

January 2026

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

A. Who are the Irish Refugee Council (IRC) ?

The Irish Refugee Council (37 Killarney Street, Dublin D01 NX74) is a registered charity and an Independent Law Centre which works with, supports and represents people seeking international protection and refugees; and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. The Irish Refugee Council delivers a broad range of services, sharing and learning from best practice, conducting research and undertaking advocacy that defends and strengthens rights, prevents regression and contributes to a stronger and more inclusive Ireland.

In the course of its work, the Irish Refugee Council works with children through a broad range of services =. The Irish Refugee Council is committed to ensuring that children are safeguarded from 'harm' as defined in the Children First Act 2015.

B. Children in the Irish Refugee Council:

Many of the children we work with have fled war, persecution and conflict in their countries of origin and have experience of trauma. They may have also taken difficult journeys to Ireland, and often reside in emergency accommodation including, but not limited to, emergency IPAS centres. Many of the children we work with are in the care of the State as unaccompanied minors. Many of the children we work with are not recognised as children i.e. their ages are disputed by the state and they will be residing in adult accommodation services.

C. How the IRC engages with children:

- **Child Refugee Service (CRS):** The Irish Refugee Council offers services to unaccompanied minors seeking international protection in Ireland. Specifically, it supports them with the requirements of the international protection process. The CRS is a 'Relevant Service' in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Children First Act 2015.
- **Youth Work:** The Youth Work programme engages with children and young people in groups, projects and on a one-to-one basis. This includes a comprehensive range of youth work activities and programmes that support the social, emotional, and physical well-being of young people aged 16-24 years.
- **Information and Advocacy Service (IAS):** The IAS provides information and advocacy over email, phone, as well as through one-to-one casework. The IAS works with adults, families with minor children, and age-disputed minors.

- **Irish Refugee Council Independent Law Centre (LC):** The LC provides representation to families including children, age-disputed minors and unaccompanied minors.
- **Resettlement and Community Sponsorship:** This service provides support and, in certain situations, accommodation, to resettled families. Families can include minor children. The work can consist of community outreach and visiting homes.
- **Housing Service:** The Housing service assists people with accessing statutory housing supports. They work with adults, families including children, and other professionals. They provide one-to-one case work, workshops and outreach services, and engage with people at outreach events.
- **Employment Service:** The Employment Service assists people in preparing for employment. They provide one-to-one case work, workshops and outreach services, and engage with people at outreach events. Children often attend our office or outreach events with their parents.
- **Education Service:** The Education Service assists people in accessing education services, and education supports. They can work with young people under the age of 18. They provide one-to-one case work, workshops and outreach services, and engage with people at events which can include children.

D. Principles to safeguard children from harm:

The Irish Refugee Council is committed to the protection of children and young people with whom we work, and to promoting good practice within our organisation.

The Irish Refugee Council is committed to promoting the rights of the child including the participation of children and young people in matters that affect them.

We believe the following:

1. Our priority to ensure the welfare and safety of every child and young person who engages with our services and programmes is paramount.
2. Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years.
3. All children and young people have an equal right to attend a service that respects them as individuals and encourages them to reach their potential, regardless of their background.
4. We are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who attends our service, including the rights to be kept safe and protected from harm, listened to and heard.
5. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation.
6. Staff members, board members, interns, volunteers and secondees must conduct

themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

7. All children will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

8. The best interests of the child remain paramount.

E. Risk Assessment:

We have assessed any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing those risks. These are also contained in our Child Safeguarding Policy on our website.

Risk Identified	Policies and/or Procedures in place to manage and mitigate identified risk
(1) A child is harmed by an Irish Refugee Council staff * member (for the purposes of this Child Safeguarding Statement this include volunteers, interns and board members) through coming into contact with the Irish Refugee Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safeguarding Policy, in particular the sections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory reporting requirements with respect to concerns of child abuse and/ or neglect. ○ The management of allegations of abuse against staff of a child availing of our Services. ○ The procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of staff working with children. ○ The procedure for the provision of child safeguarding training. • Law Centre Risk Management Policies and Procedures.
(2) A child is harmed by another person (including another child) through coming into contact with the Irish Refugee Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safeguarding Policy, in particular the sections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mandatory reporting requirements with respect to concerns of child abuse and/ or neglect. ○ Reporting a Concern. ○ Procedures for the provision and maintenance of child safeguarding training.
(3) A child is harmed by a failure on the part of a staff* member to report, or the filing of a poor report of allegations/suspicions of abuse made to Irish Refugee Council staff by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Policy, in particular the sections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The appointment of a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) with responsibility for ensuring that reporting procedures within the Irish Refugee Council are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.

<p>telephone, email, letter or in person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The management of allegations of abuse against staff of a child availing of our Services. ○ The procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of staff working with children. ○ The procedure for the provision of child safeguarding training.
<p>(4) A child absconds while engaging with the Child Refugee Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immediately notify both the designated Tusla Social Worker/ Contact Point and emergency services.

F. Procedures:

The Irish Refugee Council’s Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice and the Charities Regulator Safeguarding Guidance for Charitable Organisations working with Children 2020.

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

- General procedures for safeguarding children.
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against employees/interns/volunteers/board members from a child availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of employees, interns and volunteers to work with children.
- 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.
- The Appointment of a Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person Procedure for appointing a Relevant Person.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the mandated persons in the organisation Office Safety and Security Policy.
- Disciplinary Procedures (with regard to inadequate work performance)

