**DEVELOPING CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES AND A CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

**GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATES FOR ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**This document draws on relevant Children First legislation, guidance and various Tusla resource documents.**

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| --- |
| Organisations/services should tailor the text in this document to their specific activities with young people and their own organisation’s management structures. It is important that the name of your organisations and the specific titles and names of those with key roles are outlined.*All guidance notes and and information outlined (in blue) to assist in completing these templates should be removed before an organisation adopts and implements their Child Safeguarding Statement and supporting Child Safeguarding Procedures templates.*The Children First Act, 2015 outlines the requirements for six specified procedures. Templates and examples of these are included in this document.In addition, Child Safeguarding Statement risk assessments outline additional procedures that may need to be place. This document outlines a number of templates for additional procedures for child safeguarding. |

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*Tusla Children First Information and Advice Officer,*

Disclaimer: All reasonable care has been taken in relation to the accuracy of the information in this document. The information is intended as a guide only, does not purport to be a legal interpretation, and does not make any warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of the data.

**CONTENTS**

**Sources**

Content in this document is drawn from:

**1. Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)** “Children First National Guidance”

**2. Tusla (2018) Child Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice** **(2018)** “Child Safeguarding Guide”which includes six best practice themes.

For further information and guidance on any aspect of this document, please visit the Children First section on [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS**

**Child Safeguarding** - ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by staff and volunteers to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, should these arise. Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm, promoting their welfare and in doing so creating an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential

**Child Safeguarding Statement** **(CSS)** – defined in the Children First Act 2015, this is a statement which includes a written assessment of risk of harm to children and the measures that will be taken to manage any identified risks.

**Guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures** – previously referred to as child protection and welfare policy and procedures, the procedures an organisation has in place to safeguard children from harm and reduce the risks to children of being harmed.

**Child or young person** – a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married.

**Child Protection and Welfare Report Form** –form for use in reporting suspected or alleged abuse or welfare concerns to Tusla. Available at - <https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.docx>

**Child Safeguarding Guide** – Child Safeguarding: A guide for policy, procedure and practice [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, “National Guidance”** – national, overarching guidance for the protection and welfare of children, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The current version was published in 2017 [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)

**Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** – a resource to any staff member who has a child protection concern. DLPs are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly and act as a liaison person with other agencies (see Children First National Guidance).

**Mandated Person** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report (i.e. mandatory reporting) concerns which meet or exceed a threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports, where requested to do so.

**Named Person** – a person appointed by an organisation to lead the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures and for ensuring that policies and procedures are consistent with best practice as detailed in the Tusla Child Safeguarding Guide. (This person can also be the Relevant Person as outlined in the Children First Act 2015).

**Organisation** – any department/sector/body/agency/organisation whether private, public or voluntary

**Provider** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means, in relation to a relevant service, a person…

(a) who provides a relevant service, and

(b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service:

(i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service

(ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other

person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or

(iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service’.

**Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF)** – form for use in reporting to Tusla

suspected or alleged retrospective abuse or welfare concerns, on adults who allege childhood abuse. Available at - <https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Retrospective_Abuse_Report_Form_FINAL.docx> See Appendices for this policy.

**Relevant Person** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider’s Child Safeguarding Statement’.

**Relevant service** – as defined in the Children First Act 2015, ‘means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1 [of that Act]’.

**Tusla** – Tusla is Ireland’s Child and Family Agency, the lead, statutory organisation for safeguarding children in Ireland.

**Worker and volunteer** – inter alia, any staff, volunteer, member of any board of

management, student, contractor (that have access to children), engaged in an organisation to provide services to children or families

[START of template]

The sample templates provided are as a guide only. Please delete all guidance notes and information (in blue) before finalising the Child Safeguarding Statement and supporting Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

**DATE: (insert date)**

**TEMPLATE**

**REVIEW HISTORY**

We in (insert name of your organisation) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ review our Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, at least every two years (or sooner if there is an update or change in legislation or national guidance).

Review of the Child Safeguarding policies and procedures is the responsibility of the Named Person/Relevant Person and ultimately the Voluntary Board of Directors/CEO etc. (outline as applicable)

**This policy was first reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**and, then, reviewed by the Named Person/Relevant Person on (sign and date):**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Named Person can also be the Relevant Person and/or Designated Liaison Person.

[Insert LOGO]

(Insert name of your organisation) **XXX**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

**AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENT**

**Ref: Chapter 4 ‘Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People’ Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 1 in Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.10-15**

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT (CSS) PROCEDURES AND SAMPLE TEMPLATE**

(Insert name of your organisation) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, as a provider of a relevant service, will have an up-to-date Child Safeguarding Statement which specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

(Insert name of your organisation) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ assesses the potential harm to the children and young people using its service(s) by carrying out a risk assessment. This written risk assessment then informs the Child Safeguarding Statement. The CSS outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.

**Guidance Note:** A Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) template with guidance notes can be found in the next two pages.

It is the responsibility of the Named Person/Relevant Person to ensure:

* The Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed prominently
* A copy of the CSS is provided to all staff and volunteers
* A copy of the CSS is made available to parents/guardians, families etc. if requested
* The CSS is provided to Tusla if requested

The Children First Act 2015 defines a ‘provider’ as “a person—

(a) who provides a relevant service, and

(b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service—

(i) employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one other person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service,

(ii) enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or

(iii) permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes a relevant service”.

**Child Safeguarding Statement Template (CSS)**

The sample template is provided as a guide only. It is a standardised format for a Child Safeguarding Statement. Please insert relevant information and delete examples that do not apply to your services. All guidance notes (in blue) should be deleted before finalising the CSS.

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[START of CSS template]

**CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

1. Name of service being provided: [insert name] **XXX**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

**Guidance note*:*** *Describe the nature of your services and specify the principles that you will observe to keep children safe from harm while they are availing of your service. List the services and activities you provide to children/young people. It is important to provide detail of all activities where staff or volunteers have regular and necessary access to children and young people so that the risk assessment reflects the procedures you have in place to manage those risks.*

Here at [insert name] **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we provide the following services to children/young people:

Examples:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Early years services
* After school activities
* Counselling services for under 18’s
* Training courses for under 18’s
* Youth groups

**Guiding principles to safeguard children from harm**

We believe that:

* Our priority is to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who attends our service is paramount;
* Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding every two years;
* All children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background;
* We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the right to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard;
* Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation;
* Workers/volunteers must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.
1. **Risk Assessment**

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm (as defined in the Children First Act, 2015) to a child while availing of our services. Risk of harm **as defined in the Act means, in relation to a child – (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or (b) sexual abuse of a child.**

Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

**Guidance note:** *Insert below areas where risks have been identified and where procedures are in place to manage the identified risk. Procedures may need to be developed to manage any identified risks.*

