

Minister Zappone begins child protection mission to NYC and UN Special Victims Detectives, Child Protection Workers and Health Professionals to share experiences

Monday 30th October 2017

A fact-finding mission led by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr Katherine Zappone, to meet detectives of New York's Special Victims Division, Child Protection and Medical teams as well as legal services will begin today (Monday 30th November 2017).

Minister Zappone will today meet the NYC Commissioner for the Administration of Children's Services, David Hansell.

The Minister will be joined by the Special Rapporteur on Child Protection, Geoffrey Shannon as well as representatives from the Gardaí, the Child and Family Agency Tusla and other Government Officials.

On Tuesday the delegation will visit Child Advocacy Centres in the Bronx – which earlier this year were highlighted as an example which Ireland could follow.

Speaking from New York Minister Zappone said:

“As we increase investment in our child protection services to over €750m for the first time ever – it is important that we look at best practice in other countries.

Our children, young people and families deserve the best possible care, supports and protections. Over the coming days I look forward to seeing at first hand the work being carried out in New York, and in particular in the Bronx.

I look forward to hearing about the experiences of specialised units of the NYPD, Child Welfare Agencies and Prosecutors. Our discussions will have a special focus on the co-location of such services in special child advocacy centres.

Our work starts today at a meeting with Commissioner Hansell.

Child protection in Ireland is changing. We have unprecedented investment, the child and family agency Tusla has big developments coming and there is ground-breaking research to help us identify best practice.

In New York we will be looking at how models and practices here could benefit children, young people and families in our own country.”

Dr Shannon added:

“I very much welcome the initiative by the Minister to examine the co-location of child-protection disciplines as a means of promoting meaningful inter-agency cooperation through genuine partnership in child protection.

The Child Advocacy Centre (CAC) model offers many advantages, including reductions in expenditure in pursuing child abuse investigations, and court proceedings.

The US National Children’s Alliance estimates that the CAC model achieves \$1,000 savings per case compared to non-CAC approaches.

The CAC model provides significantly higher rates of coordinated investigations and increased successful prosecution of child abuse perpetrators.”

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS

The Mission will include a number of elements after which media updates will issue.

Monday 30th Oct

Meeting with the New York Commissioner for the Administration Of Children’s Services, David Hansell

Meeting with representatives of the Irish Community

Tuesday 31st Oct

Visit to Bronx Child Advocacy Centre

Address to the UN Security Council ‘Children and Armed Conflict

Bilateral Meetings at the United Nations

Update on USA-Ireland Adoption Agreement

Wednesday 1st Nov

Meetings with the New York District Attorney’s Office

Visit to Pieta House (USA)

Visit to Irish Centres

Thursday 2nd Nov

Meeting re Philanthropy