



# We want to hear from you

How to provide feedback or make a complaint  
about a children's social care service



2021



# an independent organisation

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent organisation to promote safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.



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# Your experience is important to us

**We would like you to tell us about your experience of social care services, both good experiences and experiences that could have been better.**

While HIQA are unable to investigate individual complaints about a health or social care service under the Health Act 2007



we will listen to what you have to say and use your feedback to establish if the information received indicates a risk to the safety, effectiveness, and management of the service, and the day-to-day care children and families receive.

## Ways to give feedback to HIQA



### ONLINE

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

### EMAIL

[concerns@hiqa.ie](mailto:concerns@hiqa.ie)



### BY POST

HIQA  
Smithfield  
Dublin 7  
D07 E98Y

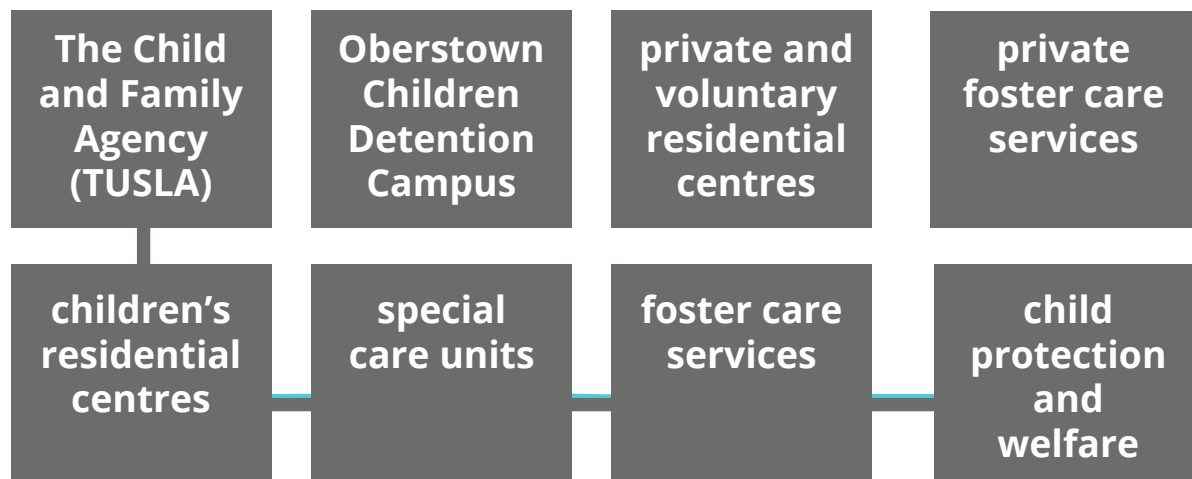


### BY PHONE

021 240 9646

# About this booklet

This booklet explains what to do if you, a family member or someone acting on your behalf wants to give feedback or make a complaint about care or treatment in the following services:



For many, the thought of making a complaint can be off-putting, but this booklet aims to help make the process easier for you.

## This booklet gives advice on:



How to make a complaint or provide feedback



What to do if you are not happy with the response

It also provides information on organisations that can support you, free of charge.

## Section 1:

### Sharing feedback on your care with HIQA

The privacy notice on our website sets out how we process all personal identifiable information that we generate and hold in the course of our work.



## Your feedback will be reviewed by an inspector



While HIQA is unable to investigate individual complaints about a health or social care service under the Health Act 2007, we will listen to what you have to say. We can use your feedback in a number of ways to establish if a service is safe, effective, caring, and well managed.

# This allows us to:

## Measure

Consider how well providers handle complaints and concerns and use them as an opportunity for improving the service provided.

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## Track

Track what is happening in health and social care services.

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## Identify

Identify any trends or patterns that indicate something unacceptable may be happening.

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## Ensure

Ensure services continue to meet essential standards of care.

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## Register

Make decisions when we register and renew registration of designated centres.

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# If we believe

## that those responsible for providing a service

may not be compliant with the necessary regulations and or national standards, we can take a number of actions in response.



