



**ombudsman**  
do leanaí  
for children

# Children's Rights & Education for Irish Children with Special Needs

**“Inclusive Education  
– Missing Links”**

Conference Hall of the  
Lithuanian Parliament  
**25/11/19**

**Dr. Niall Muldoon**  
**Ombudsman for Children**  
**Republic of Ireland**



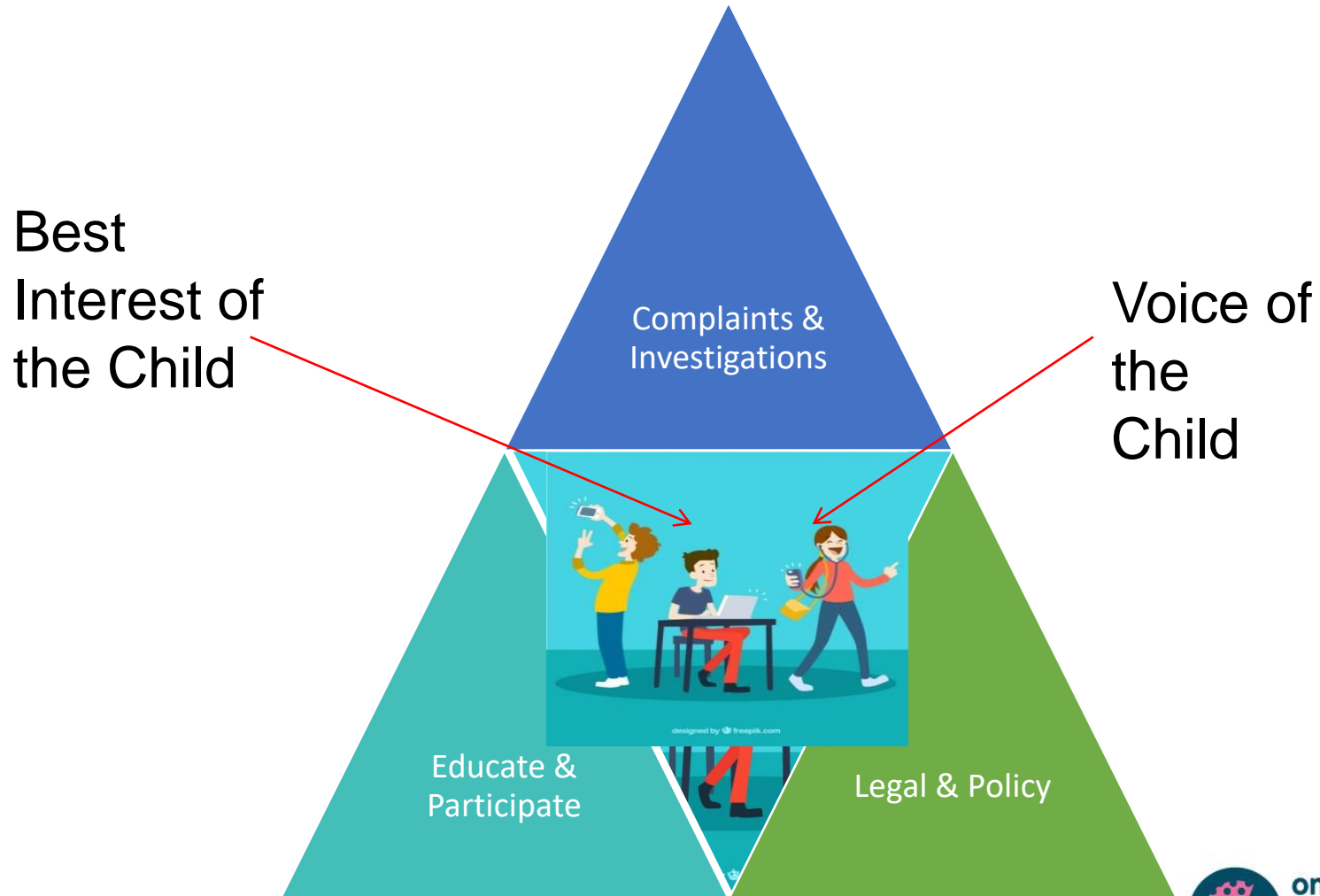
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# Ombudsman for Children's Office

- Ombudsman for Children Act, 2002
- Independent statutory body
- Presidential appointment
- Direct accountability to the Oireachtas



# OCO STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS



A graphic for 'BEYOND LIMITS 19' featuring a dark blue background with a large pink circle on the left and a green starburst on the right. The text 'BEYOND LIMITS 19' is in white, with '19' in a smaller font. Below it is the tagline 'Empowering young people with disabilities'. In the bottom right, the hashtag '#BEYOND LIMITS 19' is displayed. At the bottom, there are yellow curved lines.

