

IFCA Statement Following HIQA Investigation into Tusla's Management of Child Sexual Abuse Allegations Against Adults

IFCA is disappointed to read the findings from the HIQA investigation into Tusla's management of child sexual abuse allegations against adults and fully supports the recommendations from the report.

IFCA's experience in relation to Foster Care has shown that until recently there were a wide range of differing policies and practices being used in the management of allegations against foster carers across Tusla areas. IFCA brought this to the attention of Tusla and in April 2017 a national interim guidance document in April 2017 was developed by tusla and this was welcomed by IFCA. The interim guidance document has contributed to a more standardised approach to responding to allegations of abuse made against foster carers. However, foster carers continue to report that they are not being provided with sufficient information or correspondence on the processes involved nor are they receiving what they consider to be adequate support when an allegation has been made against them. One of the key difficulties reported to us in such situations continues to be the lack of information regarding the process or the corresponding timelines involved and the stress that this can put on the entire family.

IFCA is aware that the national policy *for managing concerns and allegations of abuse or neglect against Foster Carers* is currently under review by Tusla. We strongly recommend that this policy be finalised.

In the absence of a finalised national policy, IFCA published an information document on *Guidance on Dealing with Complaints or Allegations of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns in 2017*, to assist our members in this area. To supplement this, IFCA has offered presentations on this topic in 17 locations around the country.

In 2017 8.9% of the cases which IFCA's national support helpline service responded to were in respect of allegations.

IFCA's publications *Guidance on Dealing with Complaints or Allegations of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns* can be accessed [here](#).

***Cases relating to allegations as recorded by IFCA relate to those who contact our service with a specific query relating to this issue. They do not denote the actual number of allegations currently open, in progress or concluded.**

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For further information please contact:

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The Irish Foster Care Association

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.