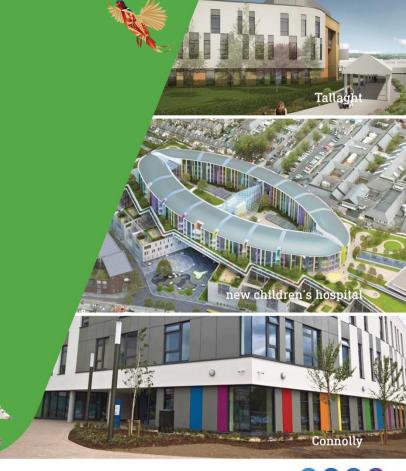
Capacity Building in the Overall Pursuit of Highlighting Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation 14/05/24 Blathnaid McCabe, Principal Social Worker, the Alders @ Connolly





Setting the scene

<u>The Alders Unit</u> at Connolly and Tallaght, Children's Health Ireland is a specialist child sexual abuse service.

- Units were established in 1988
- Catchment area All of Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow, Louth, Meath, Cavan, Monaghan
- Referrals primarily come from Tusla
- Other referrers include GPs, NEPS, Primary Care, Schools

The Laurels Clinic

The Laurels Clinic sees children and young people under 16 years.

The Laurels Clinic catchment area is Dublin and Leinster.









The Alders Unit, CHI at Connolly Hospital

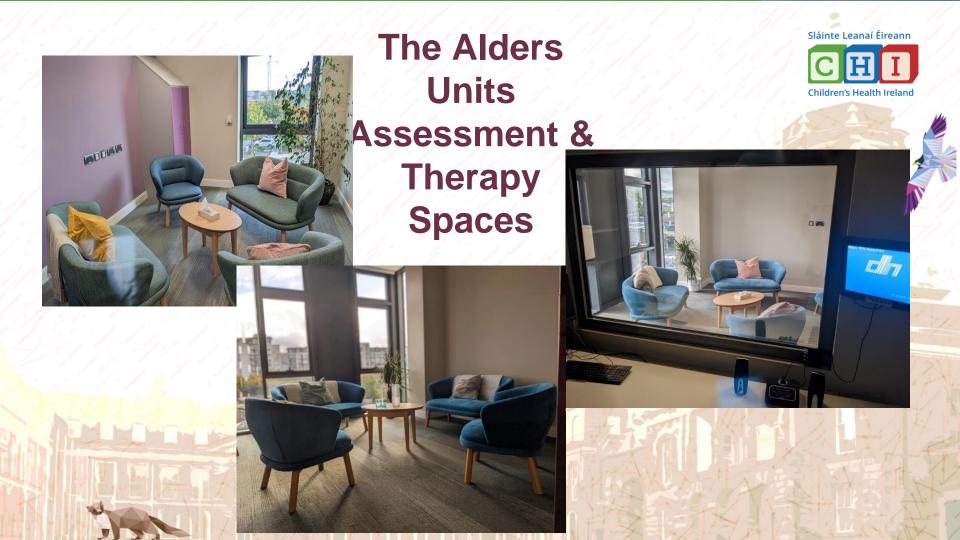


The Alders Unit & Laurels Clinic, CHI at Tallaght Hospital









Prevalence

- CSO, 2022, Sexual Violence Survey
- Three in ten adults (29%) experienced sexual violence as a child
- Women reported experiencing child sexual abuse (36%) at a higher level than men (22%) did.
- Women were three times more likely to experience unwanted sexual intercourse as a child (7%) compared with men (2%)
- A quarter (25%) of women experienced non-contact sexual violence as a child, compared with 16% of men (CSO, 2022).

