Non-Accidental Head Injury (NAHI) is the leading cause of death and long-term disability for babies who are harmed (Sidebotham and Fleming 2007).

This conference aims to raise awareness about Non-Accidental Head Injury in the Irish context. The impact of this form of harm at an individual, familial and societal level will be examined through a number of professional perspectives.

The first year of life is the time when babies are most at risk of harm. In one national Welsh study, babies under 1 were identified as being six times more likely to suffer physical harm than children aged between 1 and 4 years old (Silbert et al. 2002). The sheer vulnerability of babies is also highlighted by the fact that one third of serious case reviews in England relate to babies under the age of 1 year (Brandon et al. 2012). Professionals working with babies and families where there has been a serious incident of harm face critical professional challenges in their identification and assessment of these infants. This conference will explore relevant case studies, examine national and international research on NAHI and create a discussion space for those interested in this area of child welfare practice.

Early intervention and evidence based prevention will be central tenets of this conference. There have been exciting developments internationally in the form of evidence based initiatives to address NAHI which have been systematically tested and evaluated, resulting in a reduction in the incidence and risk of harm.

The NSPCC in the UK are developing a nationwide preventative programme which is linked with NAHI – Coping with Crying. This programme was piloted, evaluated and found to be successful as a preventative early intervention tool. It is influenced by a U.S. programme where there was a 47% reduction in the incidence of Non-Accidental Head Injury (Dias 2005). This model along with the NSPCC model includes a brief psycho-educational intervention with new
parents. This preventative model will be introduced at the conference, with valuable messages for those working with parents and caregivers.

This conference will appeal to a range of professionals, practitioners, educators and those involved in policy, research and development with an interest in child welfare.

**Conference Programme**

9.30-10.00  **Registration**

10.00  **Welcome Address**  
Ms. Nicola O’Sullivan, Head of Research, Education and Training, Bessborough

10.10–11.00  **Opening Address**  
Professor Alf Nicholson, National Clinical Lead in Paediatrics, Temple Street Children’s University Hospital

11.00-12.00  Ms. Sally Hogg, Senior Commissioner for Children’s Social Care and Wellbeing – ‘Coping with Crying: Keeping parents sane and babies safe’ (United Kingdom)

12.00-12.20  **Tea/coffee**

12.20-12.50  Mr. Pat Kelleher, Social Work Team Leader - NAHI in the Irish Context: Messages from Practice and Research.

12.50-1.30  Ms. Denise Kirwan, Solicitor - NAHI: Case Law and Challenges: a Legal Perspective

1.30-2.15  **Lunch**

2.15-2.45  Ms. Sheila Cahalane, Child Protection Public Health Nurse – Reflections on professional engagement with parents and babies where a non-accidental injury has occurred.

2.45 -3.15  Ms. Nicola O Sullivan, Head of Education, Research and Training - Working in painful spaces

3.15-3.50  Questions and Answers

3.50-4.00  **Closing Address – Dr Kenneth Burns**

*Chairperson – Dr Kenneth Burns, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork.*

**Registration and booking information:**


For more information, email: training@bessborough.ie call: 021 435 7730 or visit [www.bessborough.ie](http://www.bessborough.ie)
BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Alf Nicholson is RCSI Professor of Paediatrics, a Consultant Paediatrician based in Temple Street Children’s University Hospital. He is also the National Clinical Lead in Paediatrics. His postgraduate training was in Dublin, Manchester and Melbourne. He has a longstanding interest in injury prevention and has over 60 peer-reviewed publications on the issue. He is former chairperson of the accident prevention group of the European Academy of Paediatrics and a member of the European Child Safety Alliance.

Ms. Sally Hogg is a specialist in children and family services, with particular expertise in support for parents during the perinatal period. Until late last year, Sally was Development Manager for Children under One at the NSPCC, a role that involved developing and implementing research-led interventions and campaigning to change government policy. In this role, Sally led the creation and implementation of two new interventions, Baby Steps and Coping with Crying, which have now reached over 57,000 families, and been shown to achieve positive outcomes for babies and their parents. Sally has a particular interest in helping parents to respond to babies' crying and in 2014 she completed a Masters with research into the impact of excessive crying in infancy.

After reading psychology and philosophy at Oxford, Sally joined the civil service and began a career in social policy and service design. Her time in the civil service included a period as Private Secretary to the Minister for Children, and a secondment to the New South Wales’ Department for Education. She was also a founding member of the Child Poverty Unit, and lead author of Government’s 2008 Child Poverty Strategy.