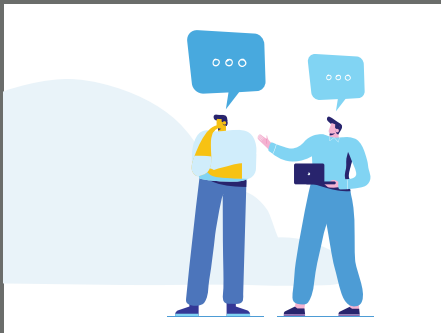
In serious cases, we may consider using our legal powers where there is strong evidence that people are at immediate risk.



# Actions:



Use the information at the next inspection planned for the service.



Ask the responsible person for more information on the general issues of concern (not related to an individual person, patient, resident or child).



Request the responsible person to provide a plan on how they will address any identified issues.



Carry out a risk-based inspection or a focused inspection to assess the quality and safety of care provided to those using the service.

## Section 2

### How to provide feedback to a children's social care service

If you are unhappy with care or treatment you have received you have the right to make a complaint, to have that complaint investigated and to be given a full and prompt reply.



By law, all health and social care services must have a procedure for dealing efficiently with complaints. The person or organisation that is providing a service is responsible for investigating your concern.

#### If you have a complaint, you could:



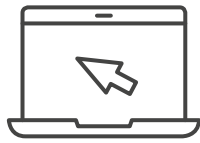
Speak with the staff providing the care

They may be able to resolve your concern at this point



Ask for a copy of their complaints procedure

This should tell you who to contact, how they will handle your complaint and how they will learn from your complaint.



You can make your complaint by email, letter or by speaking with the person in charge.



You can make a complaint by speaking with the complaints officer in person, or by phone.

### **It is usually a good idea to keep a record of what you said**

who you spoke with and what they said. The service you complain to should let you know how long it will take to investigate your complaint and respond to you.



When you make a complaint the service must:

- acknowledge your complaint or concern,
- look into and investigate your complaint or concern,
- let you know what they found,
- respond to you in a timely manner.

# Tusla

If you are unhappy with the care you received from a service operated by Tusla, such as:

**a children's residential centre**

**a special care unit**

**a foster care or child protection service**

## You can talk to the person who is working with you

or ask to talk to their manager or any Tusla person who is working with you. You can also contact the service directly to make a complaint or talk to your social worker or their manager.

This gives them the chance to listen to your concerns, try and put things right for you, and identify any areas that can be improved upon.

**Tusla also likes to hear when they have done something well.**



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

The Tusla policy for complaints and feedback, called 'Tell Us', tells you how they receive compliments, comments and complaints.

This is available from [this link](#) on their website, under About us - Feedback and Complaints - Tell Us Publications.

### If your complaint is not resolved at that point

You can contact a complaints officer. A complaints officer will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and provide regular updates, in line with their policy, until you receive a recommendation.

## Complaints department



01 771 8500  
9am – 5pm  
Monday-Friday



[tellus@tusla.ie](mailto:tellus@tusla.ie)  
[online form](#)  
[website](#)

For your convenience a list of the 17 Tusla service areas including their contact details are set out in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

### If you are not satisfied with the recommendations

Request a review, set out why you want a review within 30 working days of the investigation report being sent to you by writing to the National Manager, Service User Experience within Tusla.

## National Service User Experience Office



01 771 8500



National Service User  
Experience Office,  
Tusla, Heuston South  
Quarter, St John's Rd W,  
Kilmainham, Dublin 8



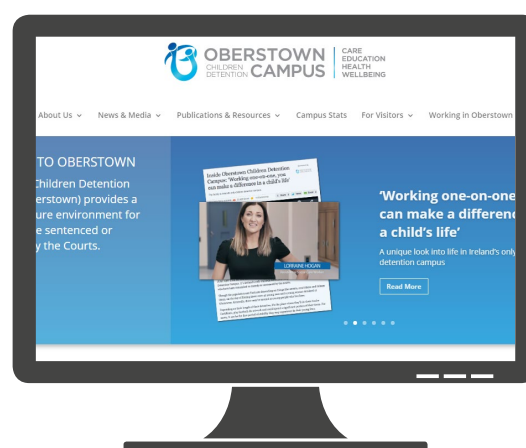
[tellus@tusla.ie](mailto:tellus@tusla.ie)

# Oberstown Children Detention Campus

If you are unhappy with the care you have received from Oberstown Children Detention Campus you can talk to the person who is working with you or ask to talk to their manager, the advocacy officer or the director.

