## A logo with blue and orange letters Description automatically generated **A logo of a person with a hand raised Description automatically generated**

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| **Job Title** | Children’s Play Specialist |
| **Employer** | North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC) |
| **Reporting Relationship** | Coordinator – Ascend Domestic Abuse Service, CEO- NTDC |
| **Reporting Staff** | None |
| **Location of Post** | Thurles and Nenagh Municipal Districts |
| **Closing Date for Applications** | 5pm Friday 28th March 2025 |
| **Date of Interviews** | To Be Confirmed |
| **Benefits offered by NTDC** | **Salary:** Competitive salaries in line with those in the public service.  **Travel expenses:** Travel expenses are reimbursed at public service rates.  **Annual Leave:** 25 days annual leave pro rata  **Pension:** Contributory pension benefits for long term staff.  **Organisation Culture:** Positive working environment and proactive approach to professional development, reflective practice, and supervision.  **Training & Development:** Opportunities to access training relevant to the role. |

**About North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC)**

North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC) which is a local development company responsible for the delivery of a range of rural enterprise, social inclusion, and community development initiatives in the Tipperary North County area.

The purpose of NTDC is to act as a voluntary, non-profit making, private limited company with a mission to promote social inclusion, promote economic development, increase employment and enterprise opportunities, and promote wider participation in voluntary activity for the people of the area.

# About Ascend

Ascend’s primary purpose is to ensure that women have support and information about the dynamics of domestic abuse and of relevant services available so that they can make informed choices. The Service is committed to ensuring that every woman will live a life without coercive control and reclaim the power to fulfil her potential. Ascend aims to work collectively and collaboratively with women, families, communities and agencies to promote a clearer societal acknowledgement of the unacceptability of domestic abuse. Ascend aims to put the safety of women and children at the centre of our work, to empower women in their lives, and to advocate on their behalf where appropriate.

# The Role and Purpose of Job

The post holder will work to address the needs of children who have been living with domestic abuse. S/he will work primarily with children under 13years of age. S/he will work in partnership with mothers in addressing their children’s needs and will work collaboratively with other agencies as and when appropriate. S/he will work with children individually and in small groups as appropriate to their needs.

The appointee will have a dual role:

1. Work directly with children using play-based activities and
2. Work directly with mothers to support them in responding to their children’s needs.

# Key Responsibilities will include:

* Working directly with children using creative play based activities to identify and address their needs in relation to the impact of domestic abuse
* Work directly with mothers to support them to recognise and respond to their children’s needs
* Working in partnership with mothers and with Tusla to address any child protection needs that arise.
* Work collaboratively with other services and local communities to raise awareness of the service and to facilitate access to other services for children.
* Carry out other duties related to the post including administrative duties

**Working with children:**

* Assess the needs of each child who come to the service and design an appropriate programme of play-based activities to address the child’s needs. Programmes may be individual, or group based.
* Build an open and trusting relationship with children in the service to facilitate them to be open and honest about their experiences and their needs.
* Provide ongoing emotional support to children in the service create opportunities for each child to share their hopes, fears, and concerns about his/her home situation.
* Provide a safe and therapeutic environment where children can give expression to and make sense of their experience and have their experience validated.
* Provide a range of play-based opportunities that facilitate children to work through their experience to a place of healing. Methodologies used will include imaginative play, messy play, sand play and other types of creative play.
* Support children to identify and develop new healthy coping mechanisms that support their growth and healing.

**Working with mothers:**

* Work in partnership with mothers to identify and respond to the needs of their children in relation to the impact of domestic abuse.
* Support mothers to recognise and acknowledge the impact of domestic abuse on themselves and on their children
* Support mothers to acknowledge their own feelings about the impact of the domestic abuse on themselves and on their children.
* Support mothers to listen and understand their children’s experience and to be able to make themselves available to support their children.
* Support mothers to help them recognise when their child needs particular support and help them develop strategies to respond appropriately.
* Work jointly with mothers and their children to support them to build their mother-child relationship and help them talk to each other.

**Addressing Child protection Concerns:**

* Work with mothers and their children in relation to any child protection concerns that arise and support them through the process of reporting and addressing concerns.
* Ensure that safeguarding concerns are addressed in line with NTDC Child Protection Policy.
* Work collaboratively with Tusla and other relevant agencies in addressing child protection concerns.
* Attend child protection case conferences, reviews Meitheal meetings and other relevant Tusla meetings as appropriate.

