

Children First National Guidance 2011 Presentation (Slide 1)

Welcome to the Tusla Children First Information Session. This session is designed to give organisations the basic information to understand their roles and responsibilities as outlined in *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011*.

Services Provided (Slide 2)

Under the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Tusla, Child and Family Agency is now the dedicated State agency responsible for improving well-being and outcomes for children. It has been established in response to recent reports on child protection failings and inconsistencies in service provision. The aim of Tusla is to bring a dedicated focus to child protection, family support and other key children's services. Tusla services include those that aim to:

1. prevent problems arising;
2. identify problems and supports at an early stage;
3. assist children and families in managing serious problems requiring specialist interventions.

Tusla has approximately 4,000 staff and the contact numbers of Social Work Offices have not changed.

On 1st January 2014, Tusla assumed service responsibility for the following range of services:

- Child Welfare and Protection Services, including family support services;
- existing Family Support Agency responsibilities;
- existing Educational Welfare Services;
- Pre-School Inspection Services;
- Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence services.

Aim of the Presentation (Slide 3)

1. 'Safeguarding' and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

'Child protection' is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect and promote the health, welfare and development of children.

2. This session is designed to provide basic information to help organisations begin the process of compliance with Children First Guidance. It does not replace the need for the organisation to develop a child protection and welfare policy and ensure staff receive training. During the session, you can click on links to other sections of the Tusla website that will provide more detailed information.

Setting the Context (Slide 4)

Inquiries into child abuse

The *Children First National Guidance, Our Duty to Care*, the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* and the *Interim Guide for the Development of Child Protection and Welfare Policy, Procedures and Practices* have all been informed by recommendations of the inquiries into cases of child abuse in Ireland over the last 25 years.

The key messages from these inquiries are explored in greater detail in the Tusla Child Protection & Safeguarding awareness: Foundation Training.

Principles of best practice

Children First sets out a number of key principles for best practice in promoting child protection and welfare concerns. We will focus on 6 key principles.

Legislation

There are number of key pieces of legislation that underpin best practice in child protection and welfare. The information that is provided gives a brief overview of relevant legislation in Ireland. It is not legal opinion or advice. It may be useful for you to seek further information on key legislation relevant to your service and role within child protection and welfare.

Policy and procedures

It is also important that everyone is aware of key policies and procedures, both national and local.

Key Principles of Best Practice in Child Protection and Welfare

(Slide 5)

Point 1: The welfare of the child is paramount. This is also referred to as the 'paramountcy principle', which is the key foundation principle of the Child Care Act 1991. Implementation of this principle means being 'child-centred'. Children's interests and welfare are the primary focus in planning and delivery of services.

Point 2: Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, children should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where there are concerns about a child's welfare, there should be opportunities provided for their views to be heard independently of their parents/carers.

Point 3: Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.

Point 4: Early intervention and support should be available to promote the welfare of children and families, particularly where they are vulnerable and at risk of not receiving adequate care and protection.

Point 5: A child's gender, religion, culture and developmental stage should be considered when taking protective action.

Point 6: Professionals/agencies working with adults who, for a range of reasons, may have serious difficulties meeting their children's basic needs for safety and security should always **consider the impact of their adult client/patient's behaviour on a child** and act in the child's best interests.

Legislation (Slide 6)

Tusla website (www.tusla.ie) for further information.

Child Care Act 1991

The Child Care Act 1991 focuses on the child and the promotion of the child's welfare. It raised the age of a child up to the age of 18 years, unless they are or have been married. It also places a statutory duty on Tusla to identify children who are not receiving adequate care and protection, to promote their welfare and to provide child care and family support services. The Act also places a statutory duty on the Gardaí to protect children and, under Section 12 of the Act, they can remove a child to a place of safety.

Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

This Act is designed to ensure that there are no barriers for persons wishing to report a concern about child abuse or welfare to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

Criminal Justice Act 2006 – Reckless Endangerment

Section 176 of the Act creates an offence where a person who has authority or control over a child or over a person who has abused a child intentionally or recklessly endangers the child by causing or permitting the child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of **serious harm** or **sexual abuse or failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child** from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation.

Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

This Act establishes in Irish law an offence of withholding information from the Gardaí in relation to specified offences committed against a child or vulnerable person. The Act also provides for a number of defences against a charge of withholding information. As this piece of legislation is very complex in nature, we would recommend organisations get legal advice on the implications of it for their own organisation.

Freedom of Information Act 2014 and Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003

These Acts give rights to individuals to access their own records and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased. There are implications for anyone recording data to ensure that it is fairly collected, accurate, kept for lawful purposes and not disclosed inappropriately.

