

How do I report a concern about a child?

When should I report a concern about a child to Tusla?

You should always inform Tusla if you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

You can report your concern in person, by telephone or in writing to the local social work duty service in the area where the child lives. You can find contact details for the Tusla social work teams [here](#).

It is not necessary for you to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern to Tusla. All that is required is that you have reasonable grounds for concern. It is Tusla's role to assess concerns that are reported to it. If you report a concern, you can be assured that your information will be carefully considered with any other information available and a child protection assessment will be carried out where sufficient risk is identified.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

If you are concerned about a child but unsure whether you should report it to Tusla, you may find it useful to contact Tusla to informally discuss your concern. This provides an opportunity to discuss the query in general and to decide whether a formal report of the concern to Tusla is appropriate at this stage. If the concern is below the threshold for reporting, Tusla may be able to provide advice in terms of keeping an eye on the child and other services that may be more suitable to meeting the needs of the child and/or family.

What will I be asked?

To help Tusla staff assess your reasonable concern, they need as much information as possible. You should provide as much relevant information as you can about the child, his/her home circumstances and the grounds for concern. These could include:

- The child's name, address and age
- Names and addresses of parents or guardians
- Names, if known, of who is allegedly harming the child or not caring for them appropriately
- A detailed account of your grounds for concern (e.g. details of the allegation, dates of incidents, and description of injuries)
- Names of other children in the household
- Name of school the child attends
- Your name, contact details and relationship to the child

You should give as much information as possible to social workers at an early stage so that they can do a full check of their records. For instance, they can see if the child and/or a sibling have been the subject of a previous referral, or if an adult in the household had previous contact with the child protection services. It also helps social workers to prioritise cases for attention, as they are not in a position to respond immediately to all cases. However, they will always respond where a child is in immediate danger or at high risk of harm. It will also help Tusla to decide if another service would be more appropriate to help meet the needs of the child, i.e. a community or family support service rather than a social work service.

Can a report be made anonymously?

While it is possible to report a concern without giving your name, it may make it difficult for Tusla to assess your concern. All information that you provide will be dealt with in a professional manner. While Tusla cannot guarantee confidentiality, in general it will not reveal the names of members of the public who report suspected child abuse without their permission.