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Child and Family Agency

# Tusla's role as a Regulator in the Early Years Sector: Now and in the Future

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# Topics

- Role of Tusla as Regulator
- Current Situation
- Registration model
- Conclusions

# Introducing Tusla

- On 1st January 2014, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency became an independent legal entity, merging the:
  - HSE Children and Family Services
  - Family Support Agency
  - National Educational Welfare Board

*“All children are safe and achieving their full potential”*

# Tusla

- Child Welfare and Protection Services, including Family Support Services
- Family Resource Centres
- **Regulation of Early Years Services**
- Statutory education welfare services, School Completion Programme and the Home School Community Liaison Scheme
- Foster care, residential care, special care and aftercare
- Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services
- Services related to the psychological welfare of children
- Assessment, consultation, therapy and treatment services
- Adoption services

# Tusla as Regulator



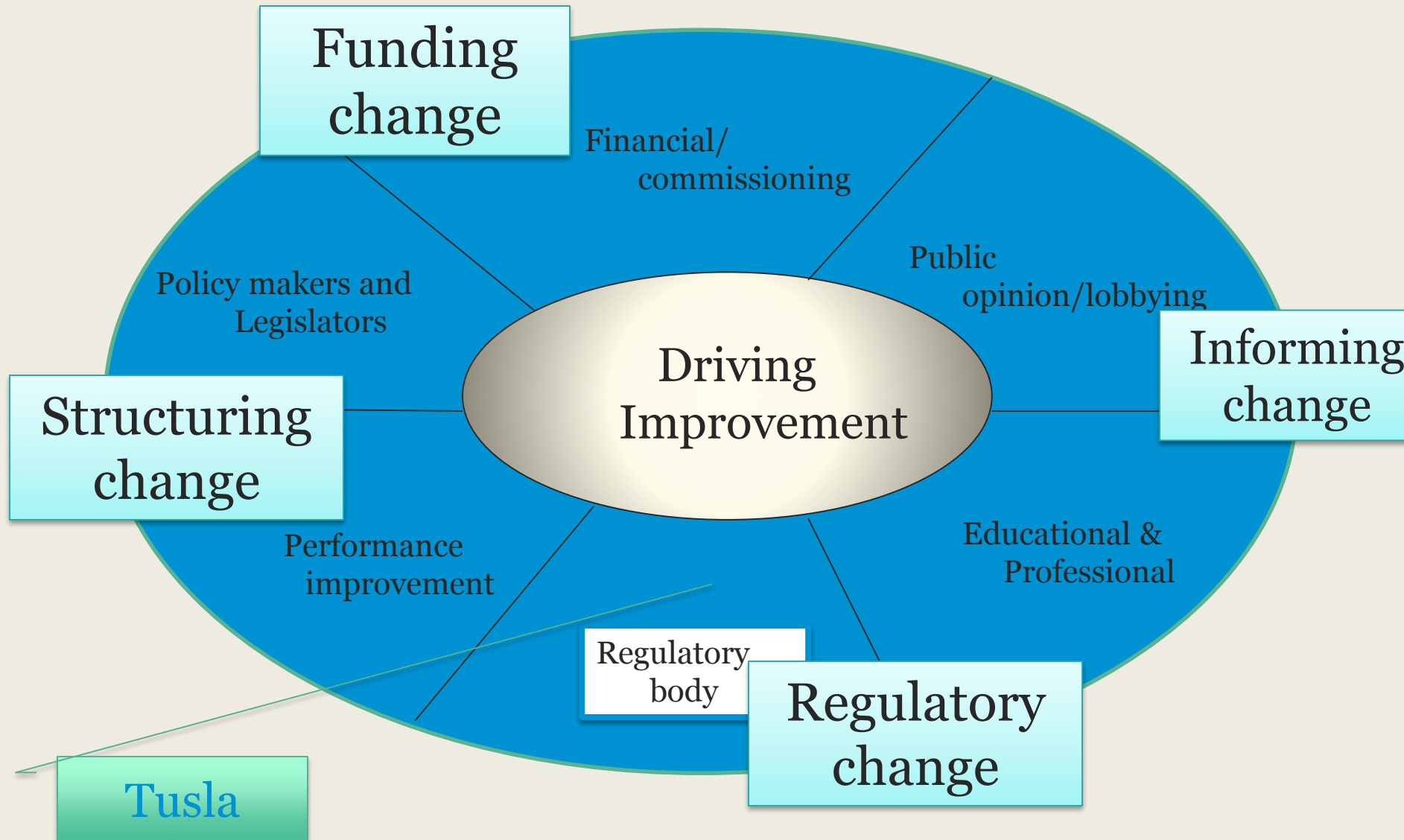
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# Regulatory role

