



Information for Designated Officers

Under the [Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998](#), certain staff grade have been appointed by the Director General as Designated Officers.

Under this Act persons are protected by law if they in good faith report suspected child abuse to a Designated Officer of the HSE, Tusla - Child and Family Agency or a member of An Garda Síochána. This means that even if a communicated report of child abuse proves unfounded, a person who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report. Section 4 of the Act protects employees from penalisation by employers for having made a report of child abuse.

Please check the list provided to see if you are a Designated Officer:

- Access Workers
- Advocacy Officers
- All HSE Nursing Personnel
- All other HSE Medical and Dental Personnel
- Care Assistants
- Child Care Workers
- Childminder Coordinators
- Children First Implementation Officers
- Children First Information and Advice Persons
- Community Welfare Officers
- Counsellors in Services for AVPA
- Designated Person within the HSE
- Environmental Health Officers
- Family Support Coordinators
- Family Support Workers
- Health Education/Health Promotion Personnel

- HIV and AIDS Services
- Hospital Consultants
- Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Pre-school Services Inspectors
- Project Workers
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Public Health Nurses
- Quality Assurance Officers
- Radiographers
- Residential Care Managers/
- Residential Child Care Workers
- Social Workers
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Substance Abuse Counsellors
- Training and Development Officers
- Managers of Disability Services

These designated officers have a basis in law. This means that under the provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, people are protected if they make a genuine or bona fide report of suspected abuse to a designated officer of the HSE. The Act created a new offence of false reporting in cases where a report was made knowing the statement to be untrue.

Designated Officer Responsibilities

To clarify with the person making the report that he/she is making a formal report.

To establish whether reasonable grounds for concern exist.

To inform the person providing the information that the Designated Officer is required to pass that Information to Tusla - Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker if reasonable grounds for concern exist.

To inform the person that the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons that report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to Designated Officers of the HSE.

A Designated Officer of the HSE has statutory responsibility under the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse and therefore cannot report anonymously or request anonymity.

What to do next?

Consult with your line manager and follow the [HSE Procedure for Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns](#).

If unsure that there are reasonable grounds for concern you can contact Tusla [Duty Social Worker](#) without delay in the area where the child resides for advice and support.

Where the decision is made that the concern should not be reported to the Tusla, the person must be informed of this and also told they may report directly to the Duty Social Worker in Tusla and that the provisions of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 would pertain.

If reasonable grounds for concern exist the information given should be forwarded to the [Duty Social Worker](#) in Tusla regardless of whether the source wishes to be identified or not. The source should be made aware that the information is being reported.

A report must be made via [Tusla's Web Portal](#) or by using the [Child Protection and Welfare Report Form](#). If there is a serious and or immediate risk to a child, make the report by telephone and then follow it up with the form. The quality of the information provided will influence the ability of the Child and Family Agency to respond.

Inform the parents/guardians of the child that a report is being made unless doing so would increase the risk to the child.

If a child is at **immediate risk** and Tusla cannot be contacted, contact [An Garda Síochána](#) without delay.