National Vetting Bureau Act 2012

This Act was enacted in December 2012, but has not yet been commenced (come into effect). The Act makes it mandatory for persons working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted, whereas at present this is done on the basis of a voluntary code. It will also create offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

Children First Bill 2014

This Bill has not been passed into law and therefore currently has no legal status. It is designed to strengthen the safeguarding and protection of children by putting key elements of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children on a statutory footing.

Policy Context (Slide 7)

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)

This 2011 version of Children First supersedes the previous version of 1999 and should be the only one in use. It is the reference point for practice and policy development. It applies to all those working in a voluntary or paid capacity with children and families, and outlines their roles and responsibilities in relation to recognising and responding to child protection and welfare concerns.

Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook (2011)

This is a reference document designed to complement Children First and support skilled professionals in Tusla and allied agencies. It provides detailed practice guidance for staff in allied organisations on recognising, reporting and recording abuse and welfare concerns. Although it is primarily written for Tusla staff, it contains a wealth of information that is useful for allied agencies, for example, in-depth information on neglect, risk factors and a checklist for multi-agency contribution to assessments.

Our Duty to Care – The principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people (2002)

This offers specific guidance to the community and voluntary sectors on the promotion of practices that safeguard children. The document includes information on the correct steps to be taken if child abuse is suspected, witnessed or disclosed. It also contains information on developing safe recruitment procedures and policies. It should be read in conjunction with Children First and the Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook.

Your own service's child protection and welfare policy

Children First directs all organisations that provide a service to children and families to have an up-to-date child protection and welfare policy that is consistent with its guidance.

Recognising Abuse & Welfare Concerns (Slide 8)

In the next section, we will look at:

- the definitions of child welfare and abuse;
- Risk factors that may heighten the level of concern;
- Additional vulnerabilities pertains to particular groups of children who are more vulnerable to abuse than others.

Percentage of cases reported to HSE (Slide 9)

A large percentage of cases reported to Tusla (53%) are identified as 'welfare' concerns.

It is important to note these are cases that have been categorised after the initial assessment by Tusla Social Work Offices. Between neglect and welfare, they make up 69% of all cases reported in 2013.

The difference between welfare and neglect is often a professional judgement made by the social work staff based on a number of factors, such as the level of severity or frequency of some concerns.

The next slide contains the definition of a child welfare concern from the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook*.

Child Welfare Concern (Slide 10)

A child welfare concern is when a child has unmet needs, but is not at ongoing risk of significant harm. Some situations will require social work intervention, while others will receive support services based in the community.

Many welfare concerns do not involve the deliberate mistreatment of a child, but rather relate to factors in the child's life or family that impact on the child's well-being, safety, security and/or development.

Types of Child Abuse (Slide 11)

Children First identifies 4 categories of child abuse. The definitions of child abuse within the document are the agreed national definitions. Everyone working with children and families needs to be aware of these definitions and of the signs and symptoms of abuse. It is important that workers from different disciplines and agencies have a shared understanding of what constitutes child abuse and a common language to communicate concerns about children. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

Neglect (Slide 12)

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways *over a period of time* rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

A distinction can be made between 'wilful' neglect and 'circumstantial' neglect. *Wilful neglect* generally incorporates a direct and deliberate deprivation by a parent/carer of a child's most basic needs, e.g. withdrawal of food, shelter, clothing, contact with other. There is a criminal aspect to wilful neglect and a person can be charged for this.

Circumstantial neglect more often may be due to parental stress/inability to cope by parents or carers. Consider not only the parent's role, but also the societal and environmental factors contributing to the parent's inability to provide for the basic needs of the child, such as social isolation, poor housing, low levels of employment and poverty (*Children Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook*, Section 1.5).

Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is *significant* is determined by the child's health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age (*Children First*, Section 2.2.2). Tusla Social Work Departments have the responsibility to assess whether a child has reached the threshold of significant harm.

Emotional Abuse (Slide 13)

Unless other forms of abuse are present, emotional abuse is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Like neglect, emotional abuse is a series or pattern of instances *over a period of time* rather than a single event.

Emotional abuse is not necessarily associated with physical deprivation. Emotional neglect and abuse is found typically in a home lacking in emotional warmth. The emotional needs of the child are not met; the parent's relationship to the child may be without empathy and devoid of emotional responsiveness.

Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily observable.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse and neglect is more likely to impact negatively on a child where there is a cluster of indices, where these are present over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Children who are physically and sexually abused and neglected also suffer from emotional abuse.