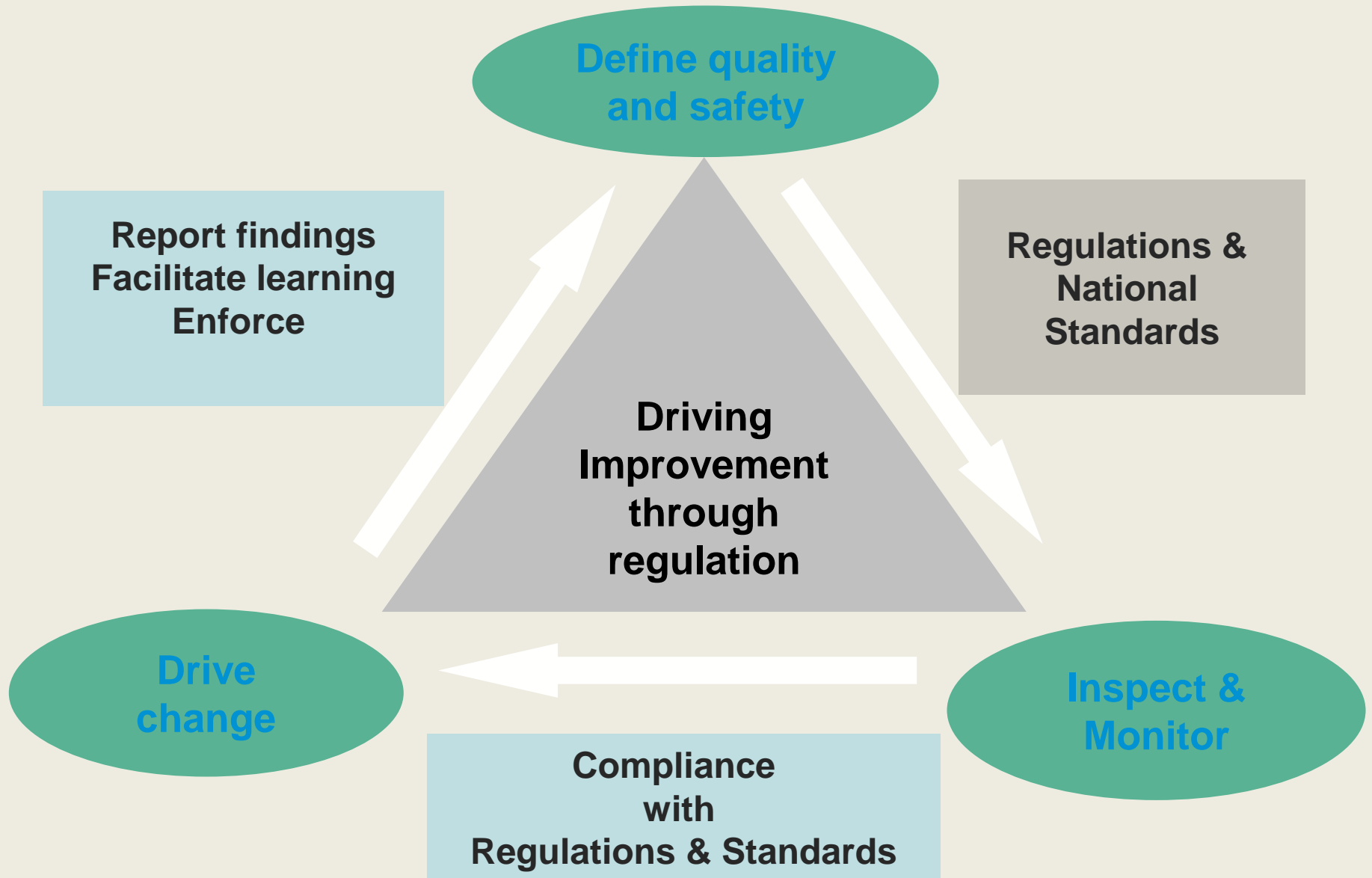
Tusla is the independent regulator of Early Years Services in Ireland

