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## Protecting Young People 2018

Updates for volunteers regarding  
Foróige's guidelines on Child protection  
and welfare concerns.



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## INTRODUCTION

In late 2017, the government fully implemented the Children First Act 2015. Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, published a revised version of "Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children". Foróige's child protection guidelines have been updated in line with these. The full document is on the volunteer portal.

The volunteers' role has not changed significantly. Staff will continue to support volunteers who come across concerns in their Foróige role.

Here are the main differences:

### 1. Foróige staff are Mandated Persons. Volunteers are not. (Chapter 1)

The Children First Act 2015 obliges Foróige staff to report child protection concerns they become aware of. This obligation does not extend to volunteers, but Foróige volunteers must, as has always been the case, raise child protection and welfare concerns with their staff person.

### 2. Consensual sexuality activity involving 15 to 17 year olds (Chapter 2)

Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. There are now defined criteria that must be met before a decision not to report can be made. You must consult your staff member in this situation.

### 3. The definitions of type of child abuse have been updated by Tusla. (Chapter 2)

Each definition has been rewritten. A section on bullying has also been added. These definitions replace all previous versions.

### 4. Grounds for Reasonable Concern (Chapter 2)

Neglect, emotional and physical abuse definitions now have a guide as to what would constitute a reasonable concern i.e. indicate that it should be reported. In the case of sexual abuse, all concerns must be reported due to the harm caused by any level of sexual abuse.

### 5. Volunteers now report jointly with staff. (Chapter 4)

If you suspect or become aware of a child protection or abuse matter that needs to be reported to Tusla, that report will be a joint report between you and the staff person. The staff person will be the main point of contact for Tusla. The only circumstance in which a volunteer would report a concern on their own would be if the staff person felt it did not need to be reported but the volunteer believed it should. Staff members cannot instruct a volunteer not to report

### 6. The language of "Child Protection" is changing to "Child Safeguarding".

(This is not in the Protecting Young People document)

a. Safeguarding is about ensuring that the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed ensure, as far as practicable, that a child or young person availing of the service is safe from harm. Child Protection is one part of Safeguarding.

b. The law requires that Foróige services and clubs will display a Child Safeguarding Statement from the 11th of March 2018. Foróige will provide one to each club and project.

### Coming Soon

The Code of Good Practice for working with young people and other documents will be updated in the next few months.