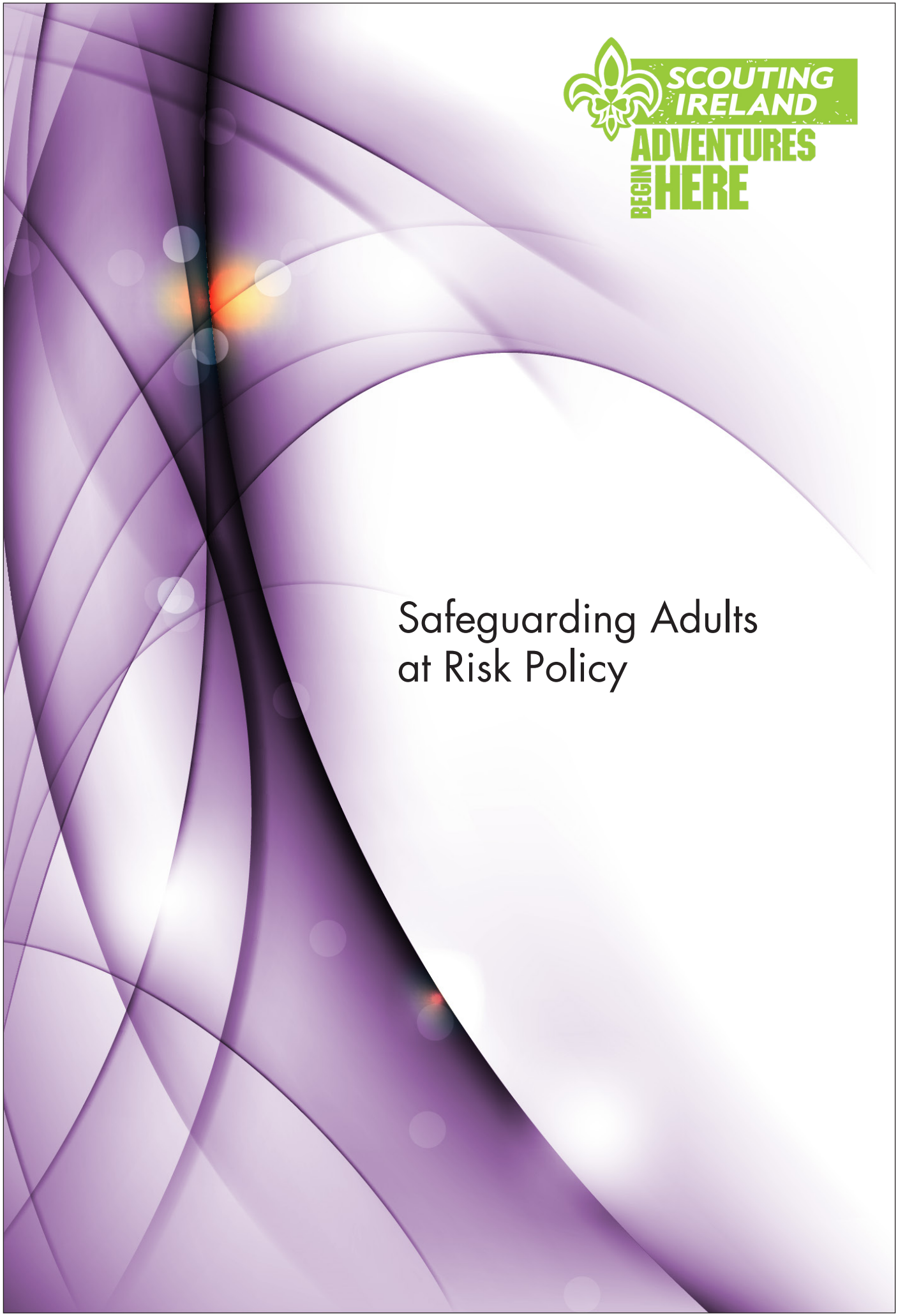


Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

	Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
	No.	Issued	Amended	Next Review Date
	BOD-SG-003	22/12/2020	04/09/2025	September 2026
	Category: Safeguarding			
	Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy			

Related Documents	
BOD-SG-001	Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
BOD-SG-002	Scouting Ireland Code of Behaviour: To assist adults engaging with children in scouting
BOD-SG-004	Membership Risk Assessment Policy: Adult members suspended without prejudice for a safeguarding purpose.
BOD-SG-005	Membership Risk Assessment Policy: Youth members suspended without prejudice for a safeguarding purpose.
BOD-SG-006	Responding to Victims of Abuse within Scouting Ireland
BOD-MA-002	Scouting Ireland's Procedure for Suspension without Prejudice
SID-CCD04	Scouting Ireland's Disciplinary Process

Revision Schedule		
Revision	**Date**	**Description**
1	04/11/2025	No changes / Accepted as relevant, current – but full review in 2026 to introduce a Safeguarding manual for S.I.

