

How many vulnerable children were in Industrial dispute area?



Alan Shatter TD

Fine Gael Spokesperson on Children, Alan Shatter TD, has called on the Minister for Children, Barry Andrews TD and the HSE to state how many of the 188 children who have now been acknowledged by the HSE to have died either while in care or about whom there were concerns resided in this area and were affected by an industrial dispute.

He said that the industrial dispute in the East Coast area has been ongoing since 2002 and has resulted in ongoing non-compliance with the Child Care protection guidelines.

“The existence of this dispute was first revealed by the Children’s Ombudsman in a report published by her six weeks ago. She criticised both the HSE and successive Ministers for Children for maladministration in failing to both publicly reveal the existence of this dispute and for taking no action to resolve it. There is a genuine concern that some of those children reported to have died from unnatural causes such as suicide, drug overdoses and unlawful killings would be alive today had this dispute been resolved and the Child Care protection guidelines observed.

“It is in the public interest that the answer to this question be given. It is also of vital importance that this dispute be brought to an end to ensure that the continuing failure to comply with the child protection guidelines does not place the lives of more children at risk. It is not only astonishing but an outrageous abdication of political responsibility that, six weeks after the publication of the Children’s Ombudsman Report, no action has been taken by the Minister to resolve this dispute. The conduct of the **HSE** and **IMPACT** is also indefensible as, despite all the scandalous revelations of recent weeks, they are acting contrary to the interests of children.”