

# Tusla Cork Update

Tusla continues to process child protection referrals at this time, and recognises that the current conditions pose particular risks for vulnerable children and families



**In 2017 the COO of Tusla, Mr Jim Gibson proposed an initiative known as Creative Community Alternatives (CCA) which had two core objectives:**

1. Identify children in the community at risk of coming into care; put in place a bespoke support package that would address the behaviours/dynamics of the child and his/her family, thereby mitigating the negative impact of same; with the intention of keeping the child out of the care system.
2. Identify children within the care system who could return home to their families and communities, if a suitable bespoke transition and support package were put in place. Of the seventeen area's comprising Tusla nationally, six pilot areas were selected, each of which developed different models and approaches to addressing the core objectives of the CCA initiative.

In the Cork Area, the model developed was one in which a dedicated Co-ordinator received referrals from child protection and welfare social work department teams, where the child, the subject of the referral, met the criteria as set out above.

In 2019 Barry Murray, Area Manager, commissioned research into the intervention from Dr Niamh Sheridan, Director, Togher Family Centre. The key purpose, findings and conclusions of this research are outlined overleaf.  
Link to the full report at <https://tfamc.ie/research/>

## Useful Websites

**Research Briefing: Child Protection, Social Distancing and Risks from COVID-19 Harry Ferguson, Laura Kelly, Sarah Pink (June 2020)**

This briefing shares some emerging findings about the challenges of achieving social distancing during child protection work, especially on home visits, and how children and families and social workers can be kept safe from COVID-19.

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/child-protection-and-social-distancing>

**The Traveller Domestic Violence, Sexual and Gender Based Violence Pilot Project -**

Pavee Point, in conjunction with other Traveller Support and Visibility Projects have produced a number of resources specific to Traveller and Roma Communities. Available from [paveepoint.ie](http://paveepoint.ie)

Up to date content regarding Sexual Offending, including Online Offending available from National Organisation for Treatment of Abusers (NOTA) at [nota.co.uk/nota-bulletin-board/](https://nota.co.uk/nota-bulletin-board/)

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is holding their Annual Meeting virtually from the 5-16 October 2020, with the theme Infectious Disease Outbreak and the Protection of Children. Registration and submission of abstracts by 5th August 2020 – see [alliancecpa.org](http://alliancecpa.org) for details.

**TUSLA**  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency



[tusla.ie](http://tusla.ie)  
[cypsc.ie](http://cypsc.ie)  
[hse.ie](http://hse.ie)  
[gov.ie](http://gov.ie)  
[corkcity.ie](http://corkcity.ie)  
[corkcoco.ie](http://corkcoco.ie)

Racism is a reality that we have in Ireland and we too need to be vigilant not just to be non-racist, but to be anti-racist. To this end the Cork Migrant Centre Youth Initiative Against Racism (in conjunction with CYPSC) held a webinar with a panel that included Bernard Gloster, CEO Tusla, Tanya Ward, Children's Rights Alliance and Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children. In a future piece in the newsletter, we hope to include a link to the webinar and an article by the young people involved. One of the hopes of the young people is that we will continue to listen, learn and educate ourselves on the issue of racism today. Please see [corkmigrantcentre.ie](http://corkmigrantcentre.ie) for further information. See also [oco.ie/directdivision](http://oco.ie/directdivision) for OCO Report on the impact of Direct Provision on children.

# Creative Community Alternatives (CCA) : A Chance to Change

## Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to consider the efficacy of the Creative Community Alternatives (CCA) programme.

## Findings

1. Cork has the largest number of children receiving CCA intervention.
2. CCA increases organisational efficiency.
3. CCA contributes to a reduction in Hardiker level.
4. CCA increases children's ability to self-regulate.
5. Key aspects of CCA most valued by children identified.
6. CCA improves parenting ability and family functioning

## Conclusion

This research would suggest that due to its success, Creative Community Alternatives Cork should be maintained, for social workers, especially in light of the hours returned to social work departments and the risk of the intangible phenomenon of 'failure to manage', which may follow any cessation of the programme. CCA should be maintained for children, especially in light of the significant success in supporting children's ability to self-regulate and the effect this has on family life. CCA should be maintained for parents and carers, especially in light of the positive effect CCA intervention had on parenting ability and family functioning. CCA should also be maintained for fiscal purposes in light of the significant savings identified through savings in social work hours alone

## Knowledge Gap

The Cork Area Management Team held the belief that CCA was an effective intervention for children in Cork. However, there was no empirical evidence to support this belief. This research endeavours to address the knowledge gap and to understand more fully the relationship between the work undertaken through the CCA programme and the outcomes of the programme, and additionally, to understand the factors upon which this success is built. Through this understanding it will be possible to answer the following:

1. Is CCA a successful model of intervention?
2. Who is CCA successful for? Children, parents and / or social workers?
3. Are the empirical findings of this research useful for CCA in Cork at a regional level and nationally?

To this end the questions above were addressed by engaging with the phenomenon from four distinct and unique perspectives:

1. The perspective of the social worker
2. The perspective of the CCA worker
3. The perspective of the parent
4. The perspective of the child

To illicit the perspectives above, four bespoke questionnaires were created. These questionnaires were administered to a total of 194 respondents, comprising 66 social workers, 51 CCA staff, 43 parents and 34 children.

