



## Children First News

# EXTRA! EXTRA!

## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Welcome to the first edition of the Children First News eZine! Children First News is published by the HSE Children First National Office. It's aim is to keep staff across the HSE, and its Funded Services, informed and up to date on developments and training resources regarding Children First. The eZine is also available on our website: [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst)

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## HSE Children First National Office

The HSE Children First National Office aims to support the HSE, and its funded services, to safeguard children through effective implementation of the [Children First Act 2015](#) and the [Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#). We aim to enhance organisational and individual skills, behaviours and effectiveness, to support the protection and welfare of children and young people. The Office has a key functional role, at national and at a local level, in supporting compliance with the Act and developing and delivering training and other resources in relation to Children First.

There are HSE Children First Training and Development Officers (TDOs) based across the country. They have key links within the Community Healthcare Organisations and Hospital Groups, to support the consistent implementation and compliance with Children First across the HSE. The TDOs have a background in child protection practice and are a useful resource to assist with the implementation of Children First, via the delivery of training, briefings and other practical advice for staff and services throughout the HSE and its funded agencies.

Contact details for your local TDO and the HSE Children First National Office can be found [here](#)

# HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy



The HSE Children First National Office launched a revised HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy in November 2019. The policy is informed by the requirements outlined in the [Children First Act 2015](#) and the [Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017](#). A consultation process was undertaken in 2018 to inform the policy and the majority of feedback was taken on board to help make it as user friendly as possible in practice. It is important that all staff in the HSE are familiar with the policy to help protect children from harm.

## The HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy outlines:

- \* How to respond to a disclosure of abuse from a child or adult
- \* How to determine if a concern meets the threshold for reporting to Tusla
- \* How to make a report to Tusla
- \* What and how to record and store information
- \* To know your roles and responsibilities in protecting children

To access the policy visit: [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst)

**Tip:** The policy contains a visual algorithm of the HSE Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedure, which clearly outlines the steps you must take when making a report to Tusla

## HSE Children First Governance Structures



There are HSE Children First Governance Structures in place to support the monitoring of strategic and operational needs for implementing Children First. As part of the Governance Structures, there are Community Healthcare Organisation and Hospital Group Children First Operational Steering Committees (OSCs) in place. These committees have responsibility for preparing and steering the on-going implementation and effective management of staff awareness and training for Children First locally. Ask your local TDO for the membership details of your local OSC.



## Did You Know?

### Reporting a Child Protection or Welfare Concern to Tusla

All HSE Staff should submit child protection and welfare reports through Tusla's online Web Portal. This is the most efficient and secure way of reporting. The Portal allows users to submit **Child Protection and Welfare Report Forms (CPWRFs)** and **Retrospective Abuse Report Forms (RARFs)**.

To use the Tusla Portal you will first need to create a user account. The Portal can be accessed [here](#) and a short user guide for the portal is available [here](#). A user guide for making a Retrospective Abuse Report is also available [here](#). If you have any difficulties using the portal Tusla's technical support team can help. You can contact them at [portalsupport@tusla.ie](mailto:portalsupport@tusla.ie). Registered Post or personally handing in a report to Tusla is the only other option, as a last resort, if you cannot access the Portal.

**(Key Tip: If you don't have a work email account, you could set up a new email address dedicated for the purpose of registering on the Tusla Portal)**

### Relevant Services

[Relevant Services](#) are set out in Schedule 1 of the Children First Act 2015.

HSE and HSE funded 'Relevant Services' must:

- ◆ Complete a Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- ◆ Create and display a Child Safeguarding Statement
- ◆ Maintain a list of Mandated Persons in the service
- ◆ Have a Child Protection and Welfare Policy in place and ensure all staff are aware of it
- ◆ Ensure all staff and volunteers have completed the online programme HSE 'An Introduction to Children First'

If you work in a Relevant Service and you are unsure if all the above requirements have been undertaken, talk to your line manager. You can also contact your local Training and Development Officer who may be able to offer advice to assist your service with compliance.

### An Introduction to Children First eLearning

There have been over **220,000\*** module completions of the mandatory HSE eLearning programme 'An Introduction to Children First' by HSE staff and staff in funded and contracted services since it was introduced in 2016. **Don't forget** all staff have to repeat the training every three years. *(\*as of December 2019)*

# Resources

## Children First Training for Mandated Persons

The HSE Children First National Office will begin roll-out of a one day classroom based training programme for mandated persons in early 2020. This builds on the online training programme 'An Introduction to Children First'. Click [here](#) to see a list of Mandated Persons.

## Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments and Child Safeguarding Statements

A Guidance for HSE Child Safeguarding Statements and Risk Assessment Workbook has been issued by the HSE Children First National Office in preparation for the legal requirement to review Child Safeguarding Statements by the 11th March 2020. You can download the Guidance from the HSE Children First website [here](#).

Child Safeguarding Statements must be reviewed at intervals of not more than 24 months or following a material change in any matter to which that statement refers.

# Coming Soon

## Children First Training and Resources Strategy

The HSE Children First National Office completed a Training Needs Analysis in 2019. The feedback has been useful to inform us of what training staff require to successfully implement Children First. Thank you to all the staff who participated in the online survey! The survey will inform the 'HSE Children First Training & Resource Strategy', which includes initiatives that we aim to develop and implement between 2020-2023 for the HSE and HSE funded services.

### Information & Resources

- [www.hse.ie/childrenfirst](http://www.hse.ie/childrenfirst)
- [www.tusla.ie/children-first](http://www.tusla.ie/children-first)

### Contact the Children First National Office

- [childrenfirst@hse.ie](mailto:childrenfirst@hse.ie)
- [Click here](#) to find your local HSE Children First Training and Development Officer

### A Message to HSE Funded Services

Service Arrangements for Section 38 and Section 39 HSE Funded Services have been updated to reflect the compliance and best practice requirements under Children First. A self-assessment compliance checklist must be completed. You can access it [here](#).

The HSE Children First National Office has limited resource capacity to support HSE Funded Services. However, the Training and Development Officers (TDOs) will aim to provide support and advice to funded service managers wherever possible upon request. They may be able to offer advice, compliance planning, and where possible training resources. Funded Service managers can contact their local TDO for further information [here](#).