



**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health

**Department of Health**  
**Child Safeguarding Statement**

April 2022

**Department of Health's Child Safeguarding Statement prepared in  
accordance with Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015**

**1. Introduction**

The Department of Health (DoH) is fully committed to maintaining the highest standards of child safeguarding (A child is defined in legislation as "a *person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married*"). Every member of staff has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that every child engaging with the Department as part of the work of the Department is safe and protected from harm within the meaning of the Children First Act 2015 and in keeping with best practice as informed by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, and *Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

**2. What is the nature of our services and what are our values?**

The Department serves the public and supports the Minister for Health, Ministers of State and the Government by providing:

- Leadership and policy direction for the health sector to improve health outcomes
- Governance and performance oversight to ensure accountable and high-quality services
- An organisational environment where, on an ongoing basis, high performance is achieved, collaborative working is valued, and the knowledge and skills of staff are developed
- Collaboration to achieve health priorities and contribute to wider social and economic goals

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Ireland by:

- supporting people to lead healthy and independent lives;
- ensuring the delivery of high quality and safe health and social care;
- creating a more responsive, integrated and people-centred health and social care service;
- promoting effective and efficient management of the health and social care service and ensuring best value from health system resources.

Our values are:

- Engaging with the public and service users
- Respect and fair and equal treatment of all
- Collaboration, innovation and forward thinking
- Professionalism, leadership and accountability
- Integrity, impartiality and value for money

### 3. Risk Assessment

The risk assessment below has been prepared in accordance with Section 11(1) (a) of the Children First Act 2015, which defines risk as "*any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service*".

	<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk identified</b>
1.	Risk of non-compliance with Children First Act and National Guidance	<p>Department Implementation Group oversees the effective implementation of our statutory requirements under the Children First Act 2015.</p> <p>Compliance assurance process for our aegis bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aegis bodies informed of their obligations under Children First legislation.</li> <li>○ Annual check on compliance of aegis bodies with the Children First Act as part of annual governance assurance process.</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Risk of harm or concern not being recognised or reported.</p> <p>Risk of harm of a child from a member of staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and Procedures developed for staff, including information on how to report a child protection or welfare concern and circulated to all.</li> <li>• eLearning training module available to all who wish to avail of it.</li> <li>• Mandated persons identified and have undertaken relevant eLearning module.</li> <li>• Certificates of completion of eLearning training by Mandated persons retained by Strategic HR.</li> <li>• Designated Liaison Person (Strategic HR) and Deputy Designated Person (Strategic HR) identified.</li> <li>• Records maintained in a confidential fashion by the Designated Liaison Person.</li> <li>• Consideration of online safety for children on all department online/social media sites included in <i>Department Policy and Procedures Guide for staff for</i></li> </ul>

		<i>responding to and reporting child protection or welfare concerns</i>
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#### 4. Procedures

This 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 Department has also developed a [Policy and Procedures Guide for staff for responding to and reporting child protection or welfare concerns](#). In addition, the following policies, procedures and codes support our aim of safeguarding children availing of our services:

- Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour
- Civil Service Dignity at Work Policy
- Civil Service Disciplinary Code
- Departmental policy on Transition Year Students and work placements

Schedule 1 of the Act, Paragraph 5(c), sets out that *any work or activity which consists of the provision of formal consultation with, or formal participation by, a child in respect of matters that affect his or her life*, is a relevant service requiring inclusion in the Child Safeguarding Statement for the Department.

Within the Department itself, there are no units currently that provide a relevant service within the meaning of Schedule 1 of the Act. This information will be updated if a specific unit's work falls within the definition of relevant service under the Act.

At a corporate level, the Department's engagement with Transition Year Students or other temporary students on placement is deemed to come within the definition of Schedule 1, paragraph 5 of the Act and so the Department's Policy and Procedures Guide attends to this group of young people on work experience.

The Guide has been developed to promote safe environments for children and young people; to mitigate the potential for risk to arise; and to manage any issues which arise safely and in keeping with best practice. In addition to the procedures outlined in the risk assessment, the following procedures support our aim of safeguarding children:

- A comprehensive list of mandated persons is retained and will be reviewed at least annually,
- Mandated persons have been informed of their statutory obligations and all have completed training,
- All current staff are made aware of their responsibilities under the Children First Act and National Guidance,
- Strategic HR Unit to make all new staff members, Transition Year Students and work placements, on joining the Department, aware of the Children First Act, National Guidance and their responsibilities under this Act, and,
- If a new staff member is deemed to be a mandated person, Strategic HR Unit to include that person on its list and request the person to undertake eLearning training and submit the eLearning certificate to Internal HR Unit.

## 5. Implementation

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

This is the third iteration of the Department of Health Child Safeguarding Statement, which has been reviewed and is being published two years on from the date of its second publication in July 2020. It will be reviewed every 2 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

For further information or queries, visit <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first> or contact the Principal Officer, Strategic HR Ms Gráinne Duffy at [grainne\\_duffy@health.gov.ie](mailto:grainne_duffy@health.gov.ie)

Signed by:



Mr Robert Watt  
Secretary General

Date:

