



Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Policy Name	Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Policy Number	SG01
Effective Date	21.10.2023	Owner	BOD
Related Policies	SG02 Child and Youth Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment SG03 Active Rescue Procedure SG04 Mandatory Reporting Procedure SG05 Garda Vetting Policy		

Version History		
Version	Description of Change(s)	Approval Date
A	Development of whole organisation policy and procedures	21.10.2023



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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

spunout is fully committed to safeguarding all children and young people with whom we work.

This spunout Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document (hereafter referred to as the 'document') aims to ensure a safe environment for children and young service users, and for young volunteers. In addition, the document aims to safeguard and support spunout staff and volunteers when they are working with children and young people. This document sets out how spunout personnel (including all employees, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors) should behave when working with young people and children. It is important to read this document carefully in order to understand the level of protection both provided and expected by spunout.

This document has been designed in accordance with child protection legislation, the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (DCYA, 2017), which outline the existing non-statutory obligations that operate administratively for all sectors of society. Consideration has also been given to *Our Duty to Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People*, (DCYA, 2002).

spunout is committed to Children First as it relates to the recognition of child abuse of all kinds, the reporting of same to Tusla, and the best practice which organisations should adhere to in order to keep children safe while availing of our services.

NOTE: All personnel are reminded that, irrespective of the contents of this document, in cases where a crime is ongoing or suspected to be ongoing, they are advised to contact An Garda Síochána on 999 or 112. A dedicated Garda phone line for reporting child sexual abuse can be reached at 1800 555 222.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the measures that spunout has in place to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm.

1.3 Scope

This document and any associated policies and procedures are applicable to the following:

- All children and young people engaged in services provided by and for spunout.
- All actions to be taken in respect to a concern raised by or on behalf of a child or young person engaging with spunout.
- All spunout personnel (including all employees, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors), service users and other agents of this organisation.



The spunout Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy applies to all work processes and procedures, including face to face, online and remote communications. It also applies to all interaction between spunout personnel and children and young people, regardless of where it takes place.

All spunout personnel are obliged to create and maintain an environment that promotes the implementation of this policy. Those in positions of authority within spunout have a duty to act as positive role models in upholding the organisation's standards, and to support and develop appropriate systems to maintain such an environment. Failure to adhere to the policy and procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal, and may lead to criminal prosecution.

This guidance may require further consideration and will be reviewed on a regular basis. All managers are responsible for monitoring implementation of this guidance. All staff members are responsible for familiarising themselves with the terms of this guidance and for adhering to them.

1.4 Statement of Commitment

spunout is committed to the protection of children and young people from harm when they are engaged in spunout services and activities. spunout is committed to promoting the rights of the child and young people including the participation of children and young people in matters that affect them.

1.5 Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

In the Republic of Ireland, Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, as amended, requires organisations that are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement.

spunouts' Child Safeguarding Statement includes an assessment of the risk of a child or young person being harmed whilst availing of the service.

spunouts' Child Safeguarding Statement specifies the procedures that are in place to:

- Manage any risk identified
- Investigate an allegation against any spunout personnel regarding any act, omission, or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the service and all specified procedures required under legislation can be found in this document.
- Select and recruit personnel who are suitable to work with children
- Provide information and training to personnel on child protection and safeguarding issues
- Enable personnel, whether mandated persons or otherwise, to make a report to Tusla in accordance with the Act or any guidelines issued by the Minister responsible for Children and Youth Affairs
- Maintain a list of persons in the organisation who are mandated persons under the Act
- Appoint a relevant person in the organisation for the purposes of the Act.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children further requires that *"All organisations that provide services to children should develop specific policies and procedures on how to create a safe environment"*.



2. Key Roles

2.1 Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

spunout has appointed Eibhlín McNamara, Deputy Director as the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and two Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPS), Tara Logan Buckley and Sinead Beirne.

They are a resource for spunout personnel, should any personnel have queries or concerns relating to child and youth safeguarding. The DLP and Deputy DLPs will liaise with outside agencies on behalf of spunout and will receive regular and appropriate training for this role. These roles are appointed by spunout and are employees of the organisation.

2.2 Role and Responsibilities of the DLP within spunout

- Possess full knowledge of spunout's duties in relation to the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.
- Have excellent knowledge of spunout guiding policies and safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that spunout reporting procedures are followed, so that child protection and welfare concerns are referred promptly to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána as appropriate (hereafter referred to as 'Statutory Authorities' when appropriate).
- Receive child protection and welfare concerns and consider if reasonable grounds for concern for reporting to the Statutory Authorities exist.
- Consult informally with Duty Social Workers, when relevant to seek their advice.
- Where appropriate, make a formal report and support others within spunout to make formal reports of a child protection or welfare concern or allegation of a criminal offence to the statutory authorities using the appropriate standard reporting forms. All allegations of a criminal offence will always be reported to the Gardai Síochána.
- Record all concerns or allegations of child abuse and welfare brought to their attention as well as any decisions taken in response to these concerns.
- Ensure that a secure system is in place to manage confidential records.
- Act as an ongoing liaison with the statutory authorities.
- Ensure implementation of these spunout Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures across spunout and coordinate the ongoing review of the spunout's Safeguarding Risk Assessments and review of the spunout Child Safeguarding Statement.
- To undertake any training required of them in the role.

2.3 Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLPS)

spunout has appointed Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPS). They are a resource for all spunout staff and volunteers who have any queries or concerns relating to child safeguarding. The DDLPS will liaise with outside agencies on behalf of spunout as necessary in consultation with the DLP. They will



receive regular and appropriate training for this role. The DDLP's are appointed nationally spunout and are employees of the organisation.