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Purpose of this Policy

Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015) was produced jointly by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland. That policy document places a responsibility on all voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland, who provide recreational social, sporting or educational activities or services, to develop a policy and procedure for safeguarding adults who may be at risk of harm. Scouting Ireland recognises that such a policy represents good practice and has decided to adopt such a policy for the entire organisation in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Adult safeguarding is based on a fundamental human right for all individuals to be treated with respect and dignity and given the right to choose. All adults at risk of harm or in need of protection should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives and there should always be a presumption of capacity to make decisions unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise. However, there are also some circumstances when it may be necessary to consider the protection and rights of others and overriding the withholding of consent may be necessary to ensure the protection of others.

The purpose of this policy is to protect adults who are at risk of, or in need of protection from, all forms of abuse to ensure that they receive a safe, sound and supportive service through the process of identifying, investigating, managing and preventing such abuse.

"All adults have the right to be safe and to live a life free from abuse. All persons are entitled to this right, regardless of their circumstances. It is the responsibility of all service providers, statutory and non-statutory, to ensure that, service users are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and to prevent abuse." (Health Service Executive, 2014, pp. 5-6)

This aim of this policy is to:

- Protect adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Recognise every adult's right to respect, dignity, honesty and compassion in every aspect of their life
- Prevent and reduce the risk of harm to adults, while supporting people's right to maintain control over their lives and make informed choices free from coercion
- Establish clear guidance for reporting concerns an adult is, or may be, at risk of being harmed or in need of protection.

Good Practice

Scouting Ireland is guided by current best practice, the law and Human Rights legislation as set out by the European Convention on Human Rights, The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014) and the Human Rights Act 1998 (UK).

Any practice which aims to safeguard adults should be proportionate to the level of risk perceived, carried out appropriately, and be the least restrictive of the individual's rights and freedoms. All adults should be offered the same services on an equal basis.

The 5 Principles underpinning this policy

1. A rights-based approach

'To promote and respect any adult's right to be safe and secure, to freedom from harm and coercion, to equality treatment, to the protection of the law, to privacy, to confidentiality and freedom from discrimination'.

2. An empowering approach

'To empower adults to make informed choices about their lives to maximise their opportunities, to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk'.

3. A person-centred approach

'To promote and facilitate full participation of adults in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his or her safety and well-being'.

4. A consent driven approach

'To make a presumption that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent, to make informed choices, to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives, to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who last the capacity to consent, and intervening in the life of an adult against his or her wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law'.

5. A collaborative approach

'To acknowledge that adult safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand in hand'.

Adults at Risk of Harm

"An adult at risk of harm is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics or life circumstances."

a) Personal characteristics
Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.
And/or

b) Life circumstances.
"Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions." (NIdirect, 2020)

Adult in need of protection Is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) Personal characteristics ***And/or***

b) Life circumstances ***And***

c) Who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests ***And***

d) Where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing or likely to cause, him/ her to be harmed. (Start360, 2019)

Harm

Harm is the impact on the victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect. It is the result of any action whether by commission or omission, deliberate, or as the result of a lack of knowledge or awareness which may result in the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, or mental health or well-being.

The full impact of harm is not always clear from the outset, or even at the time it is first reported. Consideration must be given not only to the immediate impact of harm and risk to the victim, but also the potential longer term impact and the risk of future harm.

Abuse

Abuse is defined as "any act, or failure to act, which results in a breach of a vulnerable person's human rights, civil liberties, physical and mental integrity, dignity or general well being, whether intended or through negligence, including sexual relationships or financial transactions to which the person does not or cannot validly consent, or which are deliberately exploitative. Abuse may take a variety of forms." (Health Service Executive, 2014)

Main forms of Abuse:

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which might or might not cause physical injury.

This type of abuse includes:

- hitting
- pushing
- rough handling
- exposure to heat or cold
- force feeding
- improper administration of medication
- denial of treatment
- misuse or illegal use of restraint
- not being allowed to go where you wish, when you wish

Signs of physical abuse are:

- fractures
- bruising
- burns
- pain
- marks
- not wanting to be touched

Psychological or emotional abuse

Psychological or emotional abuse is harmful behaviour that can cause mental distress. It can involve both verbal and non-verbal abuse which can scare, humiliate and isolate a person. This may include:

- threats
- humiliation or ridicule
- provoking fear of violence
- shouting, yelling and swearing
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion

Signs of psychological or emotional abuse are:

- being withdrawn
- too eager to do everything they are asked
- showing compulsive behaviour
- not being able to do things they used to
- not being able to concentrate or focus

Financial abuse

Financial abuse happens if someone tries to steal, steals or defrauds you of your money, goods or property.
This includes:

- exploitation
- embezzlement
- withholding pension or benefits
- exerting pressure around wills, property or inheritance

Signs of financial abuse are:

- having unusual difficulty with finances
- not having enough money
- being too protective of money and things they own
- not paying bills
- not having normal home comforts

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is unwanted sexual activity or sexual behaviour that happens without consent or understanding.