# BEYOND LIMITS<sup>19</sup>

Empowering young people with disabilities

#BEYOND  
LIMITS<sup>19</sup>



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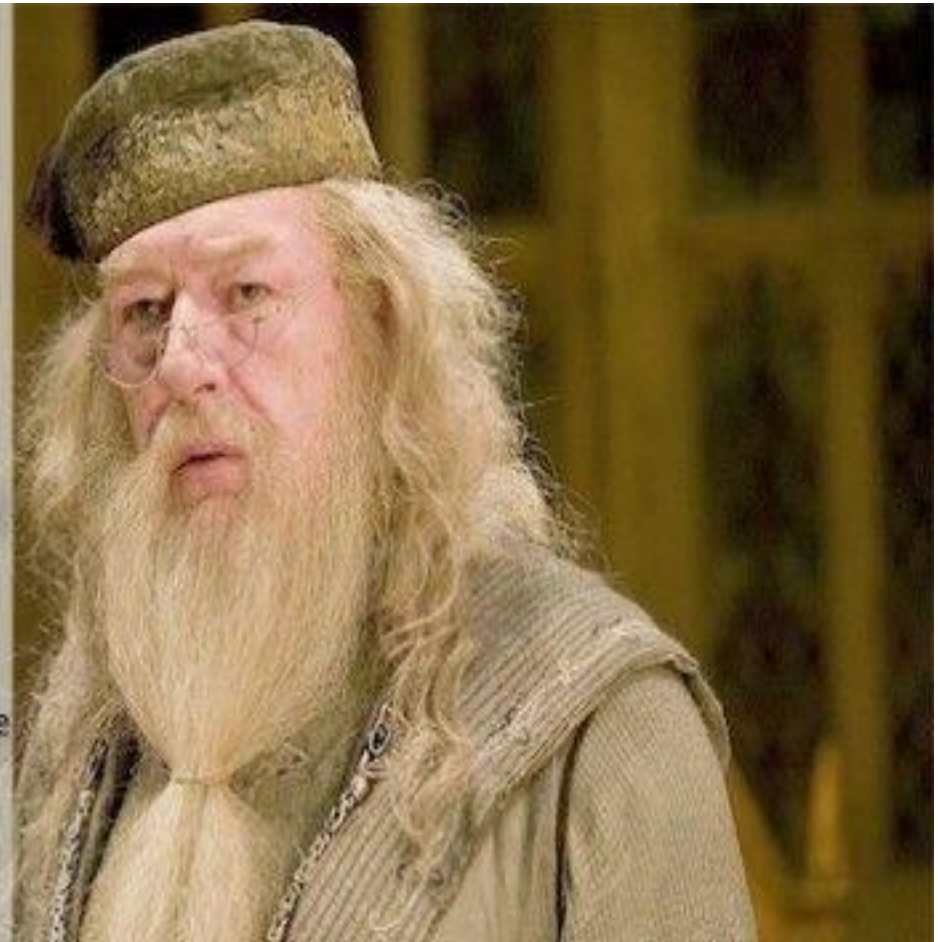




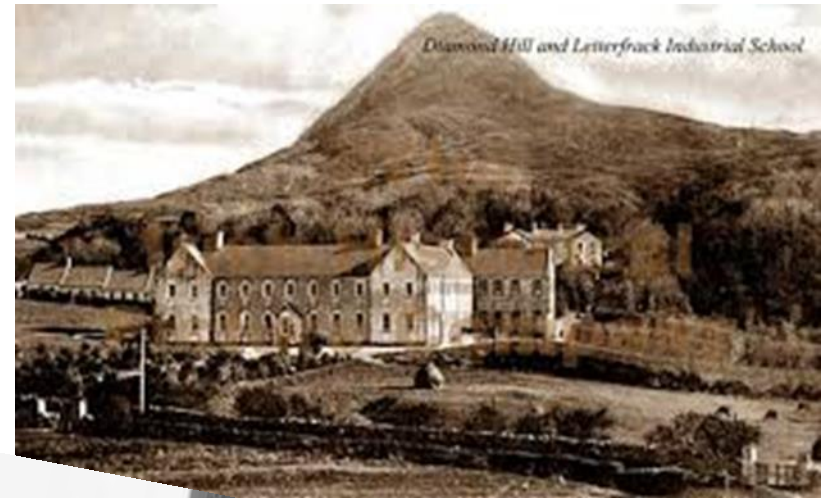
**What a performance . . . It's a 10! Dancing with the Stars Judge Julian Benson full of praise for the Bluestack Foundation choir and orchestra** PICTURES MATT BRITTON

**A child's voice,  
however honest  
and true, is meaningless to  
those who've  
forgotten how to listen.**

– Professor Albus Dumbledore



# WORKHOUSES, BORSTALS AND INSTITUTIONS



# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS -PAST

- Ireland built walls around all our problems and our “different children” – Disabled, Born outside Marriage, Epilepsy, Poor, Orphaned, Criminals
- Children who were in institutions or part of the “different” group were trained for physical and manual work e.g. Farms, Factories, Garages, Housekeeping, Laundries – TO BE EXPLOITED
- Education was only for “those with prospects”

# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - PRESENT

- Almost 250,000 in 3<sup>rd</sup> Level in 2018
- Ireland has the highest proportion of school-leavers progressing to higher education within the EU
- Rights are recognised but still not fully available for all
- 120,000 children in Pre-school education
- Recognition of Education in Early years
- Move toward inclusion and mainstreaming throughout the system



## AIM MODEL

- OCO **Investigation** into Pre-school Support 2015
- The **Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)** is a programme of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the Early Childhood Care and **Education** Programme in mainstream pre-**school** settings and can participate fully in the pre-**school** curriculum alongside their peers.
- **Medical Nurses** funded through the Health Service in Special Schools



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# CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - FUTURE

- Seclusion & Restraint
- Assessment of Needs
- Availability of Special Needs Place
- Possible closure of Special Needs Schools

**THANK**

**YOU**