**Working collaboratively with others:**

* Work with local communities and frontline services to create awareness of domestic abuse and its impact on children and youth and promote best practices in **R**ecognising, **R**esponding and **R**eferring.
* Establish and maintain effective collaborative working relationships with staff in key agencies e.g. social work, youth work, family support, so that the needs of children are met by the relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.
* Develop links with services across North Tipperary area including local service providers, gardai, schools, children and youth groups, parenting support programmes, etc.
* Advocate on behalf of children to facilitate them to access services provided by other agencies
* Develop referral pathways for children to facilitate them to access relevant support services from other agencies.
* Make secure referrals to other services where children may need additional support to compliment the support provided by Ascend or where an alternative service is in a better position to address the needs of the child.
* Where a child is attending the Ascend service and one or more other services, work collaboratively with such other services to maximise the benefit to the child and avoid duplication.
* Work closely with Barnardos in relation to TLC Kidz, making referrals as appropriate and co-facilitating the programme as and when required.

**Carry out administrative and other duties:**

* Work as part of the Ascend Community and Outreach team, liaising with other staff in relation to services and supports for children/families as and when appropriate.
* Engage in supervision sessions on a regular basis and actively participate in team meetings and other team development processes.
* Establish and maintain an adequate supply of resources to service the programme. This includes an adequate supply of play materials and resources.
* Be aware of health and safety and manage activities accordingly, paying particular attention to safety, hygiene, fire prevention and safe use of equipment.
* Maintain appropriate records of all the work undertaken with and on behalf of children.
* Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all case files.
* Liaise with and inform the Manager, on a regular basis, of concerns and developments arising in the service.
* Prepare and compile reports and statistics on the service as required and submit to funders as and when required.

***The above Job Description is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all duties involved and consequently the post holder may be required to perform other duties as appropriate to the post which may be assigned to him/her from time to time and to contribute to the development of the post while in office.***

**PERSON SPECIFICATION:**

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| **Factors** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Qualifications | * Relevant Level 8 professional qualification (e.g. psychology, social care, counselling. Play therapy) approved by CORU or other relevant registration body |  |
| Knowledge | * Excellent knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse/coercive control, post separation abuse and other issues affecting women survivors of domestic abuse and their children. * Extensive knowledge of services and supports required and available to women survivors and their children. * Comprehensive understanding and strong working knowledge of Children First and other relevant legislation * Comprehensive knowledge of statutory and other regulations regarding working with children and their mothers and the practice implications of these | * Knowledge and experience of a CRM System |
| Experience | * At least 3 years’ relevant experience working in a counselling/social care setting with children * Strong track record in the development and delivery of services for vulnerable children * Strong track record in working therapeutically with children using creative play-based methods * Strong track record in key working with vulnerable adults and/or children * Proven ability to advocate on behalf of clients and to negotiate effectively to facilitate them to access relevant services * Proven ability to design and deliver group-based programmes for vulnerable clients * Proven ability to manage a demanding and diverse workload | * Experience of working with children who have witnessed domestic abuse |
| Core Competencies | * Excellent skills in needs assessment, support work and advocacy * Ability to work alone and as part of a team * Ability to build positive working relationships with clients, colleagues and other agencies * Excellent verbal and written communication skills including report writing skills and ability to produce reports in a timely manner * Capacity to work effectively with other agencies * Excellent training and group facilitation skills * Excellent planning, administrative and organisational skills * Self-starter with capacity to apply creativity and initiative appropriately within the parameters of the role * Strong resilience and capacity to manage stress and to work effectively under pressure |  |
| Other requirements | * Understanding of and commitment to confidentiality as it applies to a service for vulnerable adults and children * Integrity and dependability * People oriented and concern for others * Self-awareness and willingness to learn * Commitment to equality and the ethos/policies of NTDC * Full clean driving licence and use of car as required for work * Adaptability and flexibility re unsocial hours * Satisfactory police/Garda clearance |  |

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT**

Part-time position - working 21 hours per week.

The is initially a fixed term contract until 31st December 2026 and is subject to continued need for the service and funding availability.

**SALARY**

The salary scale for this role will be from €41k-€60k (pro rata) commensurate with experience and qualifications.