This gives them the chance to try and put things right for you. It also helps Oberstown Children Detention Campus to know what they can do better and how they can do it.

Oberstown Children Detention Campus also likes to receive compliments and comments.



[www.oberstown.com](http://www.oberstown.com)

## Contact Oberstown



[info@oberstown.com](mailto:info@oberstown.com)



Oberstown Children Detention Campus,  
Oberstown, Lusk, Co.  
Dublin, K45 AY66

# Private or Voluntary services

## Residential centres

If your concern is about a private or voluntary children's residential centre you can talk to the person who is working with you or ask to talk to their manager or any Tusla person who is working with you. You can also contact the service directly to make a complaint or talk to your social worker or their manager.

This gives the service the chance to try and put things right for you. It also helps them to know what they can do better and how they can do it.

These centres should have a complaints policy that outlines how they manage complaints. In addition, these centres are registered and inspected by Tusla's Registration and Inspection Service. If you have a concern you could contact Tusla's Registration and Inspection Service who can use this information when inspecting services, and also endeavor to signpost individuals to the relevant agency who can best manage their complaint.



01 897 6857



Registration and  
Inspection Service, TUSLA,  
Units 4/5 Nexus Building,  
2nd Floor, Blanchardstown  
Corporate Park, Dublin 15



[reg.inspection@tusla.ie](mailto:reg.inspection@tusla.ie)

## Foster care services

If your concern relates to a private foster care service you can talk to your social worker or foster carer or any other Tusla person working with you. You can also contact the service directly to make a complaint.

This gives the service the chance to try and put things right for you. It also helps them to know what they can do better and how they can do it. These services should also have a complaints policy to outline how they manage complaints.

# If you are not happy with the response to your feedback



**ombudsman  
do leanaí  
for children**

The Ombudsman for Children can investigate complaints about public bodies providing services or making decisions about children and families, or organisations providing services on behalf of the State. The main functions of the Office are:

- to promote the rights and welfare of children and young people up to 18 years old
- to investigate complaints made by children or on behalf of children against public bodies, schools and hospitals.

## Contact the Ombudsman for Children's Office



1800 202 040



The Ombudsman for Children's  
Office, Millennium House, 52-56  
Great Strand Street,  
Dublin 1, D01 F5P8



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



## Office of the Ombudsman



# Ombudsman

The Ombudsman can examine complaints from people who feel they have been unfairly treated by a public service provider. The Office can examine complaints against most organisations that deliver public services.

The Ombudsman cannot look into a complaint if it is made more than 12 months after you initially complained of the action or you became aware of that action, unless there are very special circumstances.

## Contact the Ombudsman



01 639 5600



The Office of the  
Ombudsman,  
6 Earlsfort Terrace,  
Dublin 2, D02 W773



[info@ombudsman.ie](mailto:info@ombudsman.ie)  
[www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie)



**Before you contact the Ombudsman for Children or Office of the Ombudsman, they recommend that you should first try to resolve your complaint with the relevant service provider.**

# Section 3

## Providing feedback to other organisations

### Concerns of a suspected criminal nature

While Tusla has primary responsibility for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, An Garda Síochána (the Irish police force) has statutory responsibility for the safety and welfare of children. Matters of a suspected criminal nature should be reported to An Garda Síochána.



#### An Garda Síochána

Ireland's National Police & Security Service

Phone your local garda station or via the Garda Confidential line



For details of how to contact your local Garda Station visit - [www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Station-Directory](http://www.garda.ie/en/Contact-Us/Station-Directory)



In emergency situations always dial 999 or 112.

# Mental health services

If you have a concern about a mental health service you should contact the Mental Health Commission as they regulate and monitor mental health services. Under the Mental Health Acts 2001- 2018, the Mental Health Commission does not have a statutory remit to manage individual complaints about mental health services.



They will use this information when inspecting services, and also endeavor to signpost individuals to the relevant agency who can best manage their complaint or can support/advocate for them while their complaint is being investigated.



