

# Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes

---

Children  
First

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency





# Contents

Introduction	1
Tusla e-learning programme on Children First	2
Organisational safeguarding policies and procedures: child safeguarding awareness and training	2
Suggested outline for training programmes	5
1. Introduction to Children First	5
2. Implementing Children First in our service	7
Delivery and evaluation of training programmes	9
Principle 1: Essential programme content	9
Principle 2: Effective delivery	10
Principle 3: Quality assurance mechanisms	10

# Introduction

This document sets out guidance to assist your organisation in identifying and achieving specific child protection and welfare training for staff (as identified in *Children First: National Guidance*).

An integral aspect of the implementation of your organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures is the articulation of your organisation's responsibility for ensuring that your organisation identifies:

- ⇒ What training your staff and volunteers need;
- ⇒ That staff and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate child protection and welfare information and training.

*Children First: National Guidance* provides the following guidance in regard to the training of staff:

- ⇒ Your organisation should provide all staff members and volunteers with good-quality information on the recognition and reporting of child protection and welfare concerns;
- ⇒ Training should also include clear information about the role of the statutory agencies with primary responsibility in child protection and welfare, namely Tusla – Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána;
- ⇒ If your organisation has employees who are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, you should also ensure that training specifically on the statutory responsibilities of mandated persons under the Act is made available to them;
- ⇒ If your organisation has a nominated designated liaison person or deputy designated liaison person, you should ensure that they receive adequate child protection and welfare information and training to enable them to undertake this role.

## Tusla e-learning programme on Children First

Tusla has developed an e-learning training programme called 'Introduction to Children First'. This can be accessed through the Tusla ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) or Department of Children and Youth Affairs ([www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)) websites and covers topics including:

- ⇒ Recognising and reporting child abuse;
- ⇒ The role of mandated persons;
- ⇒ The responsibilities of organisations working with children to safeguard children;
- ⇒ The role of designated liaison persons.

It can be completed in approximately 90 minutes.

The e-learning training programme includes an assessment. Anyone who successfully completes the programme and passes the assessment can download a certificate of completion.

The e-learning training programme may also be a useful tool for organisations in pre-induction or induction processes when recruiting staff or volunteers.

## Organisational safeguarding policies and procedures: child safeguarding awareness and training

Your child safeguarding policies and procedures are written by your organisation to support the implementation of the Children First Act 2015 and *Children First: National Guidance*.

All staff within your organisation will require appropriate training, taking cognisance of their roles. The following are examples of some of the roles staff may hold and the knowledge they require.

## Management

Your organisation's leaders are critical to the embedding of organisational policies and therefore managers need to be satisfied that:

- ⇒ All staff or volunteers who may potentially be in a position to identify a child protection or welfare concern know the procedures they are required to adhere to;
- ⇒ Their direct reports and all other line managers are aware of the appropriate procedure to follow if any service user experiences harm as a result of using the service and/or an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff;
- ⇒ The named designated liaison person/s is/are fully supported by the management structure to achieve the remit of this role;
- ⇒ If the service is subject to inspection, that all staff are aware of and are achieving the relevant standards as specified with regard to the protection and welfare of children;
- ⇒ Where their organisation is in receipt of funding that it meets the required expectations of the funder regarding adherence to all appropriate aspects articulated in *Children First: National Guidance* and the Children First Act 2015.

Management must ensure that staff and volunteers are released from duty, where necessary, for appropriate child protection and welfare training and to gain certification to evidence their attendance.

Management also hold the responsibility for identifying processes to gather the data and records of attendance at training programmes and the certification of their staff and volunteers for attendance at training.

## Administrative staff

It may be the case that administrative staff are not involved directly in work with children and families, however, many administrative staff have occasion to speak to or engage with service users and therefore may receive information regarding the welfare and safety of a child. Additionally, administrative staff

may type reports or record/minute the decisions made by management or staff in regard to the organisational response to child protection and welfare issues. Given these functions, it is essential that such administrative staff are fully aware of the organisation's policies relating to child protection and welfare and that they adhere to these.

---

### *Staff who work directly with children*

Any staff member working directly with children is ideally placed to identify instances where children may be in need of protection. As a result, any such staff member is required to be able to recognise, respond to and, if necessary, report their concerns, observation or disclosures to Tusla. They also require training on their organisation's expectations of them regarding safeguarding policies and procedures.

