



Children First: Roles and Responsibilities of HSE Staff

All HSE staff have a responsibility to protect children from harm, promote their welfare and report to Tusla - Child and Family Agency when they have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

All staff must:

- ◆ Read the [HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy](#).
- ◆ Be familiar with their service's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- ◆ Be familiar with the HSE Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedure.
- ◆ Report and record child protection and welfare concerns
- ◆ Complete the mandatory HSE eLearning module '[An Introduction to Children First](#)'.
- ◆ Respond to concerns regarding unsafe practices taking place within their service/ organisation by informing their line manager or making a [protected disclosure](#).
- ◆ Be familiar with any additional child protection and welfare roles they might have.



Some staff have additional responsibilities such as **Designated Officers, Mandated Persons** and **Line Managers**.

Check the [HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy](#) to see if you are a Designated Officer.

Check [Schedule 2](#) of the Children First Act 2015 to see if you are a Mandated Person.

Designated Officers

Certain grades of staff are Designated Officers under the [Protections for 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. Designated Officers must report all reasonable grounds for concern to Tusla.

The [Information Sheet for Designated Officers \(PDF, 1,084 KB, 2 pages\)](#) outlines which categories of HSE staff are Designated Officers and the responsibilities of the role.

Mandated Persons

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on 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.

The [Information Sheet for Mandated Persons \(PDF, 1,099 KB, 2 pages\)](#) provides more information on the legal obligations of Mandated Persons

Line Managers

All Line Managers have particular responsibilities to support staff under the HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy. Line Managers must:

- ◆ Provide consultation and assistance to staff who have a child protection or welfare concern.
- ◆ Ensure that the [HSE Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedure](#) is followed.
- ◆ Ensure that staff maintain secure records of all child protection and welfare reports sent to Tusla/An Garda Síochána.
- ◆ Ensure that they are aware of all Mandated Persons that they have line manager responsibility for.

For details on these and additional responsibilities please see the [HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy](#).

Note:

Child protection is everyone's responsibility.

Even if you do not work with children, adult based services play an important part in the identification and assessment of child protection and welfare concerns.

Consideration of the impact of parental problems on a child or children should be a routine part of practice in adult as well as in children's services.

Adults may also disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. If you receive a disclosure from an adult that they were abused as a child, and you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child (who is under the age of 18 years at the time of the disclosure) has been, is being or is at risk of being harmed, you must report this to Tusla - Child and Family Agency.

If you do not have a concern for a child, you are not required to make a report unless the adult wants you to. If you do have a concern for a child it is not necessary to have the adults consent to make a report.

If a child is at immediate risk and a [Tusla Duty Social Worker](#) cannot be contacted please contact [An Garda Síochána](#) without delay.