Your consent and child protection

We will usually discuss our concerns with you and explain why we are making a report.

However, your consent is not required for us to make a report. When it comes to child protection, Data Protection legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) do not prevent us from sharing information when necessary to keep children safe.

What happens next?

After a report is made, Tusla may contact you to gather more information. Their goal is to fully understand the situation so they can protect and support any child that may be at risk.

Your cooperation is important. Without it, Tusla may find it harder to keep a child safe from harm.

Support services

We understand that this process may be difficult for you, and you may need support too.

There are services available to help. Many of these services are free and do not require a referral. For more information, visit the HSE website:

Mental health supports and services - HSE.ie

What to do if you have a concern

If you are worried about a child's safety or well-being, don't stay silent. Report your concern to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

More information

To learn more about the HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy, visit:

www.hse.ie/childrenfirst

This leaflet is translated into other languages. Scan the QR code below.

Limits to Confidentiality

When We Can't Keep Information Private: Protecting Children

This leaflet explains why HSE staff may need to share sensitive or personal information to ensure the safety and protection of children.

We respect your right to privacy and are committed to keeping your information secure. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In some situations we are required to share information.

If we are concerned about a child's safety or well-being, we may need to share information with Tusla (The Child and Family Agency) or An Garda Síochána. This is required by law to protect children.

Child Safeguarding – Our Legal Obligations

The safety, welfare and development of children and young people is a priority for the HSE. Our work is guided by the law and policy, such as:

▶ The Children First Act 2015 and

▶ The Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017

It is our policy that all HSE staff must inform Tusla when they have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected (harmed).

In addition, some HSE Staff are legally required to report concerns if they believe a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed.

ℹ In Ireland, the law defines a child as anyone under the age of 18.

How do we identify a Concern?

A concern about a child's welfare or protection may come to our attention in different ways, such as:

▶ A child tells us or shows signs that they have been harmed.

▶ We see or hear something that makes us believe a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being harmed.

▶ Someone shares concerns that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed.

▶ An adult tells that they were harmed as a child, and we believe another child may now or in the future be at risk from the same person.

Where do we report a concern?

Tusla is the agency in Ireland responsible for ensuring that children are safe and well cared for. They also provide support to families.

If we have concerns about a child's welfare or protection, we must report them to Tusla. You can learn more about their role and services at:

www.tusla.ie/children-first/

In some cases, we may also need to report concerns to An Garda Síochána, or Tusla may share information with them if necessary.

We must report concerns, even if:

▶ We do not know the child or the person who may have caused harm.

▶ You tell us the concern has already been reported to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

▶ You later decide you want to take back something you said that raised concern.