

Child Protection Policy

Appendix A

Extract from Department of Health and Children Children First Guidelines,
May 2004, Page 38

4.4 Standard Reporting Procedure

4.4.1 If child abuse is suspected or alleged, the following steps should be taken by members of the public or professionals who come into contact with children:

(i) A report should be made to the HSE in person, by phone or in writing. Each HSE area has a social worker on duty for a certain number of hours each day. The duty social worker is available to meet with, or talk on the telephone, to persons wishing to report child protection concerns.

(ii) It is generally most helpful if persons wishing to report child abuse concerns make personal contact with the duty social worker. This will facilitate the social worker in gathering as much information as possible about the child and his or her parents/carers.

(iii) In the event of an emergency, or the non availability of HSE staff, the report should be made to An Garda Síochána. This may be done at any Garda Station.

NOTE: A Standard Form for Reporting Child Protection and/or Welfare Concerns to a HSE is at Appendix 4 (Appendix B in D7ET Child Protection Policy document). This is for use by staff and volunteers in organisations which work with children or who are in contact with children. If a report is made by phone, this form should be forwarded subsequently to the HSE.

4.5 Information Required when a Report is Being Made

4.5.1 The ability of the HSE and/or An Garda Síochána to assess suspicions or allegations of child abuse will depend on the amount and quality of information conveyed to them by persons reporting their concerns. As much as possible of the following detail should be given in the Standard Reporting Form or by telephone:

(i) accurate identifying information as far as it is known. This should include the names, addresses and ages of the child and all children in the family as well as the parents'/ carers' names and address;

(ii) name and address of the person alleged to be causing harm to the child;

(iii) a full account of what constitutes the grounds for concern about the welfare and protection of the child or children;

(iv) source of any information which is being discussed with the HSE;

(v) dates when the concern arose, or a particular incident occurred;

(vi) circumstances in which the concern arose, or the incident occurred;

(vii) any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern;

(viii) the child's own statement, if relevant;

(ix) any other information regarding difficulties which the family may be experiencing. These may include illness, recent bereavement or separation, financial situation, addiction, disability, mental health problem;

(x) any factors which may be considered supportive or protective of the family. These may include helpful family members, neighbours, useful services or projects with whom they have contact;

(xi) name of child or children's school;

(xii) name of child and/or family's general practitioner;

(xiii) the reporter's own involvement with the child and parents/carers;

- (xiv) details of any action already taken about the risk or concern;
- (xv) names and addresses of any agencies or key persons involved with the parents/carers;
- (xvi) identity of reporters including name, address, telephone number, occupation, and relationship with the family.

4.5.2 Any professional who suspects child abuse should inform the parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to the HSE or An Garda Siochana unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

4.5.3 In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and a duty social worker is unavailable, An Garda Siochana should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending HSE intervention.

Appendix B

Extract from Department of Science and Education 'Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures', March 2001, Appendix 1

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Standard reporting form for reporting child protection and welfare concerns to a HSE

1 Date of Report:

2 Name of person reporting:

3 Address of person reporting:

4 Relationship of reporting person with child:

5 Method of Report (telephone call, personal call to office):

6 Family Details:

Details of child concerned

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Male/Female: _____

Alias (known as): _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

7 State whether you consider your report to indicate

a) suspected or actual child abuse or b) need for family support, giving reasons:

Physical Abuse Sexual Abuse Emotional Abuse Neglect

Suspected

Actual

8 Details of other family/household members:

name age relationship to child employment/school location

In cases of emergency, or outside HSE hours, reports should be made to An Garda Siochana.

9 Name of other professionals involved with child/ren and/or parents/carers.

Public health nurse:

School:

General Practitioner:

Any other agency or professional involved:

(please describe the nature of the involvement)

10 Report Details

Describe, as fully as possible, the nature of the problem or incident being reported, giving details of times and dates of individual incidents, the circumstances in which they occurred, any other persons who were present at the time, and their involvement.

11 Has any explanation been offered by the child and/or parents/carers, which would account for the current problem or incident? (Details)

12 As far as possible, describe the state of the child/ren s physical, mental and emotional well-being.

13 If child abuse is being alleged, who is believed to be responsible for causing it? Include (if known)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Degree of contact with child:

Degree of contact with other children:

14 Describe (in detail) any risks to which the child/ren in this situation are believed to be exposed.

15 How did this information come to your attention?

16 What has prompted you to report your concern at this time?

17 What evidence of harm exists at present?

18 Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers present situation, which may have relevance to the current concern? (For example; recent illness, bereavement, separation, addiction, mental health problem or other difficulty)

19 Are there any factors in the child and/or parents/carers present situation, which could be considered protective or helpful (for example, extended family or community support).

20 Has any action been taken in response to the current concern or incident (details)

21 Are the child s parents/carers aware that this concern is being reported to the HSE?

22 Is there a need for urgent protective action at this point?

23 Any other comments.

Signed: _____

Date: _____