

complainants. It requires full commitment from all members of staff and management. **See Mohill Family Support Centre s CLG Complaints Policy & Procedure Procedure for allegation of abuse against a member of staff**

If an allegation of abuse is received, it will be assessed promptly and carefully by Mohill Family Support Centre CLG Staff Liaison Committee. Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee should be based on an opinion formed 'reasonably and in good faith'. It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the HSE Children and Family Agency, without delay. This decision should be based on reasonable grounds for concern.

- This will require a dual process, the DLP will follow the reporting procedures regarding the incident in relation to the child and the Coordinator will follow HR procedures. If the allegation is against the coordinator the Chairperson of Mohill Family Support Centre CLG will follow the procedure.
- The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. Mohill Family Support Centre CLG should as a matter of urgency take any necessary protective measures. These measures should be proportionate to the level of risk and should not unreasonably penalise the employee/volunteer, financially or otherwise, unless necessary to protect children. Where protective measures penalise the employee/volunteer, it is important that early consideration be given to the case.
- Any action taken should be guided by agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract and the rules of natural justice. The Chairperson of Mohill Family Support Centre CLG will be informed about the allegation as soon as possible.
- When Mohill Family Support Centre CLG becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by an employee during the execution of that employee's duties, Mohill Family Support Centre CLG should inform the employee/volunteer of the following:
 - (i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her;
 - (ii) the nature of the allegation.
- The employee/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond. Mohill Family Support Centre CLG should note the response and pass on this information if making a formal report to the Tusla Children and Family Agency.
- The DLP/Coordinator will take care to ensure that actions taken will not undermine or frustrate any investigations/assessments conducted by the HSE Children and Family Agency or An Garda Síochána.

Mohill Family Support Centre CLG will maintain a close liaison with the statutory authorities to achieve this.

- The Staff Liaison Committee DLP/Coordinator should be notified of the outcome of an investigation and /or assessment. This will assist them in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the employee/volunteer.
- The parent will be informed if there is an allegation against a staff member in relation to their child. The parent will to be told from the outset, including if a report is being sent to Tusla Child and Family Agency. The DLP will follow the reporting procedure in relation to the child, and keep the parent involved and updated

Confidentiality

- The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of the staff in statutory and voluntary organisations involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. **It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.**
- All information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect should be shared **on 'a need to know' basis** in the interests of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with a child and family should make this clear to all parties involved, although they can be assured that all information will be handled taking full account of legal requirements.
- Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. They are not intended to limit or prevent the exchange of information between different professional staff with a responsibility for ensuring the protection and welfare of children. The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.

Recording

- Records should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act, within an agreed HR filing system and be available only to those directly involved and within the confines of the obligations and duties of the Data Protection Act, 2016.