



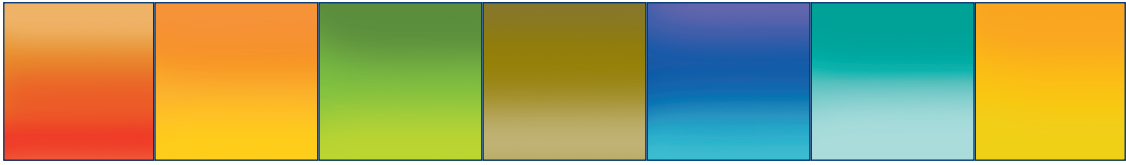
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# Our Children First

## A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidelines

by Geraldine Fox



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## **Our Children First: A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidelines**

**By Geraldine Fox**

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This booklet does not provide detailed provisions of *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* or the Child Care Act, 1991. It does not purport to be an interpretation of the guidelines or the Act nor is it a document giving legal advice as to the provisions of the legislation. For full legal interpretation of the guidelines, professional legal advice should be sought. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the booklet no liability is accepted by the author or Barnardos for any errors.

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## Our Children First: A Parent's Guide to the National Child Protection Guidelines

# What's in this guide

The purpose of this guide is to explain to parents the hows and whys of protecting children. The three main sections outline what you should do if you are worried that a child you know is being abused, what happens if you are investigated by the health board for child abuse and what you can do to make sure your own children are safe when they are in someone else's care.

This guide is based on *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, which was published in 1999 by the Department of Health and Children. *Children First* offers guidance to health professionals, teachers, members of the Garda Síochána and those who work with children in sports, community and voluntary organisations who are in a position of responsibility in recognising and responding to possible child abuse.

## Children's Rights

In 1992 Ireland accepted an international agreement which clearly outlined children's rights. This was the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which is like a Bill of Rights for all children and 'the best interests of the child' is stressed at all times. Some people find this difficult to understand as they think that if parents have the responsibility then they have a right to treat their children as they see fit without outside interference.

**Here is a list of some of the rights that children are entitled to from you, society, and the health board as the State agency charged with protecting children.**

- Care and protection.
- Reasonable standards of living.
- Reasonable standards of health and development.
- Protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.
- A service that respects culture, religion, sexuality and special needs.
- In planning the service they're going to provide, the health board should listen to the views of children.

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# The Child Care Act, 1991

## What is the Child Care Act, 1991?

The Child Care Act was passed into law in 1991. It is designed to promote the welfare and protection of children (0-18 years). It sets down rules to make sure that all children are brought up in a safe and secure way.

## Why is there an act about caring for children?

- To acknowledge that children are precious and that childhood is a very important time.
- To protect children from harm and to make sure they achieve their full potential.
- To make sure that all children are protected by law so they can grow up free from abuse.
- To let adults know what is expected of them by the law in relation to their care and treatment of children.
- To make sure the Gardaí and the health boards act to protect children who are in danger.

## What does the Child Care Act say?

The Act covers several key areas:

### Children

- Children's safety and welfare are the most important and come before anything else; everything should be done to protect them.

### Rights and responsibilities of parents

- Parents are responsible for their children's welfare. You have a right to respect and should be consulted on issues concerning your family as you know more than anyone else about your children's personality, their lives, their likes and dislikes.

### The role of the child's family

- The Act emphasises the importance of families. Families should be

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able to get help early, to encourage them to look after their children and keep them safe.

- The family is the best place for a child to grow up and be cared for whenever possible.

#### Partnership

- People from different agencies, e.g. social workers, public health nurses, Gardaí and teachers must work together to provide services for children and families in need and must ensure that your views are taken into account.

## Who has responsibility for looking after my children?

- You as a parent have the responsibility of looking after and protecting your children. However, if you cannot keep them safe and protect them or are not able to care for them, then the health board has to step in.
- The wider community also has a responsibility for the welfare and protection of children.
- People who work with children have a responsibility to make sure that they are being cared for. They have to be vigilant in relation to children's protection and welfare and must pass on their concerns or suspicions to the health board.
- Organisations who work with children have a responsibility to make sure that children are safe and that their workers are trained and checked out.
- Together we can all make a difference in protecting children.