In 2013, Sally was invited to become Vice Chair of the UK Maternal Mental Health Alliance, a role that she held until her son Will was born in November 2014. Alongside work, Sally is also chair of her local NCT branch, coordinating voluntary support for new parents.

Mr. Pat Kelleher is a Social Work Team Leader in South Lee Social Work Department in Cork City. Pat has a particular interest in the area of social work assessment in cases of suspected non-accidental injury. He has written a chapter on this subject in the book Children’s Rights and Child Protection: Critical Times, Critical Issues in Ireland (2012). Pat qualified in 2001 with a Masters in Social Work (MSW) and has been working in the area of Child Protection and Welfare since this time.

Ms. Sheila Cahalane is a Child Protection Public Health Nurse, based in South Lee Social Work Department and has a special role in working with families with younger children. Her role is unique in the Irish setting and this health and social care model of child protection working was evaluated favorably in 2015. This research revealed that social
workers were very positive about this role considering that that a referral to the CPPHN brings a multi-disciplinary focus to the case while valuing the continuity of input with a health professional that is on site.

**Ms. Denise Kirwan** is a Solicitor at Comyn Kelleher Tobin Solicitors in Cork. Denise specialises in advising state bodies on extremely sensitive issues arising from applications under the Child Care Act, the detention of minors under the Inherent Jurisdiction of the High Court, the ECHR Act, provisions of Brussels 11 Regulations, Adoption, Mental Health, matters relating to Juvenile Justice, Healthcare provision (both clinical and primary care), issues regarding Medical consent, the Law Of Capacity as it relates to both minors and vulnerable adults, and other Healthcare related legislation, Regulations and Guidelines.

**Ms. Nicola O’Sullivan** is Head of Research, Education and Training at the Bessborough Centre, Cork. Nicola has been engaging for three years, in a Prof Doctorate in Social Care and Emotional Wellbeing at the Tavistock and Portman Trust in London. Her research interests include psycho-social research, fear and anxiety in professional practice with infants and toddlers, and relationship based practice. Nicola worked for four years as clinical manager of a residential parent and infant unit with a specific focus on infant mental health in the context of child protection, at the Bessborough Centre. Her earlier professional achievements include the establishment and management of the Limetree child protection family support service in the Cork area. Nicola worked for ten years with children in the Irish residential care system. She has a degree in Social Science from University College Cork and a Masters in Child Protection and Welfare from Trinity College Dublin. She provides training on attachment, chronic neglect, and complex working environments. She teaches on the subject of Infant Mental Health and Child Protection at Trinity College Dublin and is a peer reviewer for the Journal of Social Work Practice. Nicola is currently involved in developing a project to therapeutically support mothers who have had successive losses of infants and children to the care system.

**Dr. Kenneth Burns** is a College Lecturer and Deputy Director of the Master of Social Work course at University College Cork. He has worked as a social worker and social work team leader in child protection and welfare and continues to support practice in this area. His main research and teaching interests are in child protection policy and practice, staff retention, career pathways for newly-qualified social workers, child care proceedings in the District Court / child removal systems, professional supervision and community-based research. Kenneth is a founding member of the Social Work Development Unit (UCC) and the National Child Protection and Welfare National Conference committee which is a joint partnership between the Social Work Development Unit (UCC), the Irish Association of Social Workers Southern Branch and the Child and Family Agency. Kenneth is a research associate with the Institute for Social Sciences in the 21st Century (ISS21) and a member of the children and young people research cluster. Kenneth is the Principal Investigator for an inter-disciplinary research group on child care proceedings in ISS21 and a longitudinal study on social workers’ retention in child protection. With Professors Marit Skivenes (Norway)
and Tarja Pöso (Finland), Kenneth is a founding member and Co-ordinator of a European network of academics and researchers examining child protection removals (court, emergency and voluntary care). He is also a founding member of Community-Academic Research Links, a community-based research initiative. Kenneth is a joint institutional Principal Investigator on two European Commission studies: a Horizon 2020 study on Responsible Research and Innovation called EnRRICH (2015-2017) and an FP7 project called Public Engagement with Research and Research Engagement with Society (PERARES, 2010-2014). Kenneth is co-chairing the national group on community-based research for Campus Engage (Irish Universities Association).