

INFORMATION NOTE:

CHILD PROTECTION & WELFARE TRAINING FOR THE EARLY YEARS

NEW CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING FOR EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

A new child protection and welfare training course for the early years sector is now available and it will be delivered by the Childcare Committees and a number of Voluntary Childcare Organisations.

- The first level of training to be offered is ***Child Protection & Welfare: Basic Level***. This is a Child & Family Agency accredited module that has been developed for the early years sector.
- The new programme replaces the 'Keeping Safe' child protection training course
- Over 3 years training will be offered to all early years workers (including childminders).
- Training will be free as far as possible.
- Only Trainers accredited to the new programme can deliver the new module.
- Training for Designated Liaison Persons will be rolled out later in 2014.

PURPOSE OF INFORMATION NOTE

This note contains information about the new Child protection and Welfare Training Programme for the Early Years Sector. It includes a summary and frequently asked questions. The information in this document is for everyone in the early years sector, it will be of particular interest to:

- Childminders
- Early years staff and management
- Boards of management in early years services
- Designated Liaison Persons in early years services
- Staff and management at Voluntary Childcare Organisations
- Staff and management at school age services

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION NOTE

From January 2014, a new standardised child protection training course is available to practitioners in the early years sector. The first level of training to be rolled-out is ***Child Protection & Welfare: Basic Level***, a quality assured child protection training course tailored to the needs of the sector. It will be rolled out over 3 years to practitioners in both services and home-based settings.

The role that early years practitioners have in the lives of children and their families means that they are uniquely placed to recognise when there are concerns about the safety, welfare or well-being of a child. Early years practitioners and services also have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care through their policies, procedures and practice.

This one-day accredited training course looks at what constitutes child abuse, roles and responsibilities in reporting child protection and welfare concerns, child protection policy and safe work practices. Many of the participants in the pilot programme reported increased knowledge, skills and confidence in responding to child protection and welfare concerns after attending the course.

Child Protection & Welfare: Basic Level will replace 'Keeping Safe' child protection and welfare training and is aimed at everyone working in the Early Years Sector.

The national roll-out is being co-ordinated by the National Early Years Children First Committee, an interagency committee tasked with the implementation of *Children First* in the sector. *Children First* is Ireland's national guidance for the protection and welfare of children. This is a cross sector initiative and Early Childhood Ireland and Barnardos have had a key role in providing training and quality assurance for the new programme.

To ensure nationwide access to the training it will be delivered by the Childcare Committees, Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta and Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta. This coordinated approach aims to provide access to a standardised training module for everyone, at minimum cost, and consistent implementation of child protection policy and procedures across the sector.

Designated Liaison Person training and an online information resource will be developed for childcare students and will be launched in 2014.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION & WELFARE TRAINING: BASIC LEVEL?

This is a one-day Child & Family Agency accredited course and it will be rolled out from Jan 2014. It is for everyone working in the early years sector including staff and boards of management in early years services and childminders.

WHO WILL DELIVER THE TRAINING?

The new module has been designed for the sector and will be delivered by Trainers based in:

- City/County Childcare Committees
- Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta
- Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta

A Training for Trainers programme has been developed and has been delivered in partnership with Barnardos, Early Childhood Ireland & the Child & Family Agency.

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A NEW TRAINING PROGRAMME?

Children First Guidance 2011 recognises the important role of training in recognising and responding to child abuse and welfare concerns. The Guidance notes that all services involved with children have a responsibility to provide training in this area on an on-going basis, it is envisaged that the forthcoming Children First Legislation will place this on a statutory footing.

Until now there has not been a uniform module available for the sector and availability of training has very much depended on area, with some areas very well served and others having limited access to child protection training. The new programme provides a quality assured child protection training module tailored to the practice needs of the sector and available to everyone at little or no cost.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE BASIC LEVEL TRAINING?

Child Protection & Welfare – Basic Level Training is aimed at everyone working in the early years sector. This includes:

- Voluntary/statutory notified childminders
- Designated Liaison Persons
- Practitioners in Early Years Services

- Boards of management
- Childminders (not in the above categories)
- Staff and management in afterschool Services.

In some areas there has been limited access to child protection training and there may be a need to prioritise places over the 3 year roll out of the programme.

HOW MANY PLACES WILL A SERVICE BE OFFERED ON THE BASIC LEVEL TRAINING?

At the moment services are being offered 2-3 places on the course depending on local demand. Our aim in the first year is to offer the training to as many services as possible. All services will be offered places on the training programme over the next 3 years.

Designated Liaison Persons who have not attended 'Keeping Safe' training and services where no-one has received 'Keeping Safe' training may be given priority where demand is greater than places available.

Designated Liaison Persons who have attended 'Keeping Safe' training are welcome to attend the new training module.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I ATTENDED 'KEEPING SAFE' CHILD PROTECTION & WELFARE TRAINING?

'Keeping Safe' training was the child protection and welfare training that was delivered by HSE/Child & Family Agency Children First Information & Advice Officers and some other accredited trainers, all participants received a certificate.

If you are unsure about what type of training you have had in the past contact the Trainer in your local Childcare Committee, Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta.

CAN CHILDCARE STUDENTS ATTEND THE BASIC LEVEL COURSE?

This course is aimed at early years practitioners who are currently working in a service or with children and will not be offered to childcare students at this stage. An online information resource will be available for childcare students going on placement and the committee is working on a standard module for childcare students.

WILL PARTICIPANTS NEED TO REFRESH?

It is recommended that early years practitioners attend this training every 3 years. For example, people who have attended 'Keeping Safe' Training in 2013 would not be expected

to attend the new course until 2016. It will remain the responsibility of the practitioner and employer to ensure that their training is up to date.

WILL THERE BE A CHARGE FOR THE TRAINING?

One of the aims of the programme is to provide accessible training and, as far as possible, training will be offered with no charge. However, a small fee may be charged to secure the booking and/or to cover expenses.

WILL PARTICIPANTS GET A CERTIFICATE?

Child Protection & Welfare – Basic Level Training is an accredited course and all participants who complete the full session will be awarded a certificate.

WILL THE TRAINING BE AVAILABLE IN IRISH?

The training is being provided in Irish by trainers based in Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta and Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta. Services may choose which training they wish to attend.

CAN WORKERS FROM OTHER SECTORS ATTEND THE TRAINING?

This course is for practitioners in Early Years Settings, if you do not work in the early years sector and would like to attend Child Protection & Welfare training contact your local Children First Information and Advice Officers, based in the Child & Family Agency.

If you would like further information on when training will be available in your area please contact your local Childcare Committee, *Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta* or Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta.

THE NATIONAL EARLY YEARS CHILDREN FIRST COMMITTEE

The Programme has been developed by the National Early Years Children First Committee and funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. This collaborative interagency committee is chaired by Kathryn O’Riordan, Cork City Childcare Committee and the members are Louth County Childcare Committee, Dublin City Childcare Committee, Fingal County Childcare Committee, Child & Family Agency Children First Office, Child & Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate, Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta , Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta, Barnardos, Childminding Ireland and Early Childhood Ireland.