**The following areas below are examples. Risks identified should be relevant to the setting and the activities provided. The examples provided below are for consideration only and should be expanded on, added to or deleted as appropriate.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Risk of harm in relation to a child as defined in the Children First Act (2015)** | **Procedure in place to manage identified risk** |
| 1 | e.g. Risk of harm of abuse by staff/ volunteers | - Recruitment and selection procedure- Allegations of abuse against  staff/volunteers  Procedure- Supervision of children procedure- Reporting procedure- Complaints procedure- Code of behaviour procedure for  staff/volunteers-Training strategy for staff and  volunteers |
| 2 | e.g. Risk of inappropriate use of social media or digital images by staff/volunteers | - Code of behaviour procedure - Supervision of children procedure- Use of social media or digital  images procedure - Reporting procedure- Complaints procedure |
| 3 | e.g. Risk of harm from peer to peer abuse | - Supervision of children procedure- Anti bullying procedure- Complaints procedure- Training strategy for staff and  volunteers |
| 4 | e.g. Risk of abuse on outings or trips away  | - Outings and trips away procedure- Recruitment procedure- Supervision of children procedure- Reporting procedure- Complaints procedure- Code of behaviour for staff/volunteers- Allegations of abuse against  staff/volunteers- Training strategy for staff and volunteers |
| 5 | Risk of abuse while providing 1:1 working | - 1:1 working procedure- Training strategy for staff and  volunteers- Staff and volunteer supervision  procedure- Recruitment procedure |
| 6 | Risk of staff/volunteers not being aware of correct child safeguarding procedures resulting in children coming to harm  | - Training strategy for staff and  volunteers- Induction and training procedure- Staff and volunteer supervision  procedure |
| 7 | Risk of harm from visitors or contractors | - Supervision of children procedure- Procedure for sign in of visitors/  contractors/ deliveries |

1. **Procedures**

**Guidance note:** *The following text outlines the procedures which are specified in the Children First Act, 2015 and must appear in the Child Safeguarding Statement.*

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), and Tusla’s *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

The following procedures list in our risk assessment and the specified procedures below support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

* Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
* Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
* Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
* Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
* Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
* Procedure for appointing a relevant person;
* Additional procedures identified in risk assessment.

**This Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed prominently.**

All procedures will be made available to staff, parents, young people, members of the public and Tusla if requested.

1. **Implementation and Review**

**Guidance note:** *At a minimum, reviews must be carried out every 24 months.*

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Provider of the relevant service)

**Guidance note:** *The provider is the individual with overall responsibility for the organisation. This may be the chief executive officer, chairperson of a board of management, owner/operator, etc.*

[Insert provider’s name and contact details]

**Guidance note:** *You should include the name and contact details of the relevant person/s, who is the first point of contact regarding your Child Safeguarding Statement.*

For queries, please contact [insert name and role], who is the relevant person and the first point of contact regarding this Child Safeguarding Statement under the children First Act, 2015.

[Insert relevant persons’ name and contact details]

[END OF CSS template]

**COMMITMENT TO LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ complies with legislation, guidance and best practice. All Tusla guidance documents can be downloaded from the Tusla website [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) Many of the guides are also available in Irish.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION** (See www.irishstatutebook.ie)

* Children First Act 2015
* Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
* Criminal Justice (withholding of information on offences against children and vulnerable persons) Act 2012
* National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016
* Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
* Criminal Justice Act 2006
* Child Care Act 1991
* United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**TUSLA GUIDANCE**

* Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children
* A Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns
* Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
* Tusla Guidance on Writing a Child Safeguarding Statement
* Tusla Best Practice Principles for Organisations in Developing Children First Training Programmes
* Tusla Children’s Charter
* Tusla Signs of Safety Approach
* Tusla Mandated Assisting Protocol for Tusla Staff.

**INSURANCE**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Voluntary Board of Directors/CEO (as applicable) and DLP should be familiar with the terms and conditions of the organisation’s insurance policies—particularly any immediate notifications required by the insurance company if there is an incident or accident.

**Insurance Policies Terms and Conditions**

Please refer to and be aware of the Terms and Conditions of the Insurance Policies held by your Organisation.

**KEY ROLES IN CHILD SAFEGUARDING**

**Ref: Chapter 3 and 4, ‘Mandated Persons’, and ‘Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People’ of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 2 in Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.16-21**

**Guidance note:** The role of Named Person, Relevant Person, and Designated Liaison Person (DLP) can be undertaken by the same person - there is no requirement to have different people for each role.

* All workers and volunteers will be informed at induction who holds which safeguarding role in the organisation
* The (name of person responsible) **XXX**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(outline who will keep this list –see Procedure for Maintaining a list of Mandated Persons template) will keep a list of mandated persons in the organisation.
* The responsibilities of each role must be understood by the respective worker
* All workers and volunteers will receive appropriate training relevant to their responsibilities, so they know what to do and who to contact if they have a concern.

**NAMED PERSON/RELEVANT PERSON**

(Insert name) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* Responsible for leading the development of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
* Ensures policies and procedures are consistent with best practice
* Liaises with all key workers and volunteers who have relevant roles and responsibilities
* Assists with the review process.
* Is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement (if Relevant Person)

**DESIGNATED LIAISION PERSON (DLP)**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has appointed a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.

(Where appropriate) We have also appointed a Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) who will assume responsibility when the designated liaison person is not available or on leave or if they are directly involved in a concern or incident.

The name and contact details of the DLP and DDLP will be known to all workers and volunteers, as well as parents and service users.

**Our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Our Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) is:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP)/ DEPUTY DLP**

***Guidance note****: There may be multiple DLP’s in an organisation e.g. the co-ordinator may be a DLP and the Manager/Leader in an Early Years Service may be a DLP within the one organisation. Clear guidance on responsibilities and recording arrangements must be outlined).*

* Both the Designated Liaison Person and the deputy must be familiar with Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, associated duties, guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures
* The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) will participate and complete DLP training where available. As a minimum, they will have completed the Tusla Children First e-learning training.
* Receive child protection and welfare concerns from workers and volunteers and consider if reasonable grounds for reporting to Tusla exist
* Consult informally with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if necessary
* Where appropriate, make a formal report of a child protection or welfare concern to Tusla on behalf of our organisation, using the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form
* Inform the child’s parents/guardians that a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, unless:
	+ Informing the parents/guardians is likely to endanger the child or young person
	+ Informing the parents/guardians may place you as the reporter at risk of harm from the family
	+ The family’s knowledge of the report could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out an assessment.
* Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to your attention as well as any action/inaction taken in response to these concerns
* Provide feedback to the referrer, as appropriate
* Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records
* Act as a liaison with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, as appropriate
* ***Where agreed, jointly report with a mandated person***

**DLP’s are appointed by their organisation to ensure that reporting procedures are followed.**

**MANDATED PERSONS**

The Children First Act, 2015, outlines who are mandated persons in Schedule 2.

The Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines the role of the DLP.

Mandated persons are required by law, under the Children First Act 2015, to:

(i) report harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla (i.e. mandatory reporting) and

(ii) assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report (i.e. mandatory assisting)

The Chairperson / Line Manager for the post will inform the worker if they are a mandated person at induction. Workers who are mandated persons should be made aware of their responsibilities under the legislation.