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



01 636 2400



The Mental Health  
Commission, Waterloo  
Exchange, Waterloo Road,  
Dublin 4, D04 E5W7



[info@mhcirci.ie](mailto:info@mhcirci.ie)

# Health and social care professionals

If you have a concern or issues in relation to the practice and or conduct of an individual health or social care professional, you should in the first instance complain to the service where you received the care or treatment.



If your complaint involves professional misconduct, you may wish to contact the body that regulates their profession.

# Professions



**Dental Council**  
Comhairle Fiaclóireachta

Dentists

**The Dental Council**

[dentalcouncil.ie](http://dentalcouncil.ie)



Doctors

**The Medical Council**

[medicalcouncil.ie](http://medicalcouncil.ie)



Nurses and midwives

**The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)**

[nmbi.ie](http://nmbi.ie)



Pharmacists

**The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI)**

[thepsi.ie](http://thepsi.ie)



Social workers, physiotherapists, radiographers, speech and language therapists, dietitians, medical scientists, occupational therapists, optometrists, radiation therapists

**CORU**

[coru.ie](http://coru.ie)

## Section 4

### Support with providing feedback or making a complaint

Complaining can be a difficult experience, but there are a number of organisations that can give you helpful advice and support. Having an advocate may be helpful. An advocate is someone who can act on the behalf of a child, young person

or their family when dealing with the social care service. An advocate can represent the views of those seeking information or making complaints when required. Some of these organisations are listed below:



#### Citizens Information

is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on a broad range of public and social services. Further information can be found on their website:

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



## **EPIC**

### **(Empowering Young People in Care in Ireland)**

is a national child rights-based organisation that works with and for children and young people who are currently living in care or who have experience of living in care. Further information can be found on their website:

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



## **Inclusion Ireland**

promotes advocacy for people with an intellectual disability, particularly self-advocacy. Further information can be found on their website:

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



## **Irish Advocacy Network**

provides peer advocacy, support and information to people with mental health difficulties. Further information can be found on their website:

[www.irishadvocacynetwork.com](http://www.irishadvocacynetwork.com)

## Section 4

### Support with providing feedback or making a complaint



#### **Irish Foster Care Association**

is the representative body for foster care in Ireland. Further information can be found on their website:

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



#### **Legal Aid Board**

provides legal advice and representation in court. The Legal Aid Board also provides family mediation services. Further information can be found on their website:

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



#### **National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities**

provides an independent, confidential and free representative advocacy service that works exclusively for the person using the service. Further information can be found on their website: <https://advocacy.ie>





## Patient Advocacy Service

is an independent, free and confidential service that provides information and support to people who want to make a complaint about an experience they have had in a HSE-funded public acute hospital making a formal complaint about their care. Further information can be found at [www.patientadvocacyservice.ie](http://www.patientadvocacyservice.ie)



## Pavee Point

is a national non-governmental organisation comprised of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population working in partnership at national, regional, local and international levels. Further information can be found on their website:

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



## Treoir

provides a free, confidential, specialist information service for unmarried parents, living together or apart, their extended families and those working with them. They provide information on legal, social welfare and parenting issues. Further information can be found on their website:

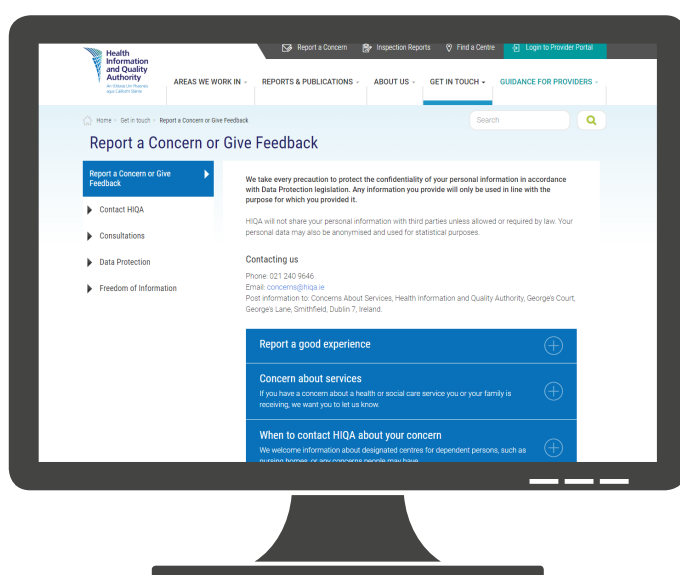
[www.treoir.ie](http://www.treoir.ie)

# Section 5

## How to contact HIQA

HIQA has a Concerns Team who can assist you with providing feedback to HIQA. Our dedicated Concerns Team will also advise you on other organisations or supports, as outlined in this booklet, which may be able to help you.

