

Kinvara Hockey Club

Procedures for Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Kinvara Hockey Club has prepared this policy in line with Hockey Ireland Code of Ethics and Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport. Sport organisations have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of children.

Staff and volunteers should be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be being abused or at risk of being abused. They should know how to recognise and respond to the possibility of abuse or neglect, so as to ensure that the most effective steps are taken to protect a child and to contribute to the ongoing safety of children in the club.

1. Categories of Abuse

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) defines four categories of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. When working with children/young people it is important to be aware of the four categories of abuse these are as follows:

❖ Neglect:

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

❖ Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver.

❖ Physical Abuse:

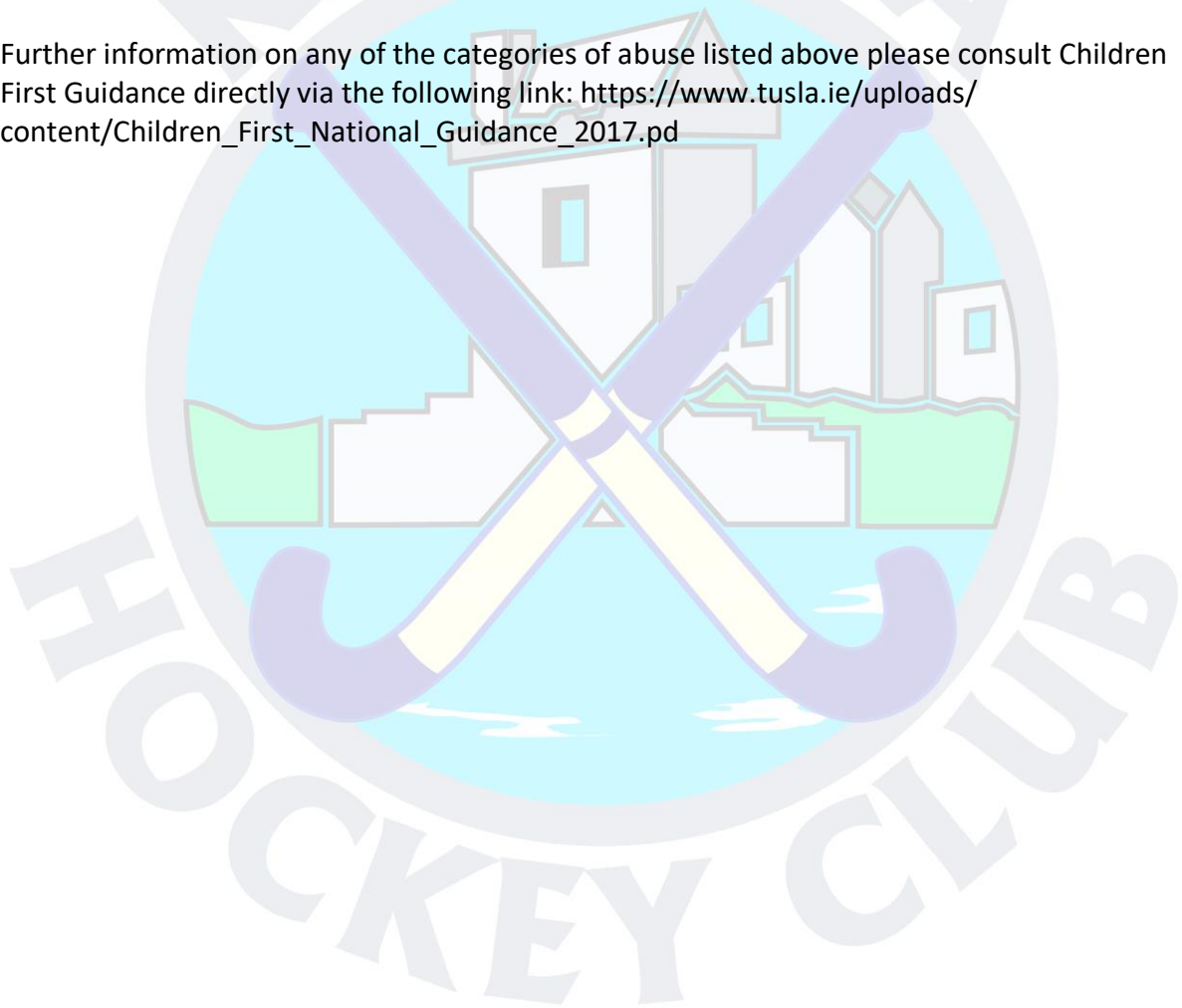
Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment.

- Beating Slapping, hitting or kicking.
 - Pushing Shaking or throwing.
 - Pinching Biting, choking or hair-pulling.
 - Use of excessive force in handling.
 - Deliberate poisoning.
 - Suffocation.
 - Fabricated/induced illness.
 - Female genital mutilation.
- ❖ Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Further information on any of the categories of abuse listed above please consult Children First Guidance directly via the following link: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf



2. Responding to person who discloses abuse

Responding to a young person who discloses abuse

A child or young person may disclose to a coach/volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children/ young people will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused.

