



Provider Assurance Report

Dublin South Central Service

Name of Service Area:	Dublin South Central
OSV No:	OSV-004416 & OSV-004417
Name of provider:	Tusla
Chief Operations Officer:	Mr. Jim Gibson
Date of Request:	06 December 2019
Date to be returned	03 February 2020

Assurance is required in the following area:

1. Unallocated Cases

Please outline how the unallocated cases project has impacted on the waiting list in Dublin South Central.

CPW- Intake

6 additional posts were assigned to DSC under the national project. Since January 2019, the CPW Pillar has restructured in order to create the most efficient and effective service delivery at that time with the resources allocated to the pillar. This restructuring created 2 Intake teams with 1 SWTL, 1 Senior Social Work Practitioner and 3 Social Workers in Bridge House and 1 SWTL, 1 Senior Social Work Practitioner and 2 Social Workers in Lord Edward St. In November 2019 the Intake Teams expanded further with the appointment of 1 Social Care Leader to the Team in Bridge House and 1 Social Care Leader and 1 Social Care Worker to the Team in Lord Edward St.

A designated contact point was in place in Bridge House and this is supported by a 0.5 Business Support to ensure accurate recording of mandated referrals and to ensure that all referrals have been responded to.

Further to this, the creation of 2 specified intake teams has supported a greater level of screening and prioritisation of referrals at the front door. More robust screening has meant that a higher number of cases/ families/ children are now being redirected through RED/COMHAR meetings. The Intake pillar is managed by 1 PSW. There are SOP's in place regarding the intake pillar (appendix 1) in addition to how business support can best support the Intake Pillar (appendix 2).

Comhar was re-initiated in Dublin South Central in February 2019. Since February 2019 18 Comhar meetings have been held in Dublin South Central. 159 referrals have been considered at Comhar since that time. 2 Comhar meetings will take place each month throughout 2020 on the following dates – 23rd January, 27th February, 26th March, 30th April, 28th May, 25th June, 30th July, 27th August, 24th September, 22nd October, 26th November. An evaluation of Comhar will take place over February and March 2020.

The RED model was initiated in Dublin South Central in April 2019. Since that time 874 referrals have been brought to a RED meeting in Dublin South Central. RED meetings take place 4 times a month in DSC.

On the 12th and 14th of August 2019 the Intake Pillar availed of support from our SOS TDO's to examine screening and thresholds at Intake. We reviewed M priority referrals as part of this exercise. At this juncture the screening tool used within the Intake Pillar in DSC was refined further to incorporate the use of the context and safety scale at the point of screening.

On 1st and 2nd October 2019, Case Prioritisation at Intake facilitated by SofS TDO's took place which supported thresholds, diversions and safety planning at the front door.

On the 1st of October the Intake Pillar went paperless with no paper files being created for referrals received from that date onwards and no further expansion of the paper file for

referrals open prior to that date. The Intake Pillar maintains a central log of referrals received in Bridge House and Lord Edward St.

On the 7th and 15th of October 2019 the Intake SWTLs and PSW for Intake reviewed all H priority referrals awaiting allocation at Intake and all unallocated referrals with an abuse categorisation. The purpose of these reviews was to ensure the appropriate priority and category was afforded to all of these referrals and also to ensure that notifications to An Garda Siochana were completed on all referrals with an abuse categorisation.

On the 1st of November 2019 the Intake Pillar implemented a Standard Operating Procedure for the Governance of Referrals Awaiting Allocation for Completion of a Preliminary Enquiry at Intake (appendix 3).

During the week of the 4th of November H priority unallocated referrals were targeted by the Intake Pillar with a view to completing the preliminary enquiries on same.

In November and December 2019 the PSW for Intake reviewed all L priority unallocated referrals at Intake. In December 2019 a review of all M priority unallocated referrals at Intake commenced. This was completed on the 9th of January 2020. On the 9th and 10th of January all H priority unallocated referrals at Intake were again reviewed by the PSW for Intake. The purpose of these reviews was to ensure that the appropriate priority and categorisation was placed on these referrals, to identify referrals for allocation and to identify referrals for closure or diversion to RED.

A series of self-audit dates have been scheduled within the Intake Pillar in Dublin South Central. These will take place quarterly on the 12th February, 7th May, 12th August and 14th October.

The plan for 2020 will be that 1 Social Care Worker, with expertise in domestic violence work will be part of the Intake Pillar to support children and families through earlier intervention within this practice area.

The number of referrals received in DSC in January 2019 was 354.

In Dec 2019 this figure was 321

No of children awaiting an IR in Dec 2019 is 695

CPW- Child Protection Teams

Within child protection, 3 teams were created in January 2019 to complete IA's, FA's, oversee cases/ children whom have been placed on the CPNS and manage unallocated cases. These Social Work teams were being managed by 3 Team Leaders who were line managed by a CPW Principal Social Worker.

A system was implemented whereby each Team Leader had an identified Duty SW whose responsibility it was to respond to phone calls/emergencies on unallocated cases. The Team Leader also prioritised cases (using SOS TL review sheet) for action and pieces of work – these pieces of work were undertaken by the Duty SW. See SOP CPW (appendix 4).

Reviews of High and Medium Priority cases took place with PSWs and Team Leaders on the 14th & 15th May, 19th June; 29th July 2019; 19th September 2019.

PSW for Service Improvement and Team Leader for QA undertook an audit of all unallocated cases in August 2019. Following a review, a blitz of High Priority cases took place in October 2019.

A review and follow up of Low Priority cases began in mid-December 2019, this is ongoing with the hope of diverting children to RED/Comhar if deemed appropriate.

A two and a half day Practice Intensive SOS Workshop facilitated by TDOs took place on the 10th, 11th and 12th September 2019. This focused on the safety planning, analysis within IA process and trajectories.

In November 2019 the CPW Pillar went paperless with no paper files being created for referrals received from the Intake Pillar. Of particular note, the CPW Pillar ceased using case lists in November 2019. The Pillar relies solely on NCCIS for case lists and returning data – MTPS etc.

A SIP is in place for the Intake & CPW pillar (appendix 5).

