Scouting Ireland, National Office, Larch Hill, Dublin 16, Ireland.
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Scouting Ireland
Safeguarding Department

Six-Monthly Report to:

the Department of Education and Youth

29 May 2026

7th Six Monthly Report

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Report to the Department of Education and Youth

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Organisation: Scouting Ireland
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Head of Safeguarding – Qualification, Registration, Supervision & Training

The Head of Safeguarding and author of this report is a professionally qualified Social Worker and CORU registered (Registration Number 003369). The Head of Safeguarding leads a small team of case officers and vetting officers in Scouting Irelands Safeguarding Department.

With 20 years' experience in safeguarding and child protection the Head of Safeguarding is committed to ensuring the highest standard of safeguarding practices and services are provided in Scouting Ireland. Staff in the Safeguarding Department receive regular individual professional supervision and ongoing training in accordance with their individual needs and in meeting the needs of the service. External supervision/counselling is also available to the staff team on an individual basis where need is identified. The Head of Safeguarding provides individual and group supervision to the staff team and in turn receives external clinical supervision and is committed to ongoing training and development.

Executive Summary

Scouting Ireland continues to maintain and strengthen a comprehensive safeguarding framework aligned with national legislation and international best practice.

Key developments for May 2026 include:

- Completion of the WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment with an overall score of 77%.
- Development and implementation of a structured national action plan addressing priority recommendations.
- Continued delivery of safeguarding training, vetting, and case management
- Strengthened governance through Board oversight and Safeguarding Subcommittee engagement.
- Ongoing collaboration with statutory agencies including Tusla, An Garda Síochána, The Gateway Service, PSNI, Charities Regulator (NI).
- Participation in Voluntary sector initiatives – Safeguarding National Committees for the Youth Sector and Vulnerable Adults
- Attendance and Participation at recent conferences- Irish Internet Hotline.ie launch, NOTA Conference, NYCI Conference
- Attendance at a conference and subsequent invite to a development day with the Aulders service –"Child Sex Abuse and Exploitation is preventable and not inevitable"

Priority actions for 2026 focus on online safety, adult safeguarding, compliance systems, and youth-facing safeguarding education.

Scouting Ireland remains committed to continuous improvement and ensuring that all young people participate in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of safeguarding practices, developments, and activities within Scouting Ireland for the reporting period up to May 2026. It is submitted to the Department of Education and Youth as part of ongoing governance and accountability arrangements.

Scouting Ireland Overview

Scouting Ireland supports over 30,000 young people and 10,000 adult volunteers across the island of Ireland. The organisation is committed to delivering a safe, inclusive, and youth-centred programme grounded in strong safeguarding principles.

Safeguarding Department Overview

The Safeguarding Department within Scouting Ireland continues to operate under professional standards, led by a CORU-registered social worker with extensive experience in child protection. The team provides case management, advisory support, training delivery, and policy oversight.

The Safeguarding Department operates as a professional, multi-functional service responsible for ensuring the safety, welfare, and protection of all members. Its work is underpinned by national legislation, international standards, and best practice guidance, including alignment with TUSLA (The Child and Family Agency (Republic of Ireland), The Education Authority (Northern Ireland) and the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) Safe from Harm framework.

Core Functions

- Case Management: Management of safeguarding concerns, including initial assessments, further assessments, and reporting, engagement and coordination with statutory agencies and other stakeholders.
- Vetting and Compliance: Processing Garda Vetting (NVGB) and AccessNI checks, ensuring all adults are vetted and re-vetted every three years.
- Training: Delivery of mandatory safeguarding training, including online learning every three years and role-specific modules (e.g. CPAP, leadership training).
- Policy and Governance: Development, implementation, and regular review of safeguarding policies, procedures, and the Safeguarding Statement.
- Risk Management: Oversight of Risk Assessments of Harm and safeguarding compliance across all levels of the organisation.

- External Engagement: Ongoing liaison with Tusla, An Garda Síochána, PSNI, Gateway Services, and other relevant bodies.
- WOSM Compliance: Participation in the Safe from Harm Assessment process and implementation of improvement actions.

WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment

In May 2026, Scouting Ireland took part the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) Safe from Harm Assessment.

Scouting Ireland achieved a score of 77%, reflecting strong compliance with international safeguarding standards.

Following the assessment, a detailed action plan has been developed to address recommendations. This plan will guide improvements in safeguarding governance, implementation, training, and monitoring throughout 2026 and beyond.

WOSM Safe from Harm – Key Actions 2026

Following the WOSM Safe from Harm Assessment (77%), Scouting Ireland has developed a focused action plan to address key recommendations. The priority actions for 2026 are summarised as follows:

- Develop and implement comprehensive Online Safety Procedures covering digital platforms, communication, and emerging risks.
- Expand safeguarding scope to include all adults, including development of an Adult Code of Conduct and improved accountability measures.
- Introduce systems to ensure adult compliance with safeguarding requirements, including training, vetting, and formal declaration processes.
- Enhance governance and oversight through improved reporting, monitoring metrics, and a consolidated safeguarding implementation framework.
- Strengthen risk management practices, including integration into organisational risk registers and development of practical tools for local groups.
- Develop child-friendly safeguarding resources and expand youth-facing education within the Safe from Harm programme.

These actions are being progressed throughout 2026 under the oversight of the Head of Safeguarding, the Subcommittee and Board of Directors, with regular monitoring and reporting in place.

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Collaboration work with other Scouting Ireland Departments

Volunteer & Group Support

- Compliance with vetting & training requirements.
- Case Management Team decision making meetings.
- Digital Devices Policy development
- Safeguarding inputs for Personal Scouting Assistant role

Programme

- Volunteer Group support for the delivery of Safe from Harm Youth Programme
- Support for events
- Safeguarding supports for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Safeguarding inputs for Neurodiverse initiatives
- Support with Scouting Irelands involvement in Pride events
- Significant supports for the contingent heading to the World Scout Jamboree in Poland in 2027

Information Technology Safeguariding supporting improvements for:

- parental consent forms
- adults renewing an agreement to adhere to Scouting Irelands code of conduct



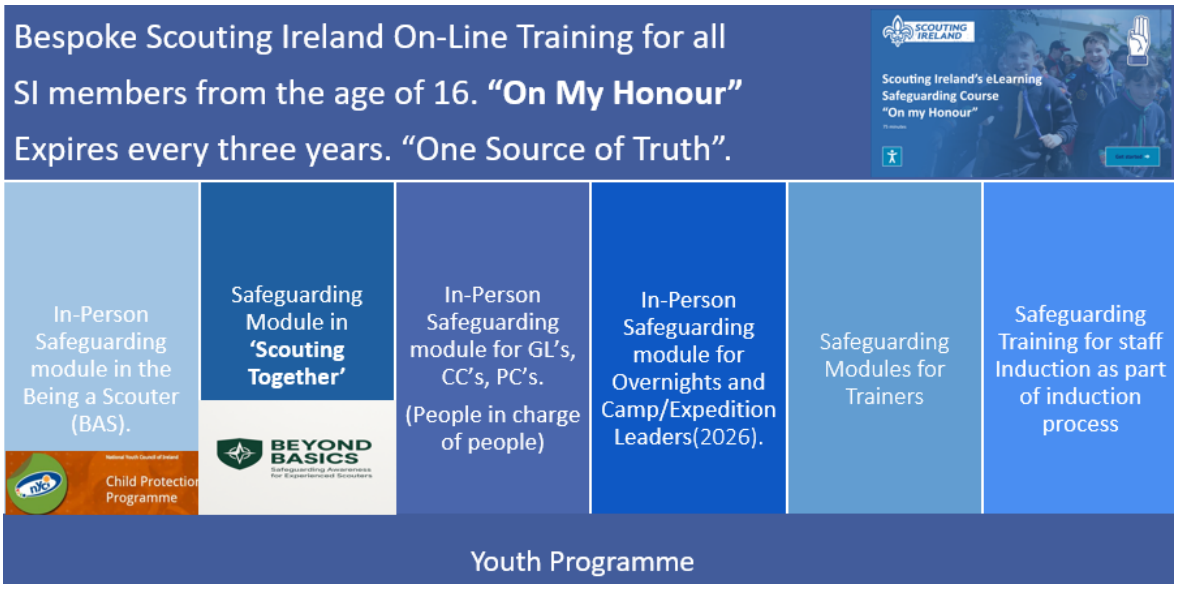
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Safeguarding Training and Development