1. **REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE CONCERNS**

**(A specified procedure under the Children First Act, 2015)**

**Ref: Chapter 1 and Chapter 5 ‘Dealing with Concerns about a Child – Tusla and An Garda Síochána’** **of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 3 in Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 22-41**

**Ref: Tusla’s Guide for the Reporting of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns, available on www.tusla.ie.**

This section details the child protection and welfare reporting procedures, including the role of mandated persons; information sharing and record-keeping in relation to child protection and welfare concerns; confidentiality; responding to children who disclose abuse; responding to adult disclosures of childhood abuse; and the procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against staff.

**RESPONSIBILTY TO REPORT A CONCERN**

* All child protection concerns should be brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person without delay. If the child is in immediate danger, the Gardaí should be called.
* The responsibility to report child protection or welfare concerns applies to everyone working with children or family members.
* Confidentiality should never be used as a reason not to report a child protection concern.
* The safety and wellbeing of the child takes priority over all other considerations. If you ignore what may be indicators of abuse, it could result in ongoing harm to the child.

**IDENTIFYING HARM AND ABUSE**

Children First National Guidance 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.

Cyberbullying should also be considered. Please see Children First National Guidance for more information.

Children First Act 2015 defines “‘harm’ as, in relation to a child:

(a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or

(b) sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise”.

**REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

You should always inform the DLP, if you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

It is not necessary for you to prove that abuse has occurred to report a concern. All that is required is that you have reasonable grounds for concern. It is Tusla’s role to assess concerns that are reported to it. If you report a concern, you can be assured that your information will be carefully considered with any other information available and a child protection assessment will be carried out where enough risk is identified.

**Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:**

* 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 the child being abused.

**IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER / EMERGENCY SITUATION**

* Where you believe the child is at risk of immediate harm, you should contact the DLP. Immediate contact should be made with the local Tusla Social Work Duty Service without delay before making a written report.In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Tusla Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána.
* **Outside of office hours, if you think the child is in immediate danger, the DLP (and/or worker) should contact An Garda Síochána.**
* Mandated persons can access Tusla's emergency out-of-hours social work service. If you are a mandated reporter and wish to report a case of child harm to Tusla, you can contact out-of-hours social work service on 0818 776 315, 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.
* Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk of harm if waiting for an intervention.
* If you are a mandated person, you must follow up with a mandated report to Tusla within three days of the emergency and where you have agreed joint reporting procedures with the DLP, you will make this report jointly.

**REPORTING A CONCERN (ALL OUR WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS)**

* Regardless of how a concern comes to a worker or volunteer’s attention, it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person without delay.
* If a worker/volunteer receives information regarding a suspicion of child abuse from a third party this must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person who will then consult appropriately with Tusla Duty Social Work.
* If you are a mandated person who also holds the role of designated liaison person, you must fulfil your statutory obligations to report a concern as a mandated person.
* The Designated Liaison Person, in consultation with the worker/volunteer who has raised a concern, will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist.
* If the DLP is unsure if a child protection concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern, they should contact Tusla Duty Social Work for informal advice and guidance.

Our local Tusla Duty Social Work Team No is: (outline contact telephone number)

**Guidance Note: for your Local Tusla Duty Social Work Team(s) see the website below:** [**https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/**](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/)

Our local Garda Number is: (outline contact telephone number)

* The DLP will report all child protection and welfare concerns by completing the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (CPWRF) which is available on the Tusla web-portal. DLP’s should register on the Tusla web Portal and make reports electronically. For details on how to register see <https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>

* If a concern relates to the DLP, reports should be made to the Chairperson/CEO, human resources (insert as applicable)
* If a concern is about a worker or volunteer, the procedure for addressing allegations of abuse against staff / volunteers should be followed.
* The Chairperson of the Voluntary Board of Directors/CEO (insert as applicable) will be informed when a report has been made by a DLP to Tusla. However, the details of the child and family will not be shared unless there is a bona fide reason for this to happen. In such situation this information must be shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis in the best interest of the child.
* The DLP will record factual details of the concern, the decisions and actions taken. These records will be held securely and confidentially.

**REPORTING IF YOU ARE A MANDATED PERSON**

* If you are a mandated person and are making a mandated report you may do this with the DLP if you have agreed reporting procedures. Guidance for mandated persons on the thresholds at which, or above which, they have a statutory obligation to report the concern under the Children First Act 2015.
* As a mandated person, if you have concerns you have a legal obligation to make a report as below.

*“…where a Mandated Persons knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child—*

*(a) has been harmed,*

*(b) is being harmed, or*

*(c) is at risk of being harmed,*

*he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief or suspicion, as the case may be, to Tusla.”*

*Also, Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 places obligations on mandated persons to report any disclosures made by a child:*

*“Where a child believes that he or she–*

*(a) has been harmed,*

*(b) is being harmed, or*

*(c) is at risk of being harmed,*

*and discloses this belief to a mandated person in the course of a mandated person’s employment or profession as such a person, the mandated person shall, as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to Tusla.”*

* **Mandatory reporting cannot be discharged by a DLP on your behalf. Mandated Persons can, however, make a joint report with a DLP.**
* Where a mandated person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should consider whether the concern meets reasonable grounds for concern, and they should report the concern to their DLP.
* If the DLP does not wish to report to Tusla, you, as a mandated person, should proceed with making a report and inform the DLP that a report under the Children First Act 2015 has been made. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 will apply in this instance. See Appendix 6 for an overview of this Act.
* If a child protection concern has come to the attention of several Mandated Persons, the report may be submitted jointly by them.
* Mandated Persons should inform the DLP if they have made a report.

**IF A DLP DECIDES NOT TO REPORT A CONCERN**

If, as a designated liaison person, you decide 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 worker or 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 worker or 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 worker or volunteer who raised the concern should also be reassured that if they do choose to further pursue the matter, they are covered by the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

**CAN I REPORT ANONYMOUSLY?**

Workers and Designated Liaison Persons cannot report anonymously. Similarly, mandated persons may not report anonymously as they are obliged to report by law.

**RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD**

You should deal with disclosures of abuse sensitively and professionally.

The following approach is suggested as best practice for responding to a disclosure.

Where a child/young person discloses abuse, the reporting procedure should be followed.

N.B. Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep.