Sexual violence and abuse can be physical contact or non-contact sexual activities,
These Include:

- indecent exposure
- stalking
- grooming
- forced to look at or be involved in producing sexually abusive material
- forced to watch sexual activities

Possible signs are:

- genital itching, soreness or having a sexually transmitted disease
- using bad language
- not wanting to be touched
- behaving in a sexually inappropriate way
- changes in appearance

Institutional abuse

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult at risk by a regime or individuals. It takes place within settings and services that adults at risk live in or use, including any organisation, in or outside the Health and Social Care sector.

Institutional abuse may occur:

- when routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care
- when poor practice and behaviours are in place
- within strict regimes and rigid routines which violate the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm
- within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence

Possible signs are:

- the person has no personal clothing or belongings
- there is no care plan for them
- they are admitted often to hospital
- professionals having treated them badly or unsatisfactorily or acting in a way that cause harm to the person

Identifying neglect

Neglect occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, suitable and adequate care and support needed by another adult. It may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a decision not to act when they know the adult in their care needs help. It may impair the health or well-being of an adult.

Possible signs are:

- having pain or discomfort
- being very hungry, thirsty or untidy
- failing health

Identifying exploitation

Exploitation is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain.

Exploitation comes in many forms, including:

- slavery
- being controlled by a person or a group
- forced labour
- domestic violence and abuse
- sexual violence and abuse
- human trafficking

Recognising signs of harm or abuse

You might become aware that an adult is at risk of harm when:

- you see or hear something
- they tell you about abuse, exploitation or neglect happening to them
- a friend, family member or somebody tells you something that causes you concern
- you notice injuries or physical signs that cause you concern
- you notice the victim or abuser behaving in a way that alerts something may be wrong

These categories of abuse are not mutually exclusive and many situations will involve a combination of types of abuse. These definitions of abuse are defined by the Government of Northern Ireland in their article 'Recognising adult abuse, exploitation and neglect'

A person's right to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are the tenets of a decent society.

The challenges of dealing with abuse, exploitation or neglect should never arise, but they can and they do. The harm caused can have a devastating and long-lasting impact on victims, their families and carers. Unfortunately, some adults are more at risk of harm than others.

Scouting Ireland is committed to keeping adults safe and from harm and exploitation and upholding their rights.

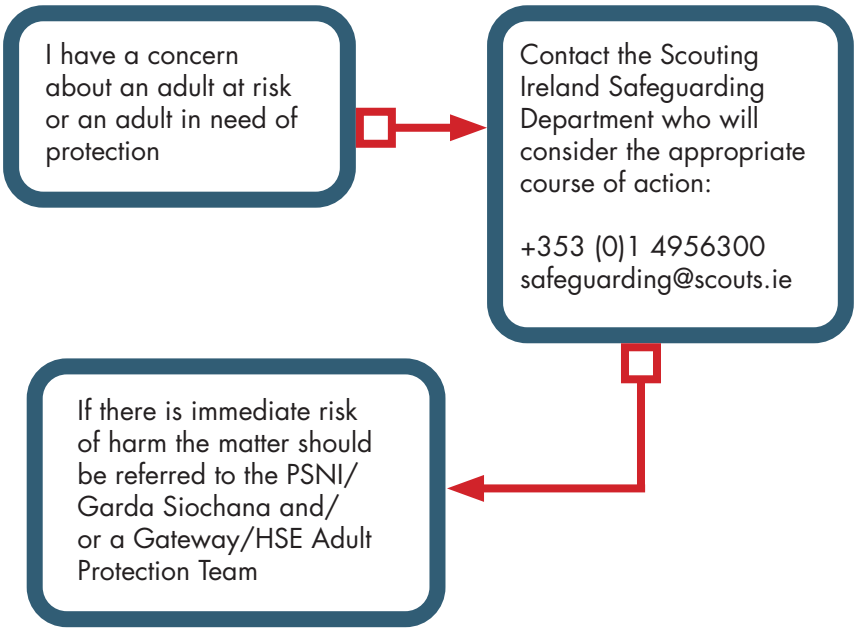
Rights of an Adult at Risk or in need of Protection

Process for Reporting a concern
Safeguarding Manager Contact Details:

Michael Lynch, Safeguarding Manager
Scouting Ireland National Office. Larch hill, Dublin 16, D16 P023
Republic of Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)1 4956300 Email:safeguarding@scouts.ie

If there is a clear and immediate risk of harm or a crime is alleged or suspected, the matter should be referred directly to the PSNI / Garda



Síochána and/or HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service (NI) / HSE National Safeguarding Office (RoI).