If a child or young person hints at or tells a coach/volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by another child/young person (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child/young person may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- Remember, the child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Accept what the child or young person has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child/young person that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you.
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When asking questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only.
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse.
- You should also avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told

Responding to adults who disclose retrospective childhood abuse

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Such disclosures may come to light when people attend counselling or may

sometimes arise as a consequence of adult services and services which work with parents/guardians and families.

Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be a current risk to any child or young person who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure and this may necessitate carrying out a risk assessment to establish these facts.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child/young person who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, and in accordance with our reporting procedures; a mandated person or DLP should report the allegation to Tusla or their local Gateway Team without delay.

Tusla have issued a Retrospective Abuse Report Form which should be used when reporting cases of adults disclosing childhood abuse to them.



3. Procedures for Responding to Child Abuse

Any member of Kinvara Hockey Club who is informed, knows, suspects or is concerned that a child is, has been or may be the subject of child abuse, while engaged in club activities or who has received information regarding any such concerns involving persons who act on behalf of the Club, has a duty to convey such concerns as a matter of urgency to the Designated Liaison Persons at Club.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP), in consultation with the person who raised the concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the Designated Liaison Person will report to a Tusla duty social worker.

If the DLP decides not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded.
- The employee or coach/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla.
- The employee or coach/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

The individual employee or coach/volunteer has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently.

Kinvara Hockey Club DLP will keep a record of concerns which, following consideration, do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern. Concerns which do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern may, upon review, show patterns or clusters which may heighten the level of concern.

- Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- All agencies dealing with children must cooperate in the sharing of records with the statutory authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
- Ensure that records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures are kept securely and safely within the organisation/club.
- Records should only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Records should only be shared on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child/young person.
- These records can only be accessed by the Club Chair and the COO and DLP.
- They will be stored in individual sealed envelope and in locked file cabinet accessible by the CCO/DLP of Kinvara Hockey Club.
- This record will be retained.
- Child protection records should be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Reasonable Grounds for concern

There are many reasons a coach/volunteer may be concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or young person.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) states that “Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected”. It is important to remember that children/young people are sometimes abused by members of their own family, by peers or by others outside the family environment such as strangers, workers or trusted adults.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused.
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

Wherever appropriate, any issues should be checked with the parents /carers when considering whether a concern exists, unless doing so may further endanger the child or the person considering making the report. The DLP should be able to support this process. It is important to remember that abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

Where ‘Reasonable Grounds for Concern’ may not exist

There will be occasions where certain instances of alleged abuse against a volunteer or staff member/ employee may be suspected, or there may be doubts as to the substantive nature of an allegation or suspicion. A suspicion which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. Where there may be insufficient grounds for establishing or substantiating such concerns the following course of action is recommended but should be proceeded with carefully and confidentially while ensuring the welfare of the child remains paramount:

Advice at all times may be sought from the National Designated Person and informal consultation may always be obtained from the relevant statutory authority

In situations where the Designated Liaison Person, following consultations (perhaps with the relevant statutory authority) subsequently decides that an allegation received or concerns relayed to them will not be formally reported to the relevant statutory authorities, as it has not the threshold for reasonable grounds for concern, the individual who raised the

concerns or made the allegations should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the reported concerns are not being reported to the statutory authorities. The individual should be advised that, if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with, or report to, the statutory authorities themselves.

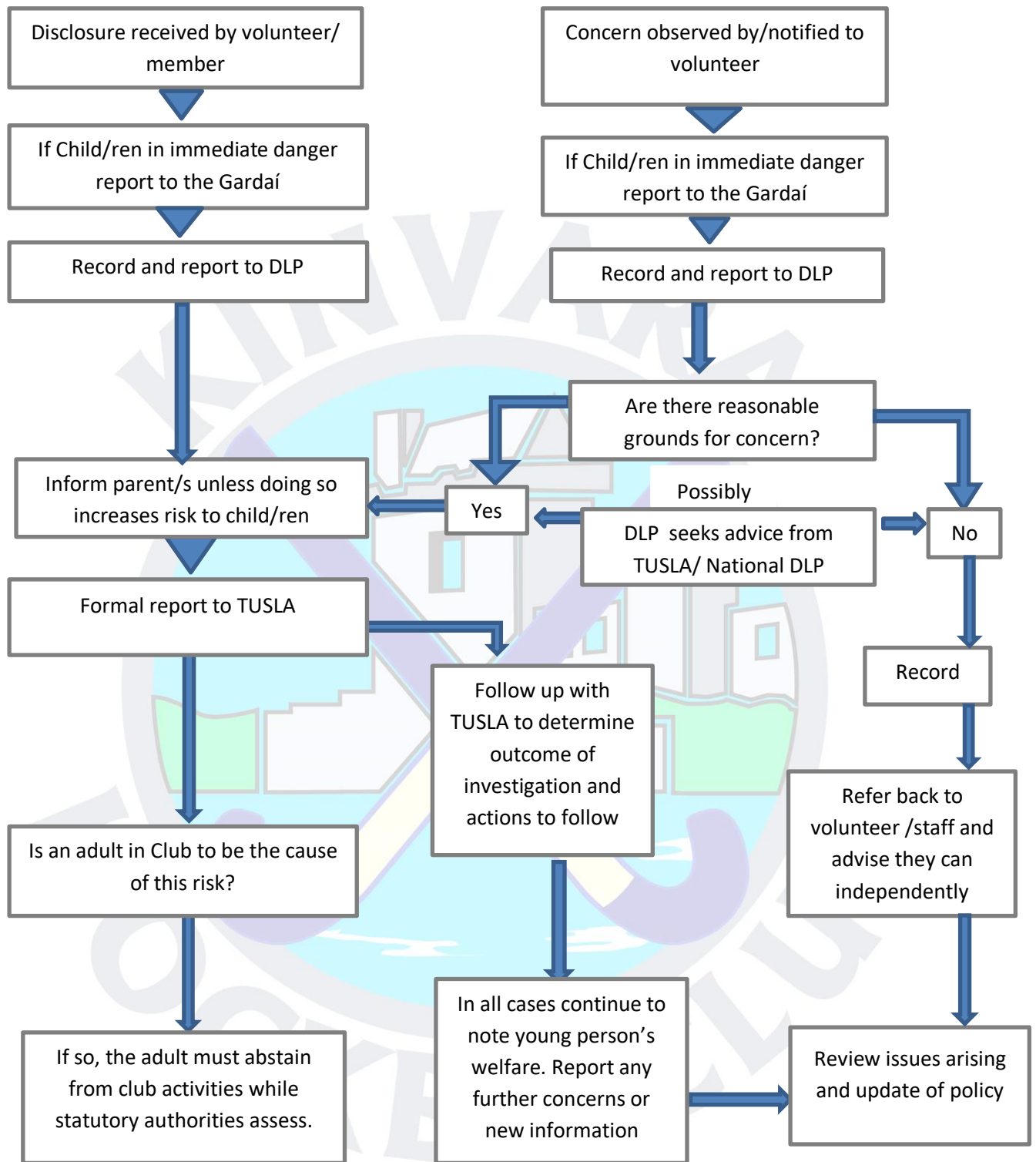
Should the person who passed their concerns be a child then the child's parents should be informed of the decision not to formally report to the statutory authorities, unless there are extenuating reasons not to report this to the parents.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the child and the person about whom the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

- Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child/young person with the relevant statutory authorities and with parents/guardians.
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with children/young people and families and in adult services should make this clear to parents /guardians and to the child/young person.
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Parents /guardians and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.



Summary of Reporting Procedures

4. Procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse made against coaches/volunteer

Kinvara Hockey Club have agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against a coach/ volunteer. If such an allegation is made, three steps should be take place:

- Responding to allegations of abuse made against a coaches /volunteers.
- Reporting allegations of abuse made against coaches / volunteers to Tusla.
- Internal procedures for dealing with the coach/volunteer should to be clearly outlined

Responding to allegations

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/ young person;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person;
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the club/sports organisation code of behaviour for coaches & volunteers;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines.

If an allegation is made against a coach/volunteer in Kinvara HC the club must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the organisation/club guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures, the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law. Kinvara HC has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the coach/volunteer.

There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child/ young person and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with a coach/ volunteer.

Special Considerations

The following points should be considered:

- The safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the sports club/organisation should take any necessary steps which may be immediately necessary to protect children
- If a Sports Leader is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness.

Reporting allegations

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

- Advice should be sought be sought from the duty social worker with regard to any actions that the club need to take to protect the child/ren that may be at risk.

- In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities.
- It is advisable that this task be undertaken by a senior office holder other than the designated liaison person/club children's officer who takes the responsibility for reporting.

When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the senior officer of a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His /her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory authorities.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his /her parents /carers, the alleged offender, his /her family, Sports Leaders) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Internal procedures for dealing with a coach/volunteer

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a coach/ volunteer, the organisation/club disciplinary procedures should ensure that fair procedure is followed and take account of the employment contract/membership guidelines as well as the rules of natural justice. The following points should be incorporated into the procedure:

- In making an immediate decision about the coach/ volunteer's presence in the organisation/club, the Chairperson should as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the child/young person. These should be proportionate to the level of risk to the child/young person; 'protective measures' do not presume guilt.
- The Chairperson should privately inform the coach/ volunteer that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation.
- The coach/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond.
- The Chairperson should note the response from the coach/ volunteer and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla.
- The coach/volunteer should be offered the option to have representation at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla.
- While Tusla will not provide advice on club matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to children/ young people can be sought from the local Tusla social work office.
- The Chairperson should ensure that actions taken by the organisation/club do not undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The organisation/club should liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.

Once the statutory process is completed, the organisation/club should consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or has been found not guilty does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible

5. Resources/ Contacts

Gort Garda Station

091 636400

Duty Social Worker/Dedicated Tusla Contact Point Galway

087 3677363

HI National DLP Contact

Shirley Moore ndp@hockey.ie

HI National Childrens Officer

Dwayne Hill nationalchildrensofficer@hockey.ie (01) 7163260

Kinvara Hockey Club CCO

Sharon Considine ccokinvarahockey@gmail.com

Reporting forms available

<https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/publications-and-forms/>