**At the earliest possible opportunity:**

* Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child/young person has said, including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child/young person
* Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
* Inform the DLP immediately per reporting procedures
* Treat the information confidentially
* React calmly, listen carefully and attentively
* Take the child seriously
* Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
* Do not promise to keep anything secret
* Ask questions for clarification only
* Do not ask leading questions
* Avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told
* Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood
* Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser

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| --- | --- |
| **Things to say** | **Things not to say** |
| I want to listen to what you have to say | Wait until I get my manager, so you can tell them too? |
| I am going to do my best to help you | I can’t do anything |
| You did the right thing by telling me, this is what I am going to do next … | I can’t believe it, I’m shocked |
| You are not to blame | This is your fault |
| Is there anything else you want to share? | Don’t tell me any more |

**RETROSPECTIVE ABUSE: RESPONDING TO ADULTS WHO DISCLOSE CHILDHOOD ABUSE**

* The requirement to report retrospective concerns should be made explicit to the client, prior tocommencement of work, for example in a therapy or counselling contract.
* If a worker/volunteer receives a disclosure from a client or service user that they were abused as a child (i.e. a disclosure of retrospective abuse), you must report this information to Tusla using a Retrospective Abuse Report Form (RARF) as there may be a current or potential risk to children from the person against whom there is an allegation.
* If you are unsure about whether to report or not, consult with your DLP or the Tusla Duty Social Work.
* Guidelines for completing a RARF can be found in Appendix 5, and on the Tusla website: [www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/](http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/)

**TALKING TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION OR WELFARE CONCERNS**

* It is usually good practice to tell the most appropriate parent/guardian in the family that you are making a report.
* This means that the family is fully informed about the services they are being referred to and understand what information professionals are passing on and why. However, there are some exceptions to informing the family (see below).
* You do not need to tell the family that a report is being made, if:
* By doing so, the child will be placed at further risk
* Where the family knowing about the report could affect Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment
* You believe that doing so would place you at risk of harm from the family.
1. **PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF / VOLUNTEERS**

**(a specified procedure under the Children First Act, 2015)**

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.

We in (insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the worker/volunteer. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

1. The **Designated Liaison Person will deal** with the **child welfare or protection concern procedure**

Note: Where an allegation of abuse is made against the Designated Liaison Person, the Chairperson/CEO (insert as applicable) will deal with the concern.

1. Will deal with the allegation against the staff member / volunteer i.e. **will deal with the** **employment aspect.**
* Legal and/or HR advice should be sought by the Board if in doubt.
* The same person should not have responsibility for dealing with the child protection reporting procedure and the employment/contractual issues.
* If an allegation is made against a worker/volunteer the (The Employer), the Chairperson/CEO,(insert as applicable) must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with:
	+ the Reporting procedure for child safeguarding
	+ the rules of natural justice
	+ relevant employment law.

|  |
| --- |
| **PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF / VOLUNTEERS**  |
| First priority is for the safety of the child/young person; the employer, Chairperson/CEO and / or DLP must ensure no child or young person is exposed to unnecessary risk. (outline the name of person responsible)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will put in place necessary protective measures. This is not a presumption of guilt.  |
| **Child welfare or protection concern*** If an allegation against a worker or volunteer is received, it will be dealt with promptly and strictly in accordance with agreed reporting procedures to the DLP
* The DLP will alert the Chairperson and/or member of Staff Liaison Sub-group that a concern has been raised
* The decision to make a formal report will be based on reasonable grounds for concern
* The DLP will consult with Tusla Duty Social Worker and complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report Form as required

Note: Mandated Persons must report a concern if it is above the thresholds* Parents/guardians should be informed of any action planned while having regard to the confidentiality and safety of all concerned including the worker / volunteer.
 | **Employment** * Once alerted by the DLP of an allegation, the Chairperson/CEO, or whoever delegated (insert as applicable) will privately inform the worker/volunteer who the allegation is against of (1) the fact that an allegation has been made against them and (2) the nature of the allegation
* They will ensure that the principles of ‘natural justice’ apply throughout the process
* All stages of the process must be recorded
* The worker/volunteer should be offered the option to have representation
* The worker/volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegation and should be informed that any response will be noted in any subsequent report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána
* An investigation will take place into the allegation(s) as soon as possible and in accordance with our organisations disciplinary and grievance procedures
* The Chairperson/CEO, or whoever delegated (insert as applicable) will ensure that no other children or young people are put at risk during this period. This may include any of the following:
	+ suspension of duties pending the outcome of an investigation
	+ re-assignment of duties that do not involve children and young people
	+ working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
* The Chairperson/CEO, or whoever delegated (insert as applicable) will inform the person against whom the allegation has been made of the outcome of the investigation as quickly as possible
* The DLP/Chairperson/CEO, or whoever delegated (insert as applicable) will work in consultation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána on what action(s) should be taken.
 |

**PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ‘WHISTLEBLOWING’**

Workers/volunteers in (insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are made aware of the appropriate authorities outside to whom they should report if they are inhibited, for any reason, in reporting an incident internally or where they are dissatisfied with the internal response. Please see the policy on Protected Disclosures.

**CONFIDENTIALITY, RECORD-KEEPING AND SHARING INFORMATION**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to peoples’ rights to data protection and confidentiality. However, in relation to child safeguarding the following will be undertaken:

* Information in relation to child safeguarding will only be shared on a ‘need to know’ basis and will always be in the best interest of the child.
* No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with children/young people and families should make this clear to parents/guardians and to the child/young person.
* Our organisation will co-operate with Tusla on proportionate sharing of records where a child welfare or protection concern arises. See Tusla’s Mandated Assisting Protocol www.tusla.ie
* Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
* Records will be kept securely indefinitely.
* Records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures are kept securely and safely by the DLP per data protection policies.
* Access to these records will be managed by the DLP/Chairperson/CEO, or person delegated (insert as applicable).

**WORKING SAFELY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Ref: Chapter 4 ‘Responsibilities of Organisations Dealing with Children and Young People’ of Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 4 in Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 42-62**

1. **PROCEDURE FOR SAFE RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

**(A specified procedure under the Children First Act, 2015)**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure best practice in the recruitment of staff and volunteers.

**APPLICATION FORM AND ADVERTISING**

An application form must be filled out for all positions in our organisation whether the position is paid or on a voluntary basis. For volunteers, the Application Form is combined with a Declaration Form Advertising for positions, paid and voluntary will be done as widely as possible and in a fair, open and transparent manner.

**GARDA VETTING**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will ensure that it fully complies with all the requirements of this legislation. Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016, it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone (whether paid or unpaid) who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. Our Garda Vetting Designated Person is (outline the name and role of the person responsible)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

All prospective candidates consent to Garda Vetting if they successfully move to the conditional stage of offer. The process of Garda Vetting a successful candidate must be completed prior to that person commencing work with the organisation.

**SELECTION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Staff will be selected by a panel of at least two or more representatives through an interview process. Volunteers will also be required to go through an interview process with the Co-ordinator and a member of the Voluntary Board of Directors (insert as applicable). Any person that is deemed to constitute a risk to children or young people will not be engaged / employed.

Some of the exclusions include:

* Any child abuse related convictions.
* Refusal to sign the application and / or declaration form.
* Insufficient documentary evidence of identity.
* Concealing information on one’s suitability for working with children.

**ID AND REFERENCES**

Two forms of identification, including one form of photo I.D. with a signature (e.g. passport or driving licence) must be provided by staff and volunteers. Contact details for two referees, who are not family members, must be provided. References will be sought in writing or by telephone and will be followed up by telephone or personal visit as appropriate.

**SIGN-OFF**

All appointments must be approved by the Voluntary Board of Directors, not by any individual member of the organisation.