Some examples of emotional abuse are:

persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
conditional parenting – level of care contingent on child's behaviours or actions;
exposure to domestic violence.

Physical Abuse (Slide 14)

Physical abuse can occur as single or repeated incidents. Some examples include:

pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling;
use of excessive force in handling.

Unsatisfactory explanations, varying explanations, frequency and clustering of indicators – all can give rise to high levels of concern for physical abuse.

There are many different forms of physical abuse, but skin, mouth and bone injuries are the most common.

The age and developmental stage of the child, the site/location of the injury and the pattern of the injury need to be examined in relation to the history of the incident.

Sexual Abuse (Slide 15)

Child sexual abuse often covers a wide spectrum of abuse activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and usually occurs over a number of years. Sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family.

Cases of sexual abuse principally come to light through: (*Children First Guidance 2011*, Appendix 1)

disclosure by the child to his or her siblings/friends;
the suspicions of an adult;
physical symptoms.

Non-contact sexual abuse can include offensive sexual remarks, obscene telephone calls, 'exposure' of an offender to a victim, an offender observing a victim in a state of undress or activities that provide sexual gratification to the offender.

Online safety and online child sexual exploitation are becoming increasingly significant issues and are covered later in this session

Some examples of child sexual abuse can include:

exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;

showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse.

Section 2.5.1(vi) of Children First refers to **consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person**. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation.

Risk Factors in Child Protection (Slide 16)

Alongside signs and symptoms, there are known risk factors that **need** to be considered when identifying, responding to and assessing child protection concerns. Risk factors are features of the child's circumstances known to be associated with heightened risk to safety or welfare. Families often experience a combination of these risk factors.

Age of child. The majority of child deaths from abuse and neglect are of children under 4, when children are most vulnerable to physical attacks and dangers created by lack of supervision and severe neglect, and are isolated from professionals, such as teachers, who might intervene to protect them.

Domestic and sexual violence. Keep the child in focus and do not look at domestic violence as an 'adult problem' only.

Be aware that the child may be experiencing feelings of divided loyalties between the perpetrator and the non-abusing parent/carer.

Be aware of the possibility that the child may be being, or has been, physically and/or sexually abused.

Parental Mental Health. Children of parents with an uncontrolled mental illness face a high risk of physical neglect. Basic needs may not be met. Parents may fail to attend to children's emotional needs, which can instill a sense of isolation and possible mistrust in children.

Parental Substance Misuse. Research supports the connection between alcohol and drugs, and child abuse and neglect. The misuse of drugs and/or alcohol may adversely affect the ability of parents to attend to the emotional, physical and developmental needs of their children in both the short and long term.

Children with Additional Vulnerabilities (Slide 17)

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such children include those with disabilities, children who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for care and protection.

The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – are applicable to the following populations of children who have additional vulnerabilities. The abuse may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic human rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints (*Children First guidance* Section 2.8).

Children in residential settings, such as boarding schools, language schools or residential summer camps. Children in these types of setting are living away from their parents/guardians, are cared for by others, could be isolated and therefore may be more vulnerable to abuse.

Children in the care of the State. The points above are equally relevant and their abuse histories may also leave them additionally vulnerable.

Children who are homeless. Similarly to above, these children may be separated from their families, can be in unsuitable accommodation and can mix with inappropriate people.

Children with disabilities. They may experience communication issues, may be exposed to multiple carers, may experience power differences, may not be informed of how to recognise inappropriate behaviour and may be perceived as not being reliable witnesses.

Separated children and asylum-seekers. Particular attention should be paid to the welfare and protection of children who are living apart from their birth parents and whose first language is not English, such as separated children seeking asylum.

Trafficked children. An area of growing concern is where children may be trafficked into Ireland for purposes of exploitation, either employment or sexual. These children may resist offers of assistance from Tusla due to fears for their own safety or that of their families. They are frequently hidden within communities since they do not attend educational, religious or social events.

Basis for Reporting Concerns & Standard Reporting Procedure

(Slide 18)

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals such as teachers, child care workers, health professionals and those working with adults with serious parenting difficulties.

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response.

Reasonable Grounds for Concern (Slide 19)

If any of the listed grounds for concern exist, you should report your concerns to the local Duty Social Worker through your Designated Liaison Person.

The *Child Protection and Welfare Handbook 2011*, chapter 2 provides more detailed information.

Designated Liaison Person (Slide 20)

Children First directs all organisations to appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The organisation should appoint a Deputy DLP to act when the DLP is unavailable (e.g. on sick leave or annual leave). The following points outline who the DLP might be and their role within an organisation.

