



BARNAHUS

I R E L A N D

A Guide for Parents and Caregivers



Barnahus West

An interagency model, working towards better outcomes for children.

What happens at Barnahus West...

At Barnahus West, we know that any form of sexual abuse can affect children, young people, and their families in different kinds of ways. At Barnahus, we want to make sure that children and young people receive the right help and support by coordinating and providing all the services needed. We bring together Tusla, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive (HSE), and Children's Health Ireland (CHI). These agencies will meet as an experienced team to discuss your child's needs and share information to make sure your child is receiving the services and support they may need. You will always be informed throughout your journey, and we will be here to help. **As a parent or carer, we know the importance of your role in supporting your child. Our team will work with you to support you and your family's needs.**



Protecting children...

When someone raises a concern about the safety and welfare of a child, including abuse or neglect, Tusla's job is to work with children, young people, and families to make sure they are safe and well cared for.

It is important that children, young people, and families have an opportunity to talk about their worries and what they would like to see happen to keep the child safe. **After speaking with you, your child, and the important people in your life, Tusla will come up with a plan to keep your child and other children safe.**

Your child's specialist interview...

As part of the evidence collection process and when your child feels ready to speak about what has happened, they can meet with specially trained interviewers. These interviewers are Social Workers and Gardaí who work together in pairs. Specialist interviewers are highly trained to gather the best evidence when speaking with your child. The evidence your child gives will be recorded and may be used in court.

The interviewers will meet with you and your child in normal clothes before the child's interview. These interviews take place in a child- friendly environment and will be at your child's pace. They can choose to stop at any point.

Barnahus aims to prevent or minimise re-traumatisation by limiting the number of times your child is interviewed.



Medical examination...

Some children who come to Barnahus will require a medical examination. The team offer both medical and forensic medical examinations. The purpose of an examination will be discussed with you, and decisions can be made about what is in your child's best interest.

A medical examination may be helpful for the purposes of wellbeing, investigation, and recovery. Forensic examination can provide very important physical evidence to the court.

Supportive, specially trained doctors and nurses carry out these child-friendly medical examinations when it is agreed to be in the child's best interest.



Therapeutic support...

At Barnahus West, you can speak with therapists who specialise in supporting children and young people who may have experienced sexual abuse.

We know that protective caregivers have an important role in helping your child. We will support you by providing advice about looking after your and your child's emotional wellbeing.

If your child has therapeutic needs, our therapist will get to know them, listen to them, and help them with any questions they have.

We can decide with you what is most suitable for your child. This may be a referral to another support service.



Frequently Asked Questions...

Q. How can my child access Barnahus West?

- A. If you have concerns that your child has been sexually abused, Irish law requires that your concern is reported to Tusla. Following this, Tusla will refer your child to Barnahus. **All aspects of this service are free of charge.**

Q. What if we have communication needs?

- A. If you or your child have communication needs, we will invite a suitable person to assist and be with you.

Q. I am not sure if I want my child to attend Barnahus. Can I find out more?

- A. Yes. You can contact us on **087 4638779**. If you decide you do not want your child referred to Barnahus, Tusla and An Garda Síochána will continue to work together, and medical care can still be accessed through the HSE/CHI/SATU.¹

Q. How can we avail of Barnahus when we live so far away?

- A. While we aim to support your child as locally as possible, some aspects of their care may be provided across various locations. We can explore if online support would work for you and your child.

Q. Can I refuse one part of the service and not the others?

- A. Yes, it is your decision what services you choose to avail of at Barnahus West.

Q. What other information will Barnahus West need?

- A. Your child may have been involved with other supports and services. It would be helpful if you could share with us any assessments or reports relating to your child.

¹ SATU stands for **Sexual Assault Treatment Unit**. Barnahus West SATUs are currently located in Donegal and Galway.

Q. How will my child's personal information be managed?

- A. Your personal data will be processed in compliance with all relevant data protection legislation and other legal requirements to which Tusla, CHI, HSE and An Garda Síochána are obliged to adhere to. Full details of Barnahus West Privacy Policy will be provided to you highlighting how we will use your personal data. Further information regarding your right as a data subject is available at: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/104935_Barnahus_Data_Protection_Notice_Poster_v5.pdf.





Barnahus West is located at Faustina House, IDA Small Business Centre, Tuam Road, Galway **H91 VW84**. We will inform you should our services require visits to other locations across the Barnahus West region.

We have a website www.barnahus.ie if you would like to find out more.

We would like to know what you think of Barnahus.

You can fill out a feedback form, or let us know at: tellus@tusla.ie

CONTACT US

Telephone:

0874638779