



**An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta**
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

CHILDREN FIRST SECTORAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Published in accordance with section 27 of the Children First Act, 2015

November 2018

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1. Introduction

The Children First Act 2015 (the Act) was fully commenced on 11th December 2017. Section 27 of the Act requires each Minister of the Government to prepare and publish a Sectoral Implementation Plan (SIP).

This SIP is prepared in accordance with Section 27 of the Act and outlines a programme of measures to ensure that the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any services which come within the definition of relevant services provided by the Department and its aegis bodies, comply with the provisions of the Act, and the guidance issues under Section 6 of the Act.

2. Relevant Services Provided

The Department Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht oversees and has policy responsibility for the conservation, preservation, protection, development and presentation of Ireland's heritage and culture. The Department also seeks to promote the Irish language, to support the Gaeltacht and to assist the sustainable development of island communities. The key functions under its remit include:

- Arts, Culture, Film and Music, as well as oversight of Ireland's cultural institutions;
- Ireland's Built and Natural Heritage;
- the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands; and
- North/South Co-operation insofar as it relates to Waterways Ireland, An Foras Teanga and the wider functions of the Department.

Details of those bodies under the aegis of the Department with roles relating to the achievement of the Department's mission and strategic objectives are set out in Appendix 1.

Relevant Services Provided by the Department

The Department interacts with young people in several different ways in order to promote and cultivate Ireland's culture and heritage. The Department also engages with Transition Year Students and Temporary Clerical Officers that may be under the age of 18. Such engagement comes within the definition of relevant services in Schedule 1 of the Act, Part 5 (a):

“Any work or activity which consists of the provision of educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities around children”.

These interactions are addressed in the Department's Child Safeguarding Statement and this information will be updated, if another Unit's work falls within the definition of relevant service under the Act.

Relevant services provided by bodies under the aegis of the Department

The Department has notified each of these bodies under its aegis (see Appendix 1) of the full commencement of the Act, and of the obligations and requirements of the Act and the

Guidance. Each body has been asked to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment and, where appropriate, to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement.

While some bodies under the aegis of the Department may not provide relevant services as specified under the Act, these services may be accessible by children along with the general public. The Department has engaged with, and will continue to engage with bodies in relation to the importance of having child safeguarding measures in place for all children that may access their services.

3. Measures taken to promote, review and report on compliance with the provisions of the Act

Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group

The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs established a statutory Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group under Part 4 of the Act to bring central Government oversight to the implementation process. The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Group has been represented on this Group by the Assistant Principal Officer in the Corporate Governance Unit since its establishment in November 2016.

Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Children First Sectoral Committee

Following on from the establishment of the Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group, the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht set up a Children First Sectoral Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to

- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement based on the requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, within the Department.
- Act as an initial forum for information sharing on the Children First legislation for all staff.
- Develop a Sectoral Implementation Plan as provided for in Section 27 of the Children First Act, 2015.

This Group will remain in place to monitor developments and to agree any changes to such arrangements that may be deemed necessary.

Child Safeguarding Statements

Under the Act, organisations that provide relevant services to children must develop a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS). This statement describes the services being provided as well as the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of these services is safe from harm. The Department has developed a CSS which is published on the Department's website and intranet. Due to the specialist nature of National Parks and Wildlife Service sites (e.g. National Parks) it has been decided that a separate Child Safeguarding Statement will be prepared in respect of these locations. These Child Safeguarding Statements will be displayed locally and are available from the Department on request.

Designated Liaison Persons

The Department has appointed, in line with the National Guidance, two Designated Liaison Persons (one to be an Irish speaker) (DLP's) and 2 Deputy DLP's (one to be an Irish speaker). The DLP's and Deputy DLP's are the principal contacts for information and advice regarding specific child safeguarding concerns. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring reporting procedures within the Department are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla. The DLP is responsible for keeping records of all reports to Tusla. The DLP will also keep reports, where, following consideration, the issue does not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern.