## When can the State tell parents how to care for their children?

- The law says that the health board and the Gardaí can be called on if someone thinks that a child is at risk of harm.
- When the health board gets a report that a child is or may be at risk of harm, they have to investigate and see how much truth there is in the complaint.
- The law says that social workers have a responsibility to take action where a child needs care and protection.



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## **What is child abuse?**

Children can be severely damaged by abuse. They can be hurt physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. Their self-esteem can be damaged, sometimes permanently. The effects can go on for years – long after the abuse has stopped. Their relationships with people may be negatively affected by their earlier experiences.

Children can be abused in a number of ways. *Children First* has outlined four broad definitions of child abuse. They are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

It is important that you do not think that the examples below are the only abuses that children suffer from. There are many more examples.

### **What is physical abuse?**

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or an injury that happens as a result of failure to protect a child whether it is because the parent/carer did not know about it or did know and did not protect the child. Some examples are:

- **Shaking.**
- **Handling a child with excessive force.**
- **Suffocating.**
- **Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy which is when a parent/carer pretends that their child is sick by making up stories about their illness or causes physical signs of illness or secretly gives a child dangerous drugs or poisons.**

### **What is emotional abuse?**

Emotional abuse is usually found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child. It happens when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.

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Some examples are:

- Constant yelling, being critical and sarcastic.
- Threatening, scaring a child, belittling them.
- Exposing a child to domestic violence.
- Not being emotionally available to the child.
- Having unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child.

#### **What is sexual abuse?**

Sexual abuse is when a child is used by another person for his or her satisfaction or sexual arousal or for that of others. Some examples are:

- Obscene exposure, touching of genitals in a sexual way.
- Masturbating when a child is present or involving the child.
- Intentionally touching or molesting the body of a child for sexual arousal.
- Sexual intercourse whether oral, vaginal or anal.
- Encouraging or propositioning a child for the act of prostitution.
- Showing a child pornography.
- Sexual activity between an adult and a child under 17.

In criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years of age. That means that if a girl of 16 has sexual intercourse with a boy of 17 it is illegal, although it might not be regarded as child sexual abuse.

#### **What is neglect?**

Child neglect is when a child's essential needs are not met either because of inadequate parenting or lack of responsibility. It is about what parents and caregivers don't do. Everyone understands that parents are not able to meet their child's needs all the time but it is persistent neglect or failure to deal with something that becomes harmful to the extent that the child's well being and/or development are severely affected.

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Neglect takes many forms. Some examples are:

- **Physical neglect** – when a child's basic needs for food, clothing and shelter are not met.
- **Medical neglect** – when a parent fails to provide adequate health care, not giving or delaying medication.
- **Supervisory neglect** – when parents leave a child without arranging necessary care, fail to supervise their child or leave them in the care of another child who is not old enough.
- **Educational neglect** – when a child is not provided with learning opportunities.

This is not the full list of examples of neglect.

#### What we know about abusers

- You can't tell an abuser by the way they look.
- They come from all kinds of backgrounds.
- More often the abuser is known to the child and is someone the child trusts.

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# **What do I do if I'm worried that a child I know is being abused?**

Reporting your concerns is never easy, no matter how sure you are. Keeping children safe is a big concern for everyone. Parents are not the only ones; neighbours, communities, schools and clubs, etc. also want to keep children safe. For everyone, child abuse is a very difficult and emotional issue. It evokes different feelings in all people – some people feel angry, let down, sad, disappointed, in disbelief when they hear that a child has been abused. Some cannot even imagine that it happens.

**If you are concerned about a young person or suspect that they are being harmed or at risk of harm then you need to let the health board know. Some people may be unsure. If this is the case, talk it through with a social worker first. This might help you to decide whether to make a report or not.**

#### **What will I be asked?**

In order for the health board or Gardaí to be able to assess the situation they will need as much information as possible – details about the child, who is harming them, an account of what happened, dates, etc.

#### **What might stop me from reporting?**

- Uncertainty or fear.
- Not wanting to interfere.
- Not wanting to acknowledge its existence.
- No faith in the system.
- Personal experience can get in the way.
- Feeling sorry for the family involved.
- Fear of being sued.

