



Drogheda Women's & Children's
Refuge Centre C.L.G.

Child Safeguarding Statement

DATE: September 2024

Version	Date	Author	Signed/Approved
1.0	9.09.2024	Michelle Woods Head of Childhood Support	<i>Jusa Kagh</i>
1.1			
1.2			

INTRODUCTION

Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge Centre (DWCR) is committed to practices which ensure best practices are adhered to by all staff and volunteers, when working with all women and children who access our supports & services.

DWCR Mission Statement

We empower women and children experiencing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence and homelessness by providing support, a range of services and safe emergency accommodation. We work towards the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence through awareness raising and education.

Our work is informed by the following approaches:



Women and Child-centred

That is non-judgemental and trauma informed - recognising, respecting and responding to individual circumstances and needs



Holistic

Recognising the effect of DSGBV on all aspects of women and children's lives



Multi-agency

Working collaboratively to achieve successful outcomes for women and children

Our work is guided and informed by our belief in and commitment to:



The Empowerment of Women

Supporting women to have an awareness of and ability to exercise their human rights



Autonomy

Supporting women as decision makers through informed choice



The Individual Voice

Providing safe space for women and children to talk and be heard



The Possibility of Change

Breaking the cycle of abuse for individuals and families



Safety

Enhancing women and children's safety through support and services



Integrity

Working professionally with honesty, transparency and accountability

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Child Safeguarding Statement is to set out standards of behaviour expected from employees of DWCR. The Child Safeguarding Statement will be made available to all relevant stakeholders. All employees, students and volunteers should read and comply with this Child Safeguarding Statement.

What is a Child Safeguarding Statement

A Child Safeguarding Statement is a document that outlines the measures the DWCR will take to ensure the safety and well-being of children while they are engaged in activities or services provided by the organisation. It is a mandatory requirement for organisations working directly with children.

Key elements of this Child Safeguarding Statement will include:

1. **Nature of the Service:** A brief description of the organisation and the services it provides to children.
2. **Commitment to Safeguarding:** A declaration of the organisation's commitment to promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from harm.
3. **Risk Assessment:** Identification of potential risks to children within the organisation's activities and procedures, along with strategies to mitigate these risks.
4. **Policies and Procedures:** Details of the specific policies and procedures the organisation has in place to prevent harm to children, including how to recognise and respond to concerns of abuse or neglect.
5. **Reporting Procedures:** Clear guidelines on how concerns about a child's welfare should be reported and handled within the organisation, including designated points of contact for reporting.
6. **Code of Conduct:** A code of conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by staff, volunteers, and others interacting with children.
7. **Training and Support:** Information on the training provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they are equipped to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
8. **Implementation and Review:** An outline of how the statement will be implemented, monitored, and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and up to date.
9. **Contact Information:** Details of the designated liaison officer(s) within the organisation who are responsible for overseeing child safeguarding practices

