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meath county council

Meath County Council Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement

2022

Document Record	
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Supersedes	2019 Statement

1. Introduction and Purpose of this Statement

Meath County Council provides a range of local government services, community facilities and local infrastructure. It serves a population of approximately 200,000 people and the county occupies a land area of over 230,000 hectares. The county is home to the third youngest population in the state and given the nature of local government, Council staff will, on occasion, come into contact with children availing of the services we provide.

Meath County Council employs circa 880 staff in the delivery of its services. Appendix 1 details the services provided by Meath County Council where there is a greater likelihood of contact with children in service provision. This list is not exhaustive, and the Council operates from a default position that staff may come into contact with children availing of any of the services that we provide.

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been produced having due regard to the Children First Act 2015, the Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, TUSLA Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement and the Council's Policy and Procedures for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children.

The purpose of this overarching Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement is to examine and put in place principles and procedures to be observed in service provision to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of a service is safe from harm.

2. Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm

Meath County Council is committed to a child-centred approach to our work with children in the delivery of all our services and activities. The County Council has an overall corporate duty and responsibility to safeguard the children accessing our services and activities.

Meath 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 Council;
- Ensuring Designated Child Protection Liaison Officers are appointed and accessible;
- Ensuring that the Council 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.

Meath County Council's 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 2000-2010 which relates to discrimination based on nine grounds: Gender; Civil Status; Family Status; Age; Race; Religion; Disability; Sexual Orientation; Membership of the Traveller community;
- Use all information in respect of children only for the purpose for which it is given, subject to child protection concern(s).

3. Risk Assessment

In accordance with Tusla's Children First National Guidance 2017, the Council must carry out an assessment of risk of any potential for harm from abuse to a child while availing of our services. See Appendix 2 for the corporate risk assessment.

4. Procedures

Meath County Council Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children, updated in 2022, outlines the procedure for:

- The management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- The safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children;
- Provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;

- Reporting of child protection or welfare concerns via a Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer to Tusla, and/or to the Gardaí in an emergency situation;
- Maintaining confidential records;
- Maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Appointing a relevant person.

It lists the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer(s) and Deputies in Meath County Council, who are as follows:

Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO)

Brian Hora, Senior Executive Officer, Housing Department

brian.hora@meathcoco.ie

Deputy Child Protection Liaison Officers

Olivia Carpenter, Staff Officer, Fire Service

olivia.carpenter@meathcoco.ie

Dympna Herward, Executive Librarian, Library Service

dympna.herward@meathcoco.ie

Alison Lynch, Senior Staff Officer, Community Department

alison.lynch@meathcoco.ie

Patricia Garvey, Tenant Liaison Officer, Housing Department

PGarvey@meathcoco.ie

Aimee McDermott, Pool Manager, Kells Swimming Pool

aimee.mcdermott@meathcoco.ie

A copy of the Policy and Procedure for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children is available online at: <http://www.meath.ie/>

5. Reporting a Concern

All County Council employees, volunteers and persons on work experience within the Council should report child protection or welfare concerns via our Designated Child Protection Liaison Officer to Tusla inside of office hours, and/or to the Gardaí in an emergency situation.

Any member of the public 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 person 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](#)

Further information on Child Protection: www.tusla.ie

6. 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 Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every two years, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: *J. Maguire*

Jackie Maguire
Chief Executive
Meath County Council

Date: 28/06/2022

Appendix 1: Meath County Council Services that may Involve Contact with Children.

1. Libraries Services
2. Parks and Playgrounds
3. School Warden Service
4. Road Safety Officer
5. Arts Office/Arts staff (including: Solstice Arts Centre)
6. Kells Swimming Pool
7. Community Services (to include groups grant aided with community grants)
8. Housing Services (to include homeless services; Housing Welfare Officers/Social Workers, Tennant Liaison Officers, Traveller Liaison, Inspectors for private rented dwellings and Housing Caretakers)
9. Litter Warden Service
10. Human Resources (to include students on placements)
11. Environmental Schools programme
12. Customer Services
13. Corporate Services - Events staff
14. Access Officer
15. Planning Inspectors, Building Control Inspectors, Conservation Officers
16. Emergency Staff – Fire and Recue Services, Civil Defence

Please Note: This list is not exhaustive and is subject to revision.

Appendix 2: Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment – Meath County Council

Child Safeguarding Risk Register										
No.	Risk Category	Risk Description	Risk Owner	Inherent Impact	Inherent Likelihood	Inherent Risk Rating	Current Controls in place	Residual Impact	Residual Likelihood	Residual Risk Rating
1	Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation and Council's policy and procedures by employees/contractors/volunteers	Designated CPLO. HR Officer	5	3	15	Up-to-date policy/procedure. Provision of training. Designation of CPLOs. On-going monitoring.	5	1	5
2	Operational	Ineffective Selection and Appointment processes of employees who potentially interact with children	HR Officer	5	2	10	Briefing for Interview Boards. Policy and procedures monitored.	5	1	5
3	Operational	Appointment of Employees and volunteers without completing of Garda Vetting procedures	HR Officer	5	2	10	Monitor process. HR staff awareness and training.	4	1	4
4	Operational	Insufficient training for Managers, Employees and Volunteers on responsibilities for safeguarding of children	HR Officer	4	2	8	Training Programme. Monitor roll-out of programme.	4	1	4
5	Operational	Weaknesses in the management and supervision of Employees and Volunteers in terms of their safeguarding responsibilities	Senior Management	4	2	8	Support to managers. Roll out of policy and procedures documents.	4	1	4
6	Reputational	Harm caused to a child or vulnerable person while accessing Council services or facilities	Designated CPLO. HR Officer	5	2	10	CPLO and deputy CPLOs in place. Awareness raising of procedures to employees	5	1	5
7	Compliance/ Reputational	Failure to report a child protection concern in accordance with the Council's policy and procedure	Designated CPLO.	5	2	10	Training for CPLO and Deputy CPLOs. Circulation of policy and procedures document.	5	1	5
8	Compliance/ Reputational	Breach of confidentiality and data protection of a reported or suspected safeguarding of child concern	Designated CPLO. HR Officer	5	2	10	Monitor by HR, CPLO and Data Protection units.	5	1	5
9	Reputational	Inadequate/inappropriate support to an employee in the event of an allegation of mis-conduct or abuse received	HR Officer	5	2	10	Monitored by HR and designated CPLO	5	1	5
10	Operational/ Reputational	Ineffective communication of the Council's Policy and Procedure on the Protection and Safeguarding of Children to all employees	HR Officer	5	2	10	Internal communication channels used. Circulation to all staff. Training to relevant staff.	5	1	5
11	Operational	Faure to undertake appropriate risk assessments	Senior Management	3	3	9	Monitor by CPLO and senior management	3	2	6