Disclosure of abuse low

- Majority of adults abused in childhood did not tell in childhood (London et al., 2005)
- Many children don't disclose during assessments/forensic interviews







What we do

- Children and young people attend The Alders Unit and The Laurels Clinic where there is a concern or disclosure of child sexual abuse.
- Children/YP up to the age of 18

The Alders Unit is made up of:

- Social workers
- Psychologists
- Psychotherapists
- Administrators







Services



- Medical assessments (the Laurels Clinic)
- Early intervention and support
- Assessment
- Therapy
- Consultation
- Training
- Research
- Annual Conference
- We work in collaboration with AGS, Tulsa, DPP, CAMHS, Schools





Capacity Building

- The units have a long standing history of supporting other agencies to feel empowered to talk to children about CSA
- Fear of/anxiety of talking-to children for various reasons
- Disclosure rates in children and adults very low and highly concerning
- Public health issue
- Prevalence has not changed and online csa is an increasingly worrying and dangerous trend
- Need to empower both the public and professionals in all sectors to understand csa and feel able to listen and talk to children





HOW

- Training to Tusla SWs at the front door all around the country
- Training to AGS (this is not happening to the same extent)
- Training to community Groups such as YPAR (Young People at Risk), BEST (Ballymun Educational Support Team)
- Training with Women's Aid
- Input to the Psychology programmes TCD/UCD
- Historically to Social Work TCD/UCD Programme





Consultations

- Consultations to Tusla, (CIC) CAMHS, BEST, Schools, Psychotherapists publicly & privately
- Consultations/support enable our teams to provide advice, support and guidance without seeing the child
- Recommendations for staff and onward referral (usually targeted at high risk YP with significant complex trauma hxs)
- Reaching out to children/families indirectly







Significant change & Development afoot - Barnahus

• In Ireland, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) services are mixed & the Government has committed to address this by implementing a **Barnahus Model of responding to CSA**. Seeking to join all elements of the system (Child Protection/Legal/Health) together, representing a significant social innovation.







Barnahus four rooms

Coordinates effective, child-friendly, multidisciplinary interventions for child victims/witnesses of violence (Standards: 2, 5, 9, and 10)

CRIMINAL

Forensic interview Court hearings

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Examination (forensic)
Treatment
Referral

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9

MDIA collaboration competence

PROTECTION

Individual assessment Exploratory interviews

> Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9

MENTAL HEALTH

Assessment Treatment Referral

Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann





- The Barnshus offers a one stop shop approach 4 pillars
- Co-operation between police, prosecutor social services child protection, mental health and medical in one child friendly premises
- The Barnahus also plays an important role in enhancing awareness and knowledge of violence against children with key stakeholders
- 10 Barnahus standards including overseen by PROMISE (EU/CoE)
- Placing child at the centre/upholding childrens' rights, preventing undue delay, organisational procedures, interagency case management, forensic interviews..
- Standard 9 Capacity Building





Capacity Building

- Training of Professionals
- Guidance, supervision, peer review, counselling
- Research & Experience
- Why should this standard be met?
- European Legal provisions (enshrined in the UN Committee on the rights of the child -UNCRC)
- UNCRC recommend broad education and training for Barnahus staff and intersectoral training





Upskilling, training, education

- Council of Europe tender
- Alders & Laurels CHI were awarded the tender to complete a training needs analysis by CoE
- Key recommendation from *Training Needs Analysis* Develop trauma informed care training (Advocacy & participation)
- Training programme for professionals to support the implementation of Barnahus Ireland.
- Alders/Laurels/University College Cork /C&F Institute were awarded tender to develop the above training
- First evidence based TIC training to be developed in Ireland





Components of training level 1 & 2

Training modules will include

- > Foundation & advanced level
- > Principles of TIC conceptual understandings
- Evidence underpinning TIC approaches
- Collaborative practice/interagency working
- > Specialist knowledge of CSA –Assessment and interventions, impact of CSA
- > Tools/resources
- Evaluation





What next

- Evaluation of the upcoming training packages which will be piloted by end of 2024
- Improved evaluation of the current trainings/consultations/workshops
- Improve Website to reach children/families/professionals

www.childrenshealthireland.ie/list-of-services/specialist-child-sexual-abuse-services/

The Alders at Connolly, CHI

Urgent Care Centre

2nd Floor, Mill Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 RRN1

Blathnaid.mccabe@nchg.ie,

(01) 6407650 / (01) 874 5214





Our job is not to deny the story, but to defy the ending- to rise strong. Recognise our story, and rumble with the truth until we get to a place where we think yes this is what happened, this is my truth and I will choose how this story ends.

