



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

**Guidance Document and Frequently Asked
Questions for
Health & Social Care Professionals**

Applying for Career Pathways

Introduction:

The implementation and roll out of the Health & Social Care career pathways agreement is to ensure that we recognise the committed work force with Health and Social Care grades .It underpins the Agency's commitment to attract and retain our staff.

It ensures timely recruitment and retention to meet the organisational strategic objectives, including:

- Tulsa's People Strategy 2022-2024
- Tulsa's Organisation Reform programme
- Strategic Plan for Residential Care Services for Children and Young People 2022-2025

As Tusla embarks on its reform programme, ensuring continuity and stabilisation of our staffing model is critical and dependant on the recruitment and retention of our staff.

The introduction of the Health & Social Care Career Pathway in Tusla allows for career progression based on service years and in recognition of Tulsa's experienced Health & Social Care Professionals (HSCP) who have the service required to progress to the next grade as outlined in the document.

It is essential from a recruitment, retention, and a workforce stability perspective within the current very limited labour market.

Background:

In April 2000, a report was completed by the Expert Group on Various Health Professions setting out criteria for, among other issues, dealing with changes in their professions, their career structures, problems in recruitment and retention, and development of service delivery for the future.

In 2004, a follow-on report (under Recommendation 45 of the Expert Group Report) was completed by James Doran and Sean McHugh in which they made a number of recommendations.

It is acknowledged that significant change had taken place since 2004 and that further significant change was inevitable in the future. This led to an agreement that a joint review of the Health and Social Care Professionals should take place with the purpose of reaching agreement on how earlier recommendations on their professions should be brought to finality. Tulsa's changing need as identified in Tulsa's Organisation Reform has the same impact on HSCP's and as such Tulsa has sanction and agreement with FORSA to implement the Health and Social Care Career Pathways for the following grades:

Tulsa Grades Encompassed:

Social Work

Social Care Work

Speech & Language Therapy

Occupational Therapy

Play Therapist

Grade covered by Tulsa's career pathways progression.

The agreement covers the following Health & Social Care Professionals that work in the following grades:

- Occupational Therapists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Play Therapist
- Social Workers
- Social Care Worker
- Addiction counsellor

Eligibility for Consideration in this Process:

Tusla and FORSA have reached agreement for HSPCs in the following grades Social Care Worker or Occupational Therapist or Play Therapist or Social Worker or Speech & Language Therapist or Addiction Counsellor (within Tusla) that for the filling of Senior posts for the above grades across the Agency the following conditions must be met:

1. Permanent staff member of Tusla.
2. Individual is 100% discharging their functions as a one of the following grades in Tusla:
Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Play Therapist, Social Workers, Social Care Worker, Addiction counsellor.
3. Have 5 years (60 months cumulative) reckonable service.
4. Must have the recommended approval of senior competences by their line manager.
5. Existing Basic Grades Health & Social Care staff on a live panel for the promoted grades outlined in this initiative with 5 years reckonable service (as outlined above in point 1 and 2) can apply for this process without having to undergo a competency-based assessment. [Application process Appendix 1]
6. Existing Basic Grade Health and Social Care staff not on a live panel for the promoted grades outlined in this initiative with 5 years reckonable service will be required to undergo a competency-based assessment. [Application process Appendix 1]

Staff appointed through the upgrade process must commit to staying in the designated Senior Post for a minimum 3 years. This will be a condition of appointment.

*This is not an automatic entitlement for upgrading to senior level, any offers made are subject to satisfying the eligibility criteria and the required competency framework relevant to the role

Please note the following:

- All posts offered within this process are required to be accepted within a 3-week timeframe from the date of offer.
- Staff will be required to formally accept job offers to be appointed by signing and returning their contract. that issues to them.
- Any offer made and accepted is on the agreement that you would commit to remaining in the post you are appointed to for a minimum period of 3 years. This will be a condition of appointment.
- On return of your contract, your appointment date will be the date of your application.
- There will be no back dating of pay beyond your application/appointment date as part of this process.

Criteria to apply for Senior Health & Social Care Grade Posts within Tusla:

- A. Staff must be Permanent staff members of Tusla.

