The Alternative Response Model (ARM) is a method of service delivery in partnership with the Child and Family Agency, Barnardos and the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services to assist families in accessing the supports they need. The Alternative Response Model facilitates timely access to support services for families who are referred following an assessment by the Child and Family Agency.

This collaborative interagency approach has operated since February 2014 in fast tracking services to children and families assessed with medium child welfare concerns with in the communities in Dublin 12 and Dublin 24.

The ARM response involves:
- A detailed assessment of the family’s support needs being undertaken by the Child and Family Agency
- A referral for family support to either Barnardos or the Daughters of Charity Child and Family Services
- The agreement of a family support plan with the family and the provision of family support by either Barnardos or the Daughters of Family Child and Family Services

The proposed presentation will focus on the following ARM service features:
- A presentation of the learning from the ARM process based on the model’s first year of operation
- A consideration of the model adopted for the ARM process and its theoretical connections to internationally recognised models such as the Differential Response Model (DRM)
- An exploration of the practices used to capture the needs of children and their families at the assessment stage with reference to the Signs of Safety tool
- An outline of methods to successfully engage families in a family support process with feedback from children & parents
- A description of how the interagency collaboration has operated in practice with feedback from practitioners
- A reference to mechanisms to address the escalation of identified risks to children within the process