

Press Release

19 April 2017

The Irish Foster Care Association welcomes the HIQA inspection report on the Dublin Mid-Leinster – Dublin South Central area

The Irish Foster Care Association (IFCA) welcomes the HIQA inspection report on the Dublin Mid-Leinster – Dublin South Central area that highlights regional variance in practice in managing allegations within Tusla. It also underlined the confusion and uncertainty amongst social work teams on how to manage welfare concerns and allegations.

IFCA has for some time been calling for the standardisation of national policies to ensure all who deal with welfare concerns and allegations are clear on the parameters and processes to be undertaken.

IFCA's CEO, Catherine Bond welcomed the report. "The safety of children in foster care should be the paramount concern for all involved in the service. Clear policies and guidance on the management of welfare concerns and allegations are vital to ensure the safety of children and that all involved are properly supported and informed of the process. A national policy needs to be implemented uniformly in all Tusla areas; no area should be developing their own policies, even on an interim basis."

Many of the findings of the inspection reflect issues that have continually been identified in IFCA's annual and mid-year support service reviews. These issues include Garda vetting, placement disruption, complaints management and many others.

IFCA acknowledges Tusla's undertaking that it is putting an action plan in place to address those areas of concern noted in the report. These concerns need to be considered by all Tusla areas to ensure the optimum service is available to children in care; with over 93% of children in State care placed with foster carers, it is essential there is clarity and consistency of practice within the service.

Notes to Editors

The Irish Foster Care Association is the representative body for foster care in Ireland. Child-centred and rights-based, IFCA promotes excellence in foster care so that children have the best chances in life. We aim to accomplish this by providing information, support, and learning opportunities for all those involved in foster care through our direct work in Advocacy, Branch Development, Support, and Learning and Development. We are an independent, membership-led organisation. IFCA's National Support Helpline runs every week day from 11.00am - 3.00pm and can be contacted at 01 458 5123.

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