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When concerns are reported, the health board will consider all the issues. It does not automatically mean that a child protection investigation will be triggered. However, the sooner something happens to reduce the risk of harm to the child, the better.

**According to the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 so long as you report whatever you believe to be true and it is done in good faith, you cannot be sued. See page 23 for further information.**

#### **Who can make a report?**

Anyone who suspects that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm has a responsibility to report their concerns to the health board as do organisations.

**Every organisation working with children and young people will have appointed a person who has the responsibility to report concerns to the health board.**

#### **How a report is made?**

A report is made either

■ In writing ■ In person ■ By phone

Every health board has a social worker on duty for a number of hours each day. Some are there all day; some are only available for half the day. If it is an emergency situation and a child or young person is in immediate danger and it is outside 9am to 5pm or at weekends then the incident should be reported to the local Garda station. You can ask that your name is not given to the family, and you can explain why you don't want this to happen.

Once you have contacted the health board the social worker may feel that there is not enough information to act on at that time. However, the information will be held on file.

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#### **What is the duty social work service?**

The duty social work service provides support to children and families who are experiencing difficulties.

##### **Their work involves:**

- Assessing child welfare concerns.
- Supporting families who are finding it difficult to manage the care of their children.
- Referring families to other support services.
- Finding alternative care if the child cannot live at home.

#### **What if my child tells me they have been abused?**

If your child tells you that they have been abused it is important that you stay calm. Listen to your child, don't promise confidentiality. Ring the duty social work service for advice. Take your child to a doctor or children's hospital if you feel they may be in need of medical treatment. For children who have been sexually abused, there are special units in most health board areas for assessment and therapeutic support. It is important that the health board and Gardai are told so that other children are protected and the alleged abuser put through the criminal process in order for them to be punished and/or get help.

#### **What if it is another child who carries out the abuse?**

It is important that both children get help. Follow the advice above for your own child. The child who carried out the abuse must be held accountable for their behaviour and the health board must refer the child to an appropriate service. The focus will be on helping the child rather than on punishing them.

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#### **What if I need help myself?**

Many parents sometimes need help to work out how best to care for their children. Asking for help can be the hardest part, but it can also be the first step in making things better. Children First says that the best place for a child to be is with their family. The health board wants children to be at home and to help them stay there. However, in a few extreme cases the children may sometimes spend time away as part of a plan to help them and their family. They can then go home if and when family issues are addressed.

- Getting help early is really important to keep your family together.
- Parents can and do make reports about their own children if they are concerned about their safety.
- Children can also make reports.

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# What happens if I am investigated by the health board for child abuse?

## Who's who in child protection and what are their roles?

The health board and the Gardaí are the two organisations that have the power by law to carry out investigation and assessment of suspected child abuse. Both organisations work together to protect children. The health board's role is to look after the welfare of children and families and the role of the Gardaí is to investigate alleged offences and to determine whether a crime has been committed. The Gardaí notify all cases to the health boards. Health boards notify cases of sexual, physical abuse and neglect to the Gardaí.

### The role of the health board

- The health board has overall responsibility for assessing and managing the concerns people have about children.
- Unless it is an emergency the assessment/investigation will be carried out as quickly as possible in discussion with other professionals and your child and yourself. This will involve interviews with you and your child and possibly a referral to a medical or specialist service for a more detailed assessment.
- Every health board has a Child Care Manager who receives all reports of child abuse and makes sure that all agencies and workers work together to help children and families. Reports are reviewed initially and every six months until a final outcome is known and an agreed plan put in place. A final report is then sent to the Child Care Manager and the Gardaí.



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#### **The role of the Gardaí**

- The Gardaí are in charge of the criminal investigation.
- They gather the evidence and send a file to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).
- The DPP decides whether to prosecute.

#### **What should happen if the health board is investigating me?**

- If you are being investigated, you must be told why. Concerns about your children must be explained to you.
- The health board's duty, role and powers must be explained.
- Your family's legal rights should be explained.
- Your views should be sought in order to ensure your child's welfare.
- You will be expected to co-operate and make decisions with the health board about your children.
- If your family situation needs to change as a result of the investigation, you must be told and the changes must be in the interests of your child.

