



**Children First**  
National Office

**HSE Children First National Office**

# Newsletter

December 2024



**Marion Martin**  
HSE Children First Lead

Over 2024, we've made great strides in implementing Children First and raising awareness of our shared responsibility to protect children and promote their welfare. This progress has been achieved despite the challenges of busy environments and changes within the HSE.

I am deeply grateful to the Children First Operational Steering Committees, service managers, and staff who work tirelessly to safeguard children across the HSE.

This year, the Children First National Office supported Operational Steering Committees, delivered training directly to over 2,500 staff, conducted 35 compliance assurance checks, collaborated with key sectors to develop new resources, and ran a successful Children First Awareness Week. I am incredibly proud of the achievements and dedication of the team.

Looking ahead to 2025, we will focus on strengthening compliance, reaching more frontline staff with a renewed emphasis on "back to basics" and on enhancing safeguarding practices.

On behalf of the HSE Children First National Office, I thank you for your continued dedication and encourage us all to keep building a culture of safeguarding where every child feels protected and every voice matters.



## In this issue...



Updated HSE Child Safeguarding Statement Guidance



What makes a good Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment?



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# Developing Child Safeguarding Statements in the HSE

All organisations providing 'relevant services', to children and families must develop a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) under the [Children First Act 2015](#). This is a written Statement that specifies how the service safeguards children from harm. Child Safeguarding Statements must be informed by Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments.

HSE Guidance for Developing and Reviewing Child Safeguarding Statements is available. The guidance includes a HSE Child Safeguarding Statement template and other useful resources.

## *How the guidance works...*

The guidance is divided into two parts. Part A provides a short step by step guide to the process.

Part B provides a template for undertaking your Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment. The template is prepopulated to help you as you fill it in. You will need to edit it along the way to make it specific to your service.

The template Child Safeguarding Statement is available in both English and Irish. All of these resources are available from the [HSE Children First Website](#).



**SCAN HERE  
FOR GUIDANCE**



## *Displaying your CSS..*

**Display your Statement in a prominent place wherever your service is provided.**

**It is recommended that HSE Child Safeguarding Statement templates are printed in A3 and displayed alongside one or both of our child friendly CSS posters which you will find at [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst).**



**Practice tip: posters for younger children should be hung down low at their eye level.**



# Responding to Retrospective Disclosures of Childhood Abuse

The Court of Appeal determined in December 2023 that mandatory reporting requirements only apply where there is a concern for a child who is under 18 years of age.

To reflect the decision of the courts the [HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy](#) was updated to clarify how staff should respond when an adult discloses childhood abuse. If you would like further detail on this [judgement](#) please visit [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst).

## So... what does this mean for me?

This means that if an adult discloses to you that they were abused as a child you must consider whether a child or children (currently under the age of 18 at the time of the disclosure) could be at risk of abuse or neglect. If you have **concerns** you must send a report to Tusla; if you are a Mandated Person this is a legal requirement. Mandated Persons are listed in schedule two of the Children First Act 2015. If you don't have concerns for a child under 18 years of age then you are not required to make a report to Tusla.

## Remember these steps...



Be sensitive and supportive to the person disclosing abuse.



Speak to your line manager and if you need further advice you can contact a Tusla duty Social Worker.



Consider whether the information needs to be reported to the Gardaí.



**Remember!** You do not need the identifying details of the child or the person subject of abuse allegations to make a report.

an adult discloses childhood abuse

support the person

THINK: Do you have current concerns for a child or children or concerns for a child in the future?

No

Yes

Continue to support and work with the person who disclosed to encourage their engagement with Tusla (if appropriate).

Report to Tusla



# Children First National Office News and Resources

## TRAINING UPDATES

Great news! Staff working in HSE Funded Services can now avail of our Children First Training programmes.

Scan here to login to HSELAND



## NEW RESOURCES

Live Q&A Webinars!