Mandated Persons

The Act designates certain professionals and other persons in specified occupations (as categorised in Schedule 2 to the Act) as 'mandated persons' who are obliged to make reports to Tusla in certain prescribed circumstances and to assist with Tusla assessments on request. This is distinct from, and additional to, the best practice reporting arrangements for organisations generally (via DLP's) under the National Guidance. The HR Unit will maintain a record of any mandated person within the Department and will inform any new entrants who are mandated persons of their obligations under the Act.

Training and Awareness-raising

The Department and its agencies will ensure that the Child Safeguarding Statement for each organisation is circulated to all staff. All staff have been informed of the eLearning training web address (as provided by Tusla) and all staff members are encouraged, as best practice, to undertake this in the interest of safeguarding children.

The Department's Sectoral Implementation Plan and Child Safeguarding Statement are central to raising awareness among staff of who the Designated Liaison Persons are, the procedures they should follow in the event of their having concerns about the well-being of children with whom they interact in the provision of the Department's services, and the obligations on them to report these concerns.

A Children First page has been established on the Department's internal intranet with links to relevant Departmental documents and Guidance published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla.

Recruitment/Vetting Procedures

All successful applicants to the Civil Service are vetted through a process operated by the Public Appointments Service. Existing officers are subject to the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour.

Annual Compliance Report

An Annual Compliance report will be prepared by the Corporate Governance Unit and submitted to the Management Board.

Reporting on compliance by Bodies under the aegis of the Department

Each body under the aegis of the Department has been made aware of their obligations under the Act, including the requirements to:

- Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement;
- Identify mandated persons;
- Ensure each mandated person completes the eLearning module, and
- Develop policy and procedures guidelines.

Each body is accountable to the Department in relation to compliance with governance matters. Each body will report on its compliance with Children First annually to the Department as part of overall corporate governance /assurance arrangements.

Review

This SIP will be reviewed and, if appropriate, revised no later than 3 years from the date of publication.

The Department's Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed no later than 2 years from date of publication.

Appendix 1

Bodies under the aegis of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

| Body | Website | Address |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| An Coimisinéir Teanga | www.coimisineir.ie | An Coimisinéir Teanga An Spidéal Co. na Gaillimhe |
| Arts Council | www.artscouncil.ie | The Arts Council 70 Merrion Square Dublin 2 |
| Chester Beatty Library | www.cbl.ie | Chester Beatty Library Dublin Castle Dublin 2 |
| Crawford Gallery | www.crawfordartgallery.com | Crawford Gallery Emmet Place Cork |
| Údarás na Gaeltachta | www.udaras.ie | Údarás na Gaeltachta Na Forbacha Co. na Gaillimhe |
| Heritage Council | www.heritagecouncil.ie | Heritage Council Áras na hOidhreachta Church Lane Kilkenny |
| Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland | www.screenireland.ie | Screen Ireland Queensgate 23 Dock Road Galway |
| Irish Museum of Modern Art | www.modernart.ie | Irish Museum of Modern Art Royal Hospital Military Road Kilmainham Dublin 8 |
| National Concert Hall | www.nch.ie | National Concert Hall Earlsfort Terrace Dublin 2 |
| National Gallery of Ireland | www.nationalgallery.ie | National Gallery of Ireland Merrion Square West Dublin 2 |
| National Library of Ireland | www.nli.ie | National Library of Ireland Kildare Street Dublin 2 |
| National Museum of Ireland | www.museum.ie | National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks Benburb Street Dublin 7 |

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| Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch (Ulster-Scots Agency) | www.ulsterscotsagency.com | The Ulster-Scots Agency The Corn Exchange Belfast, BT1 2LG Northern Ireland |
| Foras na Gaeilge | www.gaeilge.ie www.forasnagaeilge.ie | Foras na Gaeilge 7 Merrion Square Dublin 2 |
| Waterways Ireland | www.waterwaysireland.org | Waterways Ireland 2 Sligo Road Enniskillen, BT74 7JY Co. Fermanagh Northern Ireland |