NCCIS

The ongoing cleansing of data on NCCIS which has been largely undertaken by the Team Leader for NCCIS. Activities such as linking/closing referrals has also been undertaken by all Team Leaders which in turn continues to give a more accurate picture of workload in the Pillar. This has resulted in a number in cases being re prioritised/closed.

In December 2019, a review of all High Priority Unallocated cases was commenced. This was completed on the 13th January 2020. The purpose of this review was to ensure that the appropriate priority and categorisation was placed on these referrals, to identify referrals for allocation and identify cases for closure and/or COMHAR. This was undertaken by a Team leader, CP Principal Social Worker and Service Improvement Principal Social Worker.

In December 2019, a review was undertaken of 60 referrals (M&H priority cases on unallocated list for greater than 6 months). These cases are being actioned presently on the Awaiting Allocation Team.

A full review of all Medium Priority cases will take place in February/March 2020.

A number of self-audit dates have been scheduled within the CPW Pillar. These will take place quarterly on the 20th February, 28th May, 27th August and 22nd October 2020.

Due to ongoing demands on child protection teams, a 4th Child protection team was created in November 2019 with the introduction of a new Team Leader post. With the creation of a further team, further restructuring has taken place within the Pillar. 2 teams will be undertaking IA's, 1 team managing cases where children are named on the CPNS and 1 team to manage unallocated cases. The aim of this is to support greater compliance with the Standard Business Process (SBP) and NCCIS. Changes in Team Leader personnel has also occurred. This will be an interim plan while a review of systems in other ISA's takes place with the aim of a restructuring further of Intake and CPW.

CIC

In April 2019, Active on Duty (AOD) was launched for the children in care pillar. The rationale for the introduction of the system was (a) manage the reality of a number of

vacancies with the system and challenges with recruiting (b) ensure implementation of Tusla's Case Load Management Policy to support staff retention and (c) allow space to be created so that Children in Care could move from the Child Protection Pillar.

There are currently (December 2019) 43 children on AOD. As of December 2019 all children had an in date Child In Care Review 42 children had a visit within timescales. All the children had an up to date Care Plan.

The AOD system is managed by a Team Leader – a dedicated Senior Practitioner and a Social Care worker. The AOD system is augmented on a daily basis with a dedicated Social Worker from the broader Children in Care teams on a duty rota.

The SOP for the management of AOD was updated in December 2019 (appendix 6).

DSC recognises that while the numbers of unallocated children in care have increased, statutory requirements are being fulfilled through the AOD system. For example, in January 2019 84% are plans were in place and by December 2019 this figure had increased to 96%.

A dedicated Team Leader has been identified to chair Child in Care Reviews since December 2019.

While there remain cases awaiting allocation within the ISA, it is hoped that since January 2019, there are better systems in place to manage, review and prioritise unallocated cases to ensure those children whom are at most risk will receive a response from the social work department.

Fostering

For fostering, a dedicated part time Team Leader is employed to ensure that Fostering Reviews have been completed in a timely manner.

Further to this, a dedicated Social Worker has been appointed to ensure that emergency s36 assessments are completed in a timely manner. The timeframe for the emergency assessment of S36 carers has improved significantly within the ISA. A SOP regarding the management of ES36 assessments is currently being finalised. A SIP is in place (appendix 7).

For full assessment of S36 Carers, DSC has employed the services of PACT and FFI (Fostering First Ireland) to assist with completing these assessments. Fostering link workers are also completing S36 assessments.

All foster carers, that have children placed with them under 18 years are allocated to a fostering link worker.

Business Support

The Service Director arranged a review of the business support structure as part of governance and oversight process in place. This was completed by the regional business support manager.

The restructuring of Business Support within the ISA, August/Sept. 2019 now means that there is a dedicated business support to each Team. This has improved efficiency of

responding to referrers and ensuring that NCCIS is being updated. This is a pertinent role as DSC has gone 'paperless' since October 2019.

As part of the risk management of unallocated cases, the Child Protection Pillar has restructured to create initial assessment teams to try and support a more efficient and effective service delivery. Also, the PSW's for Intake, Child Protection, Service Development and Team Leader for unallocated cases has carried out an audit of all high unallocated cases within Intake and child protection and reprioritised as appropriate.

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

The number of unallocated cases in Dublin South Central in the Child Protection and Welfare Service by priority level:

At Intake
H 33
M 164
L 93

On CP Teams post intake
H 68
M 178
L 30

The number of unallocated cases in Dublin South Central in the Child Protection and Welfare Service by priority level:

As per December 2019 MTP:

High: 133
Medium: 350
Low: 332
Total: 695
Please note MTPO data includes intake, CPW and Children in Care.

The number of unallocated children in care as of the 31/12/2019

The number of children being managed on "active on duty" in children in care is 43 children.

The means by which the COO is assured of the reduction in unallocated cases in Dublin South Central

The regional service director reports directly to the COO with regard to unallocated cases. At national meetings, performance data is discussed, analysed and reported on. In addition to this, with regard to the implementation of Signs of Safety as the national approach to practice, each area and region is required to provide regular updates on their area implementation plan (AIPS). This process also includes reporting on any identified risks.

A national group has also been recently established within the COO office to review regional risk registers and risk that have been escalated to the COO office.

The COO also maintains a tracker relating to the national unallocated cases project and met with all service directors and area managers in Q3 2019 to discuss this and ensure all areas were made aware of expectations relating to the project.

Monthly Measuring the Pressure Stats are provided each month to the National office. Further to this quarterly performance indicator are also completed. Currently, fortnightly returns regarding the number of unallocated cases within Intake and CP are sent to Area Manager and Service Director. Further to this, monthly Governance meetings are held, chaired by Service Director and attended by all PSW, Area Manager, Q&A department.

The Service Director provides updates to COO via 1:1 meetings and national operational management meeting. In addition to this in 2020 the CEO has introduced national performance conferences.

Whether this project will be extended into 2020

The national unallocated project will not be extended into 2020 in its current format. That said, the focus on unallocated cases will continue but the governance for this will be through existing structures from area manager to service director and COO.

