

**Adult**

**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

# Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)

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**A leaflet for adults  
disclosing that they were  
abused as a child**

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**In this leaflet we explain to you what happens when you tell someone that you have been abused as a child. This is called ‘making a disclosure of child abuse’.**

**This leaflet will also tell you:**

- About us – Tusla – The Child and Family Agency
- How Tusla assess disclosures (CASP)
- Where you can get support

We have written this leaflet to help you understand what we do and what you can expect when you make a disclosure.

## About us – Tusla – Child and Family Agency

Tusla is the State agency responsible for protecting the welfare of children. We are also responsible for protecting children from risk of harm. Children’s safety is our main concern.

## Tusla and An Garda Síochána (Irish police)

An Garda Síochána is also responsible for protecting children. They conduct any criminal investigations into child abuse. We must tell An Garda Síochána about any allegations of child abuse.

If An Garda Síochána is investigating an allegation of child abuse at the same time as we are carrying out our assessment of child abuse, we will work with An Garda Síochána and decide how to proceed. Our child abuse assessment is called a ‘substantiation assessment’.

## How to make a disclosure of child abuse

Making a disclosure of child abuse is when a person tells another person that they were abused. You can contact us to disclose child abuse or someone else can contact us on your behalf.

## How Tusla assesses disclosures of child abuse – Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)

The CASP is the process we may use when assessing allegations of child abuse. Our CASP process also helps us to identify any risk of harm to children that we need to bring to the attention of another person or organisation.

We aim to treat everyone affected by allegations of abuse with:

- fairness
- dignity
- respect.

We also need to make sure that we make decisions in line with:

- the law
- policy
- best practice.

## Types of abuse

Allegations of child abuse can include:

- sexual abuse
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

## People involved in the CASP

**Person Making a Disclosure – PMD:** A Person Making a Disclosure is a person – either a child or an adult – who has made a disclosure of child abuse.

**Person Subject of Abuse Allegations – PSAA:** A Person Subject of Abuse Allegations is a person – either a child or an adult – who has had allegations of child abuse made against them.

## What happens if I don't know where the PSAA lives now?

We may try to find out the address of the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA) by asking An Garda Síochána or another State agency to help. If we cannot find the address, we may not be able to proceed with a substantiation assessment.

## What if the PSAA is dead?

If a PSAA is dead, there is no current risk to children and we will not undertake any substantiation assessment.

## What if I am not ready yet to disclose child abuse?

If you are not ready to speak with us, we will be limited in the actions we can take, if we are worried that children are at immediate serious risk, then we will take immediate action to keep all children safe.

If we continue to have reasonable grounds for concern, and believe that further assessment is needed, we must move on to stage 2 of the substantiation assessment (see page 7). This involves getting the PSAA's response to the allegations.

## Other people involved in the CASP

A witness can be either an adult or a child who has information relevant to the disclosure. They may:

- have seen an event
- or
- know something about the disclosure

## The substantiation assessment

During the substantiation assessment we examine and evaluate if allegations of child abuse are:

### 1. **Founded:**

This means we have established, on the balance of probabilities, that child abuse did occur. (Balance of probabilities is complicated as it looks at many things and it is based on how likely or unlikely it is that child abuse happened.) If the allegation is founded the social worker decides if the PSAA poses a risk to children.

### 2. **Unfounded:**

This means we have not established, on the balance of probabilities, that child abuse has occurred.

## This substantiation assessment process includes the following:

### Screening

We review the referral of child abuse and decide if we will use our CASP process.

### Preliminary enquiry

We find out the main facts and decide if we need to do more assessment.

### Stage 1 - the Person Making a Disclosure (PMD)

We meet you - you are the Person Making a Disclosure (PMD).

We also meet any witnesses.

We decide if there are reasonable grounds for concern and if further assessment is required. If so we will move to stage 2.

### Stage 2 - the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA)

If we move to stage 2:

- We give the PSAA all relevant information in writing, including your allegations.
- We will carefully consider any response from the PSAA.
- We will try to meet any witnesses the PSAA identifies.

The PSAA may ask us to ask you questions. If the PSAA wishes to have questions put to you, this request will be considered and we will discuss with you the best way of having questions put.

If this happens, it is a matter for you to decide if you wish to have further questions put to you by or on behalf of the PSAA. If you would like to talk more about this the CASP social worker will meet with you to discuss this in more detail.

### Outcome

At the end of the substantiation assessment, we will reach one of two outcomes.

#### 1. **Founded**

#### 2. **Unfounded**

(We explained these earlier)

### Provisional and final conclusion

When we have decided the outcome, we will give a provisional conclusion to the PSAA.

- We will ask the PSAA to respond.
- If the PSAA responds, we will assess this response.
- We will then come to a final outcome on the child abuse allegations.

Important: After this, the PSAA may ask for a review.

## Review

If the final conclusion is founded, the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA) may ask for a review within 14 days of that conclusion.

Two review panel members do this review. They are independent and from outside Tusla. That means they examine our work and the 'founded outcome' that we reached again to make sure we took all the steps we should have. They do not fully reassess the allegations. If there is a review, we will share your information with the review panel members.

Tusla will provide you with a Data Protection Notice which will tell you how Tusla will use your information. We will inform you of the outcome of the review as soon as we know.

## Assessing risk and informing relevant people

We will assess any risk posed by the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA) to children. After this, to keep children safe, we may need to inform relevant third parties. We would give a relevant third party the least information needed to protect any children at risk. Third parties may include:

- parents

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- family members

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- employers

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- community organisations.

## Supports to help you

There are many people and services available to help you.

### HSE National Counselling Service

T: 1800 700 700, or you can visit, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling-service/contact-us/>

### CARI

CARI is an organisation providing special support to children and families affected by abuse.

T: 0818 924567 (01 830 8529)

E: [hello@cari.ie](mailto:hello@cari.ie)

[www.cari.ie](http://www.cari.ie)

### Rape Crisis Centre National 24 Hour Helpline

T: 1800 778 888

### One in Four

One in Four aims to provide a safe place for men and women to explore the impact childhood sexual abuse has had on their lives.

T: 01 662 4070

## Further information

If you would like to view more information about the Tusla Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure, it is available at:

[www.tusla.ie/CASP](http://www.tusla.ie/CASP)

The procedure is written for our trained staff, so it is very detailed and long. If you need help, one of our social workers will answer any questions you may have.

If you need any general information or wish to report child abuse, please contact your local Tusla Office. Contact numbers are also available at: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).

Tusla will give you with a Data Protection Notice which will tell you how we will use your information.

### Tusla feedback and complaints procedure

If you wish to give feedback or make a complaint you can contact:

E: [tellus@tusla.ie](mailto:tellus@tusla.ie)

P: 01 771 8500 (Call 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

<https://portal.tusla.ie/feedback>

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