

## **Tusla Child and Family Agency: Call for Tender** **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/111069>)**



**Call for tenders: Tusla Child and Family Agency are seeking tenders for the project listed below which is funded by Tusla.**

**Tusla is dedicated and committed to working in partnership with children, families & communities to ensure that children in need or at risk of harm are supported, protected, and connected to people who can safeguard and promote their wellbeing throughout their lives.**

### **Project Title: Review of the Fostering Assessment Framework**

- Relative fostering assessment
- General fostering assessment

### **Background:**

**The National Guidance for Foster Care Assessment, 2016** (including the relative assessment framework) when developed was adapted to Irish practice and legislation from the British Agency for Adoption and Fostering "Undertaking a Fostering Assessment: A Guide to collecting and analysing information for Form F" (BAAF 2011). It aims to provide analysis and evaluation of information gathered during assessment interviews.

Statutory social work services and private foster care agencies are responsible for assessing potential foster carers who have the capacity to meet the assessed needs of children in care.

The National Assessment Model for both general foster care and relative foster care outlines the sequence of essential conversations with foster care applicants, in order to assess their ability to look after children in care. It considers relevant information about the unique personal qualities and life experiences of applicants as they relate to the task of fostering and the degree to which they possess the necessary stability and security in their adult lives to foster abused and neglected children. It is important that the assessing social workers and foster care committees (FCC) understand that all assessments of applicants' ability to foster are a form of risk assessment. Assessment reports give a 'snapshot in time' of their lives and overall abilities which indicates their potential as carers, based on evidence from their past and current circumstances. This model incorporates areas of support and supervision required for the future, addressing how best to manage any perceived concerns in the interests of children in care and of foster families.

The National Assessment Framework was developed in 2016 with a 12-month approval timeframe for review, to be reviewed in 2017. This review did not occur, and the National Assessment Framework has not been reviewed to date.

While many elements of the Assessment Framework are considered to be robust and has been positively referenced in many HIQA reports, more recently staff and foster carers have raised some concerns in relation to it.

### **Project aim and objectives Aim**

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency are seeking a dedicated resource to review the National Assessment Frameworks for both relative and general foster care. Both the National Foster Care Lead and National Policy Manager for Alternative Care will provide support on this work.

# Objectives

This project will achieve the following:

- Undertake a literature review of national and international best practice and produce a report identifying best practices.
- Undertake a national consultation on current process, with key stakeholders including fostering staff, children in care staff, foster carers, and external stakeholders, e.g. IFCA, private fostering agencies, relevant advocacy groups e.g. EPIC, birth parent's advocacy groups, Foster Care Committee members..
- Undertake a review of HIQA foster care inspection reports and internal audit/ monitoring reports.
- Develop a draft assessment based in the findings of the national consultation and best practice review
- Develop a supporting guidance for the use of the assessment tool(s)
- Pilot the assessment in 4 areas, 2 piloting the general assessment framework and 2 piloting the relative assessment framework. This work will be supported by the oversight group and key operational staff.
- Finalise the assessment frameworks taking account of feedback from the pilot feedback
- Provide briefings to each fostering team on implementation

The person tasked with this work will be asked to review the current assessment framework model and the output of this work will be to;

- develop a new fostering assessment framework for **both relative and general fostering**
- develop a supporting guidance on the use of the new assessment frameworks.

The post will report and provide updates to a national oversight group which will consist of

- National Policy Manager for Alternative Care
- National Lead for Fostering
- PSW in fostering
- PSW for Children in Care
- Chair, Foster Care Committee
- Professional Support Manager for Alternative Car

## In undertaking this project, the successful candidate will be expected to:

- Demonstrate a high level of knowledge of, and experience of working in, fostering services and associated children's services.
- Demonstrate a core competency in communication, teamworking and building collaborative relationships
- Demonstrate an ability to analyse information gathered from the literature review, the review of inspection/monitoring reports, the consultations and the piloting phase of the project and extract core components for development into an assessment framework
- Demonstrate an ability to produce reports in a manner that evidences best practice, analysis of information gathered
- Be familiar with the legislative framework that governs the operation of the fostering assessment framework, this would include the Child Care Act, regulations and relevant standards.
- Demonstrate the ability to work to a clear schedule delivering the required outputs in a timely manner.

## Applications for funding will need to demonstrate that the project will:

- Engage with research best practice in conducting reviews of literature, evidence, legislation, policy, and practice as relevant to the specified topic.
- Be implemented and aligned to an agreed search protocol which will be devised by the consultant/researcher(s) and approved by Tusla.
- This is a desktop review, however, during the course of the project if the methodology should change a review by the Tusla Independent Research Ethics Committee may be required. Any change must be discussed and approved by the Tusla governance and oversight structure.
- Engage with the relevant Tusla governance and oversight structure for the duration of the project and provides subject matter expertise on the topic for the duration of the project aligned to the project delivery schedule. Progress updates to the Tusla governance and oversight structure will be required at intervals agreed upon once the project is commenced.
- Provide a clear outline of the milestone for the project and timelines for the achievements of the individual milestones including the completion of the literature review, creation of draft frameworks and consultations schedules. The successful tenderer will be required to submit progress report(s) at intervals agreed in advance.
- Provide the working group with a proposed dissemination plan in preparation for publication of reports and the communication of research findings to a range of audiences including presentations to Tusla, networking and collaboration events, conference contributions, and other opportunities.

## Expected Output:

- Reviewed fostering assessment framework (relative and general)
- Guidance for undertaking a fostering assessment under the new framework
- Short report (15-20 pages) and presentation on the findings and outcome of the project to Tusla

## Budget

The total budget for this work is up to €35,000 excluding VAT. The successful tenderer will be responsible for all tax, VAT, and other associated liabilities. Tusla will be responsible for contract management for the duration of the project. The successful tenderer will adhere to all the terms and conditions of the contract. The contractors reserve the right to withhold payment where the successful tenderer fails to meet his/her contractual obligations in relation to the delivery of services to an acceptable level of quality.

## How to apply

Tenders should be submitted to Karen Mc Dermott, Tusla: [karen.mcdermott4@tusla.ie](mailto:karen.mcdermott4@tusla.ie) (<mailto:karen.mcdermott4@tusla.ie>) by close of business on **Friday 11th October 2024**. Informal queries and r queries relating to the subject matter of the RFQ can be made to Grainne Collins, Alternative Care Policy Manager, Tusla [grainne.collins@tusla.ie](mailto:grainne.collins@tusla.ie) (<mailto:grainne.collins@tusla.ie>). 23rd – 27th September and to Colette Mc Loughlin, Service Director, Office of the Director of Service and Integration, Tusla [Colette.mcloughlin@tusla.ie](mailto:Colette.mcloughlin@tusla.ie) (<mailto:Colette.mcloughlin@tusla.ie>) 30th September – 4th October.

The project duration is up to 6 months commencing 21st October 2024.

## The tender should include information under the following headings:

- Consultant/Researcher profiles including relevant experience, skills and knowledge of the sector and study context. This information should include reference to, and details of other similar work undertaken previously.
- The lead consultant/researcher specified for all correspondence during the lifetime of the project
- Proposed outline of the approach including methodology, analysis and report writing.
- Proposed budget including a breakdown of costs, timeline, and schedule for the delivery of the project. This should include the costs for all personnel involved in the project.
- Consultant/Researcher to adhere to quality assurance processes of the Tusla/DCEDIY governance and oversight structure for reviewing and commenting on draft outputs prior to finalization.
- Risk assessment with mitigation and escalation strategy outlining any potential difficulties or delays that may be encountered through the course of the project.
- Consultants/Researchers must carry out their work in accordance with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA, 2017).
- Data processing review in line with Data Protection requirements and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR).
- Evidence of insurance/public indemnity.
- Referees (2 referees).
- Contact details; and
- Gantt Chart outlining a timeline of project deliverables.

Tenderers are advised that Tusla is subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts, 2014. If a Tenderer considers that any of the information supplied in their Tender response is either commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, this should be highlighted and the reasons for its sensitivity specified. In such cases the relevant material will, in response to a request under the FOI Act, be examined in the light of the exceptions provided for in the Act.

## Evaluation Process

All tenders will be evaluated by the relevant Tusla governance and oversight structure and Tusla National Research Office under the following criteria:

- Cost.
- Research design and methodology.
- Relevant experience.
- Skills and knowledge.

- Contract management including demonstration of ability to complete project within the specified timeline.

**Region**

Nationwide

**Date Entered/Updated**

23rd Sep, 2024

**Expiry Date**

11th Oct, 2024

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.activelink.ie/vacancies/tenders/111069-tusla-child-and-family-agency-call-for-tender>