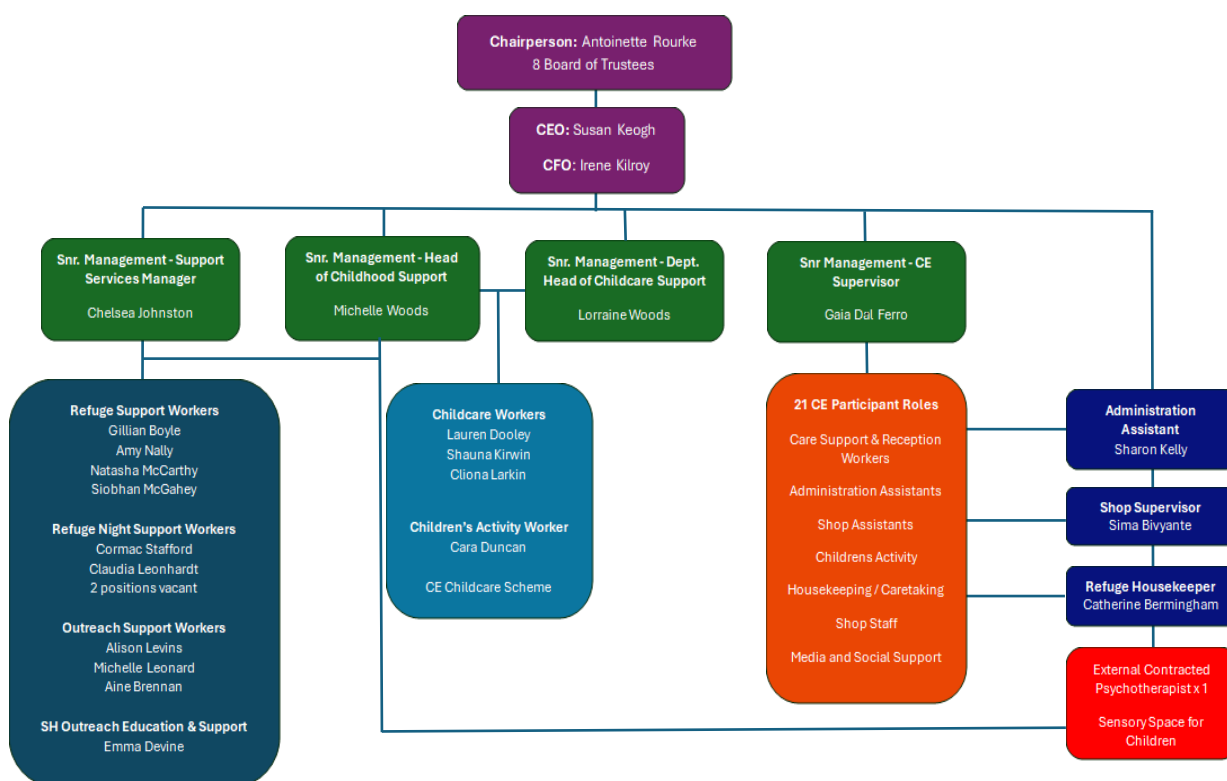
SUMMARY OF SERVICES

The Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge Centre provides a range of essential services to support children who are living with domestic abuse and/or are homeless. Our services are designed to create a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for children from infancy to adolescence.

Below is an overview of the key services we offer:

- 1. Residential Care:** We provide safe and secure residential care for children living in the refuge, offering a stable and supportive environment for those affected by domestic abuse or homelessness.
- 2. Registered Childcare Service:** Our registered childcare service caters to children aged 0-14 years, offering both sessional and drop-in childcare support. This service aims to provide a safe space for children to play, learn, and receive care during their engagement with the service.
- 3. Evening and Weekend Activities Club:** Managed by our Children's Activity Worker, this club offers a variety of activities, events, and outings tailored to children of all age groups. The club operates during evenings and weekends, providing a structured and engaging environment for children.
- 4. Therapeutic Supports:** The DWCR provides financial assistance to children to access therapeutic supports through Sensory Space therapy services.
- 5. Safe Steps Programme:** This programme offers 6-week group sessions designed to provide therapeutic support to children, helping them process their experiences of domestic abuse in a safe and supportive group setting.
- 6. CourAGEus Programme:** The DWCR team deliver the CourAGEus programme to teenagers in schools and youth groups. This 90-minute interactive workshop educates young people on healthy relationships and provides them with the tools to recognise and respond to signs of abuse.
- 7. The Safe Harbour Project:** This is a new two-year initiative led by the DWCR with the aim of raising awareness about domestic and sexual-based violence and its impacts on migrant women and children. The project focuses on increasing accessibility and visibility of DWCR's services among migrant communities, particularly in Mosney Village, thereby making our support more accessible to those who need it most.
- 8. The Outreach Team:** The Outreach team plays a vital role in supporting women in the community who have experienced domestic abuse, providing them with information about their legal options and assisting them in navigating the legal system if they choose to seek court orders. During their work, the team may also become aware of children in these families who are experiencing abuse. In such cases, the Outreach team has a responsibility to initiate child protection measures to ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART 2024



DWCR COMMITMENTS TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Child Safeguarding Statement

Our service is committed to safeguarding the children in our care and ensuring that the service provides a safe, nurturing environment. The DWCR places the utmost importance on the welfare of every child who attends our service and are dedicated to providing child-centred practice in all our interactions with children.

Commitments:

- **Child Welfare Priority:** We believe that the welfare of the children attending our service is paramount. All our practices and policies are centred around ensuring the best interests of the children.
- **Upholding Children's Rights:** We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person in our care, including their rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, to be listened to, and to be heard.
- **Policy and Legislative Compliance:** Our child safeguarding policies and procedures align with national policies and legislation, including:

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), 2017.
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure, Tusla, 2018.
- Children First Act 2015.
- **Scope of Policy Declaration:** This policy declaration applies to all paid staff, CE participants, volunteers, committee/board members, and students on work placements within our organisation. All involved parties must agree to abide by the policies, procedures, and principles outlined in this safeguarding policy declaration and the associated child safeguarding policies and procedures.
- **Policy Review:** Susan Keogh (The Appointed Relevant Person) will review our safeguarding statement, along with the accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures, every two years. Reviews may also be conducted sooner if necessitated by changes in service issues, legislation, or national policy.
- **Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection:** The DWCR have appointed Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection, who are responsible for overseeing and ensuring the implementation of our child safeguarding policies and acting as the main point of contact for any child protection concerns.

