



**OIFIG AN ARD-RUNAÍ, AN ROINN DLÍ AGUS CIRT AGUS COMHIONANNAIS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY**

Ms. Margaret Falsey,
Clerk
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2

Dear Ms. Falsey,


I refer to the letter of 2 August 2017 to the Secretary General, Mr Noel Waters, regarding a request by the Committee for a note on discussions which have taken place between the Department and other parties regarding legislative change for the oversight of monies of the Wards of Court by the Comptroller and Auditor General. This is an interim response to the Committee's request arising from its meeting on 13 July in relation to the Courts Service Vote.


It is understood that the Courts Service have already outlined to the Committee the substantial audit, governance and oversight arrangements in place for these funds.

It should be noted that these wardship funds are held under the general responsibility of the President of the High Court. The Attorney General's Office has advised that substantial Constitutional issues need to be considered in relation to the question of a role for the C&AG in relation to these funds. Consultation in this regard will be necessary with the C&AG, the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, the Accountant of the Courts of Justice and the President of the High Court. The Committee may also wish to note that the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 provides for the introduction of new support arrangements on a phased basis.

Accordingly, work has commenced with a view to convening consultations with all relevant stakeholders in the early autumn. A more detailed note on this matter will be provided to the Committee as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



 Noel Waters
Secretary General

12 August 2017.