

Empowerment Plus Child Safeguarding Statement



1 NAME OF SERVICE AND NATURE OF SERVICE

Service Name: Empowerment Plus
Nature of Service: Empowerment Plus is a charity organisation in Ireland dedicated to providing support services to children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Our services include mentoring, family support, educational programs, advocacy, and community-based interventions aimed at empowering individuals to achieve their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment. Empowerment Plus provide vital, community-based services aimed at supporting children, young people, and families experiencing significant difficulties. Empowerment Plus' services are accessible 24/7, reflecting its commitment to offering around-the-clock assistance.
Services provided include:

- Access support and supervision
- Community-based individual support
- Supervised transport
- Emergency overnight support
- Foster placement support
- Family support
- Out-of-hour welfare checks
- Targeted work to prevent young people from entering care or changing foster placements

2 PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

Empowerment Plus is committed to safeguarding children and protecting them from harm. We are guided by the principles outlined in **Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)** and the **Children First Act 2015**.
The following principles inform Empowerment Plus's commitment and responsibility to keep children safe and promote their welfare and best interests whilst availing of our services:

- The best interests of the child are paramount.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to, and taken seriously and consulted in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives, considering their age and understanding.
- Parents/guardians have a right to respect and be consulted and involved in matters concerning their family.
- Where there is a conflict between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/guardians and families, the child's welfare must come first.
- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and children's protection require multi-agency, multi-disciplinary activities.



3 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Category	Main procedures and controls in place to manage risk identified
1. Risk of harm to a child by a staff member, volunteer or student, including risks related to outings and online activities	Empowerment Plus Child safeguarding policy and Reporting procedures Empowerment Plus recruitment and selection procedures in place for workers Trust in Care Policy which includes the procedure for managing allegations of abuse made against a staff member, Empowerment Plus managing allegations policy is in place Code of Standards and Behaviour Staff supervision policies Social Media Policy Risk Management Policy Out-of-Hour's support Empowerment Plus reporting procedures for children protection and welfare concerns to Tusla in place List of mandated persons in place Empowerment Plus safeguarding procedures for appointing a relevant person in place
2. Risk of harm to a child from a service user (adult or child), visitor or member of the public, including risks relating to outings and online activities	Supervision/accompaniment/admission policies are relevant to local service Public access policies are relevant to local service Social Media Policy Risk Management Policy Out-of-Hour's support

3. Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a staff member	<p>Mandatory training ‘An Introduction to Children First’ eLearning for all staff</p> <p>Procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons</p> <p>Children First included in Employee Induction</p> <p>Empowerment Plus Safeguarding policies, Reporting procedures, training and information in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus reporting procedures for children protection and welfare concerns to Tusla in place</p> <p>List of mandated persons in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus safeguarding procedures for appointing a relevant person in place</p>
4. Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a child	<p>‘An Introduction to Children First’ eLearning for all staff</p> <p>Child friendly information in relation to how to report if they feel unsafe</p> <p>Empowerment Plus Safeguarding policies, procedures, training and information in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus reporting procedures for children protection and welfare concerns to Tusla in place</p> <p>List of mandated persons in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus safeguarding procedures for appointing a relevant person in place</p>
5. Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015 and/or related guidance in HSE services	<p>Procedure for reporting a Relevant Person for this purpose of this Child Safeguarding Statement</p> <p>Children First Governance Structures in place</p> <p>Internal Audit and compliance assurance measures</p> <p>Empowerment Plus reporting procedures for children protection and welfare concerns to Tusla in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus Safeguarding policies, procedures, training and information in place</p> <p>List of mandated persons in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus safeguarding procedures for appointing a relevant person in place</p>
6. Risk of harm to a child through lack of supervision by a staff member (including access visits, outings, transports)	<p>Garda vetting process in place and thorough reference checks, Empowerment Plus recruitment and selection procedures in place for workers</p> <p>Internal trainings on risk management, safeguarding</p> <p>Staff supervision policies</p> <p>Incident reporting policies</p> <p>Codes of Standards and Behaviour</p> <p>Out-of-hours support for staff members</p> <p>Safeguarding policy and procedures in place</p> <p>Empowerment Plus safeguarding procedures for appointing a relevant person in place</p>
7. Risk of harm to a child through unauthorised photograph	<p>Consent reviews and documentation</p> <p>Professional boundaries policy</p> <p>Codes of Standards and Behaviour</p> <p>Staff supervision policies</p> <p>Social Media policy</p> <p>Internal incident reporting measures</p>
8. Risk of harm to a child by safety concerns while facilitating transport by staff member	<p>Garda vetting process in place and thorough reference checks, Empowerment Plus recruitment and selection procedures in place for workers</p> <p>Use of own car policy</p> <p>Mandatory driver license verification checks</p> <p>Child-appropriate safety equipment requirements</p> <p>Adherence to legal standards</p> <p>Internal behaviour management protocols</p>
Other (Additional risks/and or controls identified)	

NOTE: THE DEFINITION OF HARM IN RELATION TO A CHILD IS “(A) ASSAULT, ILL-TREATMENT OR NEGLECT OF THE CHILD IN A MANNER THAT SERIOUSLY AFFECTS OR IS LIKELY TO SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE CHILD’S HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT, OR WELFARE OR (B) SEXUAL ABUSE OF THE CHILD” (CHILDREN FIRST ACT 2015)

NOTE: THIS IS AN AMALGAMATED LIST OF RISKS, GROUPED INTO THEMES. THIS STATEMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED BY A MORE DETAILED SECONDARY RISK ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT WHICH CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

POLICIES AND 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, Empowerment Plus has developed and implemented following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service;
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with 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 (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.



IMPLEMENTATION

Empowerment Plus is committed to implementing this safeguarding statement and ensuring that it is communicated effectively to all staff, volunteers, service users, and other relevant stakeholders. We are dedicated to creating a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people in our care.

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 has been adapted on the 17th September 2024 and will be reviewed on the 17th September 2026, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: Valerie Hogan (Provider)

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For queries, please contact Aileen Carey, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015, on 0871017177 or aileencarey@eplus.ie



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