

Responding to a child who discloses abuse – suggested guidelines in accordance with the Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with these disclosures.

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only. **Do not ask leading questions**
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible
- Treat the information confidentially, subject to the requirements of Children First Guidance and legislation

Retrospective Disclosures

Some adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when an adult attends counselling, or is being treated for a psychiatric or health problem. If you are, for example, a counsellor or health professional, and you receive a disclosure from a client that they were abused as a child, you should report this information to Tusla, as the alleged abuser may pose a current risk to children. If, as a mandated person, you provide counselling, it is recommended that you let your clients know, before the counselling starts, that if any child protection issues arise and the alleged perpetrator is identifiable, you must pass the information on to Tusla. If your client does not feel able to participate in any investigation, Tusla may be seriously constrained in their ability to respond to the retrospective allegation. The reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015 apply only to

information that you, as a mandated person, received or became aware of since the Act came into force, whether the harm occurred before or after that point. However, if you have a reasonable concern about past abuse, where information came to your attention before the Act and there is a possible continuing risk to children, you should report it to Tusla under this Guidance.

Safe Management of Staff and activities

Recruitment & Selection

Mohill Family Support Centre CLG has a written policy and procedure in relation to the recruitment and selection of employees. Mohill Family Support Centre CLG ensures best practice in the recruitment of staff/ volunteers/trainees through the following:

- Recruitment of employees all positions will be interviewed for.
- Existing employees who apply for an internal position will be treated on an equal basis once all criteria/requirement of the post is met.
- A person specification and job description is be compiled prior to advertisement of all posts.
- The person specification will contain details of experience, skills or other attributes required to carry out the job.
- The job description will detail the duties, tasks and responsibilities for the job.
- Advertisements will be placed for the position.
- Applicants will be forwarded an application form, job/person description and an information note about the organisation.
- The Coordinator and Board of Directors of Mohill Family Support Centre CLG will review the applications and short list candidates for interview.
- The interview panel will, where possible, will have a gender balance. All candidates will be asked the same core questions. Interview notes may be taken and score sheets will be kept for each candidate.

Reference Checking and Garda Vetting

- References will be taken up for the agreed candidate and they are required to complete a Garda Vetting Form.
- Phone references are taken and a written confirmation of the reference agreed with the referee. Once all checks have been completed the selected candidate will be offered the position and a contract of employment will be issued.
- Successful candidates are required to submit a validation of their qualifications and a copy of a photo id for their personal file.
- All information and notes from the process are kept on file for a minimum of 12 months.