You are the person who knows and understands your child best, so your family and extended family will be seen as having loads of information.

#### **What happens when a report is sent to the social work service?**

- Social workers will check their records to see if there has been any other contact with your family.
- They will check if other professionals (e.g. public health nurses, doctors, crèches, hospitals, schools) know your family and if they have any concerns about your children. They should tell you when this happens.
- If they think your family is getting all the services they need, social workers may decide that no action is needed.

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- You may be invited in to discuss the concerns with the social worker. If the social worker decides that there are immediate concerns for your children then a visit to your home will be organised in order to make sure your children are safe, to see what your version of the incident is and to see what services can be offered to support you, if needed.

Usually two social workers will visit you at home. All social workers should carry identification cards and you should always check them before you allow them to enter your home.

- The health board will look at how your family has managed so far, what has gone well for you and how you achieved that, as well as what has not gone well for you.
- After the initial assessment is done, a decision will be made whether or not to assign a social worker to your family. If one is not available you will be put on a waiting list.
- A record of the report and investigation and decision will be kept on file.

#### **If someone makes a report about me will I get to know who made it?**

Generally, you will only know if the person making the report tells you. All organisations that work with children – crèches, schools and youth clubs, etc. should have a child protection policy. This means that if they have concerns they should talk to you before they make a report directly to the health board.

#### **How might I feel during an investigation?**

- Investigations can be traumatic and intimidating. You are bound to feel powerful emotions such as anger, fear, shame, hopelessness, guilt, powerlessness, etc.
- It might be difficult to know how to behave, in case you are judged to be guilty.

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#### **What rights do I have during an investigation?**

- You should know how information is going to be gathered about you and your children.
- You should know who is going to be asked for information.
- You should be asked for your explanation of events/concerns.
- You should be told how the information is going to be assessed and evaluated.
- If the alleged abuser is your partner then you will be asked to help protect your child either by making sure your partner is never alone with your child or by making sure they have no contact with your child, depending on the perceived risk, nature and severity of the abuse.

#### **What may happen as a result of an investigation?**

- When the investigation is finished, social workers will assess how safe they feel your child is and what support, if any, your family may need.
- Support may be offered to you and this may be enough.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to get a family member or a responsible adult, e.g. a neighbour to protect your child in the family home or to get them to stay with a relative or friend.
- If there is no one suitable to take over it may be necessary for your child or children to stay with someone named and checked out by the health board. You will be asked to consent to this.
- If you don't consent, a court order may be sought. This situation is very unusual.

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#### What are the possible outcomes of an assessment?

##### If no concerns are found

Following a preliminary assessment there are a number of things that can happen. It may be that the assessment concludes that there are no concerns. If this happens the information gathered is simply filed away and will only be examined if further concerns or more information come to light. If you have gone through an investigation and are told that the allegations are unfounded, you should ask the social worker to go back to each of the agencies they have contacted to let them know the result of the investigation. Health board staff should support you and you may need to think about some appropriate counselling service to help you.

##### If concerns are found

If the health board thinks there are still concerns, further evaluation involving a full assessment of all aspects of the child's circumstances will follow and recommendations made.

#### If there are concerns about my child, what type of meeting is held?

**1. A strategy meeting** can be called at the beginning of an assessment if your child is seen to be at serious risk or in need of immediate protection. Health board staff, members of the Garda Síochána and any other staff involved with your family are invited to the meeting. The main aim is to share information so that a plan of early intervention can be put in place. A date is agreed to review how things are going for you and your child.

**2. A child protection conference** can be called if your child is seen to be in immediate danger; sometimes when emergency action has been taken. You and your child, depending on their age, will be asked to attend. Workers from different agencies who know your child and have ideas on the concerns expressed about your child's care and protection will also attend. Decisions are made in order to help you protect your child. Workers will decide on what tasks they will carry out. A record of the meeting is kept and everyone should get a copy of it, including the parent.

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After the child protection conference a child protection plan will be put together by all the various agencies. It outlines what is needed for your child's continued protection and well-being.

It is important when invited that you attend, as you will know more about your children than others. If you are not feeling very confident and are finding it hard to attend, you should ask if you can bring a person you trust with you. Plans that you agree to will succeed more than plans which are put in place without your contribution and consent.