And

- B. Staff must have a least 5 years' reckonable service (60 months cumulative) as a basic grade Health and Social Care Professional

And

- C. Staff must be 100% discharging their functions, in the following grade Social Care Worker or Occupational Therapist or Play Therapist or Social Worker or Speech & Language Therapist or Addiction Counsellor (within Tusla) before they are eligible to apply.

And

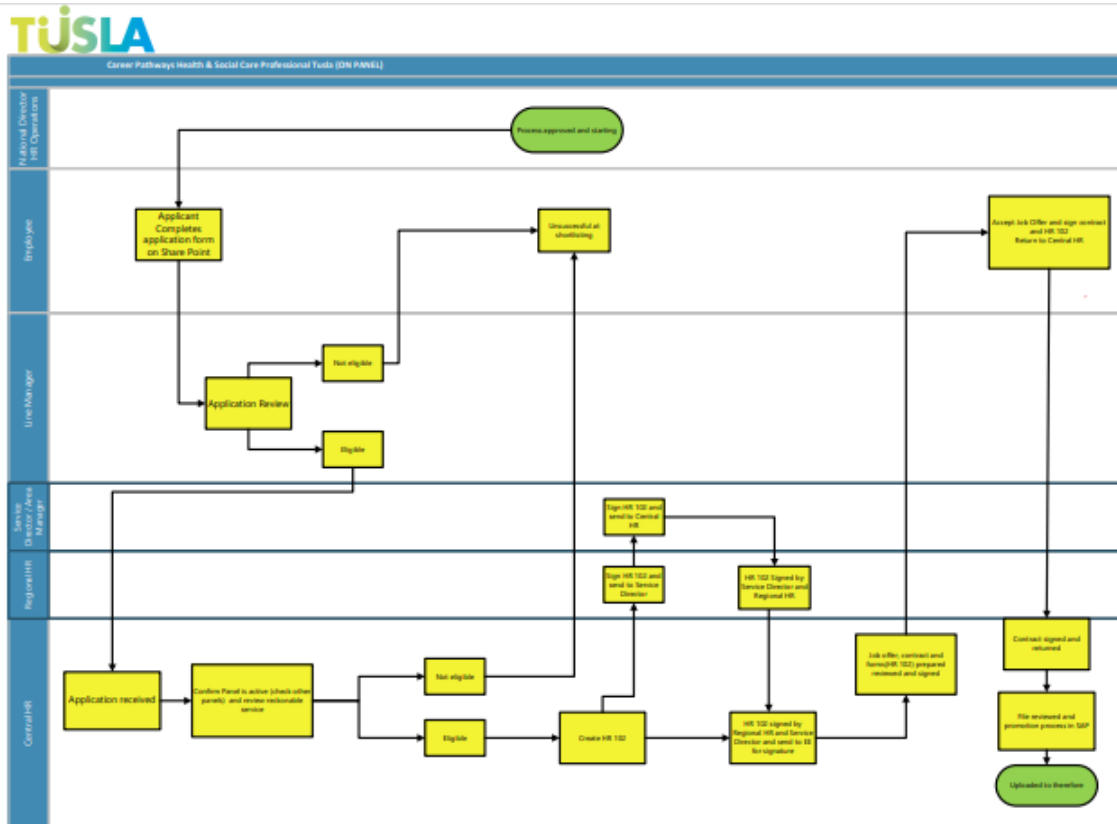
- D. Staff meeting Criteria A, B & C above and who are on a live Senior Panel must complete an application form to apply for senior level post under this initiative as outlined in Appendix 1.

Or

- E. If you are not on a Senior Panel but meet criteria A, B & C above, you must complete an application for a Competency Based Assessment as outlined in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Process Flow for Health & Social Care Professionals who meet the Criteria:



Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. I am a Health & Social Care Professional with at least 5 years' experience (60 months cumulative), but I currently work in a non-frontline directive care service. Am I eligible to apply at this time?

Yes, once you are currently employed as a Social Care Worker or Occupational Therapist or Play Therapist or Social Worker or Speech & Language Therapist or Addiction Counsellor.

Q. I am a Health & Social Care Professional with at least 5 years' experience (60 months cumulative), working in Tusla Child and Family Agency in a temporary capacity on a fixed term contract. Am I eligible to apply at this time?

No. Staff must be a permanent staff member of Tusla before they are eligible to apply.