The DLP should fulfil the following criteria:

Senior person. The appointed person must hold a position of seniority in order to be able to make decisions.

Working knowledge of organisation. The DLP must understand how the organisation operates on a daily basis.

Listening and communication skills. The DLP must have the necessary skills to be able to listen to and communicate with staff, parents and children.

Familiar with topic of abuse. The DLP does not need to be an expert, but should be clear on the organisation's responsibilities, procedures and policies, and where they can go for further assistance when considering child protection or welfare concerns.

Available. It is important that the DLP can be contacted during operating times of the service.

Role of the DLP

Keep up to date and support staff: The DLP should act as a resource to any staff member or volunteer who has a child protection concern. The DLP should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments.

Consider child protection concerns: The DLP considers with the person who raised the child protection concern whether 'reasonable grounds for concern' exist.

Informal consultation with Tusla: The DLP can, through informal consultation with Tusla, seek advice on whether to make a formal report. They should state explicitly that they are not making a formal report and that they are giving details of a concern, but no identifying information in relation to a child or family. If the social worker advises that a formal report should be made, the DLP must follow this advice.

Make formal reports: The DLP makes formal reports to the Duty Social Worker using the Standard Report Form on behalf of the service or insures that the standard reporting procedure has been followed.

Manage confidential records: The DLP should ensure that a secure system is in place, with restricted access.

Inform parents/carers: It is generally the role of the DLP to inform parents/carers about any child protection concerns, especially if a call or report is made to a Tusla Social Work Office. However, there may be particular instances where another staff member is better placed to inform the parents because of their role and relationship with the family. This is a decision that is made between the DLP and the staff member.

The organisation's child protection and welfare policy and procedures should include the name and contact details of the DLP and an outline of their role and responsibilities. The DLP and Deputy DLP should ensure that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training, considered necessary, to keep updated on new developments.

Procedures for Reporting (Slide 21)

The reporting procedure within the child protection & welfare policy should involve the above steps.

- Staff/volunteer report their concern to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). In consultation with the DLP, they agree whether reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- If a decision is made to report, all information should be recorded on the Standard Report Form (SRF) and sent to the local Tusla Duty Social Work Offices. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to report verbally by telephone and follow this up with the completed SRF.
- If you and the DLP are unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist, it is possible to have an informal consultation with a Tusla Duty Social Worker.
- Following your referral, you should receive a letter acknowledging receipt of your concern by Tusla. It is important that you retain this for your own records.
- In the event that a child is in immediate danger and you cannot contact your local Tusla Duty Social Work Office, you should contact the Gardaí. Out-of-hours social work services do not exist in most Tusla areas.

Contact numbers for all Tusla Duty Social Work Offices nationwide are given in Appendix 2 of *Children First* and are also available on the Tusla website (www.tusla.ie) or through Tusla LoCall Tel. 1850 241850.

- 'Where an organisation decides not to report concerns to the Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the individual employee or volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking such action. The employee or volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána'.(*Children First*, 3.8.1 (paraphrased)).
- **Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or to risk of harm pending Tusla intervention.** In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with Tusla, you should contact the Gardaí. This may be done through any Garda station.

Record Keeping (Slide 22)

- Records should be factual, accurate and legible; should be dated and signed after each entry; and should be recorded on the day that the action took place or, at the latest, the following day.
- Records should be signed off by the line manager.
- Records should be accessible at all times during a key worker's absence from the office, but must be stored in a secure manner that ensures they are only available on a strictly 'need to know' basis. It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that files are kept up to date and good recording practices are maintained.

Confidentiality (Slide 23)

Sharing information with Tusla or An Garda Síochána for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or of the Data Protection Acts. At the same time, everyone in the organisation, including children and parents, must be informed that if staff in the organisation become aware of possible child abuse or welfare concerns, this cannot be kept secret and will be shared with Tusla.

Child protection concerns are highly sensitive and it is particularly important that children and parents can be assured that information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. So, for example, within the organisation, the concern is only discussed between the particular staff member who has raised the concern and the Designated Liaison Person (DLP). The DLP only discusses the concern with the parent(s) and the Tusla Duty Social Worker, unless it is in the child's best interests for other staff members who work with the child to be aware of the concern.

The child protection and welfare policy should include clear guidance/procedures on confidentiality.

