

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

(Prepared in accordance with section 11 of the Children First Act 2015)



1. NAME OF SERVICE

An Garda Síochána

2. NATURE OF SERVICE & PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

Section 7 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 provides that:

- (1) The function of the Garda Síochána is to provide policing and security, including vetting, services for the State with the objective of —
- (a) preserving peace and public order,
 - (b) protecting life and property,
 - (c) vindicating the human rights of each individual,
 - (d) protecting the security of the State,
 - (e) preventing crime,
 - (f) bringing criminals to justice, including by detecting and investigating crime, and
 - (g) regulating and controlling road traffic and improving road safety.
- (2) For the purpose of achieving the objective referred to in subsection (1), the Garda Síochána shall co-operate, as appropriate, with other Departments of State, agencies and bodies having, by law, responsibility for any matter relating to any aspect of that objective.

Personnel employed by the Garda Síochána have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that every child availing of the service is safe and protected from harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015. The Garda Síochána by its inherent nature adheres to legislation to mitigate the risk to children. This forms the fundamental basis of policy and guideline documents within the organisation. The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all personnel employed by the Garda Síochána, with a view to ensuring the highest possible level of safeguarding of children is provided.

The Garda Síochána is committed to safeguarding children & for this purpose takes cognisance of relevant provisions of the Constitution of Ireland and relevant legislative provisions.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive risk assessment has been undertaken, with a view to identifying potential risks that may arise for children when interacting with the Garda Síochána, which informs this Child Safeguarding Statement.

Risk Identified		Procedure in Place to Manage Risk Identified	
1	Risk of harm to Children who interact with the Garda Síochána while they undertake their duties.	- Code of Ethics for the Garda Síochána - Reviews by the Garda Professional Standards Unit - Legislation, policies, protocols, procedures and guideline documents regarding reporting, notification, interview and investigation which are outlined in detail in the full risk assessment of harm held at the National Child Protection Unit of the Garda National Protective Services Bureau. - An Garda Síochána Guidelines for interacting with children.	
2	Risk of Harm to Children in the care/custody of the Garda Síochána from other persons utilising the Garda Service.	- As far as is practicable children are separated from other persons while in Garda Síochána stations, to avoid risk of harm. - Criminal Justice Act 1984 (Treatment of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations 1987 and 2006. - Recording Procedure & Guidelines relating to Children in Care of the Garda Síochána	
3	Risk of harm to Children engaging in Youth Programmes organised by the Garda Síochána	- Training in Children First for all Juvenile Liaison Officers & Community Gardaí - Legislation, policies, protocols, procedures and guideline documents regarding reporting, notification, interview and investigation.	
4	Harm to a child not recognised or reported by personnel within the Garda Síochána, or inappropriate response to abuse.	- Personnel within the Garda Síochána have been provided with a number of information documents regarding Children First. - Children First Training is compulsory for all members of the Garda Síochána during Probationer Training or through training delivered through Continuous Professional Development. “An Introduction to Children First” mandatory eLearning training for all members of the Garda Síochána.	

4. PROCEDURES

The Child Safeguarding Statement of the Garda Síochána has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 & Children First: National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children (2017). In addition to the procedures in place to manage risk, detailed above, the following procedures support the safeguarding of children who come in contact with the Garda Síochána:

- All members of the Garda Síochána are subject to investigation following allegations of abuse of a child in accordance with the Criminal Law, the Garda Síochána Act 2005 and the Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations 2007.
- All members of the Garda Síochána are subject to vetting on initial application & appointment. In addition, personnel employed in specialist work with children are subject to further suitability assessment.
- Children First training is provided to all members of the Garda Síochána during Probationer Training or through Continuous Professional Development.
- All child protection & welfare concerns known to the Garda Síochána will be reported to Tusla in accordance with the Children Joint Working Protocol for the Garda Síochána/ Tusla – Child & Family Agency Liaison.
- All members of the Garda Síochána are mandated persons. All civilian Garda staff employed as registered medical practitioners, nurses, psychologists, & teachers are mandated persons.
- The relevant person for the purposes of the Children First Act 2015 is Detective Superintendent, Garda National Protective Services Bureau (National Child Protection Unit). GNPSB@garda.ie.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The Garda Síochána is committed to implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that are in place to support the commitment to keep children safe from harm. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed before 11th March 2022, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.


Commissioner of An Garda Síochána

For queries please contact the ‘Relevant Person’ for the purposes of the Children First Act 2015:
Detective Superintendent, Garda National Protective Services Bureau (National Child Protection Unit)

Ag Coinneáil Daoine Sábháilte – Keeping People Safe