



Last week, I had the opportunity to visit two Barnahus sites in Ireland. One in **Galway**, already operational, and one in **Cork**, where the facility is still in the design phase.

Both shared a single purpose: to make the justice and recovery process less traumatic for children and families. But what really stood out was that *there is no one way* to achieve that goal.

Galway: A Model in Motion

The Barnahus in Galway is already supporting children and young people, and their work is inspiring. Every child referred for child sexual abuse receives a **comprehensive medical assessment**, and in **85% of cases**, additional health needs are identified.

This commitment to *whole-child wellbeing* illustrates why Barnahus matters. It's not just about justice or protection, it's about recognising the wider impact of trauma and responding with care, dignity, and expertise.

The team in Galway are not static. They are constantly learning, adapting processes, and sharing feedback across agencies. Their enthusiasm for the work is contagious. Everyone, from reception to clinical staff, radiates compassion and purpose.

Cork: Building from the Ground Up

In Cork, plans for the Barnahus are still being developed. But rather than seeing this as a delay, the team are embracing it as an *opportunity* to co-design with partners, think differently about layout and flow, and ensure the building truly reflects the needs of children and families.

This level of planning and reflection takes time, but it also creates ownership and innovation. Every discussion from who greets the child at the door to how agencies share information is shaping the culture long before the doors open.

Embracing an Agile Approach

Visiting both sites reminded me of the value of an **agile approach** to implementation.

Barnahus is not a “build once and done” model. It’s a living, learning system that needs flexibility, reflection, and iteration.

Adopting an agile mindset — where learning drives adaptation — allows teams to:

- **Pilot and refine** processes before scaling.
- **Collect the right data** to inform quick course-corrections.
- **Empower staff** to share insights and identify barriers early.
- **Maintain focus** on outcomes for children, not just milestones.

Good project management and robust data collection don’t limit creativity — they make it possible. They give leaders the clarity and confidence to make informed, child-centred decisions at the right time.

When we gather the right data and manage projects with structure and purpose, we create the space for innovation to flourish. Instead of reacting to crises or relying on assumptions, we can see patterns, measure progress, and adjust course with confidence.

Good data tells us not just *what* is happening for children and families, but *why* — and that insight allows teams to design responses that are thoughtful, compassionate, and grounded in evidence.

Reflections for Scotland's Bairns' Hoose Journey

Scotland's Bairns' Hoose journey can take real confidence from the work happening in Ireland.

The key lessons for me were:

- There is **no one-size-fits-all model** — each community will shape its own version.
- The combination of **strong project management** and **agile flexibility** is essential.
- Ongoing **data collection** helps ensure decisions stay grounded in evidence and experience.
- Above all, success depends on **people** — those who bring warmth, belief, and determination to make it work.

As Scotland continues to develop its own model, these lessons remind us that creating child-centred systems requires both **heart and structure, vision and discipline**.

At TICCS, we're proud to support partnerships across Scotland to apply these same principles — guiding multi-agency teams through trauma-informed change, agile project delivery, and meaningful measurement.

Because when we combine compassion with data, collaboration with structure, we create change that lasts — and most importantly, that works for children.

About the Author

Helen Pasquale is the founder of **Trauma Informed Change Consultancy Services (TICCS Ltd)**.

Following a 30-year career with **Police Scotland**, Helen now supports multi-agency partnerships across Scotland to design and deliver **trauma-informed systems change** — including **Bairns' Hoose development**, **UNCRC alignment**, and **multi-agency collaboration**.

If your local authority is planning its own Bairns' Hoose model, TICCS can help you apply these lessons with a trauma-informed, data-driven approach.

Learn more about our implementation support by booking a call.

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