

## GUIDANCE 17

# INFORMATION FOR COMPLAINANTS AND SURVIVORS OF CHILD ABUSE

### MAKING A COMPLAINT OF ABUSE

1. People are encouraged to report information about child abuse directly to the Gardaí and/or Tusla (see useful contacts).
2. Meeting the Designated Liaison Person and/or Deputy DLP. Every person will be heard with compassion and in a spirit of acceptance. The needs of the person will be prioritised in choosing the time and place of a meeting.
3. Offering support: The person making a complaint is encouraged to bring somebody with them to the meeting for support. They will be offered a "support person" and given information on professional support services.
4. Referral to the statutory authorities, (Gardaí / Tusla) The DLP will advise of the Franciscans' responsibility to report information on child abuse to An Garda Síochána and Tusla, Child and Family Agency.
5. Confidentiality: Any information shared is treated as highly confidential and only shared with those with a legitimate need to know, e.g., statutory authorities.
6. Role of An Garda Síochána: It is the responsibility of the Gardaí to investigate and establish if a crime has been committed. The Gardaí will not contact a victim or survivor with their consent.
7. Role of Tusla: It is the role of Tusla to promote the welfare and protection of children. Tusla personnel will assess if a person presents as a risk to children.

#### THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)

Their role is to ensure that all child protection concerns are responded to and managed in accordance with civil law and church policy. If you decide to make your complaint directly to the Franciscans, the DLP or Deputy DLP is the person who will hear your complaint and explain the process to you.

### SUPPORT FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY ABUSE

Many people have suffered throughout their lives because of abuse they experience as children. The effects can be devastating. We wish to offer supports to those who have been affected in this way. The following supports are provided by the Franciscans.

1. The Catholic Church has established an independent professional counselling support service called Towards Healing which can be accessed free to those who experience abuse (contact details below).
2. Spiritual support services are available through a support service Towards Peace (contact details below).
3. A pastoral meeting with the Provincial and/or an identified other is available at the appropriate time or venue that suits the person who has experienced abuse.
4. An identified person known as a Support Person will be made available to any person who makes a complaint of abuse against a Franciscan. The support person can help you to understand the process involved in making a complaint, listen to you, and help you to access professional support services.

#### USEFUL CONTACTS

##### An Garda Síochána

Free Confidential Number: 1800 555 222

##### Tusla/Child and Family Agency

[www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

##### Towards Healing

Freephone (Ireland): 1800 303416

Freephone (UK): 0800 0963315

[www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

##### Towards Peace

(01) 505 3028

[www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)

#### CONTACT DETAILS

##### Designated Liaison Person

(085) 800 5685

[dlp@franciscans.ie](mailto:dlp@franciscans.ie)

##### Deputy Designated Liaison Person

(01) 674 2500