

Comhairle Contae **LÚ**
Louth County Council

Child Safeguarding Statement

**Prepared in accordance with Section 11 of the Children
First Act, 2015.**

Child Safeguarding Statement

This statement sets out the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as possible, that a child availing of Louth County Council Services is safe from harm.

Relevant Services Provided

Louth County Council consider that we are a relevant service, under the Act.

1. **Name of service being provided:** Local Authority Services for the County of Louth
2. **Nature of service:** The Council provides and funds a wide range of services to the public, including Housing, Roads, Water Services, Planning and Economic Development, Waste Management Services, Fire Services, Library and Recreation Services and Arts Services.
3. **Principles to safeguard children from harm:** Louth County Council is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in the delivery of all our services and activities. The Local Authority has an overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard the children accessing any Local Authority Services or Activity.

Louth County Council is committed to;

- Promoting general welfare, health development and safety of children;
- Ensuring safe management procedures are in place for all staff and volunteers including: 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 Officers are appointed and accessible;
- 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 procedures for responding to accidents and complaints;
- Developing and maintaining clear record keeping procedures;
- Ensuring a Code of Behaviour is in place to provide employees and volunteers with clear guidance on how to treat children and young people in the organisation;
- Developing a policy of interagency cooperation with Tusla and other agencies involved in the protection of a child.

Louth County Council's child-centred approach

Louth County Councils child-centred approach means to:

- Treat all children equally
- Listen to and respect children
- Involve children as appropriate
- Provide encouragement, support and praise (regardless of ability)
- Use appropriate language (verbal and physical)
- Have fun and encourage a positive atmosphere
- Offer constructive criticism when needed
- Treat all children as individuals
- Respect a child's personal space
- Use age-appropriate teaching aids
- Lead by example
- Be aware of child time limitations e.g. school/exams when scheduling activities
- Create an atmosphere of trust
- Be aware of the *Equal Status Act 2000-2015* which relates to discrimination based on grounds of :
 - Gender
 - Civil Status
 - Family Status
 - Age
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Disability
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Membership of the Traveller community

In addition, the Acts prohibit discrimination in the provision of accommodation services against people who are in receipt of rent supplement, housing assistance or social welfare payments.

- Use all information in respect of children only for the purpose for which it is given, subject to child protection concern(s).
- Only to photograph or use photographs with the specific approval of parent/guardian(s)

4. Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. The table below provides the high level risks identified and mitigations that have been put in place.

	Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1.	Risk of harm to a child from a member of staff, volunteer or other person whilst availing of our services	HR Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children
2	Risk of harm to a child by a contractor working on behalf of the Council or an economic operator managing a Council facility	HR Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children
3	Risk of harm or concern not being recognised or reported	HR Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children
4	The nature of the activity or other material to which a child is exposed, may be inappropriate and potentially harmful	HR Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children

5. 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 procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Louth County Council's Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children:
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons and Deputy Liaison Officers

All procedures listed are available upon request.

6. Reporting a Concern

Anyone can report a concern about a child. If you have any concerns about a child, you should report it to Tusla. A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child can contact the Tusla local social work duty service in the area where the child lives for advice about reporting your concerns.

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 you can contact the Gardai.

If you require any further information on the Local Authority's Policies and Procedures, please contact Joe McGuinness, Child Protection Liaison Officer and Deputy Child Protection Liaison Officers,

- Yvonne O'Brien, County Librarian
- John Lawrence, Senior Executive Officer, Quality of Life

Further information on Child Protection – www.tusla.ie


7. Implementation

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

This Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed within 24 months or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Subsidiary Service Specific Child Safeguarding Statements have also been devised for the following areas

- Housing
- Library & Museum Services
- Recreation Services

Signed: 
Chief Executive, Louth County Council

Date: 5 JAN 2021