---

### *Staff who work directly with adults*

Staff who work directly with adults are equally ideally placed to identify if an adult they are working with poses any risk to children (such risk may be circumstantial or wilful). This group of staff may be able to support the adult to engage with suggested interventions to protect the child and therefore they require training to recognise, respond to and, if necessary, report risk to Tusla. They also require training on the expectations of them under the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures.

---

### *Staff who provide ancillary services to service users*

Other support staff (including but not limited to porters, canteen staff, gardening staff, etc.) need to be aware of their obligations to follow your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to the protection and welfare of children.

# Suggested outline for training programmes

While the format of training programmes is a matter for organisations themselves, Tusla here suggests content for two training programmes to meet the needs of staff and volunteers. The suggested programmes are **Introduction to Children First** and **Implementing Children First in our Service**.

---

## 1. Introduction to Children First

Please note that Tusla's e-learning training programme 'Introduction to Children First' meets the learning outcomes listed below and is available on the Tusla website, [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this programme, learners will have:

1. Knowledge of the Children First Act 2015 and *Children First: National Guidance*;
2. Understanding of the role of Tusla and An Garda Síochána in protecting children;
3. Understanding of the roles and responsibilities of mandated persons as assigned under legislation;
4. Understanding of the role and responsibilities of designated liaison persons;
5. Knowledge of the types and features of abuse;
6. Knowledge of the factors which may make children more vulnerable to harm;
7. Guidance in responding to a disclosure of abuse from a child;
8. Reviewed the reasonable grounds for concern and the thresholds for reporting;
9. Knowledge of the importance of confidentiality and record-keeping;
10. Knowledge of how to report child protection and welfare concerns.

### Resources available to support this programme

Children First Act 2015 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) Department of Children and Youth Affairs [https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildren\\_First%2FChildrenFirstGuidance.htm&mn=chie3g&nID=2](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildren_First%2FChildrenFirstGuidance.htm&mn=chie3g&nID=2)

*A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

*Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

*Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

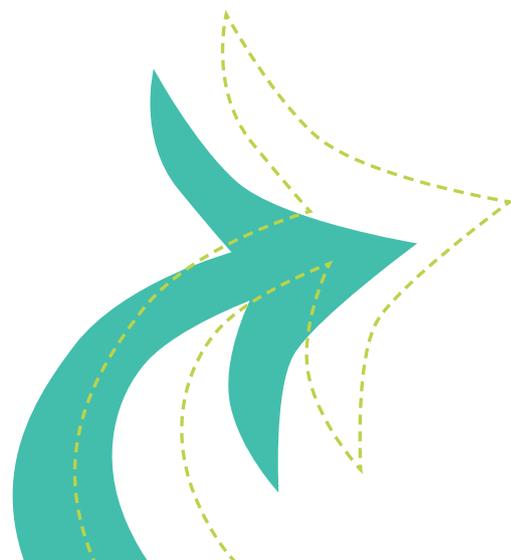
*'Introduction to Children First' e-learning training programme* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/children-first-e-learning-programme>

Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)

Tusla website, [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

### Time required to deliver this programme

Given the varying abilities of learners and the contexts in which different organisations operate, it is difficult to be definitive about the time required to deliver this programme. Organisations may choose to use a number of formats for delivery, e.g. e-learning, briefing sessions, experiential face-to-face delivery, etc. If delivered as a face-to-face interactive/experiential training programme, delivery may take between five and six hours.



.....

## 2. Implementing Children First in our service

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this programme, learners will have:

1. Reviewed specific staff and volunteer roles in recognising and reporting child protection and welfare concerns under *Children First: National Guidance* and the Children First Act 2015;
2. Reviewed the service's safeguarding policies and procedures for the protection and welfare of children;
3. Understanding of staff members' roles and responsibilities as mandated persons;
4. Understanding of staff members' roles and responsibilities as designated liaison persons;
5. Knowledge of the organisation's procedure when reporting child protection concerns;
6. Knowledge of the organisation's policies and procedures for recording-keeping;
7. Knowledge of the standards of behaviour required under the organisation's code of behaviour;
8. Knowledge of the standards the inspecting bodies require of the service in regard to the protection and welfare of children (if required).

