



21st June 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns,
Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2
E: holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Re: *Number: 31745/22*

To ask the Minister for Health if his Department and public bodies and agencies that operate under his remit that operate in direct contact with members of the public have policies in place for members of the public to report instances of sexual harassment or assault that occur on the property of his Department or each public body and agency under his remit; if so, if these policies are publicly accessible on the relevant website; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question that has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is committed to promoting the well-being of patients and service users by providing an environment where people are treated with dignity and respect. The HSE is highly committed to its staff and to providing them with the necessary supervision, support and training to enable them to provide the highest standards of care.

- **Safeguarding:** The HSE has in place the ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures’, it is available at:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/personsatriskofabuse.pdf>

This policy sets out the procedures that all staff from HSE and HSE funded services (section 38 and 39 agencies) must follow if a service user discloses physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse and neglect. In 2016 under this policy document, safeguarding teams were established in each of the nine Community Health Organisations (CHOs).

- **Trust in Care:** The HSE’s has in place the ‘Trust in Care’ policy (2005) this policy is publicly accessible at the following website: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hrppg/trust-in-care.html>
This policy sets out the procedure for reporting and managing allegations of abuse and neglect against health service staff in accordance with natural justice.
- **Children’s First:** The HSE provides mandatory training to all staff on the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (Children’s First Guidelines). This policy is available at:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/childrenfirst/children-first-national-guidance.html>



- **Incident Management Framework:** The HSE also has in place the Incident Management Framework (2020), this policy is available at:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/nqpsd/qps-incident-management/incident-management/hse-2020-incident-management-framework-guidance.pdf>

The purpose of this policy is provide guidance to staff in HSE and HSE funded agencies on the management and review of all levels of incidents that may occur within health and social care services.

- **The HSE's Open Disclosure Policy (2013) is available at:**
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/nqpsd/qps-incident-management/open-disclosure/hse-open-disclosure-full-policy.pdf>
This policy provides the guiding principles on the processes and procedures to support staff to communicate with service users when things go wrong in health and social care.

Kind Regards

Joanne Haffey
Senior Operations Manager
NQPS