

# Capacity Building in the Overall Pursuit of Highlighting Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse/Exploitation

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Tallaght



new children's hospital



Connolly

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CHI | Connolly | Crumlin | Tallaght | Temple Street



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# Setting the scene

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The Alders Unit 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.

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# The Alders Unit, CHI at Connolly Hospital



# The Alders Unit & Laurels Clinic, CHI at Tallaght Hospital





# The Alders Units & Laurels



# The Alders Units Assessment & Therapy Spaces



# Prevalence

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- **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

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# What we do

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- 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

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# 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

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# 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

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# 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

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# Consultations

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- 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

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# 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.



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# Barnahus four rooms



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- 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

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- 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

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# Upskilling, training, education

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- 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

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# Components of training level 1 & 2

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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

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# What next

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- 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/](http://www.childrenshealthireland.ie/list-of-services/specialist-child-sexual-abuse-services/)

The Alders at Connolly , CHI

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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.

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