### Resources required to support this programme

Copies of organisation's own safeguarding policies and procedures

Children First Act 2015 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>

*Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) Department of Children and Youth Affairs [https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildren\\_First%2FChildrenFirstGuidance.htm&mn=chie3g&nID=2](https://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildren_First%2FChildrenFirstGuidance.htm&mn=chie3g&nID=2)

*A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

*Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

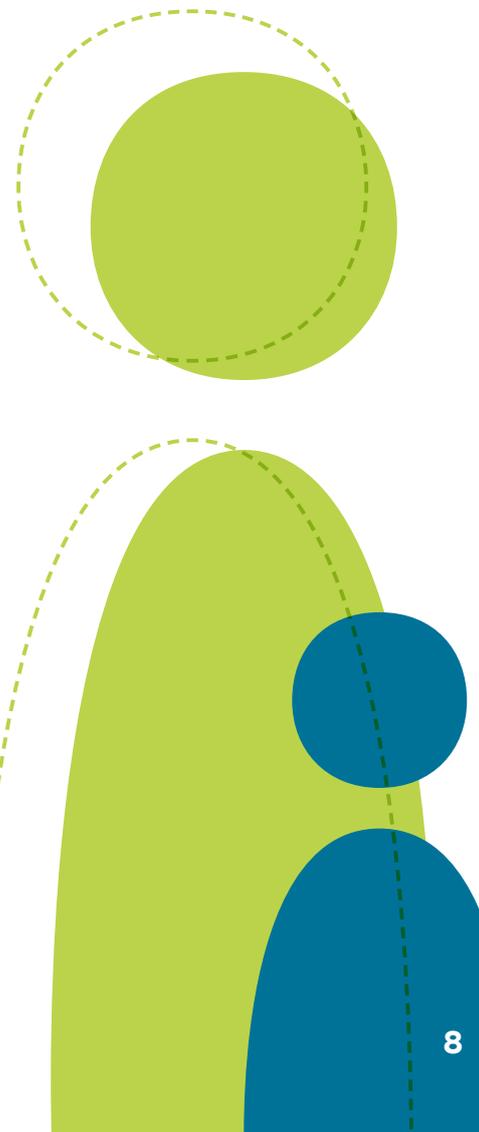
*Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff* (2017) Tusla – Child and Family Agency <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>

Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, [www.dcy.gov.ie](http://www.dcy.gov.ie)

Tusla website, [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

### Time required to deliver this programme

Given the varying abilities of learners and the contexts in which different organisations operate, it is difficult to be definitive about the time required to deliver this programme. Organisations may choose to use a number of formats for delivery, e.g. e-learning, briefing sessions, experiential face-to-face delivery, etc. If delivered as a face-to-face interactive/experiential training programme, delivery may take between three and five hours.





# Delivery and evaluation of training programmes

Some organisations will have internal training departments with training and development staff assigned to the regular delivery of training to their staff. Some organisations will have identified staff who, due to practice experience or other appropriate reasons, will have the ability to deliver programmes to their colleagues.

In the absence of such internal resources, some organisations will procure/ commission external trainers to deliver programmes to their staff.

In all cases the following principles will guide best practice.

---

## Principle 1: Essential programme content

Best practice recommends that in meeting this principle organisations should ensure:

- ⇒ The programme content is consistent with the learning needs identified by your staff;
- ⇒ All content and material is derived from current research, policy, legislation and practice guidance;
- ⇒ Any such programme is updated in line with themes from participant feedback and emerging research, evidence and developments;
- ⇒ Any such programme will make reference to the self-care and sensitivity of participants.

.....

## Principle 2: Effective delivery

Best practice recommends that in meeting this principle organisations should ensure:

1. Interactive delivery methods are utilised, incorporating appropriate adult learning theory/styles;
2. Messages and information provided are consistent with *Children First: National Guidance*;
3. Delivery is clear, accurate and relevant to participants' roles and responsibilities;
4. Information is linked to practice issues;
5. Delivery is professional, inclusive and respectful;
6. Mechanisms for evaluation of training delivery are in place.

.....

## Principle 3: Quality assurance mechanisms

Best practice recommends that in meeting this principle organisations should be satisfied that:

1. Content and delivery of the training programme is line with principles 1 and 2 above;
2. Appropriate training in record-keeping mechanisms are developed and operating effectively;
3. Learning outcomes are consistently achieved by participants;
4. Certificates are only issued to participants who have attended the training in full;
5. Evaluation systems for programme content are in place;
6. Evaluation systems for programme delivery are in place.

**In summary:** Responsibility for assessing the competency and meeting the training needs of staff in regard to safeguarding children rests with the management of individual organisations. This document provides guidance and can be used as a benchmark by organisations to either develop their own child protection and welfare training or to review training programmes which they access for their staff.

Children  
First

TÚSLA  
An Ghníomhaireacht um  
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach  
Child and Family Agency