**INDUCTION**

* New staff and volunteers in (name of organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ must undertake an induction process that includes information on the policies and procedures contained in our child safeguarding policy.
* All volunteers and staff that work with children are required to sign and abide by child safeguarding policy and procedures.
* All staff members and volunteers will be provided with clear job descriptions that outline their roles and responsibilities.
* Staff who are mandated persons will be informed of what class of a mandated person they are as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015. (see Procedure for keeping a list of Mandated Persons).
* Appropriate induction will be provided for all workers and volunteers
* Where the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is managing an activity / programme in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in partnership with another organisation (or organisations), a contract will be drawn up and agreed with the relevant organisation(s).
* This contract will include procedures for the safe management of staff and volunteers for the particular co-managed activity / programme.

**PROBATION**

Staff and volunteers will complete a probationary / trial period of at least three months. During this time, their interaction with children and young people and their willingness to abide by, and actively implement, child safeguarding policy and procedures will be assessed by their Line Manager.

**SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

* The Co-ordinator and/or Line Manager of the worker/volunteer provides support and supervision for staff at least every six weeks.
* Appropriate support and supervision structures for staff / volunteers will form part of their placement agreement. Volunteers are supported and supervised by the Co-ordinator/ Line manager

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

All workers and volunteers must be aware of, and familiar with this organisation’s Disciplinary and Grievance procedures.

1. **CHILD SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION AND TRAINING PROCEDURE**

**(A specified procedure under the Children First Act, 2015)**

* Our organisations will assess its child safeguarding training needs on a regular basis and seek to provide training on Children First relevant to the role of the worker or volunteer in the. Management is responsible for ensuring that all relevant workers and volunteers are trained in the recognition of the signs of abuse, understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and know the procedures to follow.

**Training Resources**

* All workers/volunteers, managers and Boards of Management will be required to undertake the Universal e-learning training programme called ‘Introduction to Children First’ developed by Tusla.
* Other Tusla e-learning programmes will also be required by staff/volunteers according to their role and responsibility.
* Other relevant training courses will be identified for staff/volunteers and will form part of the training strategy for our organisation.

**Training Records**

Will keep a log of what safeguarding training workers and volunteers have received. This log is maintained by the Named Person / Designated Liaison Person and records the following details:

* Date and name of training programmes delivered
* Names of worker/volunteers who attended and their position within the

organisation

* Details of workers/volunteers who did not receive training but need to complete it
* Number of workers/volunteers trained
* Training programmes completed by each worker/volunteer (e.g. induction into the organisation’s guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures, child safeguarding training, DLP training, etc.)
* The names of the trainers who delivered the programme and the organisation
* A signed receipt of all workers/volunteers who have been given a copy of the organisation’s declaration of guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures (can be done at induction or in-house training).

**OTHER SPECIFIED PROCEDURES UNDER THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015:**

1. **PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON/S**

**(A specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015)**

**PROCEDURE FOR APPOINTING A RELEVANT PERSON/S FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE CHILDREN FIRST ACT, 2015**

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11, (3) (g) of the Act requires that ‘A *child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place’ for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of this Part.*

Part 2 (8) of the Actoutlines the definition in relation *to “Relevant Person” which means a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider’s Child Safeguarding Statement.*

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ As an organisation we have a responsibility to appoint a Relevant Person/s in line with the above Act.**

**Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

1. Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by outlining in the Child Safeguarding Statement/s the specified procedures required, which include a “procedure for the appointment of Relevant Person/s.
2. Ensure that all staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the process to appoint the Relevant Person/s.
3. Ensure all staff/volunteers are aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s as outlined in the Child Safeguarding Statement.
4. Ensure that all parents, children, members of the public and Tusla are aware that they may receive a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement upon request. This statement will contain the details of the Relevant Person/s.

**Roles associated with this procedure**

1. The(insert as appropriate) **XXX \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** CEO, Board of Management, Owner/Proprietor) has responsibility for appointing a Relevant Person/s.
2. The appointed Relevant Person/s in line with the Children First Act, 2015 will be the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.
3. Management and Staff/volunteers will ensure that any queries in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement are directed to the Relevant Person/s named.

**Outline of Procedure**

The procedure to appoint a Relevant Person/s is as follows.

1. The (insert as appropriate) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_CEO, Chair of Board of Management, Owner/proprietor may decide to be the named Relevant Person/s for the purpose of the Child Safeguarding Statement.
2. The (insert as appropriate) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_CEO, Board of Management, Owner/proprietor may appoint the Relevant Person/s and delegate the function to a nominated person in the organisation.
3. If appointed, the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be outlined in a letter to the nominated person.
4. The name of the Relevant Person/s will be included on the Child Safeguarding Statement.
5. All staff/volunteers will be made aware of who has been appointed as the Relevant Person/s by receiving a copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement which includes the name of the Relevant Person/s. All parents, children, members of the public and Tusla will also receive a copy of the statement upon request which will inform them of who has been appointed as a Relevant Person/s.
6. This procedure and the role and function of the Relevant Person/s will be reviewed within 24 months of the date and outlined on the Child Safeguarding Statement, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

DATE: **XXX**

**6. PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS**

**(A specified procedure under the Children First Act 2015)**

**PROCEDURE FOR MAINTAINING A LIST OF MANDATED PERSONS**

The Children First Act 2015, Section 11 requires organisations that are providers of Relevant Services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11, (3) of the Act requires that ‘A *child safeguarding statement shall... in that regard, specify the procedures that are in place’ for* maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in therelevant service who are mandated persons.

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **as an organisation we have a responsibility to maintain a list of mandated persons in line with the above Act.**

**Purpose of this procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

* Meet the requirements of the Children First Act, 2015, by putting in place a procedure for maintaining a list of persons who are mandated persons as outlined in Schedule 2 of the Act.
* Ensure that all management, staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons.
* Ensure that all management and staff/volunteers within the organisation are aware of the responsibilities of Mandated Persons

**Role of the Mandated Persons**

As defined in the Children First Act 2015, mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach or exceed a particular threshold to the local Tusla social work duty service and to cooperate in the assessment of mandated reports (please see Children First: National Guidance (2017) Chapter 3, for further information on the roles of mandated persons and Appendix 2: Schedule of Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015 a copy of which is available as an Appendix in this procedure).

**Outline of procedure**

**Employers**

It is the responsibility of *(insert as appropriate- Human Resources, Board of Management, Delegated Senior Manager etc.)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* to identify persons in positions that could be characterised as Mandated Persons with responsibility under Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015. Those staff members will be advised of their responsibility as Mandated Persons by letter, and a copy of the letter sent will be held on their personnel file. Line Managers of all staff who are identified as Mandated Persons will also be informed of their status by letter.

A full list of the employees and line managers who were sent letters in this regard will be held by (insert Human Resources, Board of Management, Delegated Manager etc.)**XXX** *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**Line Managers**

Line Managers of identified Mandated Persons will inform new and existing staff of their Mandated Person responsibility and this should be discussed within Supervision.

* Managers must ensure that employees who are Mandated Persons meet their responsibilities and comply with these procedures through monitoring, audit and review
* Managers must facilitate training for employees who are Mandated Persons where necessary
* Managers are responsible for consulting with staff to review the Mandated Persons list to remove persons who are not identified as Mandated Persons. They must inform (insert Human Resources, Board of Management, Delegated Manager etc.) **XXX** *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* of any changes required to the list.