The child protection conference is only to make decisions around what is going to happen. You should not be re-interviewed or questioned at the meeting. Your ability to parent should not be put under the spotlight.

There are some cases when you would not be asked to attend. If you are excluded, there must be a reason why, and it must be recorded and made known to you in writing.

**3.** Some health boards now hold **family group conferences**. This meeting is for family members to discuss, often with social workers, what can be done to make sure a child or young person in their family is safe and well cared for. The family is asked to be involved in making decisions, recommendations and plans about keeping the child safe, where the child should live or how often they should meet up with family, etc.

### What happens to the information gathered?

- Once you have come to the attention of the health board social work office, a file will be opened in your family name. All the information gathered by the social worker will be put together in this file.
- There will usually be a referral form, which contains information on the concerns of the person who made the initial report about your children. The file will be added to every time there is new information. This may be a telephone conversation, a letter, a verbal account from an outsider, a report from the public health nurse, a report from the school, etc.

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- If you move to another health board area and you have an allocated social worker, they will inform the new health board of your move and try to get your case transferred so that your family can get the supports they need in the new area.
- If you do not have a social worker but the health board knows that you are moving to another area they may contact the health board in the new area to let them know that they have a file of your family details. This saves you having to go over your story with another person and may give the health board in the new area a clear picture of what your family's needs are in order for them to be addressed.

You have a right under the Freedom of Information Act, 1998 to know what information about you is held in public records and to change inaccurate material.

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## How can I make sure my child is safe?

While it is impossible to always know where your children are and what they are doing, there are times you entrust them to the care of others. If your child goes to a crèche, childminder, pre-school or a youth/sports club, you need to know who is going to be looking after them and how they are going to keep them safe. After all, you are entrusting your child to others to be looked after. You need to know the policies and procedures they have in place in order to protect your child. Unfortunately, it is a fact that people who abuse children have a tendency to look for work where they will have contact with children. Nowadays organisations take steps to ensure that their staff are selected carefully. It is your right to ask questions to satisfy yourself about your child's safety.

### Things to look for

- They should be happy to tell you how their staff (voluntary or paid) are selected. Every organisation should have a proper selection procedure. Some staff that work with children will have gone through a Garda check to make sure that the person has not committed a crime against a child but the majority will not. This is because of the amount of time and resources it would take to complete this task.
- You should ask what the organisation's child protection policy is and if the staff have been trained in the policy, (proper training will assist staff in preventing and responding to suspected child abuse) and other protection concerns like a bullying policy.
- The Child Protection Officer is the title given to the person appointed in each organisation to deal with child protection concerns reported by staff and young people. Who is the officer in your child's club?

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- Having entrusted your children to their care you should be satisfied that they have guidelines that ensure the best service available to your children. You should ensure that standards have been set for the ongoing delivery of that service. This includes having the recommended numbers of staff to supervise your children.
- The organisation should keep records on all children. These should include your consent to membership, medical details and special needs and emergency contact telephone numbers. Do staff have an accident and incident book where they write up issues?
- It is important to find out how the club deals with challenging or disruptive behaviour. It is important to know that the club will deal with it and have thought about what is acceptable and what is not.
- If your child is going on a trip it is important that you know what their policies are around these trips.
- You should satisfy yourself that the building and facilities are safe and secure and that there is a first-aider on site.
- As well as talking to the professionals about what they are offering it is vital that you talk to your child about personal safety. Do they know who they could talk to if they wanted to look for help?



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# Support

## What can the health board offer to my family?

- The health board is obliged to offer you support services. They must do everything possible to help your family stay together as long as this is in your children's best interest.
- Getting support early can ensure that things do not get worse and may help you to cope with stress and help support you as a parent so you will be able to make sure that you protect your children.
- Each health board has different ways of providing the services you may need either through their own staff or services run by the voluntary sector.
- Some services will work directly with families, like a family support worker, who will be able to help you develop your strengths as a parent by providing direct practical help, e.g. budgeting, meal plans, accompanying you to appointments. You may need someone to help you to sort out housing or welfare rights.
- Services may be directed towards your child to enhance his/her welfare and self-confidence, helping your child to feel better about themselves or helping a child come to terms with a traumatic event, a bereavement or a damaging experience. If necessary, specialist consultants could be brought in. Support may be provided on a one-to-one basis or in a group or you may be referred to a specialist service.

