

From 11th December 2017, mandated persons must:

- 1 Report child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla;
- 2 Help Tusla, if requested, in assessing a reported concern.

Mandated persons are people who have ongoing contact with children and/or families and who are in a key position to protect children from harm.

As a registered foster carer, you are named as a mandated person under Irish law.

This means that if you have reason to believe that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, you are legally required to report your concerns to Tusla.

The term foster carer under the Children First Act includes any foster carer who is registered with Tusla, including pre-adoptive foster carers, supported lodgings providers, Tusla foster carers (general and relative carers) and foster carers registered with private fostering agencies.

What to do if... You are concerned about the safety or welfare of a foster child in your care:

- 1 Without delay, discuss your concern with the child's allocated Social Worker or your Fostering Link Social Worker.
- 2 Following this conversation with the Social Worker, decide whether your concern reaches the threshold for a mandated report or reasonable grounds for concern.
- 3 If a report is required, then submit a Child Protection and Welfare Report Form to the Duty Social Work Service in the area where the child lives. The child's allocated Social Worker or your Fostering Link Social Worker can help you with this.

What to do if... You are concerned about the safety or welfare of a child who is not in your care:

- 1 Discuss your concern with your Fostering Link Social Worker or any Tusla Social Worker.
- 2 Following this conversation with the Social Worker, decide whether your concern reaches the threshold for a mandated report or reasonable grounds for concern.
- 3 If a report is required, then submit a Child Protection and Welfare Report Form to the Duty Social Work Service in the area where the child lives. Your Fostering Link Social Worker or a member of the Fostering Social Work Team can help you with this.

In an emergency situation where you think a child is in immediate danger, please contact the local Tusla duty social work service immediately. Contact details for all duty social work teams are on the Tusla website, www.tusla.ie.

If a child is in danger outside office hours or if you cannot contact Tusla, contact an Gardaí Síochána.

What will happen if I report a concern to Tusla?

Tusla checks all reports and information on the day they are received and, if necessary, takes emergency action to protect the child.

The report will first be screened to identify the risk to, and concern for, a child and the best service to respond to the report. If necessary, an assessment will then be carried out to gather more information.

As a mandated person, you may be required to assist Tusla in our assessment of any concern you report. For example, you may be asked to give more information over the phone or in writing or to attend a meeting.

There are a number of possible outcomes following an assessment. For more information about how to report a concern to Tusla and what happens after you do so, see Tusla's *A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns*. This is available on the Tusla website.

Support and training

As a mandated person and a foster carer, you will be required to complete training in Children First. Tusla has developed an online training programme called 'Introduction to Children First' which is available on the Tusla website, www.tusla.ie. If you don't have internet access or cannot access the online training for any reason, contact your Fostering Link Social Worker to discuss this and to make alternative arrangements for this training.

Tusla has also developed a number of information booklets about Children First and mandatory reporting, which provide information on:

- How to report a concern about a child to Tusla;
- What happens when Tusla receives a report of a concern;
- Tusla's internal process for requesting assistance from mandated persons.

Your Fostering Link Social Worker is also available to support you if you have any questions about your responsibilities as a mandated reporter.



The introduction of mandated reporting in Ireland

A significant development has taken place in child protection and welfare in Ireland. The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has published revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* and announced the commencement of the remaining sections of the Children First Act 2015 from 11th December 2017. This will introduce mandated reporting in Ireland from 11th December 2017.

What is mandated reporting?

Mandated reporting places a legal obligation on certain groups of people to report concerns of child harm to Tusla – Child and Family Agency. These people are known as ‘mandated persons’.

More information

Websites:

www.tusla.ie
www.dcy.gov.ie

Forms for reporting child protection and welfare concerns: www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children: www.dcy.gov.ie

A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns: www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/

Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff
www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/

‘Introduction to Children First’ online training programme www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme

The Children First Act and Mandated Reporting

What does it mean for Foster Carers?

Children First **TUSLA**
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency