

DETAILS OF YOUR DESIGNATED PERSON	
NAME:	
ROLE:	
CONTACT NUMBER:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	
DATE OF MEETING:	
YOUR NOTES:	

The HSE wish to acknowledge the input from the Patient Representative Groups who were involved in the development of this document.

Further information is available  
on the HSE website:  
[www.hse.ie/opensdisclosure](http://www.hse.ie/opensdisclosure)



Cáilíocht Náisiúnta agus Sábháilteacht Othar  
Office of Patient and Clinical  
National Quality and Patient Safety  
Office of the Chief Clinical Officer



NATIONAL  
OPEN DISCLOSURE  
PROGRAMME

## Attending an Open Disclosure Meeting

Information for  
Patients and Families



Updated June 2025





## WHAT IS AN OPEN DISCLOSURE MEETING?

The HSE is committed to communicating honestly and openly with you and your family when something unexpected happens while in our care. This includes when a patient safety incident occurs. That means that something happened that wasn't expected, and it may or may not have caused harm.

**Open disclosure** means explaining what happened, saying sorry, and talking honestly about it. This is part of the HSE's policy.

The time after an incident can be emotional and difficult. We want you to know we are here to meet with you and support you. This leaflet explains what open disclosure is and how we will support you.



## BEFORE THE MEETING

You have the right to open, honest communication about the incident. You can ask questions, and there can be ongoing conversations if you wish.

You will be given the name of a key contact person, called a "designated person". For serious incidents (where someone was seriously harmed or died), a designated person will guide you or your support person. The designated person will stay in touch, give you information, and help arrange a date, time, and place for the open disclosure meeting. They will consider any specific requests you might have. They will also explain who will attend and how to prepare.

It's a good idea to agree with them:

- How you want to be contacted
- When you want to be contacted
- How often you want updates

They can also tell you about any other supports or services available.



## HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

It's completely normal to feel a range of emotions at this time. You can bring someone with you for support, such as a trusted friend or family member. If you'd prefer, your designated person can help arrange for an independent advocate to attend the meeting with you.

It can help to write down any worries or questions before the meeting, in case you forget them. Your designated person will also help with practical things like how to get to the venue, parking, and any accessibility needs.

## Open Disclosure and the Patient Safety Act 2023

A new law came into effect in September 2024: **the Patient Safety (Notifiable Incidents and Open Disclosure) Act 2023**. It supports a culture of openness and honesty across health and social care services.

The law says healthcare providers must speak openly and compassionately with patients and/or their support person (called a "relevant person" in the law) when certain serious incidents, called **notifiable incidents**, happen.

There are currently 13 types of notifiable incidents. These include serious events, like when someone dies after a medication mistake, or when a baby receives special treatment like therapeutic hypothermia (cooling therapy) after birth. The law sets out the steps services must follow, and requires them to report these incidents to the relevant regulator.



## AT THE MEETING

We want the open disclosure meeting to feel as comfortable as possible.

- Your designated person will meet you when you arrive at the location and time agreed with you.
- They will explain who is attending the meeting and bring you to the room.
- The meeting is a two-way conversation. You can talk about what happened and how it affected you. We'll explain the steps the service is taking.

At this meeting you will:

- be treated with dignity and respect.
- be provided with information about what is known so far and what has been done.
- receive an apology for any harm caused.
- have a chance to ask questions and raise concerns.
- help agree on next steps. You will be provided with further information as it becomes available, if you wish.

If a review of care is happening, we will explain the process.



## AFTER THE MEETING

Your designated person will walk you out and talk about what happens next. They will follow up with you afterwards to see how you're doing. You can contact them any time if you have questions or need more information. You will also receive a summary letter of the meeting with the key points and actions from the meeting. If more updates become available, your designated person will keep you informed.

For more information about open disclosure, visit the website or scan the QR code overleaf.