Where a matter is referred directly to the above-mentioned statutory services, the Safeguarding Department at Scouting Ireland must be informed to facilitate any necessary follow-up action.

However, in most circumstances there will be an emerging safeguarding concern which should normally be referred to the Safeguarding Department at Scouting Ireland, who will in turn notify the HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service/HSE National Safeguarding Office, for a professional assessment. It will be their responsibility to judge whether the threshold for an adult protection intervention has been met, or whether alternative responses are more appropriate. The Safeguarding Department at Scouting Ireland may also notify the Garda Siochana or the Police Service of Northern Ireland where there is a concern that a crime may have been committed.

Role of the Safeguarding Manager

- Ensuring the Scouting Ireland Adult Safeguarding policy is disseminated and implemented throughout the organisation, promoting an adult safeguarding ethos within the organisation;
- Providing information and support for Scouting Ireland volunteers on adult safeguarding;
- Advising the CEO of Scouting Ireland regarding adult safeguarding training needs and/or concerns;
- Making referrals to the statutory authorities.
- Liaison with statutory authorities when appropriate;
- Responsibility for the development and updating of the Scouting Ireland Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Reporting to the CEO regarding adult safeguarding
- Maintaining all records pertaining to adult safeguarding in a secure location at Scouting Ireland and making records available for inspection as appropriate and necessary.
- Compiling and analysing records of reported concerns to determine whether a number of low-level concerns are accumulating to become significant. Update Safeguarding Manager accordingly.

If you are not satisfied with the way in which an adult safeguarding complaint has been dealt with by the Scouting Ireland Safeguarding Department, please contact the

Safeguarding Manager at +353 (0)1 4956300 or safeguarding@scouts.ie.

Complaints Procedure

Adult Safeguarding Gateway Teams (NI only)

Belfast Trust	Duty Social Worker Tel: 028 9020 4550 (Ormeau Road) Out-of-hours emergency duty team Tel: 028 9056 5444
Western Trust	Duty Social Worker Tel: 028 7131 4090
Southern Trust	Gateway Team, Craigavon Tel: 028 3834 3011 Gateway Team, Newry Tel: 028 3082 5152
South Eastern Trust	Duty Social Worker Tel: 0300 1000 300 Out-of-hours: 028 9056 5444
Northern Trust	Gateway Service (0300 1234 333) gives options to contact appropriate Team. Out-of-hours Emergency Social Work Service (028 9446 8833)

HSE Adult Safeguarding Teams (ROI only)

Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal	Ms. Donna Carroll, HSE Office, Community Health Care Area 1 Ballyshannon Health Campus An Clochar, College Street,Ballyshannon Co . Donegal 071-9834660 Safeguarding.cho1@hse.ie
Dublin North, Dublin North City, Dublin North West	Ms. Mary McNutt, St Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, Dublin 20 076-6959528 Safeguarding.cho9@hse.ie
Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth and Meath	Ms Maura Seabrooke, Ashbourne Primary Care Centre, Unit 12, Killegland Walk, Declan Street, Ashbourne, Co. Meath A84 A627 01 6914632 safeguarding.cho8@hse.ie

Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West	Ms. Celine O'Connor, Beech House, 101-102 Naas Business Park, Naas, Co. Kildare 045 920410 Safeguarding.CHO7@hse.ie
Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East	Mr.Tony McCusker, Ballinteer Health Centre, Ballinteer Avenue, Dublin 16. 01 2164511 Safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie
South Tipperary. Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford	Ms.Geraldine Sutton, HSE Offices, Dublin Road, Lacken, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny 056-7784325 Safeguarding.cho5@hse.ie
Kerry and Cork	Ms.Kathleen O'Mahony, Unit 24/25 Doughcloyne Industrial Estate,Wilton, Cork T12Y821 021 4927550 Safeguarding.cho4@hse.ie
Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and East Limerick	Ms. Maggie McNally, Tyone Health Centre, Tyone, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary 067 46470 Safeguarding.cho3@hse.ie
Galway, Roscommon and Mayo	Ms. Pauline Levins, La Nua, Ballybane, Castlepark Road, Galway 091 748432 Safeguarding.cho2@hse.ie

HSE National Safeguarding Office
Tel: 061 46 1165 safeguarding.socialcare@hse.ie

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