Roles and Responsibilities of HSE staff under Children First

As a staff member of the HSE if you are concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or if a child protection or welfare concern is brought to your attention you should immediately consult with your line manager or the most appropriate senior staff member and follow the HSE Procedure for Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns.

Categories of child abuse:
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Remember concerns may come to your attention through your work with parents, families and not just direct work with children.

The Duty Social Worker in Tusla - Child and Family Agency MUST always be informed if reasonable grounds for concern exist that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. If you or your line manager are unsure if a report should be made you can contact the Tusla duty social worker for an informal consultation.

If a child is at immediate risk and the Duty Social Worker in Tusla cannot be contacted please contact An Garda Síochána without delay.

Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

1. Recognise
   - Signs of abuse
   - Behaviours
   - Risk Factors
   - Disclosure

2. Respond
   - Consult with your line manager or senior staff member
   - Consult with Tusla - Child and Family Agency
   - In an emergency, contact Tusla and/or Gardai

3. Report and record
   - Complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form
   - Forward the Report Form to TUSLA and retain a copy for your records
   - Report to Gardai, if required

www.hse.ie/childrenfirst
Mandated Persons

The children first act places a legal obligation on certain people (mandated persons) to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla.

- Where a mandated person knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being harmed, has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed they must make a mandated report to Tusla.
- A mandated person may be required to assist Tusla, if requested in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report.

Line Managers

All Line managers have particular responsibilities to support staff under the HSE’s Child Protection and Welfare Policy. To find out more about these responsibilities click here.

Useful Links:
Tusla - Child and Family Agency:
www.tusla.ie
Department of Children and Youth Affairs:
www.dcya.gov.ie

HSE Designated Officers

Certain grades of HSE staff are Designated Officers under the Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998. Anyone who reports suspected child abuse in good faith to a Designated Officer is protected from civil liability by law.

To check if you are a Designated Officer and to find out more click here.