Scouting Ireland continues to deliver a blended safeguarding training model that combines online learning with in-person training courses, ensuring that safeguarding education is accessible, flexible, and responsive to the needs of volunteers across the movement. The online learning platform enables Scouters to complete core safeguarding requirements at a time and pace that suits them, while face-to-face courses provide valuable opportunities for discussion, scenario-based learning, skills development, and the sharing of good practice.

Safeguarding training content is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect legislative changes, national safeguarding guidance, lessons learned from case management and emerging trends affecting young people. In addition to core safeguarding training, specialised modules continue to be developed to address emerging risks such as online safety, cyberbullying, harmful sexual behaviour, mental health and wellbeing concerns, inclusion and diversity, trauma-informed practices and the safeguarding implications of new technologies and social media platforms. These modules are designed to enhance the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills of Scouters, enabling them to recognise concerns, respond appropriately, and create safe, supportive environments for all young people.

The movement remains committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding practice, with training programmes informed by feedback from volunteers, safeguarding professionals, and statutory agencies. This ongoing investment in learning and development helps ensure that safeguarding remains embedded at every level of Scouting and that volunteers are equipped to meet both current and future safeguarding challenges.



Governance and Oversight

Safeguarding remains a standing agenda item at Board level. The Safeguarding Subcommittee continues to provide oversight, supported by both internal members with relevant experience and independent experts.

Each Scout Group must have Safeguarding as a standing agenda item for Group Council and assembly meetings.

Likewise, each County and Provincial meetings must have Safeguaridng as a standard agenda item.

Core Functions of the Safeguarding Department

- Case Management: Management of safeguarding concerns, including initial assessments, further assessments, and reporting, engagement and coordination with statutory agencies and other stakeholders.
- Vetting and Compliance: Processing Garda Vetting (NVGB) and AccessNI checks, ensuring all adults are vetted and re-vetted every three years.
- Training: Delivery of mandatory safeguarding training, including online learning every three years and role-specific modules (e.g. Child Protection Awareness Programme, 'Beyond Basics' and other bespoke safeguarding training).
- Policy and Governance: Development, implementation, and regular review of safeguarding policies, procedures, and the Safeguarding Statement.
- Risk Management: Oversight of Risk Assessments of Harm and safeguarding compliance across all levels of the organisation.
- External Engagement: Ongoing liaison with Tusla, An Garda Síochána, PSNI, Gateway Services, and other relevant bodies.
- WOSM Compliance: Participation in the Safe from Harm Assessment process and implementation of improvement actions.

Volunteer Support Structures

Volunteer & Group Support and Structures: Safeguarding Subcommittee, Welfare/Listening Ear Teams, and event-specific safeguarding supports. Routine Collaboration with the Volunteer and Group Support Department including policy implementation and Training content, design and roll out.

Programme Support: Engagement with volunteer teams, including neurodiversity, LGBTQI+ inclusion, and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and plans to further enhance faiths and beliefs

Welfare Supports: Scouter access to Scouter Wellness Assistance Programme (EAP) and structured supports for members.

Safeguarding at Events: Provision of safeguarding planning, oversight, and response structures at national and large-scale events. Oversight of Volunteer Welfare Teams at events.

