



## Information for Designated Officers

Under the [Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998](#), persons are protected by law if they report suspected child abuse to a Designated Officer of the HSE, Tusla - Child and Family Agency or a member of An Garda Síochána as long as the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. Section 4 of the Act protects employees from penalisation by employers for having made a report of child abuse.

This legal protection means that even if your reported concern proves unfounded, if a plaintiff took an action, they would have to prove that you had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

Certain HSE staff grades have been appointed by the Director General as Designated Officers. Members of the public are protected under the Act if they report concerns about children to Designated Officers in the HSE.

**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 Adult Victims of Past Abuse  
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 child 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 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 Act 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 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 using the relevant [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 within three days. The quality of the information provided will influence the ability of Tusla 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.