It is important to note, that nationally work has also taken place with regard to service performance. The CEO has introduced for example a performance conference approach whereby all areas/regions and national services within Tusla will be required to report at regular performance conference meetings on key performance metrics, which will include unallocated cases. The focus of these conferences will be on whether data is accurate; what is plan in place to address any performance risks/issues and also to ensure a systemic approach with regard to performance, including support from other directorates within agency including finance, HR, quality assurance and policy.

It is planned that the area service improvement plan to reduce the numbers of unallocated cases within the Intake and CP Pillars will continue in 2020.

For Intake, screening and further development of RED/COMHAR will increase the number of referrals to these early intervention services. NCCIS has been fully implemented within Intake and Child Protection which ensures quality of data.

There is a significant amount of cases that have been categorised as low priority as the outstanding work to be completed on these cases is on NCCIS. There is no ongoing active Social Work involvement with the children.

The COO sanctioned overtime for staff to complete work on NCCIS in January 2019 for cases as identified for closure/diversion.

If so, the projected outcomes, including timelines of the project

The target in the 2020 Tusla business plan is to reduce unallocated cases (including referrals relating to retrospective abuse) by 20%.

Assurance is required in the following area:

2. Recruitment/Resources

Please outline how the Dublin South Central Service Area benefited from recruitment initiatives and the pilot of the workforce development plan specifically to include.

In June 2019, the Principal Social Worker in Lord Edward Street along with a number of staff held an open/ information evening for new graduates. This helped to fill a number of vacant posts at the time. It is hoped that this will take place again in May/June 2020.

At the end of December 2019 there was 2 vacancies unfilled i.e. no agency against them.

At the end of December 2019 there were 28 social work vacancies (across all grades). Of this, 24 are filled by agency social work staff and 3 filled by social care agency staff (please note other unfilled post relates to FSP).

In Q4 2018, additional posts were allocated to the area. These included 1 PSW, 2 Senior Practitioner posts, a Team Leader post and a Social Care leader post. The PSW post was used to create an Intake Pillar and the Team Leader post was used to create an Intake team for the intake Pillar. 2 Senior Practitioner posts were allocated to Intake, one for each of the 2 teams i.e. 1 in LES and 1 in Bridge House. The Social Care leader post was allocated to fostering to support the set-up of emergency S36 assessments and training for fostering.

A FCC Chair for area was also appointed and an additional post for aftercare manager.

A NCCIS SWTL post was also put in place.

In Q4 2019, due to numbers of cases awaiting allocation, 3 Social care Leaders and 3 Social Care Workers posts were allocated to the area. These posts are within Intake and child protection and welfare teams. This additional allocation was part of national unallocated cases project.

Work is also taking place across the 5 areas in DML by the national workforce planner with regard to resources at the "front door", retention initiatives that are taking place that are found to be effective and initiatives to hard to fill posts. This report has been prepared for DSC and is completed.

There is ongoing rolling campaign for recruitment of social workers. The new graduate campaign is also underway.

In addition to this, a bursary scheme is in place with Maynooth National University of Ireland, whereby students will be awarded sponsorships to come to work for Tusla on graduating and to

take up positions with high unallocated cases/ high staff vacancies. The interviews for this scheme happened in January 2020.

A new initiative is also in place to ensure that students doing placements in Tusla view Tusla as an employer of choice on graduation. This includes ensuring that students are provided immediately on commencing their practice placement the required ICT equipment (laptop and mobile phone). In the Midlands, there are currently 9 students on practice placements. It is our experience that this is very often one of the most effective ways of recruiting new staff to an area.

The regional service director has also engaged directly with both Maynooth university (as it sits within the areas/locations where posts are hard to fill within region) and also with Tallaght (Technological University Dublin) with regard to both social care and social work graduates. It is hoped that by further developing these strategic alliances, that students will be encouraged to see child protection and welfare work as an attractive career option.

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

The outcome of the comprehensive review of resources at the 'front door'

A governance and oversight group is established by Service Director who reports to COO. As part of the national unallocated cases project, the national workforce planner has also completed a review of staff resources at the intake. This report is available to HIQA. Of note, the key issues in DSC is that the area do not have a high number of vacancies in the area but the overall staff compliment needs to be increased to respond to service demand. This is challenging given that the surrounding areas within DML are also large and have high service demand and as such, the capacity to move staffing from surrounding areas is very limited.

The area report to the Service Director every 2 weeks re data from intake. In addition to this the Service Director can run reports (and does so) from NCCIS re allocated and unallocated cases. Area demographics and profile was also completed to support review of resources at front door. It is for this reason that DSC were allocated an additional 6 posts.

DSC has set up 2 intake teams at the front door. One of these is based in Lord Edward Street and one based in Bridge House. The purpose of setting up two dedicated intake teams is to ensure all referrals are screened and prioritised at point of referral, and that there is dedicated staff to respond to phone calls and take referrals details from referrers.

Since January 2019, the intake teams have continued to further develop their role and how they manage cases at the front door, for example, through use of NCCIS and data quality.

Through reviewing of Intake cases, through SofS, and the further development of RED and Comhar within the area, there has been a decrease in number of children being referred from intake to CP for the completion of an Initial Assessment. In January 2019 29% of referrals received at Intake were referred for the completion of an Initial Assessment. In November 2019 6% of referrals received at Intake were referred for completion of an Initial Assessment. 1549 referrals were closed at Intake between January and December 2019. 394 referrals were passed to the Child Protection and Welfare Teams for completion of an IA. This reduction has ensured that only children that require a child protection response are referred onto child protection teams and thus reducing the numbers awaiting allocation on child protection teams. This process will be further embedded into the child protection teams in 2020 when there will be dedicated initial assessment teams to ensure SBP compliance regarding time frames. It is hoped that this will further decrease the number of children awaiting allocation further.

The number of approved WTE posts in the Child Protection and Welfare Service

The information provided relates to WTE posts working in the following teams:

Intake	13 posts
CPW	26.2 posts
CIC	45.6 posts
Aftercare	9.6 posts
Retro team	2 posts (under Regional structure since Q4 2019)
PPFS	35.64 posts

Please note this staffing allocation per pillar remains under close review and will continue to be rebalanced.

