

**Young People**

**TÚSLA**

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency

# Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)

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**A leaflet for young people  
who are alleged to have  
abused a child**

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**We understand that having allegations of child abuse make against you can be very upsetting for you and others in your life. We have written this leaflet to help you understand what we do and what you can expect when we assess these allegations.**

This leaflet explains:

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

## 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. We also want to make sure that your right to fair procedure is respected. As such, we advise you to get legal advice if you can before you meet with us. We tell you more about this on page 5.

## 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’.

## What does ‘making a disclosure’ mean?

Making a disclosure of child abuse is when a person tells another person (for example, their therapist or teacher) that they were abused.

## What happens when a child makes a disclosure of child abuse?

A child can contact us themselves to disclose child abuse. Child abuse can also be referred to us by adults – a child might tell an adult like parents, friends or teachers that they have been abused. The adult can then refer this information to Tusla.

When we receive referrals of child abuse, we may use the Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) to assess the allegations.

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

The CASP is what we may use to assess allegations of child abuse. The CASP helps us to identify any potential risk of harm to children. It also helps us to find out if we need to tell other people about these risks so we can keep these children safe.

We aim to treat you and 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.

**A witness:** 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

## Legal advice

We recommend that you look for legal advice when you receive the communication from us telling you that an allegation has been made against you. We encourage you to bring your legal advisor to any meetings with Tusla.

If you do not have a legal advisor, then you may bring another support person with you to any meeting with Tusla.

We cannot make you cooperate with a substantiation assessment so any cooperation from you is voluntary. If you decide not to engage in the substantiation assessment, then we will reach an outcome (decision) on the allegations without your input.

## 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 the PMD and any witnesses.

We decide if there are reasonable grounds for concern and if further assessment is required.

If we decide there is reasonable grounds for concern we go to Stage 2.

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

If we move to Stage 2, we will put the allegations to you and give you all relevant information in writing when we meet you.

We will carefully consider any response from you.

We will try to meet any witnesses you might identify.

### 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 reached an outcome, we will give you a provisional conclusion.

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

## You can ask for a review of a 'founded' decision

If the final conclusion is founded, you can ask Tusla 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 all the relevant information, including details about you, with the review panel members.

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

## Keeping you and other children safe and telling other people

We will assess if there is a potential risk to children. If necessary, we will take immediate action to keep you and all children safe.

We may need to tell other people about the risk to keep children safe. These other people are known as 'third parties'. We will give other people only the information needed to keep you and other children safe. Other people may include:

- parents

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- family members

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- employers

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- community organisations.

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## Supports to help you

Having allegations of child abuse made against you can be very upsetting.

Remember, children's safety is our main concern in Tusla. This includes keeping you safe. There are lots of support services available and we can help you to make sure that you get the support that you need.

### CARI (if you are under 12 years old)

CARI is an organisation providing special support to people affected by abuse.

T: 0818 924567 (01 830 8529)

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

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

### National Inter-Agency Prevention Programme (NIAPP)

NIAPP is a Tusla community-based treatment programme for young people aged between 13-18 years who have shown sexually harmful behaviour.

T: 01 415 0534

## 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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