



## Early Years Child Protection Programme December 5, 2017

### Mandatory Reporting and Child Safeguarding Statements – New Requirements

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There are new legal obligations for early years service providers in the area of child protection and welfare. This article looks at what they are and what they mean for early years services.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse concerns and the requirement to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement are about to become law. From December 11, 2017, when the Children First Act 2015 is fully commenced, there will be new legal requirements in the area of child protection for professionals and services with a key role in the lives of children and families. Early Years services and the people who work in them will have new legal obligations under the act.

<b>On December 11, 2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Mandated Persons acquire new legal obligations to report child abuse concerns</li><li>- Relevant services are required to have a Child Safeguarding Statement – but have 3 months to comply</li><li>- Revised Children First Guidance &amp; other support documentation comes into operation.</li></ul>
<b>On March 11, 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Relevant services have until this date to publish their Child Safeguarding Statement</li></ul>

#### Mandated Persons

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. All persons carrying on or running a registered pre-school service and all who are employed in them as childcare staff are Mandated Persons. Mandated Persons will have a legal obligation to report child protection concerns over a certain threshold to Tusla.

**You are a mandated person if you are:**

-A person carrying on a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991.

- A childcare staff member employed in a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991

**Child Safeguarding Statement**

A Child Safeguarding Statement is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. It includes a risk assessment, measures to manage any risks and a number of mandatory safeguarding policies and procedures. Early years services (including preschools and school age services) who employ at least one other person will have a legal obligation to publish a Child Safeguarding Statement. Services will have 3 months from December 11, 2017 to comply.

If you are a pre-school or a school-age service who employs more than one person you are legally required to have a Child Safeguarding Statement.

**New Children First National Guidance**

*Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children* has been updated to include these new provisions and contains important information for professionals working with children and organisations providing services to children. Everyone working in an early years service should read and be familiar with the new Guidance document. All early years services will be provided with a copy over the coming weeks.

The Children First Guidance, the e-learning course and a number of other useful resources can be found at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

These new requirements are a further, welcome step towards keeping children safe from harm by ensuring that all child protection concerns are passed to Tusla and that organisations providing services to children have taken all the measures necessary to protect the children in their care.

**More information**

- The Early Years Child Protection Programme will run regional briefing sessions in early 2018 on the new requirements.

- Tusla have launched an e-learning programme, Introduction to Children First, an interactive course that provides introductory information on the new legal requirements and it recommended that all staff and providers of early years services complete it. It can be accessed at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)
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