The number of new posts approved since September 2019 (if applicable)

6 Social Care Worker/Leader posts
Team leader post provided by regional office.

The number of approved WTE posts in the foster care service

Foster care WTE 19.2

The number of posts filled in the foster care service since September 2019

Two posts:
1 Social work senior practitioner
1 PQSW

The number of filled posts in the Child protection and Welfare Service since September 2019

16 posts

A breakdown of vacancies per function (Child Protection and Welfare Service and Foster Care Service) as of 31/12/2019

Fostering Vacancies: 3 WTEs

Child protection and welfare service: 35 WTE vacancies

Please note as per previous response there are 2 vacancies unfilled in area i.e. no agency staff against them.

Specific initiatives employed to ensure effective use of resources

Ongoing review of current staffing structures to ensure that the area is implementing the most effective and efficient service for service delivery that it can with resources it has, for example, restructuring in January 2020 of child protection teams and AOD system for CIC. This includes analysis of data by Service Director to ensure resources are allocated most efficiently and to respond to highest service risks.

NCCIS is now being used more effectively as a governance tool and to assist with allocation of resources. Tusla's Outcomes for Children hub is also a tool to support this.

A national initiative to support effective use of resources included a project to convert agency staff onto temporary/permanent contracts. In DML, 94 post were converted through this. This initiative supports effective use of resources as it reduces budget spend on agency and brings more stability to areas for planning/managing resources/service.

To support staff retention, the area has implemented Tusla Case Load management and training needs analysis. Reports are generated and reported on regarding caseloads.

Assurance is required in the following area:

3. PPFS and pathways to community based early intervention

Please outline how children and families in Dublin South Central benefited from the review and strengthening of PPFS and pathways to community based early intervention.

From a regional approach, the regional PPFS implementation manager (RIM) chaired a regional group for PPFS Senior Managers and PPFS staff. The RIM reports directly to the regional service director. The regional service director attended this regional group in 2019 to emphasise priority of RED processes and the increase of Meitheals. Additional staff were also allocated to DSC PPFS in 2019 which were; 2 Senior CFN coordinators. The regional PPFS implementation manager has also observed RED meetings across the region to ensure consistency, sharing of learning and high quality. Another date in DSC is scheduled for 10/02/2020.

Tusla's commission and oversight of service level agreements ensures funded agencies are required to support and lead Meitheals and/or RED process.

In 2019, the area has increased the number of referrals from the front door to the RED/Comhar meetings.

Comhar was re-initiated in Dublin South Central in February 2019. Since February 2019 18 Comhar meetings have been held in Dublin South Central. 159 referrals have been considered at Comhar since that time. 2 Comhar meetings will take place each month throughout 2020 on the following dates – 23rd January, 27th February, 26th March, 30th April, 28th May, 25th June, 30th July, 27th August, 24th September, 22nd October, 26th November. An evaluation of Comhar will take place over February and March 2020.

The RED model was initiated in Dublin South Central in April 2019. Since that time 874 referrals have been brought to a RED meeting in Dublin South Central. RED meetings take place 4 times a month in DSC.

There has also been an increase in the number of Meitheals within the ISA, 43 Meitheals took place in DSC in 2019.

In 2019, the area has increased the number of referrals from the front door to the RED/Comhar meetings. There has also been an increase in the number of Meitheals. The following table indicates the trend re numbers of Meitheals requested in the area since 2018.

Dublin South Central				
Meitheal Request		Access Pathways		
		Direct Access	Social Work Diversion	Social Work Step-Down
Q2 2018	12	10	0	2
Q4 2018	6	2	4	0
Q2 2019	25	17	5	3

This has meant that children and families are receiving the right service at the right time and that families receive an early intervention service. It is hoped by doing so, that children and families will be prevented from coming into child protection services. The increase in Meitheal's in the area is also a reflection on the filling of 2 senior child and family network co-ordinator posts in 2019. The CFSN co-ordinators have provided training on Meitheals to different agencies and community groups during 2019 which has contributed to this increase and further training will take place during 2020. The number of Child and family Networks operating in the area are as per the following table;

Dublin South Central	
CFSNs Operating	
Q2 2018	3
Q4 2018	4
Q2 2019	5

The additional Meitheal co-ordinators within the area has meant that there are increased number of children and families receiving a service through early intervention. Dublin South Central through its PPFS also operates 2 Family support teams and also funds the Springboard project Dublin 8 family support team whose aim is to provide early intervention services in areas of high deprivation socio economic disadvantage. The PPFS teams work closely as part of the area RED team to identify families and children in needs of support in respect of child welfare referrals/

Dublin South Central also funds a number of agencies who attend our COMHAR meetings and who also take child welfare referrals, with parental consent, to support the functioning of families in the area. Working with grant funded partnerships, the area is supporting early intervention services.

During 2019 the area also has taken governance of 3 Area based childhood initiatives (ABCs) which support the area in respect of early intervention services with families and children. For example, ABC Docklands have extended their home visiting educational service to families and children into the South Inner City area during 2019 and are providing a valuable intervention for young children and their mothers up to 4 years of age.

Family Support Services

There are currently 2 Family Co-ordinators within DSC. One is based in Donore Avenue and one in Bridge House.

Data regarding Family Support Service in Dublin West

- There are currently 10 family support practitioners in Bridge House, managed by a family support co-ordinator.
- Cases currently allocated to FSS – 63

- Of cases allocated to FSS – 15 open to SW
- FSS waiting list – 5
- Cases closed to FSS 2019 – 70

Data regarding family support services in Dublin South Central

- There are currently 4 full time family support practitioners and 1 part time managed by a family support coordinator.
- Cases currently allocated to FSS - 37
- Of cases allocated to FSS – 17 open to SW
- Cases closed to FSS 2019 - 38

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

Use of RED process

Since January 2019, the intake PSW has taken a lead in developing the RED/Comhar meetings within the ISA.

There is now a weekly RED meeting within the ISA, once per fortnight in LES and once per fortnight in Bridge House.

In 2019, the number of children/families that were referred to RED was 847. The number of referrals to Comhar was 159.

To support sharing of learning, consistency of approach and also to ensure the processes are of a high quality, the regional PPS implementation manager (RIM) has observed RED meetings across DML. The regional RIM reports directly to the service director. The regional PPS RIM carried out this exercise in DSC in January 2020.

