He has considerable senior management experience across both Government Departments and the health service having worked previously for the Department of Health, the Health Service Executive, the Eastern Regional Health Authority and the Department of Finance. He holds masters degrees in public administration from the Institute of Public Administration/Trinity College Dublin and Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.

Professor Pat Dolan
Professor Pat Dolan is joint founder and Director of the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. He holds the prestigious UNESCO Chair in Children, Youth and Civic Engagement, the first to be awarded in the Republic of Ireland. Professor Dolan has worked with and for families as a practitioner, service manager, and currently as an academic for over 20 years. He has extensive policy experience and was recently a member of a Government Task Force advising on the necessary transition programme for the new Child and Family Support Agency.

Jennifer Gargan
Jennifer is Director of EPIC, Empowering People in Care. She is a professionally qualified social worker who has worked in a wide range of settings with marginalised and vulnerable families and children. She previously worked with the ISPCC with children begging on the streets. She then joined the HSE and worked in community development as well as child protection and family support. Having obtained an MSC in management, Jennifer joined EPIC in 2005. EPIC has since extended its staff and advocacy services nationally.

Paul Gilligan
Paul Gilligan is the Chair of the Children’s Rights Alliance. He is the Chief Executive of St Patrick’s University Hospital and was formerly the Chief Executive of the ISPCC. He trained as a clinical psychologist through Trinity College Dublin, is a former Vice-Chairman of the National Children’s Advisory Council and former President of the Psychological Society of Ireland.

Catherine Ghent
Catherine Ghent is one of the foremost Child Law practitioners in Ireland. She is a member of the Human Rights Committee of the Law Society of Ireland and the National Children’s Advisory Council. Catherine has been involved in a number of high profile and ground-breaking cases and spoken at numerous conferences as an expert in her field. She regularly contributes to public debate on her areas of practice, namely Child Law, Criminal Defence Law and Human Rights Law.

Gordon Jeyes
Gordon Jeyes is CEO Designate for the Child and Family Support Agency. A critical role for Mr. Jeyes is the design of a National Service Delivery Framework to underpin the provision of safe, high quality child protection and welfare services. Mr Jeyes worked previously with Cambridgeshire County Council as Deputy Chief Executive in charge of the Office of Children and Young People’s Services. Prior to that, he was the UK’s first Director of Children’s Services and provided advice to governments in Scotland and at Westminster on the development of Children’s Services. Mr. Jeyes also led the critical incident response to the Dunblane school massacre in 1996. He was awarded an OBE for services to Children in the Queen’s birthday honours list in the UK in 2011.

Kasie and Noel, Voice of Children in Care Implementation Group
Kasie and Noel are members of the Voice of Children in Care Implementation Group, an initiative of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Group was established to oversee implementation of the recommendations from the Listen to Our Voices consultations with 210 children in care. The work of the Group to date includes providing input to the HSE Alternative Care Handbook, reviewing care plan guidance documents and providing feedback on making care plan reviews more child- and youth-friendly.

Dr Geoffrey Shannon
Dr Geoffrey Shannon is a solicitor and Special Rapporteur for Child Protection. He is the Chairman of the Adoption Authority of Ireland and the author of Child Law. In 2010, he was appointed by the Minister for Children along with Norah Gibbons to conduct a review of 196 children who have died in the care of the state in the last ten years. The review was published in June 2012. Geoffrey is the recipient of the Canon Maurice Handy Award for the period January 2006 to December 2007. He is also the recipient of an Award by the Chamber of Commerce for Outstanding Contribution to Children.

Toby Wolfe
Toby Wolfe is the Acting Director of Start Strong, which is a coalition seeking to advance children’s early care and education in Ireland. A member of the Prevention and Early Intervention Network, Toby represents Start Strong on the Expert Advisory Group on the National Early Years Strategy. He is also the Co-Chair of Eurochild’s thematic working group on early childhood education and care.

A video recording of the symposium will be made available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/cradub www.youtube.com/cfrcnuig www.youtube.com/PEINetwork
Follow the discussion on Twitter: #ChildFSA

Children’s Rights Alliance: 31 Molesworth St., Dublin 2 www.childrensrights.ie
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre: National University of Ireland Galway www.childandfamilyresearch.ie
Prevention and Early Intervention Network: 9 Harcourt St., Dublin 2 www.preventioninpractice.ie