Q. I am a Health & Social Care Professional and I have over 5 years' experience (60 months cumulative) and I am working in Tusla Child and Family Agency, employed through an agency. Am I eligible to apply at this time?

No. Staff must be a permanent staff member of Tusla before they are eligible to apply.

Q. Who is appropriate level/grade/ line manager to recommend an employee for appointment to a senior post?

Recommendation of an employee to a senior post can be made by an Area Manager.

Q. What is considered to be reckonable service?

Service within the HSE, Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) other statutory health agencies, the Department of Health and bodies which provide services on behalf of the HSE under Section 38 of the Health Act 2004 is considered as reckonable service.

Q. If I apply for a senior post through this process where will I be based?

On successful completion of the process candidates will remain in their current location/area of service.

Q. Can I apply for promotional posts within 3 years of accepting the post?

Yes. You can apply for promotional posts within 3 years of accepting the post.

Q. What will be the implications if I retire from the organisation within 3 years of accepting the post?

You can retire from the organisation on your planned date.

Q. I was previously on a Senior panel which has now expired can I apply through the panel route?

No, If you are not on a current live panel then you will need to undergo a competency based assessment as outlined in Appendix 1.

Q. I am currently on a live panel what do I need to do?

You can apply for this process without having to undergo a competency-based assessment as outlined in Appendix 1. If the panel is for the same grade as you would be appointed to, should you be successful in your application for career progression. E.G I am on a Social Care Leader Panel I don't need to undergo a competency-based assessment, but you still need to apply through "I am on a panel" through the APP as explained in appendix 1.

Q. I am on a panel for a post in a different location/area can I take up appointment in an alternative location or will I remain in my current location?

No. If you apply for this process you will upgrade in your current location and will be removed from any live panel for the grade that you are applying for. Please note that should your application be successful in this process you will be required to remain in your new post for 3 years/36 months.

Q. What is the appeals process if I am unable to get a recommendation from a senior post holder?

You have the option to appeal any decision through the Tusla Grievance procedure.

Q. How will my point of scale be calculated?

The Starting Pay on Promotion rules as laid down by the Department of Health Circular 10/71 will be applied.

Q. What will be my rate of pay?

You will be paid at the appropriate salary scale for the grade from the effective date of promotion.

Q. What will the effective date of my promotion be?

The effective date of the promotion will be the date that the application is submitted.

Q. Will I receive back pay?

There will be no back dating of pay beyond your application/appointment date as part of this process.

Q. I am currently in an acting Senior position do I need to complete the competency assessment?

Yes, unless you were appointed to the Senior post through a Tusla Recruit campaign.

Q. I have 60 months employment as a Social Care Worker but I was on sick leave for 24 months during this time. Does this period of sick leave count as reckonable service?

Any period of unpaid leave does not count as reckonable service.

Q I am currently on a career break can I still apply?

No, however, you can apply on your return from career break.

Q I am currently on Maternity Leave can I still apply?

Yes

Q What is the closing date for applications?

There is no closing date, this is a rolling competition.

Frequently Asked Questions & Guidance on Completing Competency Based Assessment:

What is Competency Based Framework?

Competency Based Framework is a systematic process for assessing whether candidates are suitably qualified and competent to fulfil the duties and responsibility of a higher grade. Once a staff member satisfies the criteria, a job offer will be made subject to approvals in place for filling of posts.

The grades are covered by this agreement are as outlined on page 1. To apply, a post holder must have been in the post for 5 years reckonable service (60 months cumulative).

How do I make an application for a Competency Based Assessment?

The application can only be made online as outlined in Appendix 1.

Does my Line Manager need to sign the application form?

Yes. Your Therapy Manager/Line Manager must assess and verify based on your completed application if you satisfy the criteria and are competent to operate at a senior level and a recommendation made. This is then forwarded to the relevant HR department to be reviewed for final approval.

Can I get assistance when filling out the form?

You are required to complete this application on your own.

My current position is split between two services.

If your current position is split between 2 services, you are eligible to apply. Staff must be currently working 100% of their contracted hours in one of the following grades Social Care Worker or Occupational Therapist or Play Therapist or Social Worker or Speech & Language Therapist or Addiction Counsellor (within Tusla) before they are eligible to apply.

What happens after I submit my application?

