



HSE Children First National Office

Newsletter

December 2023

A word from



Marion Martin
HSE Children First Lead

Childhood should be a time of joy, growth, and limitless possibilities. Yet, far too often, children face unimaginable challenges and dangers. It is our collective responsibility to protect them from harm. It is our duty to stand up, to be their voice, and to create an environment where their innocence is cherished and protected.

Children First provides a framework for identifying risks and responding to child protection and welfare concerns. Beyond our legal duties, by adhering to its principles, we can create a secure environment that supports the safety and well-being of every child in our care.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have played a key role in Children First implementation across our services. In a very busy organisation, and with limited resources, I know it has not been an easy task. The Children First National Office endeavours to support you, and I welcome any suggestions on how we can improve on that support.

Let's all work together to stimulate a culture of child safeguarding!



In this issue...



About the HSE Children First National Office



Key messages on... Children First Training



A bit more about... Children First Compliance



Spotlight on... Children First Public Awareness Campaign



Bonus Crossword! Yes, there's a prize!!!!

A bit about us...

HSE Children First National Office

Children First

Children First refers to Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015. It is a generic term used to encompass the guidance, the legislation and the implementation of both. Children First promotes the protection and welfare of children and outlines how to help protect them from harm or abuse.

What we do...

Our Office aims to support the HSE, and its funded services, to safeguard children through the effective implementation of Children First.

We have a key functional role, at national and at a local level, in supporting implementation, compliance and developing and delivering training and other resources in relation to Children First.

How we do it...

We focus on four key areas of work:

1. Supporting Community Healthcare Organisations and Hospital Groups to understand requirements and plan for effective implementation of Children First.
2. Conducting Children First Compliance Assurance Checks to provide a level of independent assurance to services and HSE senior management.
3. Delivering Training, and briefings, directly to staff.
4. Developing new resources and policy documents in line with our Training and Resource Strategy.

Meet the Team



Our team is made up of the HSE Children First Lead, 18 Children First Training and Development Officers who are located across the country, and one Office Administrator.



To access these resources and much much more visit our website www.hse.ie/childrenfirst



Key messages on...

Children First Training



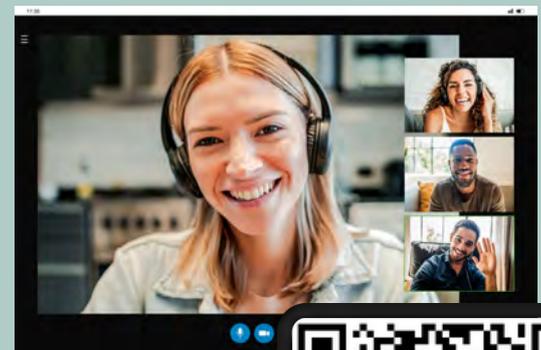
Mandatory Children First Training

'An Introduction to Children First' is a mandatory eLearning programme for all staff of HSE and HSE Funded Services, and must be completed on HSeLanD every 3 years. It only takes 90 minutes and certificates should be submitted to line managers.

Supplementary Training

We currently offer the following supplementary training sessions:

- Children First Workshops for Mandated Persons
- Recognising and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect Workshops
- Workshops for undertaking Risk Assessments & developing Child Safeguarding Statements
- Children First Briefings for Line Managers



To find out more scan the QR code to go directly to our training page.

What people are saying about our Workshops

"A brilliant course, very well presented and well-paced. It provides good learnings, material and very interactive. The content was informative and very relevant to me both personally and professionally."

"I found the training to be very interactive and informative and I gained a lot from it."

"One of the most informative, concise and relevant on line courses I have completed."



-Thank you

A bit more about...

Children First Compliance in the HSE



Children First Governance Structures

Children First Governance Structures are in place to support the implementation of Children First throughout the HSE. The Children First National Office is supported by a Children First Oversight Committee and Operational Steering Committees (OSCs) have been established at National, Community Healthcare Organisation and Hospital Group levels.



Children First Bi-Annual Progress Reports

Children First Operational Steering Committees are required to submit two implementation progress reports per year to the HSE Children First National Office. This information is collated into a National Summary Report, which is presented to the HSE Senior Leadership Team.



Implementation and Compliance Self-Audit Checklist for HSE & HSE Funded Services

All HSE services complete this checklist annually to gain a self-assessed measure of Children First Compliance. Services should be able to produce copies of completed checklists on request.



Children First National Office Compliance Assurance Checks

The Children First National Office has recently started undertaking Children First Compliance Checks. The objective is to gain an independent measure of Children First Compliance at service level with a view to improving Children First Implementation and practice.



Internal Audit

Children First has formed part of the agreed Internal Audit Schedule since 2021. Internal Audit look for evidence of Children First implementation and compliance, for example, a service's Self-Audit Checklist, Child Safeguarding Statement and risk assessments, training certificates, procedures and evidence that staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

For further information check out our website www.hse.ie/childrenfirst

Spotlight on...

Children First Public Awareness Campaign 2023

The HSE Children First Awareness Campaign took place from the 25 September to 1 October 2023. This year's campaign focused on the responsibility of organisations under Children First. Many events and briefings took place nationally across various HSE sites.

Key messages

All organisations working with children and young people (Relevant Services) are required to **develop policies and procedures** to create a safe environment for children availing of a service.

Relevant Services are required to keep children safe from harm and to undertake **Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments** and develop and display **Child Safeguarding Statements**.