You can contact HIQA's Concerns Team in the following ways



[Online](#)



021 240 9646



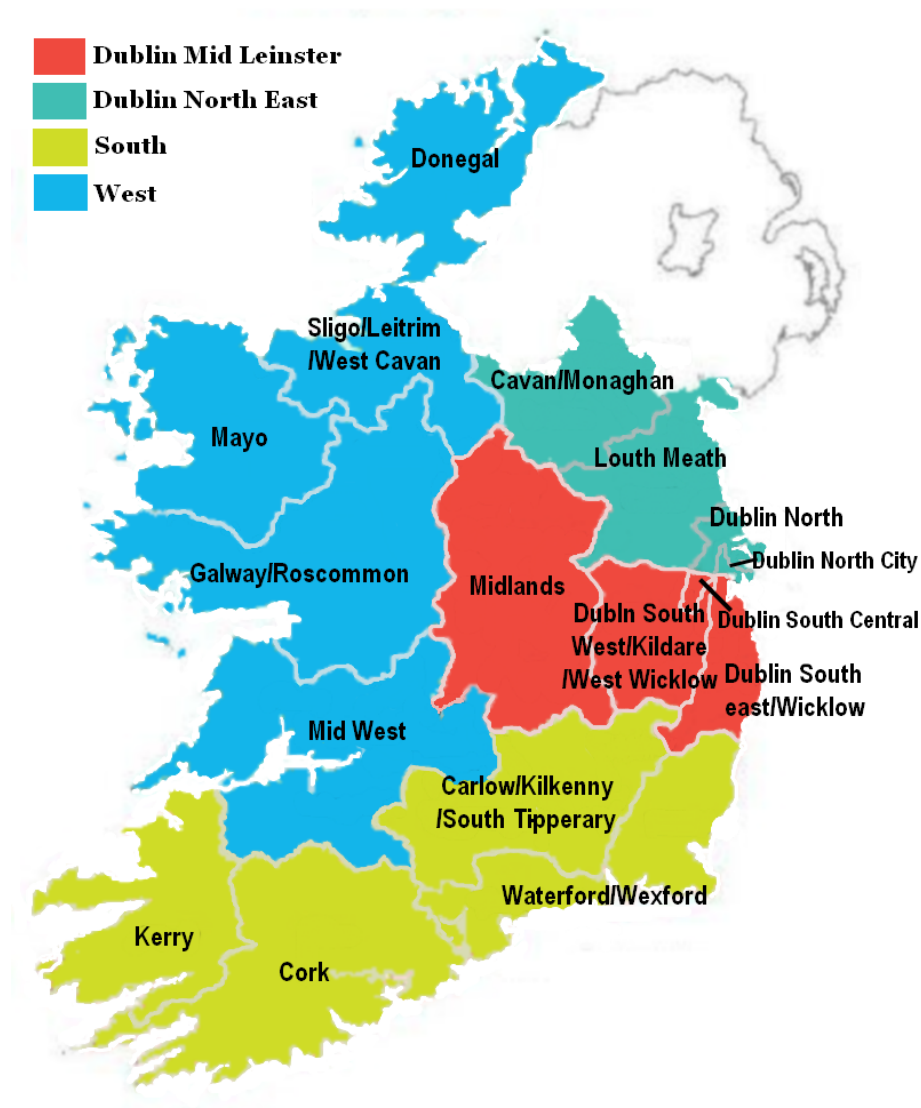
Concerns, HIQA,  
George's Court,  
Smithfield, Dublin 7,  
D07 E98Y



[concerns@hiqa.ie](mailto:concerns@hiqa.ie)

# Appendix 1:

## Tusla service areas and contact details



### Further Information:

Further information on Tusla's management team can be found at [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)



# Thank you

**Published by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)**

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