Conference Theme: Participation of Children and Parents in Family Support

Title: From Pockets of Good Practice to a Universally Respected Right

Background

From the outset, Tusla – the Child and Family Agency has expressed a commitment to hearing the voice of children and young people. Its founding legislation requires that the Agency gives consideration to the views of children in the performance of its functions and in planning and reviewing the provision of services. While the agency is obliged in law to involve children and young people in decision making and there are pockets of good practice in place, there is evidence that this approach to working with children and young people is not mainstreamed and the right of children or young people to participate in decisions affecting them is not uniformly respected. Tusla is currently developing a strategy to mainstream participatory practices within the work of the Agency.

Aim and Contribution to Learning

As the author of the background paper informing the development of the Tusla Strategy, the aim of this presentation is to share the learning in this paper on how to embed a culture of participation within social work and social care services, with a particular emphasis on family support services. The paper will outline actions that are required at a governance and practice level to mainstream participatory approaches to working. In outlining the required measures, the presentation will endeavor to illustrate at all times how these actions can be operationalised in practice and be inclusive of all children who require the services of Tusla.