It is the Line manager’s responsibility to ensure that all information, induction and training necessary for staff members who are Mandated Persons is undertaken with particular reference to the reporting procedure.

**Staff (and or volunteers)**

* Staff who are Mandated Persons when fulfilling their legal responsibility should ensure their line manager/Designated Liaison Person is aware when they are making a report.
* Those who were graded as Mandated Persons but self-determined they did not meet the criteria as Mandated Person are advised to inform their line management.

**Arrangements to notify staff of their Mandated Person Responsibility**

Employment contracts for all staff will indicate that they must adhere to all relevant legislation. This includes the Children First Act. The following will be included in all existing and new employee contracts. ‘You are required to comply with legislation / policies which have particular application to your position. Details of these policies will be communicated to you by your Line manager’.

**Maintenance and Production of a List of Mandated Persons**

A list of Mandated Persons will be maintained *at* (insert as appropriate- National level/Regional level/ Local level) XXX *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*. Where multiple lists are being kept, line managers will be identified to hold lists of Mandated Person which must be updated and submitted *to (insert- name of person holding full organisational list)* XXX *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* who will maintain a the organisational list of Mandated Persons.

**Review**

All arrangements for maintaining a list/s of mandated persons outlined in this procedure will be reviewed within 24 months of the date outlined below or if there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

**Date: XXX**

**ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR CHILD SAFEGUARDING**

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROCEDURE**

(Insert name) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is committed to providing equal opportunities for all children and young people regardless of their gender, age, culture, disability, religious beliefs, family status, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community.

(Insert name) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ promotes a child centred-approach to creating a safe environment for children and young people. Staff and volunteers are provided with clear good practice guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour when working with children and young people.

Worker and volunteers in this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ have a responsibility to promote children’s rights.

**WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL:**

* Create a safe, inclusive, accessible environment
* Treat children and young people with dignity, sensitivity and respect
* Listen to and value children’s opinions and beliefs
* Include children in appropriate decision making
* Enable children to regard their bodies as their own property
* Know about the principles and practices of child safeguarding, childrens’ rights, including their legal and moral responsibilities
* Respect children’s privacy in bathrooms and in changing rooms
* Sensitively ensure that children know about the child safeguarding policy
* Always responding to complaints or allegations
* Use encouragement to positively develop confidence and self-esteem
* Facilitate the young people to draw up an Anti-bullying Code of Behaviour that will be followed while they are involved in any activities with our organisations
* Be alert to Cyberbullying and ensuring supervision and support to young people in relation to this area

**Guidance Note:** *This is not an exhaustive list and needs to be tailored depending on your services.*

**WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT:**

* Demean children or young people
* Spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others unless this is the context of agreed one to one activities.Meetings with individual children or young people will take place as openly as possible
* Shout at or show aggression towards children
* Subject children to any form of verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse
* Will not engage in sexually provocative games or make suggestive or inappropriate comments
* Exclude children from groups or activities
* Favour one child or children over others
* Have inappropriate physical contact with children
* Tell jokes or make comments of a racist, sexual or derogatory nature
* Refuse to act on a child welfare concern
* Engage in making joking, or using language that belittles a child or young person.

**Guidance Note:** *This is not an exhaustive list and needs to be tailored to each organisations depending on their services.*

# SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL IMAGES PROCEDURE

The purpose of the social media, ICT and digital Images Procedure for Workers or volunteers and volunteers in this organisation is to ensure the safe and responsible use of all ICT equipment when working with children/young people. All Workers or volunteers need to be clear on their roles and responsibilities around the use of social media, ICT and digital images when engaging with young people.

**ICT equipment and mobile phones**

* All Workers or volunteers or volunteers should only use their work mobile phone or ICT equipment to communicate with children/young people, where necessary, and where this has been agreed by their line manager, parents and young people.
* Workers and volunteers must not use their personal mobile phone to communicate with children/young people. This includes phone calls, text messages, e-mail or web based communications e.g. Twitter, Instagram etc.
* Some workers and/or volunteers may use texting or text advice services where children/young people may be involved in a one to one texting exchange with a worker, given the nature or type of service. However, good practice guidelines should be in place, which protect children/young people, the worker and the organisation.
* Workers or volunteers must not participate in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate imgaes or obscene materials.
* Misuse of ICT equipment or mobile phones could result in the need for additional supervision, retraining, counselling and in some situations could result in disciplinary procedures being invoked.
* In the event that a worker receives or comes across images of child abuse or concerning data, this should be reported to the DLP following the Procedure for Reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns.
* Workers or volunteers who use social media sites as part of their work or for work related purposes should do so only with the agreement of their Manager. Any contact with children and young people through social media sites should be recorded alongside other communications and work with children/young people.
* Any misuse of social media should be reported to your line manager as soon as possible. You must also report any inappropriate comments on Social Media by another worker.
* Workers or volunteers must not use their personal social media profile or personal devices to communicate with, or to take or share images of, children and young people with whom they work.
* Workers or volunteers must not use their personal social media profile or personal devices
* Workers or volunteers must not accept ‘friend’ or ‘network’ requests from children/young people with whom they work.
* Workers or volunteers must not share their personal contact details with children/young people with whom they work.

**Digital Images;**

* Workers or volunteers must not use their own personal equipment to take images.
* Parental Consent must be sought to take and/or store images.
* Parents, where appropriate, should be informed about why photos are being taken and/or stored.
* Consent from child/young person to be photographed must be obtained.
* All children/young people must be appropriately dressed when taking digital images.
* Identifying details of children/young people such as full name, e-mail address, home address, telephone number, etc. should not be published with photos.
* Do not provide additional information that can assist someone to locate children/young people.
* Permission should be sought from children/young person and parent (as appropriate).
* If using an outside photographer, ensure you have complete contact details of photographer used. Clearly, outline that all images will remain the property of our organisations and cannot be used or sold for any other purpose.

 **E-Mails**

* Workers or volunteers must only use their work e-mail account for communication with children /young people and where this has been agreed with a manager, the parents and young person.
* Do not send messages which are discriminatory, harassing, negative, or threatening and which could cause offence to the child/young people.
* Do not email private messages to children/young people.
* Tone in email should be professional when communicating with children/young people.

**Young people using ICT when involved in our activities**

In relation to computer use by children and young people, managers, workers and volunteers must ensure the following:

* Setting controls are enabled;
* Security and filter software are in place;
* Appropriate supervision of children/young people’s use of the Internet, including time and place;
* That you regularly check user history;
* Where appropriate, that you discuss risky and safe behaviour around ICT usage, with child/young person (e.g. privacy settings, not using profile photos, not using own name etc.)
* An appropriate level of monitoring is carried out and that you inform the child/young person how you are monitoring their usage.
* Any concerns about a child’s online safety must be recorded and reported to the DLP who may consult with Tusla or An Garda Síochána and follow our organisations Procedure for Reporting child protection or welfare concerns.

