



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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From: Gordon Jeyes, National Director

To: All HSE Staff, allied professionals who work with Children and Families
Health Service Executive, Hospitals and Partner Agencies

Re: Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook

Date: 22nd September 2011

Protecting children and promoting their welfare is a collective activity and responsibility, and I am pleased to commend this Practice Handbook as an aide to delivering accountable, consistent and transparent practice in protecting children in Ireland.

Our aspiration for children in Ireland is that they will fulfil their potential and be healthy in every aspect of their lives, physically and mentally. This vision can only be achieved with the cooperation of the relevant professions across departments, support services and communities.

The vital work of social workers and other professionals together with partner agencies in assessing risk and acting to protect vulnerable children is difficult and demanding. This Practice Handbook is designed as a quick reference book to help support front-line practice. It sets out the key issues in the different stages of action – from referral through assessment to intervention. It has taken account of the recommendations of inquiries and case reviews, together with international research and best practice.

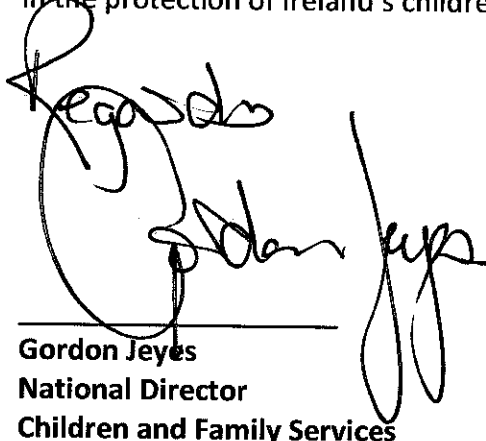
The Practice Handbook is designed to be a companion volume and to complement Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011), which is the full reference text for practitioners. It will also support policies, procedures and legislation. The Practice Handbook is a guide to basic and consistent practice, but it cannot and does not cover everything. It will give clear guidance, but additional support and advice should be sought through your peers and your line manager.

The Practice Handbook builds on the skills as well as the resilience and determination of agencies working together to put children first. It is a professional guide to help us be reliable and dependable partners and to ask the same of others. I acknowledge – to all those working directly with and within Social Work teams, those within the Court systems and those working in all agencies – that social work is both demanding and complex. Remember, the population is not made up of customers to whom we sell or colleagues to whom we pander, but of partners on whom we can rely and with whom we can act.

I pay tribute to the dedication, hard work and commitment of the many front-line social workers and other professionals who are challenged on a daily basis to provide a quality service. They deserve the respect and support of the communities whom we serve. They should not be hindered from making the best intervention possible for children and families. The task for all of us who are dedicated to making Ireland safer for children is to use our professional skills, work together and offer an accountable, consistent and transparent child-centred service to protect children.

You can access a copy of Children First, Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook and supporting documentation by visiting: www.hse.ie/go/childrenfirst

Thank you for your commitment, professionalism and dedication. Your work is vital in the protection of Ireland's children.



Gordon Jeyes
National Director
Children and Family Services