Name of DLP	Role in Organisation	Contact Number
Susan Keogh	CEO	0858030731
Michelle Woods	Senior Management Team	0858011583
Chelsea Johnston	Senior Management Team	0852775822
Lorraine Woods	Senior Management Team	0858569294
Irene Kilroy	Chief Financial Officer	0858569295
Michelle Leonard	Outreach Worker	0832007435

RISK ASSESSMENT

The DWCR have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
<p>Physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse perpetrated by another service user</p>	<p>Medium Risk:</p> <p>This risk is addressed by the following procedures and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are adequately supervised at all times while using the services. • There is a mechanism for children to highlight incidents of concern (Feedback and Complaints Policy). • CCTV is in operation throughout the DWCR building including the Playroom. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are Garda Vetted with two written and validated references in place prior to commencing employment. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are complete the eLearning Child Protection Module and are trained in the DWCR child protection policies and procedures. • Lone working and code of conduct for policy for all paid staff, CE participant, Students and Volunteers
<p>Physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse perpetrated by a staff member</p>	<p>Low Risk:</p> <p>This risk is addressed by the following policies, procedures and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone Working Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Recruitment and Garda Vetting Policy • Induction Policy and Relevant Training • Intimate Care Policy • Nappy Changing Policy • Child Protection Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High staff to child ratios in place • Children are adequately supervised at all times while using the services. • Open and Visible Environment – Activities and/or interactions with children will occur in open, visible environments with rooms with windows and outdoor settings that are easily observable by others. • There is a mechanism for children to highlight incidents of concern (Feedback and Complaints Policy). • CCTV is in operation throughout the DWCR building including the Playroom. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are Garda Vetted with two written and validated references in place prior to commencing employment. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are complete the eLearning Child Protection Module and are trained in the DWCR child protection policies and procedures.
<p>Safeguarding children’s right to privacy and confidentiality</p>	<p>Low Risk:</p> <p>This risk is addressed primarily by implementing the following policies and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality Policy • Record Keeping policy and procedures • Complying with Data Protections Legislation as per DWCR Data Protection Policy • Confidential Record-Keeping • Store physical records in locked cabinets accessible only to authorised personnel, and digital records on the Esafe CRM system. • Use encrypted communication channels for sharing sensitive information of therapy referral forms • Ensure that all staff are trained in data protection principles, including the importance of confidentiality and the legal obligations related to handling children's information. • Obtain informed consent from parents or guardians before collecting or sharing personal information about a child, except

	<p>where sharing is required to protect the child's welfare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain clearly how information will be used, who will have access to it, and under what circumstances it might be shared, such as in • Regularly review and update consent. • Conduct conversations about sensitive matters with children in private, secure settings to ensure that their privacy is respected and that they feel safe to speak openly. • Have clear procedures in place for addressing breaches of confidentiality, including steps to mitigate any potential harm to the child and reviewing practices to prevent future occurrences. • Transparent Communication with Children and Parents - Keep children and their mothers or guardians informed about their rights to privacy and confidentiality, and how the organisation will uphold these rights. • Provide clear guidance on how children can express concerns or complaints if they feel their privacy has been compromised.
<p>Accompaniment Support with Children with no parent or guardian</p>	<p>Medium Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone Working Policy • Interactions with Children Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Child Protection Policy • Outings Policy • Obtain Parental or Guardian Consent - Always secure written consent from parents or guardians before transporting a child alone. The consent form should include details about the trip, such as the purpose, destination, time, and who will be driving. • Maintain a Record of the Journey - Keep a log of all journeys, including the date, time, route, purpose, and names of both the driver and the child on Esafe. • Sit in Appropriate Seating - Ensure that the child sits in the back seat rather than the front passenger seat. Use age-appropriate car seats or seat belts, following safety regulations and guidelines for the child's age and size. • Clear Communication and Transparency - Clearly communicate

	<p>the transportation plans to the child, including any changes to the schedule or route.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding Unnecessary Stops - Limit stops to only those that are necessary • Two-Adult Rule When Possible - When feasible, follow the two-adult rule by having another adult present in the car.
Lone Working with Children	<p>Low Risk:</p> <p>This risk is addressed by the following policies, procedures and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone Working Policy • Code of Conduct Policy • Recruitment and Garda Vetting Policy • Induction Policy and Relevant Training • Intimate Care Policy • Nappy Changing Policy • Child Protection Policy • There is a mechanism for children to highlight incidents of concern (Feedback and Complaints Policy). • CCTV is in operation throughout the DWCR building including the Playroom. • Open and Visible Environment – Activities and/or interactions with children will occur in open, visible environments with rooms with windows and outdoor settings that are easily observable by others. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are Garda Vetted with two written and validated references in place prior to commencing employment. • All paid staff, CE participants, Students and volunteers are complete the eLearning Child Protection Module and are trained in the DWCR child protection policies and procedures

PROCEDURES

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*. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following policies and procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Child Protection Policy
- Reporting and Responding to Concerns Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Outings Policy
- Nappy Changing Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Support and Supervision Policy and Practice
- Induction Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- E-Safety and Digital Media Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Incident and Accident Reporting Policy
- Parental Involvement and Communication Policy

This statement reaffirms our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of child protection and welfare within our service.

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood Drogheda Women's and Children's Refuge Centre CLG. ***Child Safeguarding Statement***. By signing below, I accept this policy and agree to comply with it.

I realise that a breach of the standards set out in this policy can be considered an act of gross misconduct and is subject to disciplinary action.

Signed:



Role: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dated: 12th Sept. 2024