Building Knowledge and Skills for better outcomes for Children-
The role of Children First 2011

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Objectives of Workshop

• To advise participants of the revision of Children First 1999 and the publication of Children First 2011 National Guidance

• To introduce the Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook

• To advise participants of the particular responsibilities of workers in Substance Misuse services under Children First

• To consider the application of the principles of best practice when working with families.
Differences between CF 1999 and CF Guidance 2011

• Name has changed from Guidelines to Guidance

• Substance and principles of Guidelines unchanged

• Content has been updated to reflect the development of new agencies (HSE, HIQA, DCYA) and changes in policy and legislation since 1999

• Reflects recommendations from recent reports

• Reflects the growing awareness of the impact of ongoing neglect on children

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhise Sláinte Health Service Executive
Principles for Best Practice in Responding to Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

• Welfare of children paramount

• Children: right to be heard

• Balance between protecting children and respecting parents

• Early intervention and family support

• Professionals working with adults who for a range of reasons may have serious difficulties meeting their children’s basic needs for safety and security should always consider the impact of their adult client/patient’s behaviour on child and act in the child’s best interest

Children First 2011 1.1

Feidhmheannacht na Seirbhise Sláinte
Health Service Executive
Roles and Responsibilities of Mental Health and Addiction Services

- Persons who are treating a person with a mental health or addiction problem must consider the welfare and safety of any children in that person’s family and/or children in regular contact with the person. Where there are concerns, these must be discussed and reported to the HSE Children and Family Services, as outlined in the standard reporting procedure

(Children First 2011: 4.11)
Point to Remember:

- It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between indicators of child abuse and other adversities suffered by children and families. Deprivation, stress, addiction or mental health problems should not be used as a justification for omissions of care or commissions of harm by parents/carers. The child’s welfare must be the primary consideration.

Children First 2.10.8

• Aide to delivering accountable, consistent and transparent practice
• Complement Children First 2011
• Companion to Children First, policies, procedures and legislation
• Deliver accountable practice
• Quick reference book for front-line practice
• Sets out key issues for different stages
• Evidence-based
Categories of Abuse

Neglect

Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Physical Abuse
Definition of Neglect

- Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care (Children First 2011)

- Child neglect often co-exists with other inter-related concern, such as domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental substance misuse issues and parental intellectual disability (Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook – HSE 2011)

- Chronic neglect can be defined as ‘patterns of the same acts or omissions that extend over time or recur over time’. An example of chronic neglect would be parents with substance abuse problems who do not provide for the basic needs of their on an ongoing basis (Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook– HSE 2011)
How do we incorporate best practice principles into our work with children, young people and parents?
Questions about incorporating best practice principles to practice

In your group please consider the following questions in relation to the scenario allocated to your group?

- **Children:** How do you hold the child as paramount? How do you listen to the child?
- **Parents:** How do you respect the parent in the child protection and welfare process?
- **Services:** How do adult services consider the impact of adults behaviour on the safety and wellbeing of the child?
- **Working Together:** How do we work together effectively?
Considering the Impact on the Child

Always consider the child’s immediate safety first

• Parenting and the attachment/bonding relationship with the child
• Home living environment
• Finances
• Potential for harm to the child
• Parenting capacity
• The non using parent
• Social and environmental circumstances
• Engagement with services
• Outcomes for the child in the long term
Summary
Principles for Best Practice in Responding to Child Protection and Welfare Concerns

• Welfare of children paramount

• Children: right to be heard

• Balance between protecting children and respecting parents

• Early intervention and family support

• Professionals working with adults who for a range of reasons may have serious difficulties meeting their children’s basic needs for safety and security should always consider the impact of their adult client/patient’s behaviour on child and act in the child’s best interest

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Children First 2.10.8
Where can I get more information?

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children is available on the website: [www.dcya.ie](http://www.dcya.ie) and also at: [http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Find_a_Service/Children_and_Family_Services/childrenfirst/](http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Find_a_Service/Children_and_Family_Services/childrenfirst/)
- ‘Duty to Care’ is available on: [www.dcya.ie](http://www.dcya.ie)
- Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook is available on: [www.worriedaboutachild.ie](http://www.worriedaboutachild.ie)
- All legislation is available on [www.irishstatute.ie](http://www.irishstatute.ie)
Closure

• Final Questions.