Your application form will be assessed to ensure that it is complete, and you will receive an acknowledgement of receipt from your application. You can follow up the progress of your application through the APP. See full guide for more information in your application status.

Who conducts the Competency Based Assessment?

The Assessment will be completed by the Therapy Manager/Line Manager and their recommendation will be then sent to the local Head of HR for review. Assessments will be carried out using the information on the application form you submit.

How do I get the results of Competency Based Assessment?

If the outcome of the Competency Based Assessment recommends that you satisfy senior competencies, HR will review approvals to fill posts and an offer will be made to you.

How will jobs in this process be offered out to applicants?

On successful completion of this process, you will be offered a post within your current location/area.

Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful?

An appeal can be made using the Tusla grievance procedure.

How long will the process take?

It is hard to determine at this point, however if you are successful the date of your appointment will be the date of your application.

When will I know the outcome?

It is hard to determine at this point, however if you are successful the date of your appointment will be the date of your application.

Am I guaranteed a Senior Post if I apply for a Competency Based Assessment?

No. Posts will only be offered out based on the Competency Based Assessment demonstrating your competency to work at senior level.

Do my terms and conditions change if I am offered a Senior post?

Appointment to a Senior post is treated as a promotion. The salary will increase, but any red-circled conditions (like annual leave and working hours) would be set aside and replaced by the new standard conditions under the public service agreements. In some circumstances, a post holder could end up working longer hours or having less leave. A new contract of employment will issue to you outlining your new terms and conditions of employment at a Senior Grade. At your application you have already indicated that you have read and agreed the job description for your new role. Location of post may change, based on service requirements.

Staff appointed through the upgrade process must commit to staying in the designated Senior Post for a minimum 3 years. This will be a condition of appointment.

If I am offered a post, would I receive back pay?

No. There will be no back pay as your new salary will commence with the contracted start date of the Senior role. If successful, the date of your appointment will be the date of your application.

Canvassing will disqualify.

Any canvassing by or on behalf of a post holder shall result in the disqualification of that post holder and their exclusion from the process.

Will the scheme be extended to other grades?

No.

Guidance on Completing Application for Competency Bases Assessment:

What information should I include on the form?

The application form is very structured and targeted. Applicants should answer all the questions, which are designed to map the duties onto the competency and knowledge in each category. You will be scored on the answers given.

Applicants should:

- Be aware of what competencies the questions cover.
- Read all the questions on the application form carefully.
- Answer all the questions (do not say questions are 'not applicable').
- Present his/her answers in the best possible light, but without exaggerating it (remember that your Line Manager/Therapy Manager will have to verify the accuracy of answers).
- Give full and consistent answers and avoid generalisations.
- Avoid 'cutting and pasting' answers.
- Give examples and descriptions of specific elements of his/her job that relate to the various factors and elaborate on them where possible.
- Use additional space where more is needed to include relevant details.

Assessors require clear, comprehensive, and accurate information on the key aspects of the post.

under the following headings in the application:

1. Professional/Clinical
2. Managing Service including change management
3. Managing Self and Others

- Responses should be concentrated on the typical job requirements, not one-off or rare events.
- Application should include supporting evidence and examples where possible.
- Review and sign off by the Therapy Manager/Line Manager.
- The Therapy Manager/Line Manager must validate the contents of the application ensuring that.
- The duties set out by the applicant are the duties of the post.
- The applicant meets the eligibility criteria for this process as outlined.
- The successful applicant will be required to accept the job offer within 2 weeks by completing HR102. On acceptance of post a new contract, job specification will issue, and a start date agreed.

How do I start my application?

By clicking the link provided in the Tusla Hub. For further explanation check the Applicant Full Guide [\(link\)](#)

Do I need to be in Tusla network?

No, you don't need to be in a Tusla network, however it is a must that you are logged in with your Tusla email in order to proceed with your application. But we highly encourage you to fill out the application from a Tusla networked computer.

What happens if the link is not working?

If that's the case, most likely will be due to a internet connection failure, we recommend you to check your internet connection and try again. If the issue persists, you can contact career.pathways@tusla.ie who will be happy to help you.

Is the link phone and tablet friendly?

The quick answer is No. This link has been designed for laptop/computer, if you decide to do your application in a phone or tablet, it will work, but the link will be become slow, and the layout won't look great. So, we highly encourage you to do this in a laptop or computer.