## How can I get support?

You, as well as your children, can request a support service which might be provided directly by the health board or through another organisation. It is your right to expect that your request for a support service will be assessed in a supportive manner.

## How you get your support service depends on:

- Your assessed needs and the services provided by your health board.
- The level of agreement reached between professionals and your family.
- If the service is available for as long as it is necessary.

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#### **How will the health board decide which service they can offer me?**

- The assessment will be based on your needs and strengths as a family so that an appropriate service can be located for you. This must focus on individual as well as family needs.
- A family support meeting is useful to draw up a plan. This gives you a chance to meet with the professionals involved. Your voice is important, you should be asked for your views on the problem and what your concerns are. Workers will also be asked for the level of risk they believe exists to your children.
- Workers need to be clear with you what needs to happen in order for things to improve. You will be asked where you get help and support at the moment and what other supports you feel need to be made available.

The service the health board will provide also depends on the availability of services in your area and the board's resources.

#### **What do I do if I was abused as a child?**

The health board has set up counselling services for adults who were abused during their childhood. See **Contacts** page 25 for details. If you have been abused and you know that the person who abused you is still in the community and has access to children it is important that you tell the health board and/or the Gardaí. Often this uncovers incidences of current abuse and can be a real way of breaking the cycle and stopping children being abused.

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### Further information

We hope this guide has helped you to understand the Children First Guidelines. However, you may still be left with a number of questions. It is important for all of us that we ask these questions individually, as no circumstances are the same.

As well as some legal issues, this section includes contact numbers of organisations that can be of further help.

#### **What other laws will help to care for and protect my children?**

The Child Care Act, 1991 is not the only piece of legislation that relates to the protection of children. There are other laws that have an impact on the care and protection of children.

#### **The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**

This Act is in force to protect you if you report suspected child abuse to the health board or the Gardaí. So long as you report whatever you believe to be true and it is done in good faith, you cannot be sued; you are protected from civil liability. So even if you report a suspicion of child abuse, believing it to be accurate, and it proves to be unfounded you cannot be sued. However, if you report a person for abusing a child and you know it is not true but you do it as a malicious act you can be fined over €1,900. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent people from malicious reports.

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#### **The Domestic Violence Act, 1996**

This Act protects families from domestic violence. Any person can apply for a Safety Order; it requires a person not to use or threaten abuse towards you and the children. It does not require that the person leave the family home. If the person is already living apart then it stops them from watching or being near the home. A Safety Order can be given for any number of years up to a maximum of 5. A Barring Order requires the violent person not to use or threaten abuse towards you and your children. It requires the person to leave the family home and stay away from where you live.

The Act gives the health board power to take out an order to ensure your safety and/or the safety of your children, which you could apply for but may be afraid of doing so. The person must be told that the health board is going to apply for the order but does not need their agreement to apply for the order.

#### **The Freedom of Information Act, 1997**

This Act is there so you can know what information is held in public records about you personally. You can also make sure that the information about you is correct and have it changed if you feel it is incorrect.

Personal information includes educational, medical, psychiatric, social work or psychological history. There are some exemptions to the Act. Freedom of Information application forms are available from all main health boards and staff must help the public with filling them in.

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## Contacts

### HEALTH BOARD CHILD CARE CONTACT ADDRESSES

#### East Coast Area Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Area 1	Tivoli Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin	01 284 3579
Area 2	Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh, Dublin 6	01 269 8222
Area 10	Glenside Road, Wicklow	0404 68400

#### Northern Area Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Area 6	St. Joseph's School for the Deaf, Social Work Dept., Navan Road, Dublin 7	01 838 5034
Area 7	Rose Cottage, Convent Avenue, Off Richmond Road, Fairview, Dublin 3	01 857 5431
Area 8	Coolock Health Centre, Cromcastle Rd., Coolock, Dublin 5	01 847 6122