Role in speaking to parents (Slide 24)

Children First is very clear that parents should be informed if a report is to be submitted to Tusla or the Gardaí, unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Where there is a concern that informing the parents is likely to endanger the child, Section 2.12 of the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* advises to '*discuss this with your Line Manager, Designated Liaison Person or the Tusla Social Work [Department] if you are unsure*'.

Retrospective Disclosure by Adults (Slide 25)

A retrospective disclosure occurs when an adult says they were abused during their childhood.

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhoods. If a retrospective disclosure comes to your attention it is important to consider the potential risk to any child, including unidentified children, from the alleged abuser.

If you are concerned that children may be at risk, you should follow your organisation's reporting procedure for child protection or welfare concerns or report directly to the Tusla duty social worker, without delay.

If you are unsure if children may be at risk, you should consult with your DLP or the Tusla duty social worker without delay.

As the person receiving the disclosure you may need to consider how you can support the alleged victim through direction to counselling or support services.

'A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to [Tusla].' Children First 3.2.4 'The duty of [Tusla] is not limited by the fact that a disclosure is made by an adult of abuse suffered during their childhood since [Tusla's] duty includes the prevention of future risk. '[Tusla] should not delay or defer an investigation on the basis that an alleged abuser does not currently have access to children since this might significantly hamper its ability to investigate the allegations' Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, p. 146.

Adult survivors of childhood abuse can be directed to: the National Counselling Service 1800 235 234 (office hours) and www.hse-ncs.ie, or Connect 1800 477 477 (Wed. – Sun. 6pm – 10pm).

Interagency Cooperation (Slide 26)

No one professional has all the skills, knowledge or resources necessary to comprehensively meet all the requirements of an individual case. It is essential, therefore, that all professionals and organisations involved with a child and his or her parents/carers deliver a coordinated response (*Children First*, Section 4.1.1). Sharing information appropriately and respectfully gives a fuller picture and can lead to greater objectivity.

Interagency and interprofessional cooperation and coordination is as important at the later stages of child protection work as it is at the outset. All personnel involved in a case should consistently make efforts to remain in contact with the key worker (normally the Tusla Social Worker) and to communicate any relevant information. The child's safety and protection must take precedence at all times (*Children First*, Sections 4.3.4 – 4.3.5).

Organisations working with children and families (Slide 27)

'All statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with and in direct contact with children should have procedures and guidelines derived from and consistent with the current *Children First: National Guidance* for their staff and volunteer'. (*Children First*, Section 4.7.2).

Organisations may be legally responsible for their failure to provide adequate care and safeguards for children in their care.

Every Government department or publicly funded body that delivers or funds services to children –whether directly or indirectly through bodies or agencies under its aegis – has a responsibility to ensure that there is an awareness within the relevant organisations of the *Children First: National Guidance* and that the standards in relation to child protection and welfare set out in the guidance are adhered to in the delivery of those services. This includes, in particular, the effective communication of roles and responsibilities under the national guidance (Children First 4.2.2).

Responsibilities of Organisations (Slide 28)

Point 1 – An organisation should promote child-centred practice whereby the welfare of the child is at the forefront of planning and practice. This includes ensuring that all staff know how to deal with difficult issues such as child protection and welfare concerns, accidents and complaints.

Point 2 –An organisation should ensure that staff have access to information about potential risks to children’s welfare/ safety.

Point 3 – Parents and children must feel that they have a voice and are included in the planning and practices in the organisation.

Child Protection & Welfare Policy, Procedures and Practice (Slide 29)

All statutory, voluntary and community services working with, and in direct contact with children and their families, should have procedures and guidelines in line with *Children First National Guidance 2011*.

This slide describes a list of the key elements that should be clearly outlined in a child protection & welfare policy.

The *Tusla interim Guide for the Development of Child Protection & Welfare Policy, Procedures and Practices* supports organisations to develop or review their policy, which should be tailor made based on the services and activities delivered.

Further Information (Slide 30)

National Adult Counselling Service (Slide 31)

We recognise that child protection and safeguarding children are sensitive topics, and frequently, people who have experienced abuse as children are not able to talk about their experiences until they are adults. It is important that adults who have experienced abuse receive information about resources that are available for support.

The first freephone number on the slide is for the **National Adult Counselling Service**, operated by the HSE. It is a free and confidential counselling service for adult survivors of childhood abuse. The freephone number will direct you to a local service.

The second number on the slide is for the **CONNECT Counselling Service** for adult survivors of abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. This service is part funded by the HSE. It is an out-of-hours service, available from 6pm – 10pm, Wednesday – Sunday. It is also available for partners or relatives of people who have experienced childhood abuse.

Thank you (Slide 32)