Our role is to promote quality and safety in Early Years Services by monitoring compliance with the Child Care (Pre-school) Regulations 2006

# Driving Improvement - Players



# Regulating for Quality





# How Tusla Regulates

- Monitoring Compliance
  - Inspections – announced & unannounced
  - Analysis of data
  - Investigate complaints
- Enforcement
  - Escalations
  - Action plans
  - Prosecutions

# Inspection Themes

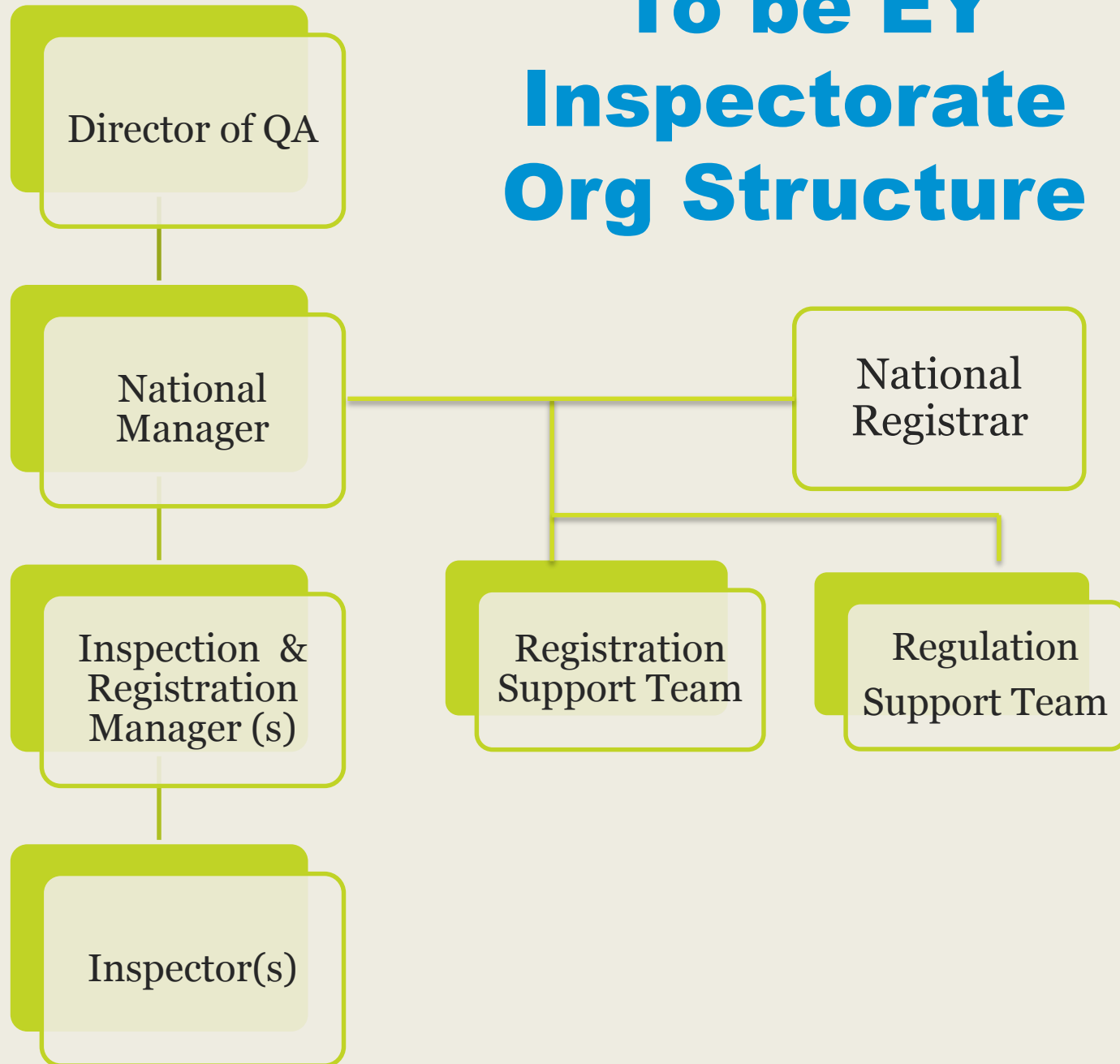
- Health, welfare and development of the child is promoted
- Safety of the child
- Management and staffing
- Records and documentation to support practices in the service provision
- Suitability of premises to provide early year's provision