Use of Meitheal process

The numbers of Meitheal within the area has increased in 2019. There were 43 Meitheal requests in 2019.

Implementation of national RED process practice guidance

At present weekly RED meetings take place that involves Intake Team Leader, intake staff, child protection staff, Child and Family Support Network co-ordinators, family support co-ordinators.

Assurance is required in the following area:

4. Retrospective Cases

Please outline how the national service improvement project for the management of retrospective cases has impacted on the management of retrospective cases in Dublin South Central Area.

Please include in your response:

The number of retrospective cases awaiting allocation by priority level as of 31/12/2019

In October 2019, a regional PSW for CASP (and retrospective abuse cases) was appointed to the DML. Currently this PSW reports directly to the Regional Service Director. There will be however 2 additional General Manager posts filled on 17th February 2020 to support the service director in oversight and governance across region (which will include regional teams such as the CASP/retrospective team).

There are currently 5 social workers assigned to this team. There is an additional SWTL post also approved and currently with recruitment for filling. In addition to this, training is scheduled for March 2020 relating to risk assessments. This training will be completed by regional staff on CASP/retrospective team but also to staff across areas.

There is a CASP implementation plan in place, which includes retrospective abuse cases and a further national audit of retrospective cases was carried out in Quarter 4 2019. Since taking up the PSW position for CASP/retrospective abuse referrals in DML, all cases have been reviewed. A significant number of cases have been identified for closure in this process. A draft SOP is currently with areas relating to the interface between local intake teams and the regional retrospective teams. The feedback on this is due for return in February 2020 and it will be finalised by March 2020.

All cases of retrospective abuse are screened and prioritised, using a retrospective prioritisation tool and deemed H/M/L dependent on the PSAA's contact with children. This is currently undertaken by Intake at the front door. There is an area SOP in place regarding the management and screening of retrospective cases at the front door.

All referrals that have identified children at potential risk are managed initially by child protection teams and can be supported by retrospective worker.

On 8th and 9th May 2019, the national service improvement team reviewed all retrospective cases within the area. At this time 175 cases were open, 79 were identified for possible closure from the audit, these cases have been closed, where possible at this time.

The PSW responsible for retrospective cases within the area has had 2 meetings to date with the newly appointed regional PSW for retrospective cases for DML. This is to plan the transfer of cases from DSC retrospective team to regional retrospective team.

In December 2019 there were 169 open retrospective Cases

Allocated H 6

Allocated M 16

Allocated L 3
Awaiting Allocation 24
Awaiting Allocation 75
Awaiting Allocation 45

Assurance is required in the following area:

5. Audit of Garda Notifications

Please outline what follow up has been completed with An Garda Síochána in relation to the above audit in the Dublin South Central Area.

All notifications to and from An Garda Síochána are centralised through a dedicated Business Support personnel so that accurate recording of referrals can be maintained.

All referrals at Intake whereby a potential risk to a child/children can be identified, a Garda Notification is completed. These referrals usually proceed to CP, post Intake for an initial assessment of a child protection concern.

To support thresholds and standardisation of practice within the area, the intake social work team leaders and Principal Social Workers meet to review all open cases at Intake and to complete Garda Notifications if required.

There is a regional CPW forum within DML and a memo was issued from the service director from the work of this forum relating to Garda notifications and when they need to be completed.

The Principal Social Workers also have oversight to ensure Garda notifications are completed when required and the CPC chair is also vigilant in checking that notifications have been done when requests for CPCs are made.

The CP PSW chairs a number of Local Management Team meetings each month, with An Garda Síochána to review all open referrals to Garda and from the Garda (in line with Tusla/Garda joint protocol).

The number of notification from the Social Work Department to An Garda Síochána has increased from 160 notifications in 2018 to 265 notifications in 2019.

Assurance is required in the following area:

6. Supports/training initiatives to staff who complete initial assessment and safety planning.

Please outline what supports have been put in place to support good practice and consistency in approach in relation to the completion of initial assessments and safety planning.

As stated previously, from January 2020, 2 child protection teams have been identified to specifically complete initial assessments to ensure further compliance with the SBP and NCCIS.

To support staff regarding initial assessments and safety planning, SofS regional leads have undertaken a number of workshops within the ISA.

Further to this, a workshop on use of SBP and thresholds has been provided to all staff within Intake and CP Pillar at Pillar Team Meetings. This is an ongoing area of work for the intake and CP Pillar.

Group Supervision, using SofS model for Intake and CP also takes place once per month and supports case discussion, direction etc to further enhance quality of initial assessments and safety planning.

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

Specific supports/training initiatives

- SofS workshops took place
10th, 11th and 12th September – child protection
1st and 2nd October – Intake
31st October – Words and Pictures, 2 cases were discussed and Words and Pictures were implemented for each case by the attendees.

There are monthly Pillar Team meetings which provide the opportunity for practice development workshops within each Pillar.

For Intake and CP examples of workshops that have been undertaken at these Pillar meetings include

- SBP
- Garda Notifications
- SC and Allegations
- Local SOP for CPC's

How you are assured of the impact of these initiatives on practice and outcomes for children

- Increased use of SBP and NCCIS by social workers- increase in number of IA's being completed
This means that children and families receive the right service at the right time depending on the level of needs identified.
- Increase in number of Garda Notification being completed- Garda are made aware, at an earlier stage of potential abuse of a child/children
- All SC and allegations being completed in timely manner – this ensures that the outcome of assessments are known quicker which may support the foster child remaining in placement with foster carer

Assurance is required in the following area:

7. Review of current service delivery model

The regional service director for DML meets with area management team in DML at regular intervals (every month) as part of the governance and oversight process in place for the area. The service director also meets with the area manager for regular 1:1 meetings. In addition to this, the service director commissioning additional external support for the area management team to support the team in implementing the changes required both with service improvements, culture and performance. To address the historical issues of poor management/governance of performance in the area, the regional HR manager has also been proactive in supporting the service director, area manager and PSWs in managing probation and also issues re performance in the area.

Organogram (appendix 8)

Front door teams (Intake and CPW).

