

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, as amended, provides that:

(1) The function of An Garda Síochána is to provide policing and security (including vetting) services for the State, with the objective of —

- preserving peace and public order,
- protecting life and property,
- vindicating the human rights of each individual,
- protecting the security of the State,
- preventing crime,
- bringing criminals to justice, including by detecting and investigating crime, and
- regulating and controlling road traffic, and improving road safety.

(2) For the purpose of achieving the objective referred to in subsection (1), An 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 An 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. An 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 An Garda Síochána, with a view to ensuring the highest possible level of safeguarding of children is provided.

An Garda Síochána is committed to safeguarding children and for this purpose, takes cognisance of human rights, 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 An 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 An Garda Síochána while they undertake their duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Code of Ethics for An Garda Síochána.Garda Decision Making Model.Establishment of Divisional Protective Services Units and Child Protection Units.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 An Garda Síochána from other persons utilising the Garda service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As far as is practicable, children are separated from other persons while in Garda stations, to avoid risk of harm.Criminal Justice Act, 1984 (Treatment of Persons in Custody in Garda Síochána Stations) Regulations 1987 and 2006.Introduction of Garda Síochána Custody Record Risk Assessment.Recording procedure and guidelines relating to children in care of An Garda Síochána.
3 Risk of harm to children engaging in youth programmes organised by An Garda Síochána	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Training in Children First for all Juvenile Liaison Officers and Community Gardaí.Garda Youth Diversion Project National Office.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 An Garda Síochána, or inappropriate response to abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personnel within An Garda Síochána have been provided with a number of information documents regarding Children First.Children First training is compulsory for all members of An 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 An Garda Síochána.

4. PROCEDURES

The Child Safeguarding Statement of An Garda Síochána has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act, 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and 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 An Garda Síochána:

- All members of An Garda Síochána are subject to investigation following allegations of abuse of a child in accordance with the criminal law, the Garda Síochána Act 2005, as amended, and the Garda Síochána (Discipline) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- All members of An Garda Síochána are subject to vetting on initial application and 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 An Garda Síochána during Probationer training or through Continuous Professional Development.
- All child protection and welfare concerns known to An Garda Síochána will be reported to Tusla, in accordance with the Children Joint Working Protocol for An Garda Síochána/ Tusla – Child and Family Agency Liaison.
- All members of An Garda Síochána are mandated persons. All Garda Staff employed as registered medical practitioners, nurses, psychologists, and 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

An Garda Síochána is committed to the 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 1 July 2024, 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)

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