# Current Situation

# Current developments and improvements

- Inspectorate undergoing organisational reform
  - Nationally led inspectorate
  - New line management structure
  - Centralising legal and complaints
- Addressing risks
  - Services that have not had an inspection
  - Targeting areas/services of concern

# To be EY Inspectorate Org Structure



# Current developments and improvements

- Process improvement
  - Editorial boards
  - Consistency groups
  - Standardisation of inspection practices
- Publication of reports
- Recruitment of Inspectors
  - 39 WTE to 48
- Move to thematic based inspections

# Current developments and improvements

- Additional professional development of Inspectors
- Sharing of information and best practice garnered through inspections

# Research

- Analysis of 3,007 inspection reports from January 2012 – May 2013
- Independent researcher: Dr Sinead Hanafin
- Outputs – 2 reports
  - Quality of Provision
  - Process of Inspections



# Research Headings

## Quality of Provision

1. Extent of compliance
2. Quantify areas of compliance and non-compliance
3. Identify issues arising in respect of non-compliance

## Process of Inspection

1. Description of the reporting process
2. Differences, commonalities & consistencies in the reporting process
3. Assess the threshold of evidence applied

# Key findings

- Quality of provision
  - High levels of compliance – nationally
  - Regional & Service Type variation
    - HSE west highest, DNE lowest
    - Drop-in services - lowest
    - Sessional and child-minding services - highest
  - Areas of non compliance
    - Management of staffing
    - Safety
    - Records

# Key findings

- Inspection practices
  - The process of inspection is comprehensive, wide-ranging and forensic
  - Application of thresholds
  - Report writing
  - Need for ongoing research and evaluation
  - Voice of stakeholders
  - Move to thematic based inspections

# Registration model



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# New Registration System

- All new Early Years service providers will have to register and undergo an inspection before commencing operation
- Previously just required to notify
- Powers to de-register and impose conditions