The area's service delivery in respect of its front door teams was re-structured in early 2019 with 2 separate pillars created in March 2019, with an intake pillar with a child protection pillar. There are 2 intake teams, one based in Lord Edward Street and the other based on Bridge House, Cherry Orchard. The purpose of creating these teams was to ensure robust screening of referrals at the front door using SOS practice model, to ensure preliminary enquiries were completed in a comprehensive manner and to ensure prioritisation of referrals and the completion of IRs in timely manner. All referrals and Intake/preliminary enquiries are on NCCIS.

Intake Staff Compliment:

Principal Social Worker	1
Team Leader	2
Senior Practitioner	2
Social Worker	5
Social Care Worker	1
Social Care Leader	2
Total	13

This represents additional staffing since September 2018 inspection of Child protection of 2 new intake team leaders, 2 new senior practitioner posts for intake, 1 additional business support admin for intake and also 3 additional social care workers for the intake pillar.

Vacancies in DSC Per Pillar:

VACANCIES	Intake	Fostering	Children in Care	After Care
Principal Social Worker	0	0	0	0
Team Leader	1	0	0	0
Senior Practitioner	0	1	3	0

Social Worker	4	2	16	0
Social Care Worker	0	0	0	1
Social Care Leader	1	0	1	2
Totals	6	3	20	3

The area is one of 5 areas nationally which have been identified as part of an unallocated cases project. Progress has been seen in the area with a reduction of over 1021 unallocated cases in March 2019, at the time of the last HIQA re-inspection, to a 40% reduction as of January 2020. This represents as of the beginning of January 2020, discussed at the the area oversight meeting on January 9th 2020, a total of 596 unallocated cases on both the intake and CPW pillars. Since the Autumn of 2019 the area has seen a graduated monthly reduction in its unallocated case numbers. A further review was requested by the area manager of all unallocated highs in January 2020, in addition to a blitz of low priority cases which commenced in December 2019 on the CPW pillar. A governance report will be provided to the area manager in relation to this review of high cases awaiting allocation.

The interface between Intake and PPFS has significantly improved in the area over the past 10/ 11 months. There are RED teams meeting every 2 weeks both in LES and in Bridge House chaired by the Team leader for Intake and also attended by the PPFS staff.

The CPW pillar is also being further structured over since January 2020 to reduce the demands on social workers within that pillar, with dedicated 4 teams, 2 of which are dedicated to completion of IAs, 1 team dedicated to unallocated cases under an assigned team leader and 1 team specifically dedicated to CPNS cases. A service improvement plan is in place currently for the intake/CPW pillars to ensure compliance under each CPW standard and also to improve and monitor timeframes for completion of IRs and IAs.

Interface between Intake and PPFS/Red team/PPFS pillar.

The area Intake Team Leaders, chairs the RED team meetings which take place every 2 weeks in the area. The RED team has diverted over 800 low priority cases since March 2019.

The intake and PPFS have also held regular blitzes regarding low priority cases awaiting allocation in the area to divert to RED or Comhar if appropriate, the new social care worker posts provided to the area by national office has supported this process. The area also has had 2 senior CFSN co-ordinator posts approved since early 2019 plus an additional CFSN co-ordinator post to establish CFSN networks in the area to develop interagency co-operation and identify early intervention services to support families and children in the area. CFSN networks have been established and presentations have been given to local community groups, Dublin City Council, An Garda Siochana and the HSE. This is to promote the development of these networks in the area to identify families and children in need of support and intervention services.

The CFSN co-ordinators have also take the lead in training on Meitheals in the area and this is reflected in the increase in the number of Meitheals during 2019.

Fostering

The area has implemented the current HIOA action plan following on from the HIOA re-inspections of September 2018 and March 2019. A service improvement plan is in place for the fostering service, please see attached. The structure of the fostering service has included the creation of a third fostering team with a fourth fostering team leader allocated to chairing foster carer reviews.

The significant risks identified as part of those inspections included the following areas;

Foster care reviews:

A total of 134 reviews have been completed during 2018/2019 leaving only two reviews to be completed for foster carers who have children aged under 18 placed. Delays in these two are due to complex factors including for one of them an appeal of founded serious concern. A schedule of review has been completed for 2020 with 39 FCs on it. This list consists of those due the first review having been approved as FCs in 2019 or due the three-year review, having had the last one in 2017.

All foster carers where an under 18-year-old child in care is placed are allocated a link fostering worker.

Unapproved S 36 Foster carers

There are currently 23 unapproved foster carers all of whom are receiving regular safeguarding visits. During 2019 18 S36 relative placement were emergency approved and all are allocated for assessment. There remains 1 complex case from 2016 which is unapproved and 3 from 2018. The area continues to use private fostering agencies to allocate these assessments and also allocates all unapproved relative carers a fostering link worker. The area is also implementing a dedicated fostering post to ensure that S 36 assessments are allocated and to ensure that there is no backlog of S 36 assessments awaiting allocation,

The progress of these unapproved assessments is regularly reviewed at the oversight meetings chaired by the SD and attended by National QA.

Emergency approved of S 36 Relative carers

The area has revised the template used regarding emergency s36 assessments and has adopted a template which has been reviewed at the regional fostering meeting. The area has also implemented a dedicated emergency s 36 fostering worker to ensure that no backlog exists re emergency approval and to improved timeframes for Emergency S 36 assessments.

Allegations and Serious Concerns.

The area has a tracker database in place re allegations and serious welfare concerns. Screening / classification of all new allegations or serious welfare concerns in adherence to Children First takes place by the principal social worker for serviced development in close liaison with the PSWs for intake and children in care/ fostering. Robust screening and classification is in place for these concerns and the area is ensuring that timeframes are closely monitored during the assessment of these concern. Robust safety planning is also in place for these children and foster placements during the course of these assessments.

Garda Vetting

The area continues to have close oversight of garda vetting for foster carers and also has a revised database in place for all adults over 16 in foster carer households to ensure that vetting is regularly monitored and updated.

Foster Care Committee

The area currently shares the same foster care committee with Dublin South West/Kildare. Given the size of each area and volume of work to The FCC, the regional service director approved a 0.5 Principal Social Work post for Dublin South Central during 2019. This post has since been filled and the new principal social worker identified to chair the Foster Care Committee is currently in the process of setting up same. A committee secretary has been also identified. The plan for the new foster care committee for Dublin South central is to be in operation April/ May 2020.

