



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

Children First

Sectoral Implementation Plan

Reviewed October 2023



Department of the Taoiseach
Children First Sectoral Implementation Plan

1. Introduction

1.1 This Sectoral Implementation Plan is prepared in accordance with Section 27 of the Children First Act 2015. It relates to the Department of The Taoiseach sector, which covers the Department, the bodies under its aegis and services funded by the Department.

1.2 The Plan outlines a programme of measures to ensure that the Department and the relevant services funded by the Department, including the bodies under its aegis, comply with the provisions of the Children First Act 2015, and the guidance issued under Section 6 of that Act.

2. Department

2.1 The Department of the Taoiseach's purpose is to help the Taoiseach and the Government to develop a sustainable economy and a successful society, to pursue Ireland's interests abroad, to implement the Government's Programme and to build a better future for Ireland and her citizens. Our core activities and strategic priorities are set out in the Department's Strategy for therevrev period 2023 to 2025.

2.2 There is only one Body under the aegis of the Department, the National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO), which has a role relating to the achievement of the Department's goals.

Relevant services provided by the Department of the Taoiseach

2.3 The Department does not provide relevant services directly to children. However, it may on occasion employ staff who are under the age of 18 as Temporary Clerical Officers. In addition, the Department supports the development of the potential of children by periodically facilitating the placement of Transition Year (TY) students for short unpaid periods of work experience within the Department. These TY students are usually under 18 years of age. The Department is committed to safeguarding all children working or training in the Department, in line with Children First Act 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

2.4 The Department may also occasionally have direct interaction with children as visitors to the building either as part of a group or individually. It is Departmental policy that the parents or responsible adults will accompany their children at all times while attending such events and consequently such events are not covered by this Plan.

Services funded by the Department

2.5 The providers of relevant services funded by the Department will be informed, as the need arises, of the provisions of the Children First Act 2015 and the National Guidance, and will be asked to provide assurance that they meet the necessary requirements.

3. Measures taken to promote, review and report on compliance with the provisions of the Act
Children First Interdepartmental Group (CFIDG)

3.1 The Minister for Children and Youth Affairs established a statutory Children First Interdepartmental Group (CFIDG) to bring central government oversight to the

implementation process. The Department of The Taoiseach is represented on the CFIDG Group by the Personnel Officer. This person is also responsible for ensuring the Department's overall compliance with the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First National Guidance.

Sectoral Implementation Plan

3.2 This Sectoral Implementation Plan sets out the high level sectoral guidance principles to be applied across the Department and the body under its aegis, in the ongoing implementation of the Children First Act 2015 and Guidance principles. The Plan will be published on the Department's intranet and gov.ie. It will be reviewed every three years or more regularly as required.

Child Safeguarding Statement

3.3 The Department's Children First Child Safeguarding Statement sets out the services the Department provides and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of these services is safe from harm. This includes procedures to be followed to identify and mitigate any risks to TY students while working in the Department. The Child Safeguarding Statement will be displayed in a prominent place, it will be circulated to all staff members and will be published on the Department's intranet and gov.ie. It will be formally reviewed at least every two years or more regularly as required.

Reporting Protocol

3.4 A Children First Reporting Protocol has been developed, providing clear guidance on how reporting should take place, by whom and in what circumstances. A standard reporting form has been developed for the person reporting a concern to complete and to submit to the designated liaison person. A record of any such concerns will be maintained in a confidential and secure manner. Reporting of concerns will be made in the appropriate way to Tusla in accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015.

Relevant Persons

3.5 The Department has appointed a designated liaison person (DLP) and deputy designated liaison person (Deputy DLP) as the relevant person and deputy relevant person for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the Department's Child Safeguarding Statement. They are the resource persons for any child protection concerns within the Department. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within the organisation are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla as appropriate. They will act as a point of contact for reporting child protection concerns and will liaise with outside agencies, as required.

3.6 The DLP and Deputy DLP along with other relevant staff will receive training in the application of the Children First Act 2015 and the Children First National Guidance. This will include the requirement to complete the [Tusla Children First e-Learning Programme](#) (certification valid for three years).

3.7 The Department's Sectoral Implementation Plan and Child Safeguarding Statement will be central to raising awareness among staff of:

- (i) who the Designated Liaison Persons are;
- (ii) 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
- (iii) the obligations on them to report these concerns.

3.8 In addition, information regarding the Children's First Act will be included on the Department's intranet site with links to relevant documents. The Department will continue to identify and develop relevant induction and training initiatives that are appropriate and proportionate to the nature and level of the Department's interaction with children.

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

Bodies under the aegis of the Department

3.10 The Department has notified the sole body under its aegis, NESDO of the requirements of the Children First Act 2015 and also of the relevant guidelines, including the need to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement where they provide relevant services to children. The Department's monitoring and reporting framework for the body under its aegis includes the Children First Act 2015 in the checklist of obligations. NESDO has advised that it does not provide services to children.

External service providers

3.11 Where the Department contracts external services to service providers who may come into unsupervised contact with children in providing such service to the Department, the service providers will be advised that they are subject to the requirements of the Children First Act. Where contracts, service level agreements, or any such undertakings come up for review, the Department will ensure this requirement is explicitly set out in such agreements.

Annual Compliance Report

3.12 An annual compliance report will be prepared for submission to the Management Board. The report will set out any relevant activity for the preceding year, including details of the Department's designated liaison persons, training provided, number of reports, if any, submitted to Tusla and an assessment of issues of concern or of broader interest to the sector.

Review

3.13 As previously noted, this Sectoral Implementation Plan will be reviewed every three years or more regularly as necessary. The Department's Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every two years, or more regularly as necessary.

3.14 To support the continued implementation and review of the requirements of the Children First Act within the Department of the Taoiseach, compliance with Children First will be a standing item on the agenda of all Departmental Health and Safety Committee meetings.