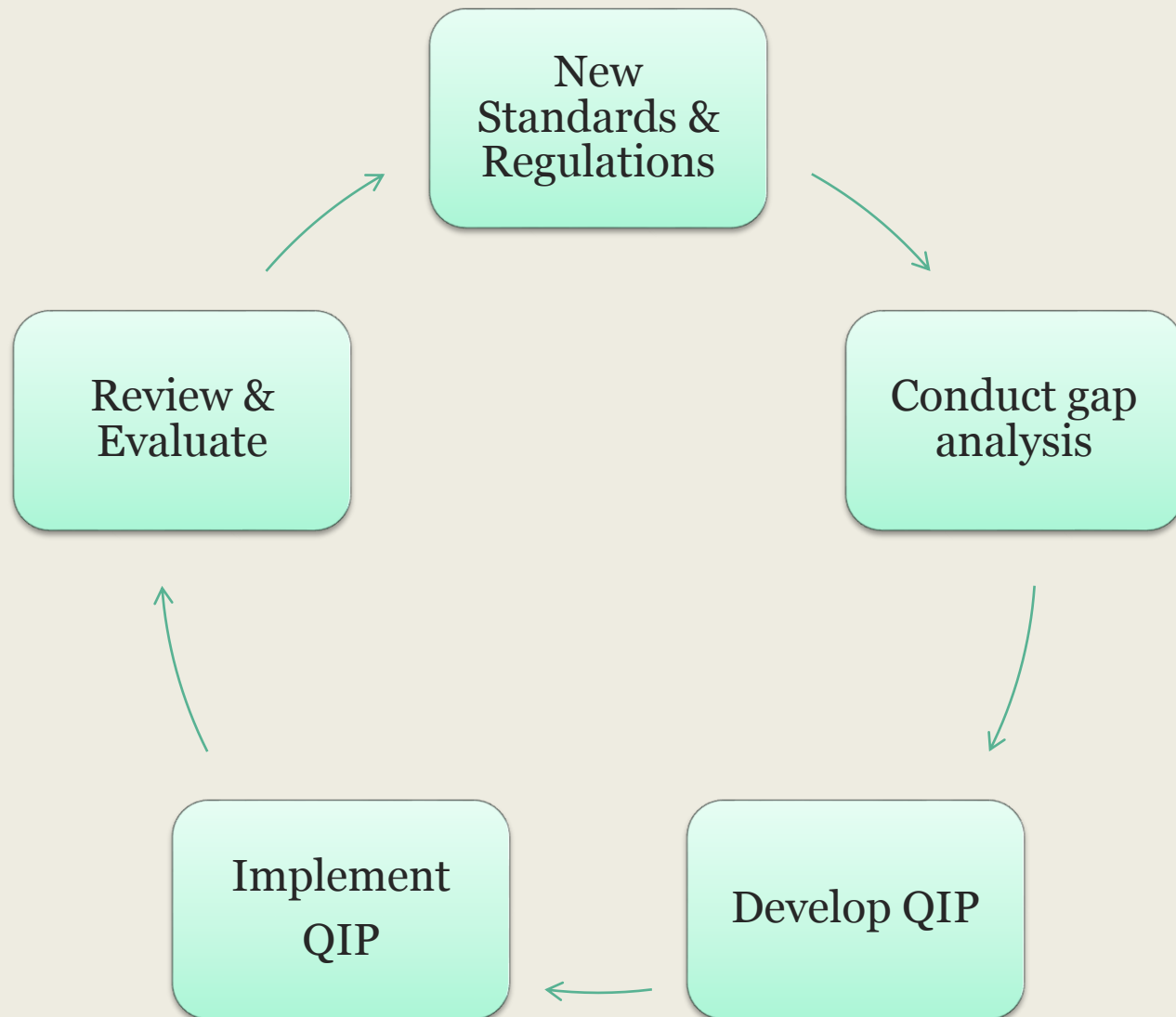
# Registration of New Services

1. Before opening: service must apply to be registered and we will give an initial determination as to fitness to operate
2. Once operational: inspection carried out to determine if registration can continue or not and additional conditions that may apply

# Registration of Existing Services

- All existing services are registered and will be re-registered within a three year time frame.
- High risk services will be prioritised for re-registration
- When?

# Preparing for Registration





# For Tusla

- Developing new SOPs for registration
- New ICT system
- Communicating and consulting with services
- Continue and enhance ongoing reforms
- Clear commitment in corporate plan
  - Move towards risk based and intelligence lead regulation

# Conclusion

- Providers are responsible for delivering high quality and safe service for children;
- Tusla, as regulator, is responsible for determining fitness to operate;
- When necessary we will take immediate action, up to and including prosecution;
- Future powers include imposing conditions and potential closure.

# Thank you



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