Children in Care

The area has implemented a service improvement plan (appendix 9) for children in care which includes ensuring that all care plans and placements plans on NCCIS. The area went live on NCCIS at the end of May 2018 and the children in care in pillar has concentrated on ensuring that key documentation is evidenced on NCCIS with master files being created for all CIC which hold limited key information while the use of NCCIS for file maintenance is being encouraged. A project has been led out by the principal social worker for children in care during 2019 to achieve this aim.

The area has 7 children in care teams under one principal social worker for children in care. The area has been given approval since January 2020 to fill a new principal social worker post for children in care which will allow a further re-structuring of the children in care pillar, which each principal supervising a smaller number of Team Leaders. It will also allow the aftercare pillar to come back under the supervision of a principal for children in care.

Active on Duty system for children in care was introduced during 2019. The active on duty system has 43 children in care currently and is managed by a Team Leader, a dedicated senior practitioner post and a social care worker. An SOP is in place for the active on duty system for children in care which includes statutory visits. Current care plans in date is 96% for children in care in the area including those who are on the active on duty system.

The area also has a complex case forum chaired by the area manager which is held quarterly and which identified children whose foster care or residential placements are at risk and which identified intervention including therapeutic intervention, to support these placements.

The area also has through its community alternative project 2019, funded agencies such as Barnardos to provide therapeutic support to children in foster carer and their carers whose placements have been identified at risk. The area also funds a systemic family therapeutic service which also provides therapeutic support to foster carers and children who placements need further supports.

Aftercare

The area appointed an aftercare co-ordinator in late 2019 and has a service improvement plan in place for the aftercare pillar since early 2019. The team comprises also of 1 part time Team leader post and 5 aftercare worker posts. The area also has a service level agreement with Focus Ireland in respect of aftercare provision and regular allocations meetings take place.

During 2019, the area has concentrated on ensuring that as part of its aftercare service improvement plan that all 16 years old in care are referred to the aftercare service and that needs assessments are completed for all 17 year olds.

The area has also ensured there is an up to date database in respect of all aftercare cases. The area has an aftercare steering group committee in place since 2018 and has been successfully in acquiring CAS apartments for young people leaving care, working closely with our approved housing bodies, local authorities and the HSE.

Business Support Review

The area conducted a review of its business support pillar with the assistance of the regional business support manager. A restructuring of business support function has taken place with dedicated named business support for each pillar (appendix 10). A SOP exists in the area in respect of business support function for the intake teams.

Children on CPNS.

The area has actively reviewed the children on the CPNS to ensure that all are regularly reviewed at CPCs and that all have an allocated worker. The area has also actively reviewed children placed over 3 times on the CPNS following review CPC at the area complex case forum chaired by the Area Manager with the principal social workers and team leaders. The area has implemented a SOP (appendix 11) for referral to CPC and files are audited prior to the CPC taking place as part of this SOP. All CPCs are chaired under the Signs of Safety practice model which has involved birth parents, children and young people more in this approach as active participants in the case conference model. The area has 2 CPC chairs, a principal social worker and a team leader. The principal social worker is also the area lead for signs of safety implementation. All child protection plans are issued within 3 days of the child protection case conference.

There are currently 71 children listed as active on the CPNS, these are listed under the following categories:

Emotional Abuse – 15

Neglect – 45

Physical Abuse – 11

There are 9 children listed longer than 18 months, and these cases are reviewed at the quarterly Complex Case Reviews which is chaired by the Area Manager. There is also one annual date chaired by Area Manager to review children listed on CPNS.

Complaints Monitoring/Tell Us.

The area currently implements the Agency's Tell Us Policy and a principal social worker is assigned to monitor these complaints and also ensure that the area database is maintained and all entered on NIMS system. This is a standing item at the senior management meetings to ensure robust senior management team oversight of and that timeframes outlined in the Tell US policy are monitored.

In 2019 there were 45 complaints made, 33 have been closed and 12 remain open with work on-going to close.

Risk Register

The area maintains a risk register that is regularly reviewed by the area manager and business support manager in respect of risks and identified control measures.

Management/Leadership mentoring.

The area management team, including the Area Manager, Principal social workers and all team leaders in the area have engaged with an external management consultancy in respect of leadership and mentoring during 2019. This has included workshops and active learning in relation to the role of managers in the area in respect of leadership, accountability and also managing teams (dates of workshops available in appendix 12)

Staff Mentoring/Well being

The area is actively implementing the case load management tool for all teams to ensure that social workers have a management caseload to further promote well- being and staff retention. During Q4 2018, the area has also created 2 Senior Practitioner posts as part of a staff retention initiative.

The area has also a staff mentoring programme on the children in care teams to support and mentor new staff. In addition, the area also provides bi monthly staff well -being / mindfulness workshops open to all staff to attend. There has been a good take up in relation to staff attendance at these workshops.

The dates for these workshops in 2019 were

- 17th May 2019
- 20th July 2019
- 19th September 2019
- 21st November 2019.

The dates for these planned workshops in 2020 are

- January 23rd 2020
- March 19th 2020
- May 21st 2020
- July 23rd 2020
- September 24th 2020
- November 19th 2020

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

The key findings of the review

The area has reviewed the functioning of each pillar over the past 12 – 15 months. Service improvement plans have been put in place for most and also operation guidance in the form of standard operation procedures (SOPs) have been developed to provide clarity and guidance for each pillar. Further reviews are in process including reviewing the operation of the front door teams to ensure that within defined capacity/ resources that unallocated cases are prioritised and that clear governance and monitoring systems are in place for these unallocated cases. Processes such as RED teams have been greatly

developed and strengthened over the past year to ensure that clear defined pathways are in place. The interface between intake and PPFs has also greatly strengthened with the addition of Child and Family support network co-ordinators in the area.

Implementation of NCCIS has been a particular focus of the area over the past year with our intake pillar going paperless in the Autumn of 2019. This progress is continuing with the appointment of an NCCIS team leader in August 2019 with a focus on cleansing of data on NCCIS which has been of success. The area is now reporting its MTP data live off NCCIS where as previously this was dependent on manual checklists held on duty teams by team leaders. The accuracy therefore of the area's data held on NCCIS has greatly improved.