Welfare Hub at Events:				
Zone	**Purpose**	**Features**	**Stage**	**Department**
Welfare Station	Welfare & Immediate emotional support needs	Trained listening ears, seats, refreshments, hankies, inviting and quiet environment, fidget toys, communication aids, contact log, etc. Direct link to Safeguarding Team.	Operational – early stages	Safeguarding
First Aid Station	Immediate medical care – onsite Service.	Certified first-aiders, first aid kits, medications, injury & illness logs. Distinct from Emergencies Skills Team.	Open Call	Safeguarding
Rainbow Café	Safe, social hub, resources	Snacks/drinks, games, arts & crafts, low-stress environment, friendly staff	Volunteer Pride events coordinator newly appointed	Programme
Chill / Neurodiverse Zone	Quiet support for sensory & neurodiverse needs	Low-light, headphones, fidget toys, visual schedules, trained staff	Neurodiverse Team established	V&GS / TBD?
Faiths & Beliefs	Ensure FAB supports / needs available	Areas of worship, prayer, Faith resources	Not yet established	TBD

Key Safeguarding Priorities - 2026

- Strengthening policy alignment with the Child & Family Agency (TUSLA), Education Authority Northern Ireland and WOSM Child Protection, Safeguarding and Safe from Harm standards
- Enhancing online safety procedures
- Expanding adult safeguarding frameworks
- Improving compliance and monitoring systems
- Continue developing youth-friendly safeguarding resources

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Safeguarding Key Performance Indicators, November 2025 - May 2026

Key Metric	Status	
WOSM Safe from Harm	Score 77%	
Active Cases (approx.)	368	Active Cases open of which 45 are being actively worked.
	6	Adults currently Suspended without Prejudice
	3	Youth Members currently suspended without Prejudice
	50+	Advice Files in this reporting period
Adults Trained	4517+	(On My Honour)
	1000+	CPAP Training Delivered
	45+	Group Leaders
	55+	Beyond Basics
Vetting & AccessNI Compliance	Ongoing monitoring 94% compliant and 6% on a formal 'stay-away' until compliant	
Policy Review Cycle	In progress 2026	
Online Safety Framework	In development (Q2 2026)	
Provincial and National Conference & events staffed / attended by Safeguarding staff:	3	Provincial Conferences
	2	weekend events staffed
	1	National Assembly
Project Work meetings / days (I.e. meetings with Volunteer teams):	4	Youth Programme Meetings / Days
	3	Rainbow / LGBTQI+ Support Meetings / Days
	3	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion meetings / days, plus regular online brief meetings with the volunteer lead for this department.
	2	Neurodiverse meeting/ days
	1	Programme support meetings
	0	Programme support days
	*Meetings for this purpose is 2 or more hours in duration, and a day is 7 or more hours.	

*Numbers are approximate and based on available statistics at time of writing report

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In Conclusion

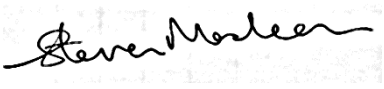
Scouting Ireland is committed to ensuring that Scouting remains a safe, inclusive, and trusted environment for all young people and adults involved in the movement. The Safeguarding Department plays a central role in delivering this vision by fostering a culture of safety, accountability, learning, and continuous improvement across the movement. Through robust safeguarding practices, training, policy development, case management, and engagement with statutory agencies, the Department works to ensure that the welfare of children and young people remains at the heart of everything we do.

Scouting provides a unique safe, offline, and outdoor environment where young people can develop confidence, resilience, leadership skills, and meaningful social connections. At a time when many young people face increasing challenges around isolation, mental wellbeing, and online harms, Scouting offers a positive space that promotes inclusion, equity, teamwork, and strong community values.

The continued support and funding received for safeguarding initiatives is greatly appreciated and has enabled Scouting Ireland to strengthen systems, improve training delivery, enhance compliance, and respond effectively to safeguarding concerns. This support has been instrumental in helping the organisation meet its statutory obligations and maintain high safeguarding standards across all levels of Scouting.

However, the increasing complexity and volume of safeguarding responsibilities, alongside growing membership demands and evolving compliance requirements, mean that additional resources and sustained investment are much needed. Further funding would significantly enhance the Safeguarding Department's capacity to expand training provision, strengthen preventative safeguarding measures, improve case management supports, and continue developing best practice systems that protect and support young people, volunteers, and communities throughout Ireland.

Scouting Ireland remains fully committed to continuous improvement and to working collaboratively with funders, statutory agencies, volunteers, and communities to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding for all.



Steven Maclean
Head of Safeguarding
Scouting Ireland