Line Manager Resource Pack

## HAPPY TO HELP!

Children First Training and Development Officers [contact details](#).

[WWW.HSE.IE/CHILDRENFIRST](http://WWW.HSE.IE/CHILDRENFIRST)



To access these resources and much much more visit our website [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst)

# ...COMING SOON!

Revised HSE Child Protection  
and Welfare Policy





# SPOTLIGHT ON FRONTLINE INTERAGENCY EVENTS

## COMMUNITY EVENT - CORK

Organised by CKCH Children First Committee in collaboration with the Gardaí, Tusla and Mecpaths



Over 100 people attended a Cork Kerry Community Healthcare-hosted event for those working to protect the safety and welfare of children in January 2024.

The event 'Making Difficult Conversations Easier' aimed to support healthcare staff experiencing challenges undertaking their obligations under Children First Legislation.

Guests from a variety of healthcare services attended the event. [Tusla Child and Family Agency](#), the HSE Children First National Office, [An Garda Síochána](#) and [MECPATHS](#) – the non-profit organisation which focuses specifically on the issue of child trafficking – were all represented at the HSE-led event, held at the Oriel House Hotel in Ballincollig.

## HOSPITAL EVENT - LIMERICK

Children First Awareness Week made front page news on PULSE in University Hospital Limerick however the highlight of the week was a conference organised by Anne Hegarty, Chairperson of the University Limerick Hospital Group Children First Operational Steering Committee.



Children First: A Collaborative Event took place in the CERC Auditorium with a variety of guest speakers from Adapt Services, HSE Children First National Office, An Gardaí Síochána Protective Services Unit, National Social Inclusion, Tusla - Child and Family Agency.

Staff members presenting at the conference included Dr Aisling O'Riordan, Consultant Paediatrician (UHL), Stacey Kelly, Drug and Alcohol Liaison Midwife and Gemma Harding and Aisling Ryan Medical Social Workers (UMHL).





# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING HSE CHILDREN FIRST AWARENESS WEEK 2024!

Mayo University Hospital: Children First Awareness Week. @IASW\_IRL @HSEWestNorthWes @CNMEMayoRos @AmandaC62359371



Teri Dillon @TuriMargaret

Follow

"Putting Children First" Tony and the SLRON Team keeping everyone up to date as part of the HSE Children First Awareness week. @charles\_gillham @HSEDubMidlands @jennifer19695



HSE Dublin and Midlands @HSEDubMidlands

#MRHPortlaoise marked "Children First Awareness Week" with an information stand in the hospital today. Confirming the message that Child safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and focusing on Mandatory training, Mandated Persons and the Child Protection and Welfare Policy.



National Child Safeguarding P... @safeguardingelc

Follow

HSE Children First Awareness Campaign - 14 to 20 October 2024: [hse.ie/eng/services/l...](https://hse.ie/eng/services/l...)



OLOLNursing @NursingOlol

Follow

@NursingOlol and the MDT promoting Children's First Awareness Week #puttingchildrenfirst #collaboration



South Infirmary Victoria Univ... @SIVUH

Follow

Our Principal Social Worker Brian Foley, Senior Social Worker Siobhan Madden and all our Social Work team have been creating awareness of Children First for National Children First Week. @tusla @WeHSCPs @IASW\_IRL @HrSswgh



National Ambulance Service... @AmbulanceNAS

Follow

@HSELive Children First Awareness Campaign takes place from 14th to 20th Oct 2024.

The campaign aims to raise awareness by promoting a number of key messages outlining organisational and staff responsibilities under #ChildrenFirst.

Find more info here: [bit.ly/3YsAUOI](https://bit.ly/3YsAUOI)



TippUH-NURSING @TippUHNursing

Follow

Children First Awareness Education taking place in #TippUH. Recognising it is all our responsibility to protect children. Thanks to our Social work dept for organising this event. @HSEDubSouthEast @PGallagherIEHG @TipperaryUH



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2 Views