What measures have been put in place to date to address the findings of the review

Measures have included restructuring of pillars, implementation of SIPs which have included strategy meetings and also intensive data cleansing processes and actions to cleanse legacy data to ensure accuracy of our data on NCCIS. There has also been allocation of additional staff resources as outlined previously in response to high service demand in this area.

The expected impact on service delivery arising out of the findings of the review in Dublin South Central

Restructuring of pillars, implementation of service improvement plans & NCCIS implementation has ensured stronger management and governance of case data on the area including robust governance of the unallocated case data information.

Assurance is required in the following area:

8. Specific Area initiatives as outlined in the Service Improvement Plan for DSC

- 20% reduction in cases awaiting allocation in 2019
 - o within ISA there was a 40% reduction
- PSW for Intake to develop screening of all new referrals into ISA
- Development of Intake Pillar to ensure referrals are screened and prioritised according to need
- Greater compliance with SBP
- Greater compliance with NCCIS
- Children to be met with as part of Intake Record and/or Initial Assessment to ensure their views and wishes are known and consideration given to whether they can be met
- 1 PSW managing all SC and allegations within foster care to ensure that interim policy is adhered to and that SC and Allegations are classified as per SC or allegation and responded to in a timely manner
- Safety plans in place when an assessment of SC or allegation is being carried out

- Improved frequency and quality of safeguarding visits of unapproved 36 Carers
- A dedicated fostering Social Worker allocated to the emergency assessment of S36 carers
- AOD system in place for children in care awaiting allocation to ensure needs are responded to and statutory requirements are met

Please clearly provide the following data/information:

The implementation of self-audits and how the findings of these audits have contributed to service improvement

Review of all cases awaiting allocation within CPW to ensure cases appropriately classified as per threshold document and ensure that cases diverted to local are pathways if deemed appropriately.

SofS workshops to develop use of safety plans with all staff in ISA.

SC and allegations

A review of cases identified that not all cases were being assessed in a timely manner- PSW now manages all SC and allegations made against foster carers to ensure that concerns are managed in a timely manner and ensure child's needs and foster carers rights are met.

Workshops have taken place within all Pillars regarding the Interim Policy for responding to Serious Concerns or Allegations against foster carers.

Full day spent by PSW reviewing all SWC and allegations on 27th November 2019 since January 2019 to ensure that procedure followed and that all information was contained on NCCIS and fostering files.

Safeguarding visits- Audits have taken place to review quality of safeguarding visits and feedback given to Team leaders to enhance quality of these. At a CIC Pillar meeting feedback was also given to staff regarding the use and improving quality of safeguarding visit templates.

CPNS

At present, the PSW and TL for CPC's/CPNS audit all cases where a CPC has been requested. This audit ensures quality assurance of Initial Assessment and the use of Signs of Safety. Please see audit sheet attached.

The Team Leader for Quality Assurance in DSC has completed the following Audits

- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding open Child Protection cases January 2019*
- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding open Child Protection cases February 2019*
- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding open Child Protection cases March 2019*
- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding open Child Protection cases May 2019*
- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding Children in Care transferring to AOD system June 2019*
- *Quality Assurance Audit regarding open Child Protection cases June 2019*

There is currently no Team Leader in post for Quality Assurance.

Tusla's Quality Assurance Directorate have also carried out a number of Audits in 2019, some at the request of the local area. This is to support the area to identify areas for learning and development.

The audits in 2019 were

- *Review of the Management of Allegations and Serious Concerns against Foster Carers, April 2019*
- *Verification Report: Implementation of Improvement Plan for Child Protection and Welfare Service, 10th April 2019*
- *Verification Report: Implementation of improvement plan for Foster Care Services, 10th April 2019*
- *Audit of Care Planning and Reviews for Children in Care, May 2019*
- *Governance and Oversight of the Unapproved Relative Carers and Safeguarding Practice for Children Placed with Them Longer than 12 Weeks, June 2019*
- *Governance and Oversight of Intake Service –Dublin South Central, July 2019*
- *Audit of Foster Care Systems, August 2019*
- *Review of the Assessment, Investigation and Outcomes of Complaints Made by Foster to Tusla Child and Family Agency and Foster Carer's Experiences of the Investigation and Outcomes of Serious Concerns, Allegations and Complaints Made Against Them, August 2019*
- *The governance, management and oversight of re-referrals to Child Protection and Welfare Services Between 31st June 2018 and 31st June 2019, August 2019*

The implementation of the area learning plan

Training Needs Analysis of staff have been completed in 2019 and have been forwarded to regional Workforce Learning and Development team. Workforce, Learning and Development have attended Senior Management Meeting regarding how best they can support the training needs of staff within DSC. A workforce learning and development plan is in place (appendix 13)3

There is also a Child Protection and Welfare Strategy (CPWS) Area Implementation Plan (AIP) to ensure that the area has a clear plan for the implementation of Child Protection and Welfare Strategy including our national approach to practice i.e. Signs of Safety.

Each area reports into the CPW strategy governance group relating to implementation of the strategy on progress with area implementation plans (AIPS).

There are 3 regional structures in place with regard to sharing of learning and to promote consistent implementation of policies/procedures/standards. These are:

- Regional Alternative Care Forum
- Regional CPW forum,
- Regional PPFS forum

In addition to this, on 17th February, 2 General Managers will commence in DML (reporting to the regional service director) to support capacity for governance, oversight, standardised implementation of policies/procedures and also to support sharing for learning across areas.

The effective use of case management

All staff have been trained in Case load management and this forms part of the supervision process.

The implementation of the caseload management tool is overseen by a national governance group and reports are submitted for this.

The timely completion of notifications of suspected abuse to An Garda Síochána

This is now completed at Intake on all cases where there is suspected child abuse, as per Children First. In addition to this, as need arises on CPW and/or Children in Care cases, Garda notifications are completed when there is a suspicion of abuse.

The CPW regional forum have also discussed this to ensure all Principal Social Workers are aware of the point when Garda notifications are required and from this, a memo was issued from the regional service director to ensure there is consistent implementation of this.