

Young People

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)

**What we do when
using the CASP**

Tusla is the Child and Family Agency

In this leaflet we explain what happens when someone tells us that a child has been abused and we need to use the CASP. When someone tells, for example, a teacher, therapist or us (Tusla), that a child has been abused, this is called ‘making a disclosure of child abuse’.

Sometimes, we use a process called the Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) to assess allegations of child abuse that are reported to us.

This leaflet explains what happens during the CASP process. It also tells you:

- about Tusla,
- how CASP helps us to assess disclosures of child abuse, and
- where to find support.

We understand that disclosing child abuse can be a very difficult and upsetting thing for someone to do. This leaflet can help you understand what to expect when someone makes a disclosure (tells us about abuse). It tells you what we do when we receive this information, and we need to use the CASP.

About us – Tusla – Child and Family Agency

Who are we

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)

Part of the job of An Garda Síochána is to protect children. Child abuse is a crime. The Gardaí carry out any criminal investigations that are needed to follow up on allegations of child abuse. We must tell An Garda Síochána about any allegations of child abuse that are made to us. An Garda Síochána must tell us about any allegations of child abuse that are made to them.

We meet An Garda Síochána when they are investigating an allegation of child abuse, and we agree next steps. An allegation is an unproven statement declaring that something has happened.

Types of abuse

Allegations of child abuse can include:

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

How to disclose child abuse

If someone discloses child abuse, it means that they tell another person that they or someone else was abused as a child.

They may have told an adult, like a parent, foster carer or teacher, that they have been abused. The adult can then tell us about it.

You can contact us yourself to disclose child abuse.

What happens when you make a disclosure of child abuse?

When someone tells us they were abused, we may use the Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) to assess the allegations.

If we think that a child is at immediate serious risk, we will act straight away to make sure they are safe.

How we assess disclosures – Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP)

Our Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) is the process we may use when assessing allegations of child abuse. The CASP helps us to identify any potential risk of harm to children. It also helps us to identify when we need to tell another person or organisation that a child is at risk.

People involved in the CASP

PMD – Person Making a

Disclosure: This is the person – either a child or an adult – who discloses child abuse.

PSAA – Person Subject of Abuse Allegations:

This is the person – either a child or an adult – who has had allegations of child abuse made against them.

A witness:

This person can be either an adult or a child who has information about the disclosure. Witnesses have an important role in helping us to assess allegations of child abuse and risk of harm to children. They may:

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

Legal advice for a Person Subject of Abuse Allegations

We recommend that you look for legal advice if 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 take part in the substantiation assessment, then we will reach an outcome (decision) on the allegations without your input.

What happens during a substantiation assessment?

When we meet you as the person making a disclosure and talk to other people about you, this is called an assessment. You do not have to meet our Child Abuse Substantiation Procedure (CASP) social worker if you don't want to. It is up to you and your parents or carers to decide. If you decide to meet our CASP social worker, you will always be able to bring an adult you trust with you to the meeting.

During a substantiation assessment our CASP social worker may need to meet other people in your life like:

- Your brothers or sisters
- Your parents
- Other family members
- Other people that might know you.

Questions from the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA)

The Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA) may ask us to ask questions to the person making a disclosure (PMD), and we will consider this request.

The person making a disclosure can decide if they want to answer these questions from the PSAA, or not.

If you want to talk more about this, the CASP social worker will meet you to discuss it in more detail.

Keeping children safe and telling other people

Our CASP social workers may need to tell other people about you to make sure you and other children are safe.

Please know that we will give other people only the information they need to keep you and other children safe. Our CASP social worker will tell the Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA)

what was said about them and who said it.

Other people the CASP social worker may tell may include:

- Parents
- Family members
- Employers
- Community organisations.

Outcome

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

1. Founded

This means that based on the information gathered during the assessment that child abuse has occurred.

2. Unfounded

This means we have not established that child abuse has occurred.

Review of final conclusion

Only a Person Subject of Abuse Allegations (PSAA) can ask for a 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.

What happens during the review?

Two review panel members do this review. They are independent of Tusla. This means they are external to Tusla and are not Tusla staff. They examine our work and the 'founded outcome' that we reached again to make sure we took all the steps we should have taken.

They do not fully reassess the allegations. If there is a review, we share your information with the review panel members.

We will tell you the outcome of the review as soon as we know. A review can take a number of months to complete.

Supports available

Telling people about child abuse 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 for children. We can help you to make sure that you get the support that you need.

CARI (Children at Risk in Ireland)

CARI provides special support to children and families affected by abuse.

T: 0818 924567 (01 830 8529)

E: hello@cari.ie

www.cari.ie

Rape Crisis Centre National 24 Hour Helpline

T: 1800 778 888

ISPCC (Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

T: 01 234 2000

E: info@ispcc.ie

www.ispcc.ie

Samaritans

T: 116 123

E: jo@samaritans.ie

www.samaritans.org

Barnardos

T: 01 453 0355

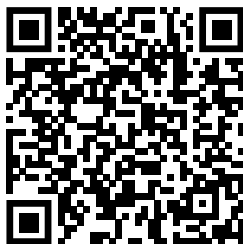
E: info@barnardos.ie

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

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.

There is an animation that explains CASP if you would like to watch it. The animation is available at:



A YouTube video explaining the CASP is also available at www.tusla.ie/CASP

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.

Data protection

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

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

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

We would like to acknowledge the feedback on the leaflets from five groups of young people in the Cavan and Monaghan Area:

- Monaghan Youth Activists
- Foróige Children in Care Group
- CAMRY Cavan
- CAMRY Monaghan
- ISPCC Children in the Community

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