Staff who are **Mandated Persons** as defined in Schedule 2 of the act must know about their legal obligations under Children First.



Galway University Hospital



National Maternity Hospital Mayo University Hospital



Wexford General Hospital



Letterkenny University Hospital

COMING SOON

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN 2024

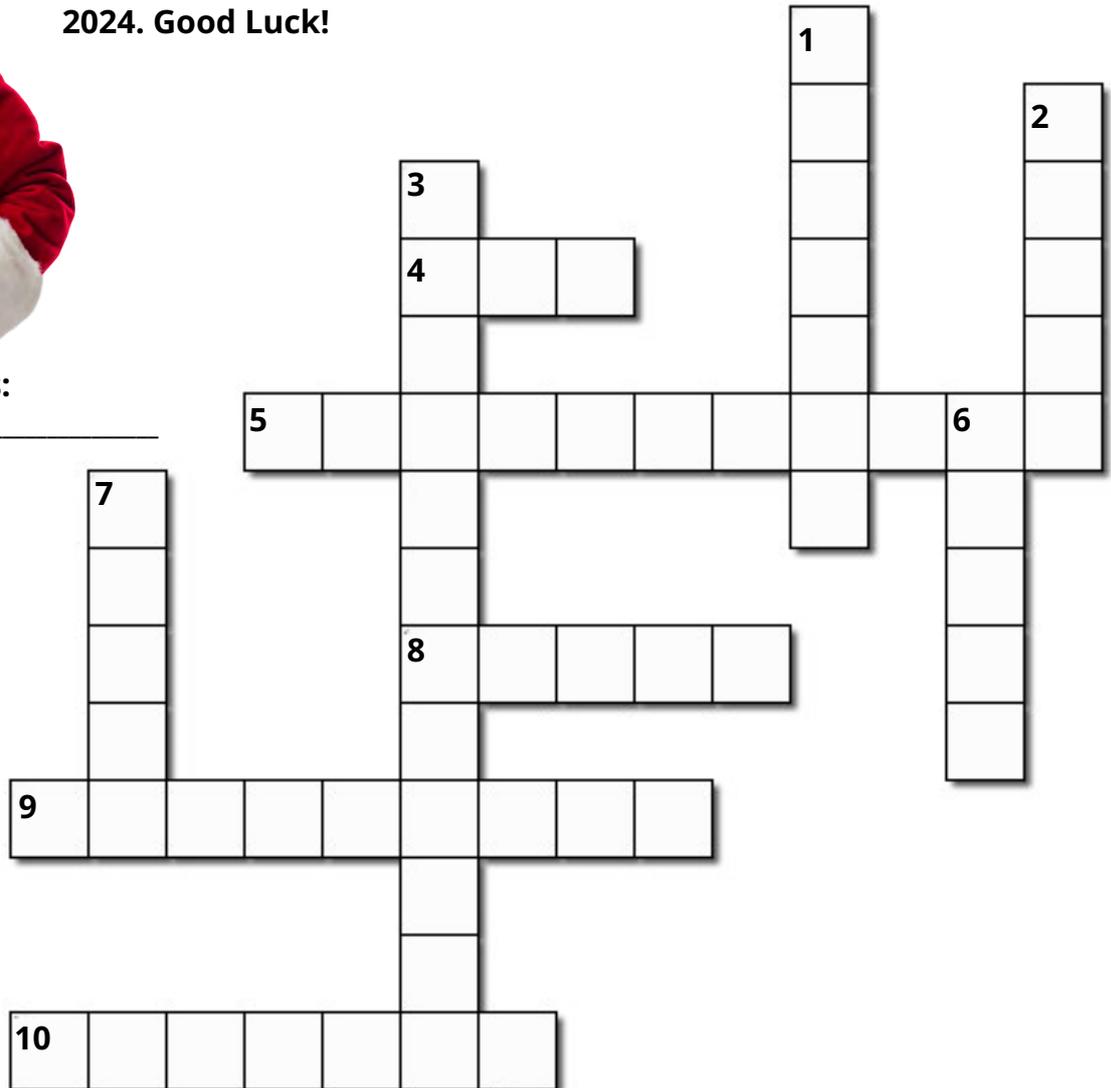
- Updated Guidance for Child Safeguarding Statements and Risk Assessment
- Newly revised HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy
- Train the Trainer for Mandated Persons Training (for Funded Services)
- and more....

Win a One for All Voucher worth €150

To enter the draw please email your correctly completed crossword to childrenfirst@hse.ie by Thursday 28 December. The winner will be announced on our website (www.hse.ie/childrenfirst) in January 2024. Good Luck!



Name and contact details:



4. The Data Protection Acts do ___ prevent the sharing of information on reasonable and proportionate basis for the purpose of child protection.

5. An official document attesting a fact and something you should give to your line manager!

8. A child welfare concern is where a child has _____ needs but is not at ongoing risk of harm.

9. Something required by law or training that has been deemed essential for an organisation.

10. The Irish Health Service's National online learning and development portal.

1. A category of child abuse beginning with 'N'.

2. 'An Introduction to Children First' must be completed every ___ years.

3. Complete the title: 'An _____ to Children First'.

6. Child protection and welfare concerns should be reported to ___ -the Child And Family Agency.

7. If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child and you cannot contact Tusla, you should contact An ___ Síochána without delay.