**SAFE MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES PROCEDURE**

* (Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to children and young people by ensuring that its facilities are fit-for-purpose, and in compliance with health and safety regulations before planning and running activities.
* (Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will keep an appropriate record of participants when running activities including emergency contact telephone number, address, individual needs, and medical conditions (if disclosed and relevant).
* (Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will keep up-to-date records of attendance, accidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly, and any unusual patterns reported to senior management), incidents, consent forms, any complaints or grievances.

**SAFE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PROCEDURE**

Children/young people are less likely to experience accidents or come to harm, if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised to maximise participation and learning in a way that minimises risk.

Ensure that:

* A work schedule is displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty or supervising an activity;
* Children/young people are not left unattended;
* Adequate numbers of workers/volunteers are available to supervise the activities (best practice would indicate that there are male and female workers/volunteers present to supervise activities with mixed groups);
* Workers/volunteers always know where children/young people are and what they are activities they are involved in;
* Any activity using potentially dangerous equipment has constant adult supervision
* Dangerous behaviour by young people or staff/ volunteers is never allowed

**PHYSICAL CONTACT**

* Physical contact will be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.
* Physical contact should always be with the child’s permission – resistance from the child will be respected
* Breasts, buttocks and groin should always be avoided
* Physical contact should be open and not secretive
* Any physical contact should be governed by the developmental stage of the child
* Tasks of a personal nature will only be undertaken with utmost discretion for very young children or disabled children and always with the full agreement and consent of the parents and the child involved

**ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS PROCEDURE**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has a Health and Safety Statement in line with Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2015 that includes a risk assessment of each area of operation. Procedures to follow in the event of an accident or incident are below. Incidents must be recorded separately to an accident. See Appendix 10 and 11 for sample forms.

**PROCEDURES**

* All accidents must be reported to the Health and Safety officer (Insert name and contact details) XXX \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who has participated in First Aid training / refresher training in the previous two years.
* All accidents and incidents must be recorded using the respective Incident Report Form and Accident Report Form.
* If a child has an accident, the primary carers are always informed of the nature of the accident and any treatment given.
* All staff members / volunteers know the location of the First-aid boxes and they are checked and re-stocked regularly.
* Children and young people are advised of any possible health and safety risks when participating in any activities / programmes
* Where trips are made ‘off site’, requirements in relation to having staff/volunteers trained in first aid will be an integral part of planning.
* External organisations that the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ works with are obliged to provide proof that they have adequate public liability insurance.

**OUTINGS AND TRIPS AWAY PROCEDURE**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ workers/volunteers will consider the following if organising activities and events involving the use of off-site facilities or staying away from home overnight. Management and workers must have included the following area when drawing up their plans.

* Safe methods of transport;
* Adequate insurance to cover all aspects of the trip;
* Written parental consent (for each individual trip);
* Any information about the children/young people which may be relevant to staying away overnight, e.g. allergies, medical problems, special needs, etc.;
* Number of workers/volunteers required to adequately supervise children/young people at all times;
* Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements;
* Respect for the privacy of children and young people in dormitories, changing rooms, showers and toilets.

The following must be covered by management and workers/volunteers who are involved in organising outings and day trips away for children/young people.

**Planning and documentation**

* Ensure permission forms are signed and received from parents/guardians prior to departure;
* Ensure that all necessary medical forms are filled out detailing medical conditions, allergies and/or procedures that may need to be looked after during the trip;
* Ensure you have adequate insurance cover for the trips and activities involved;
* The selection process for choosing the children/young people for the trip must be fair and transparent;
* Follow proper recruitment procedures when selecting workers/volunteers to go on the trip, allowing enough time for Garda vetting, police checks and reference checks which may be outside Irish jurisdiction;
* Ensure that all workers/volunteers have received adequate child safeguarding

Training and are aware of the organisation is guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures

* Ensure that emergency contact phone numbers for parents/guardians are

documented and available at all times;

* All workers/volunteers should be given clear roles and responsibilities for the trip;
* There should be one person appointed as the overall leader of the group who will have final decision making authority during the trip;
* Ensure that a risk assessment has been conducted in line with the organisation’s policy.

**Accommodation**

* In the planning stage check the proposed sleeping arrangements for participants, employees/volunteers and other support personnel;
* Check health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation for upstairs rooms, accessibility of rooms and corridors for mobility of the participants;
* Ensure that single-gender dormitories/rooms are used for children/young people;
* Ensure that only children/young people of similar age share sleeping accommodation
* Ensure all workers/volunteers have a list of all the children/young people’s

accommodation allocation;

* Adults should never enter children’s/young people’s rooms without knocking first.

**Preparing participants and programme**

* Prepare an information pack for participants including the programme of activities, emergency information if necessary and a ‘help me’ card, particularly for foreign trips.
* It is essential that the children/young people are involved in every aspect of the process. This is an ideal opportunity for them to share the responsibility for the trip/activities that take place.
* A code of behaviour for the children/young people should be signed by the

parents/guardian.

* Ensure one worker/volunteer is appointed group leader; they will have various

responsibilities including making a report following the trip.

* There should be a plan for communication with parents/guardians and participants to inform them of travel and accommodation details, activities, special requirements, medical requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This can take the form of meetings or written correspondence.

**Emergency procedures**

* Have clear emergency procedures should you need to curtail your trip; have an emergency fund and know where the children/young people, workers and volunteers are at all times.
* Children/young people should be under supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission.
* Have a back-up plan if the programme changes for any reason.
* Bring a medical/first aid kit with you and that you have first aid trained workers/volunteers
* Workers/volunteers should ensure they have the contact details of senior

management with them while on the trip.

* For foreign trips, in particular, it is advisable to have an agreed contact person in the organisation who will be able to respond to emergencies if they occur at any time of the day or night. This may involve liaising with parents/guardians in difficult situations that can be hard to do over the phone. This person should ideally be the line manager responsible for the trip or activity and should have the full contact details of the group and the full itinerary for the trip.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

To put an effective monitoring and evaluation system in place, each of the following should be addressed:

* Systems for monitoring and evaluation should be developed prior to the trip and agreed among the team.
* Monitoring and evaluation should be carried out with the participants, employees and volunteers.
* There should be regular evaluations with the participants, employees and volunteers.
* Carry out a full and final evaluation following the event. Review your risk assessment from the planning process to see if there are any areas that need to be addressed.
* Make sure there is a system for keeping records and reports during the trip.

*Information on trips away can be found on the Léargas website, www.leargas.ie.*

*For additional information, also see Tusla Child Safeguarding Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* [*www.tusla.ie*](http://www.tusla.ie) *(Appendices 14)*

**WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP (EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS)**

* (Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ When using facilities or services provided by another organisation, workers / volunteers will clarify and agree which organisation’s reporting procedures for child protection or welfare concerns will be followed. This will depend on what organisation has responsibility for the specific activities undertaken with children.

