

What do Childcare services need to do in relation to Child Protection?

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that the children with whom they work or are in contact with may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

As an organisation working with children you have an overall duty and responsibility to safeguard children in your care. There are a number of steps which you can take in order to provide a safe environment for children;



- Promoting general welfare, health development and safety of children through rigorous adherence to policies and procedures, ensuring the safety and welfare of children in environments and interactions.
- Ensuring safe management procedures are in place for all staff and volunteers including: robust recruitment, selection, supervision and support procedures;
- Developing and providing guidance and procedures for staff and volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the possible abuse or neglect of child involved in your service;
- Identify a **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**; an explanation of what this entails is outlined below.
- Ensuring that the organisation has procedures in place to deal with an allegation of abuse made against a staff/volunteer;
- Raising awareness in the service about potential risks to children's safety and welfare; this may be completed at **induction** and through regular staff meetings.
- Developing procedures for responding to accidents and complaints;
- Developing and maintaining clear record keeping procedures.
- Ensuring a Code of Behaviour is in place to provide staff and volunteers with clear guidance on how to treat children and young people in the service;
- Developing a policy of partnership and cooperation with parents.
- Developing a policy of interagency cooperation with the Child and Family Agency and other agencies involved in the protection of a child.

The Designated Liaison Person

Every organisation, both public and private, that is providing services for children or is in regular direct contact with children should:

- Identify a **designated liaison person** to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns.
- The designated liaison person is responsible for ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed, so that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker or in the event of an

emergency, where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the Children and Family Agency Duty Social Worker, should contact An Garda Síochána

- The designated liaison person should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments. They must also have completed Child Protection and Welfare Training.

Who should be the DLP?

- This should be a senior staff member who is in a position to make decisions and support staff in cases of Child Protection and welfare and making a report to Child and family Agency.
- The DLP must have a good working knowledge of organisation on a daily basis as well as an understanding of the roles of the staff working in the service.
- They must have good listening and communication skills as this is a sensitive subject.
- The person must have a good understanding of abuse and have completed Child Protection and Welfare Training .
- The DLP must be available throughout the day to receive any Child Protection and Welfare concerns.
- Childcare Services should also have a Deputy DLP who follow the same criteria and have the same responsibilities when the DLP is not available.



What is the role of the DLP?

- Provide information and advice to staff and volunteers and are responsible for keeping them up to date with child protection information by attending training and other information resources.
- Receive and consider child protection concerns and conduct informal consultation with the Duty Social Worker.
- The DLP should be comfortable in making a formal referral and be familiar with using the standard report form.
- Liaise with Community services or An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate.
- Manage confidential records, the DLP will ensure that records on child protection and welfare concerns are kept secure with restricted access.



- The role of the DLP will also be to inform parents/carers about any child protection and welfare concern particularly if a call or report has been made to the Duty Social Worker
- Advise the service on child protection training needs

Staff induction on Child Protection and Welfare.

All staff should, as part of their induction, be made aware of the child protection policy and be provided with an overview of the key elements of Children First the and organisational roles and responsibilities for safeguarding the children in their care.



Services may wish to use a short presentation which is available at;

<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/roles-and-responsibilities/organisations/tusla-children-first-national-guidance-2011-presentation>

Organisations may use the presentation in a number of ways:

1. Staff can view the presentation as part of induction training.
2. Staff can view the presentation to prepare for attending Child Protection and Welfare Training.
3. **It is important to note that this presentation is not an alternative to Child Protection and Welfare Training.**