



An Oifig Náisiúnta um Chumhdach

Ospidéal Naomh Iósaf

Sráid Mulgrave

Luimneach

V94 C8DV

T: 061 461165 R: safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie

National Safeguarding Office,

South East Wing,

St Joseph's Hospital, Mulgrave Street

Limerick.

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31/08/2023

Róisín Shortall TD
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
E: roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie

Dear Deputy Róisín Shortall,

PQ 36294/23

To ask the Minister for Health the response time for a direct service to a caller to HSE Live outside the hours of 9-5, Monday to Friday; the response time figures for the past three months; if a log is kept of the different types of concerns raised; if a log is kept as to whom the concerns have been forwarded for action; if the data collated by HSE live is included in the Annual Report of the National Safeguarding Office; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 36672/23

To ask the Minister for Health when is it proposed to have a single dedicated HSE safeguarding service number available at all times in order that a person who wishes to report any form of abuse or wishes to gain immediate access to a safeguarding service can do so (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 36293/23

To ask the Minister for Health if, as part of the external review of the HSE Safeguarding Policy, it is the intention to look in particular at the expansion of a safeguarding service being provided by the safeguarding and protection teams outside of hours 9-5, Monday to Friday; if it is the intention to provide a dedicated information and support service to the public in relation to adult safeguarding issues; and if he will make a statement on the matter.



National Safeguarding Office

Your three parliamentary questions have been forwarded by the Department of Health to the HSE for reply. This Office has been asked to reply on behalf of the HSE. As the scope of the questions overlaps I am providing one response to address the matters raised.

With regard to HSELive, callers and persons contact HSELive with queries and matters seeking health information on a range of topics. There is an arrangement in place for any safeguarding concern raised by a caller or a person submitting a query/ seeking assistance to be passed onto the relevant HSE Safeguarding and Protection Team and the person would be redirected to the relevant HSE Safeguarding Team for direct contact and response to their concern. HSE Live currently does not categorise callers according to the nature of a safeguarding concern raised and therefore this would not be reflected in how data is published in the HSE National Safeguarding Office Report. Safeguarding data published in the HSE National Safeguarding Office Report is taken from data returns from the individual nine Safeguarding Teams in the Community Health Organisations.

The HSE is open to developing a singular national safeguarding phone line where a demand for this service is evident. The HSE has commissioned an ICT provider to configure and design a notification and case management system which will have a centralised online portal for safeguarding notifications from members of the community and community health professionals. Work on the configuration of the portal functionality is currently ongoing and the public-facing portal will contain advice as well as the contact details of the regional safeguarding teams for direct phone referral or contact for advice, guidance, and support. In addition, currently, the phone number and contact details of the HSE National Safeguarding Office is widely circulated on the HSE website and awareness-raising materials. Members of the public regularly contact the National Safeguarding Office which will guide them in relation to query and advice on contact with the relevant regional Safeguarding Teams. In the South East Community Health Safeguarding Team, a free phone contact number has been widely published since its launch in June 2022 and this is an avenue that the HSE is looking to further develop in other areas to promote ease of access to the HSE safeguarding Service in addition to the portal access.

As already noted the HSE is open to developing a singular national phone line and the business case for the investment for such a development would be informed by reviewing the evidence with regard to demand and requirement for such an extended support line, especially on an overnight 24 hour basis. Callers needing an immediate response from services on an overnight basis would often be of an emergency service which would go direct to An Garda Síochána and the Ambulance services. The HSE currently funds certain voluntary organisations to assist with the running of phone line supports and the Agency reviews feedback on the type of calls these services take on overnight or weekend times which are often related to issues such as loneliness, entitlements and welfare supports.



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In June 2023, Jackie McIlroy, an adult safeguarding expert from Northern Ireland, was asked by Bernard Gloster, HSE CEO, to examine issues relating to the publication of the Emily NIRP Report and Safeguarding Report case, and to look at HSE safeguarding more broadly. Ms McIlroy has worked at both individual case and policy level for adult safeguarding and will report directly to the CEO. She is currently conducting a high-level review of the HSE safeguarding policy, procedures, structures and will advise on possible options for the future of safeguarding in both the community and alternative care settings for adults. She will advise the CEO on possible options for the future of safeguarding, recognising that the HSE has roles in safeguarding in both the community and alternative care settings for adults. The Review will consider any recommendations regarding public access to HSE Safeguarding Teams.

Yours Sincerely,

Tim Hanly

General Manager | National Safeguarding Office

Copy to HSE PAD at PQuestions@hse.ie



National Safeguarding Office