The nature of its relationship with the other organisation will be clarified – particularly in relation to management of staff and volunteers and agreement of the required policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. The ‘Working in Partnership’ checklist, (based on child safeguarding best practice themes) in Appendix 7 of Tusla’s Child Safeguarding, A Guide for Developing Child Safeguarding Policies Procedures and Practices, can be used to facilitate this agreement. ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie) Children First Publications)

* Codes of Behaviour will be discussed to identify any variances in work practices and to agree a shared approach as part of the placement agreement.
* Complaints procedures / how to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour will also be part of this discussion and both organisations will have agreed procedures in place regarding information sharing, should such issues arise.
* Where there is co-managing of an activity / programme with another agency, a written contract will be agreed with the other organisation(s). The contract will stipulate the agreed policies and procedures that are required to ensure the safe management of the activity / programme and will identify the Designated Liaison Person to lead any child protection or welfare concern that may arise.
* Information sharing / record keeping protocols will also be agreed in relation to each procedure outlined in the contract.

**SHARING OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES, CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT, CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES INVOLVING PARENTS, CARERS, FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 5 in Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice pp. 63-71**

**SHARING OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

* Parents/guardians, children and young people should be made aware of the guiding principles, child safeguarding procedures, and Child Safeguarding Statement on initial contact with our organisation
* Codes of Behaviour, Code of Conducts, including the anti-bullying policy will be communicated to all

**WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

* Children and young people are made aware of their right to be protected, consulted and treated with respect.
* When communicating with parents/guardians, families, children and young people, workers and volunteers should be mindful of possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences.
* Workers and volunteers should encourage the active participation of children and young people in decision making in a manner which is appropriate to their age.
* Workers and volunteers will check that children/young people understand that they are free to approach any worker/volunteer if they are worried about something.
* Children will be unconditionally respected and will be heard, listened to and taken seriously.
* Children will be appropriately consulted on the development of codes of behaviour and policies including anti-bullying.
* Where possible and depending on resources, age appropriate workshops will be facilitated to maximise their participation.
* Workers and volunteers will seek feedback from parents/guardians informally and via formal review and evaluation.

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

* Children’s rights and entitlements will be widely communicated within the (insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ using posters and age appropriate information leaflets, including our child safeguarding statement, our principles and procedures.

Our notice board can be used to display:

* The child safeguarding statement and procedures (if the display board is in a prominent place);
* The name of the Designated Liaison Person, and Deputy;
* Our Equality and Inclusion policy and procedure
* How to access the Complaints Procedure;
* Details of any information evenings/workshops for parents/guardians on diversity, equality and anti-discrimination issues, etc.

We will work closely in partnership with parents / carers and other agencies / support services that are working with the individual child.

We will engage a variety of communication tools when working with children that have communication difficulties.

**COMMUNICATION POLICY**

* Registration forms for children/young people will evidence that parents/guardians have been informed of the Child Safeguarding Statement and the child safeguarding procedures
* All communication, including electronic email and text, between staff, volunteers and children will be appropriate and will only be done with parental/guardian’s consent.
* Communications will not contain inappropriate images or text that might be construed as pornographic, racist, derogatory or contain innuendo or material that in any way might be inappropriate or offensive.
* Young people will not be contacted by workers/volunteers through social media.
* Photographs, video or other images of children or young people will not be taken without the freely given consent of the young person and the parents / guardians / carers.
* Parents / guardians should be advised prior to a social event to be mindful of seeking consent to take photos, record footage of other attendants and children events etc.
* Use of, and retention of photographs will be in line with our data protection policy and procedures including any processing of children’s data. Please see Appendix 13 for a sample consent form.

**GUARDIANSHIP**

Workers and volunteers will establish who has guardianship rights for a child where appropriate.

**SHARING INFORMATION WITH PRIMARY CARERS**

Primary carers are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the work of our organisation and we are committed to keeping them informed of all aspects of the activity / programme that their child is involved in.

A copy of the child safeguarding policy and procedures is available to all primary carers.

In the event of a child welfare and protection concern arising, the practice in

(insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is to inform primary carers immediately unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

If the any of worker/volunteers have concerns about the welfare of any child or young person, they will contact the DLP who:

* Respond to the needs of the child and ensure that the interests of the child are paramount;
* Inform the primary carers unless it is thought that this action would put the child at further risk;
* Encourage the primary carers to work in partnership with our organisation;
* Liaise with Tusla and/ or An Garda Síochána as appropriate;
* If there is a complaint against a member of staff or a volunteer, the DLP and the Chair/CEO will immediately take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child and inform the primary carers as appropriate.

**COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

(Insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ promotes best practice and always welcomes feedback. We encourage people to address their comments / concerns to us as soon as possible as this will facilitate us to address the matter most effectively.

* If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child, it will be dealt with in accordance with this child safeguarding procedures.
* All comments or complaints will be treated properly, fairly and impartially.
* Informal comments or complaints could initially be addressed to the person(s) in question, if appropriate.
* Alternatively, the Co-ordinator of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can be contacted. They will be responsible for directing the complaints / comments to the appropriate person.
* Where a complainant feels that their comment / complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily through the informal process outlined above, the comment / complaint should be put on a formal basis following the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Complaints Procedures. Where possible formal complaints / comments should be made in writing.
* The Chairperson will acknowledge the complaint, in writing, within 10 working days. The Board will do their best to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Where the matter cannot be resolved, the Board will investigate the matter and issue a complaint investigation report within 30 working days.
* In the event that the investigation cannot be concluded within 30 working days, the Chairperson will write to the complainant, explaining the reason for the delay. The Chairperson will provide the complainant with an update, in writing, every 20 working days thereafter.

**IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES**

**Ref: Best Practice Theme 6 in Tusla Guide for Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Practice pp.74-78**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

* Implementation is an on-going process and a continuous cycle of development, response to change, review of policies, procedures and practices relevant to Children First.
* The ‘Best Practice Theme’ checklists, found in Tusla Guide for Child Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Practice, and Tusla Self-Assessment Checklist for Tusla-funded organisations, should be used to assess your organisation’s compliance with requirements of Children First National Guidance.
* Workers who hold key child safeguarding roles in the (insert name of your organisation/service) **XXX** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Named Person, Designated Liasion Person, Relevant Person) will work with the Board to review and evaluate child safeguarding practices. They will assess what resources are needed. They will put in place an implementation plan for child safeguarding with details tasks, timeframe and person(s) responsible.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

* Part of the implementation cycles includes monitoring and reviewing performance against tasks required. This helps to evidence and promote best practice for each of the best practice themes. This review process ensures areas of procedure and practice that are working well can be acknowledged and areas requiring improvement can be identified and addressed.
* The (insert name of person responsible, i.e. DLP, Relevant Person etc.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will monitor, on an ongoing basis, safeguarding practices including, training needs and supervision and support.
* The (insert name of person responsible, i.e. DLP, Relevant Person etc.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will assess risks to child safeguarding on an ongoing basis and raise potential risks with the Designated Liaison Person who will suggest changes to internal procedures and practice to mitigate risks.
* The (insert name of person responsible, i.e. DLP, Relevant Person etc.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will review guiding principles and child safeguarding statement and procedures every two years or sooner if service issues arise or there are changes in legislation or national policy.

**EVALUATION**

* The (insert name of person responsible, i.e. DLP, Relevant Person etc.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will evaluate how well child safeguarding is embedded in our organization using consultation tools (including for young people) appropriate to the audience being consulted.