#### South Western Area Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Area 3	Unit 43 The Malting Business Park, 54/55 Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8	01 454 4733
Area 4	Old County Road Health Centre, Crumlin, Dublin 12	01 415 4700
Area 5	Community Services, Dublin West, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10	01 620 6092
Area 9	Poplar House, Poplar Square, Naas, Co. Kildare	045 876001

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### Midland Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Longford/ Westmeath	Health Centre, Longford Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath	044 40221
Laois/Offaly	Health Centre, Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly	0506 46254

### Mid-Western Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Limerick	Vocational Training Centre, Dooradoyle, Limerick	061 482792
Clare	Tobartaoiscaín, Ennis, Co. Clare	065 682 3921
North Tipperary	Child Care Manager Dept., Annbrook, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary	067 38300

### North-Eastern Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Cavan/ Monaghan	Child Care Dept., Local Health Care Unit, Rooskey, Co. Monaghan	047 30475
Louth	Louth Community Services, Community Care, Dublin Road, Dundalk.	042 933 2287
Meath	County Clinic, Navan, Co. Meath	046 78748

### North-Western Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Donegal/ Sligo/Leitrim	Sheil House, College St, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal	071 982 2776

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### South-Eastern Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Carlow/ Kilkenny	Community Care Centre, James Green Kilkenny	056 52208
Waterford	Community Care Centre, Cork Road, Waterford City	051 842800
Wexford	Community Care Centre, Georges St, Wexford	053 23522
South Tipperary	Community Care Centre, Western Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary	052 77285

### Southern Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
South Lee	Floor 2, Abbeycourt House, George's Quay, Cork	021 492 3833
North Lee	Floor 2, Abbeycourt House, George's Quay, Cork	021 492 3952
North Cork	Gouldshill House, Mallow, Co. Cork	022 31244
West Cork	13/14 Hibernian Building, Main St, Skibbereen, Cork	028 40580
Kerry	6 Denny St, Tralee, Co. Kerry	066 718 4811

### Western Health Board

COMMUNITY CARE AREA	ADDRESS	PHONE No
Galway	Community Care Offices, 25 Newcastle Road, Galway	091 523122
Mayo	Mayo Community Services, WHB, 3rd Floor, St. Mary's Hospital, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	094 22333
Roscommon	Child Care Office, Abbey Town House, Abbey Street, Roscommon	0903 26732

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### Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centres

CENTRE	CONTACT DETAILS	
<b>Dublin</b>	Christchurch Square, Dublin 8 Email: <a href="mailto:ncrc@barnardos.ie">ncrc@barnardos.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.barnardos.ie">www.barnardos.ie</a>	Tel: 01 454 9699 Fax: 01 453 0300
<b>Athlone</b>	River Court, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath Email: <a href="mailto:ncrc@athlone.barnardos.ie">ncrc@athlone.barnardos.ie</a>	Tel: 090 647 9584 Fax: 090 647 9585
<b>Cork</b>	The Bowling Green, White St, Cork Email: <a href="mailto:ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie">ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie</a>	Tel: 021 431 0591 Fax: 021 431 0691
<b>Limerick</b>	10 Sarsfield Street, Limerick Email: <a href="mailto:ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie">ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie</a>	Tel: 061 208 680 Fax: 061 440 214
<b>Galway</b>	41/43 Prospect Hill, Galway Email: <a href="mailto:ncrc@galway.barnardos.ie">ncrc@galway.barnardos.ie</a>	Tel: 091 565 058 Fax: 091 565 060

### CARI Helpline 1890 924 567

For children, families and groups affected by sexual abuse.  
110 Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9.

Tel: 01 830 8529

### Parentline Local 1890 927 277

For parents under stress.  
Carmichael House, Nth. Brunswick St., Dublin 7.

### Citizens Information Local 1890 777 121

Free and confidential information on all your rights and entitlements.



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#### **Women's Aid Free National Helpline 1800 341 900**

Helpline open 10am - 10pm

#### **National Network of Women's Refuges and Support Services**

##### **087 221 6328**

If you are unsure of which refuge or support service to contact, you can call this number and they will help you find the right one.

#### **Legal Aid Centres**

There are 32 centres across the country. You can find their number in the phone book or call (01) 240 0900 and ask for the number of your nearest centre.

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#### **NOTES**