



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Children
First

Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement

1. Name of service being provided

Galway County Council is the local authority for the County of Galway.

2. Nature of service

Galway County Council is responsible for the provision of an extensive range of public services to include Economic, Rural, Community Development & Corporate Services, Finance & ICT, Housing, Infrastructure & Operations, Planning, Environment & Emergency Services.

3. Principles of Safeguarding Children

Galway County Council is committed to a child-centred approach in working with children in the delivery of all services and activities. The Local Authority has an overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard children accessing the Local Authority services and activities in accordance with Galway County Council's Child Protection and Welfare Policy & Procedures. Galway County Council is committed to:

- Promoting general welfare, health development and safety of children
- Ensuring procedures are in place for all staff/volunteers, providers/contractors of 'relevant services' engaged by the Council, and Funded/Community Groups in the context of Local Authority Services to include: robust recruitment, selection, supervision and support procedures
- Developing guidance and procedures for staff and volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the possible abuse or neglect of a child involved in the services or activities of the Local Authority
- Ensuring Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and Deputies are appointed
- Ensuring that the Local Authority has procedures in place to deal with an allegation of abuse made against an employee/volunteer
- Raising awareness in the organisation about potential risks to children's safety/welfare
- Developing and maintaining clear record keeping procedures
- Ensuring an employee Code of Conduct is in place
- Developing a process of interagency cooperation with Tusla and other agencies involved in the protection of children.

4. Local Authority's child-centred approach

Galway County Council will use all information in respect of children only for the purpose for which it is given, subject to child protection and welfare concern(s). The safety, welfare and development of children is a key priority for the organisation. In line with national and international best practice, Galway County Council promotes a culture of zero tolerance for any type of abuse or abusive practice.

5. Process

Galway County Council's Child Protection and Welfare Policy & Procedures has been developed to promote safe environments for children, to mitigate the potential for risk to arise and to manage it safely if it arises in line with Children First guidance. In addition, the processes outlined in the risk assessment below at point 7 provides a framework for Galway County Council's response to concerns regarding the safety and welfare of children.

6. Governance

The Chief Executive, Executive Team and relevant Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement is adhered to. This Corporate 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 Corporate Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

7. Risk Assessment

It is a mandatory requirement that an assessment of risks is carried out in accordance with Tusla's Children First National Guidance 2017. Each individual service area of the council must undertake a risk assessment of any potential for harm to a child, while availing of the services of the Council. A list of the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing these risks, is available to members of the public on request. The risk assessment below represents an overarching one for the organisation.

RISK IDENTIFIED

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING RISKS

<p>A. Risk of non-compliance with Children First Act 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Child Protection Policy and procedures in compliance with Children First Act 2015 • Appropriate recruitment and Garda vetting procedures for relevant employees and volunteers • Appropriate vetting procedures (in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012-2016) for all relevant employees and volunteers • Appropriate training of Staff, Mandated Persons and Designated Child Protection Officer and Deputies • Appointment of Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and Deputy Child Protection Liaison Officers • Mandated persons within the organisation identified and a list of mandated persons held by the Human Resources Unit • Completion of Risk assessments for each Service Area.
<p>B. Risk from staff or volunteer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust recruitment procedures • Appropriate Garda Vetting procedures • Appointment of designated Child Protection Liaison Officers • Code of Conduct for employees • Implementation of Child Welfare and Protection Policy and Procedures in line with Children First Act 2015 requirements • Relevant Child Protection & Welfare Awareness training for Staff, Mandated Persons and Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and Deputies • Procedures to deal with an allegation of abuse made against an employee or volunteer.
<p>C. Risk from other service user</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Charter and Customer Code of Conduct on display for services users at all public counters and in publicly accessible buildings • Parents/Guardians advised regarding requirement to supervise children appropriately in publicly accesses/buildings and services.
<p>D. Risk of harm/concern not being recognised by staff/volunteer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Child Protection & Welfare Awareness training for Staff, Mandated Persons and Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer and Deputies • Clear reporting procedures in place in accordance with Galway County Council's Child Protection and Welfare Policy & Procedures • Details of Designated Liaison Persons and deputies circulated to all staff and contact details available on the intranet.
<p>E. Risk from: <i>Providers/contractors</i> of 'Relevant Services' engaged by the Local Authority and or; <i>Funded/Community Groups</i> carrying out 'Relevant Services' on behalf of the Local Authority or that is grant aided or supported or assisted by the Local Authority</p>	<p>The Council shall seek a signed declaration from the provider/contractor of a 'Relevant Service' and Funded/Community Groups carrying out 'Relevant Services' on behalf of the Local Authority or that is grant aided or supported or assisted by the Local Authority confirming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have read and understand the particulars outlined in the Children First Act, 2015, Children First National Guidance 2017 and TUSLA Guidance • They have prepared a Child Safeguarding Statement which is in place specifying the service being provided and outlining the procedures in place as set-out in sections 4.2 & 5.2 of GCC's Child Protection & Welfare Policy & Procedures to mitigate any risks • They have in place appropriate child protection policies and procedures • They have undertaken a risk assessment for the provision of the service/contract and agree to follow the guidelines on procedures and practices contained within both the Risk Assessment undertaken and the prepared Child Safeguarding Statement • That a vetting disclosure has been received in accordance with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2012 to 2016 for any employee and/or volunteer carrying out 'regular work or activities' i.e., any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children or vulnerable persons.

8. Reporting a Concern

Anyone can report a concern of abuse about a child. If you have any concerns about the welfare/abuse of a child, it should be reported to Tusla. A report can be made in person, by telephone, in writing or online. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child in County Galway can contact Tusla on **091-546235**. For further information or queries, please contact Galway County Council's Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer Mr. Kieran Keon on 091-509018.

In the event of any emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with Tusla, you should contact An Garda Síochána. If a child is in danger outside office hours, contact the Gardaí. Further information on Child Protection and welfare is available at www.tusla.ie.

9. Implementation & Review

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our services. This Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every 2 years in line with policy and legislation. For further information on the Local Authority's policies and procedures, contact Galway County Council on 091-509000 or visit www.galway.ie.

Signed:



Chief Executive, Galway County Council

Date:

20th Jan 2023.