



2.1E GUIDANCE ON REPORTING CHILD SAFEGUARDING SUSPICIONS, CONCERNS, KNOWLEDGE OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST DECEASED RESPONDENTS

All child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations must be received with openness to listening and responding pastorally to the complainant. If a suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation relates to a respondent who is deceased, it may not be possible to establish the credibility of the information. The following response should be made:

All suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations should be reported to the RCB Safeguarding Casework Team, who will ensure that:

- A suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation against deceased respondents must be reported to PSNI/An Garda Síochána who have a responsibility to assess whether a criminal offence occurred. In the case of deceased respondents, while prosecution is not possible, PSNI/An Garda Síochána will still require notification as the information may be relevant to an existing investigation.
- The Children First Act 2015 states that where a mandated person believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed, is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed they should report to Tusla. Children First Act 2015 guidance also states, 'In cases of retrospective abuse, a report needs to be made where there is a current or potential future risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation.' It can be concluded from the guidance provided through Children First that where the alleged respondent is no longer alive there is no current or ongoing risk to any child from that respondent; therefore in this instance there is no need to report to Tusla. There is also no requirement to report such allegations to the Gateway Team in Northern Ireland.

If the suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation relates to a deceased member of church personnel, the information should be reported to the statutory authorities as outlined above. The Diocesan Safeguarding Panel will attempt to establish the facts from the complainant and any case records that already exist. If there are other allegations against the deceased member of church personnel and there is a similar pattern evident in the new information, it can assist in assessment of credibility.

If the allegation is deemed credible, an offer to meet the Bishop or other relevant Church leader should be made to the complainant.

The Bishop should offer pastoral care and may consider offering an apology for any harm disclosed. If there are no previous allegations against the respondent and there is no credible evidence, the complainant should be advised accordingly at an appropriate time.