2.4 Role and responsibilities of the DDLP within spunout

The role and responsibility of the DDLP is to support the DLP in their role. When the DLP is unavailable the DDLP will perform all of the functions of the DLP.

2.5 Mandated Persons in spunout

In the Republic of Ireland, the Children First Act 2015 defines certain persons as "Mandated Persons". Within spunout, the following personnel are deemed 'Mandated Persons' under this legislation:

- Designated Liaison Person
- Deputy Designated Liaison Persons
- Platform Shift Leaders and Supervisors
- Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of spunout
- Volunteers who self declare as Mandated Persons

The list of Mandated Persons will be maintained by spunout. The organisation will be responsible for updating this list in the event of any personnel change or changes to role descriptions. The list will also be reviewed in line with the review of this policy document and spunout Child Safeguarding Statement every 24 months, or sooner in the event of any change to national policy or legislation.

Within the Republic of Ireland, Schedule 2, Section 2 of the Children First Act 2015, as amended, provides a list of the classes of persons who are specified as Mandated Persons for the purposes of this Act.

Persons who are Mandated Persons [under Schedule 2, Section 2 of the Act] in a professional capacity may also be Mandated Persons if acting in a voluntary capacity. For instance, members of the clergy, members of An Garda Síochána and foster carers are Mandated Persons.

Any Volunteer who is a Mandated Person in their personal or professional life may also be a Mandated Person in a voluntary capacity, provided the voluntary role involves that person discharging an analogous or comparable role to the professional role, which warrants their designation as a Mandated Person. All volunteers are required to declare to spunout if they believe that they are Mandated Persons while acting in a voluntary capacity with the organisation.

spunout will maintain a record of this declaration on its volunteer management system.

2.6 Roles and Responsibilities of the Mandated Persons within spunout

Within the Republic of Ireland, Mandated Persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which meet or exceed a particular threshold of 'harm' (see Section 4.9) and to assist Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (hereafter referred to as 'Tusla'). Mandated persons can also be mandated to assist Tusla in their assessment of child protection and welfare concerns about children or young people who have been the subject of a mandated report.

All mandated persons will be informed in writing that they are mandated and will be briefed on their role



and responsibilities under the Children First Act 2015. Any new spunout personnel that are Mandated Persons will be briefed on commencement of their employment and/or volunteering.

See Section 4.8 for Mandated Person's responsibilities in reporting procedures.

2.7 Relevant Person in spunout

A Relevant Person is defined by the Children First Act 2015, as amended, as "a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's child safeguarding statement". See Section 8 of the Children First Act 2015, as amended.

spunout is a provider of a relevant service and is required under the Act to appoint a Relevant Person. The Relevant Person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

2.7.1 Appointment of a Relevant Person

spunout's process for the appointment of a Relevant Person is as follows:

1. The Board of Directors of spunout will propose the Relevant Person and delegate the function to the CEO.
2. The CEO may delegate this function to a nominated individual within the staff team.
3. The name of the Relevant Person will be displayed on spunout's Child Safeguarding Statement.

3: Procedure to Manage any Risk Identified within spunout

3.1 Introduction

In the Republic of Ireland, Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015 as amended, requires organisations that are providers of relevant services to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement. For further information, please refer to Schedule 1 and Section 2 of the Act.

As spunout is an organisation that provides relevant services under the Act, the organisation is obliged to maintain a written Child Safeguarding Statement that specifies the service being provided and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child and young person availing of the service is safe from harm.

Section 11 (3) (a) of the Children First Act 2015 as amended requires that a Child Safeguarding Statement should specify the procedures that are in place for managing any risk identified.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Comply with the requirement to have a specified procedure in relation to managing any risk identified within spunout



- To identify the procedures adopted to manage any risk identified within spunout

The procedure is intended to provide information to spunout personnel, young people availing of our services, funders, and to members of the public in respect of the procedure used to identify and manage any risk identified.

3.2 Procedures in place to manage any risk identified within spunout

spunout conducts risk assessments and puts in procedures to mitigate and manage each identified risk. This is achieved through the development and bi-annual review of our Child Safeguarding Statement and annual Review of Risk Assessments of Harm. This is reviewed by our People, Quality and Safety Sub Committee on behalf of the Board of Directors and subsequently submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

3.2.1 Purpose of the Risk Assessment

Under the Children First Act 2015, spunout must undertake a risk assessment. A risk assessment is an exercise where the organisation examines all aspects of its service from a safeguarding perspective, to establish whether there are any practices or features of the service that have the potential to put children or young people at risk.

The risk assessment process is intended to enable the organisation to:

- Identify potential risks.
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks.
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks.

3.2.2 Child Safeguarding Statement

The Child Safeguarding Statement will be communicated throughout spunout by the following means:

- Adoption and ratification by the Board of Directors of spunout
- Disseminated through our Leadership Team to personnel
- Link available to all staff in our policy hub
- Included in our onboarding packs to all employees
- Included in our onboarding packs to all our volunteers
- Link available to all volunteers on our volunteer platform
- Displayed on our spunout website
- Inclusion of a link, where appropriate, on all social media platforms, newsletters and bulletins



- Available on request to children and young people, funders, stakeholders and members of the public

The full text of the spunout Child Safeguarding Statement is available on the following page.



spunout Child Safeguarding Statement

Effective 2nd December 2023

In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Children First Act 2015, the spunout Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) has been circulated to all spunout personnel, including staff, volunteers, and Board members. The CSS is publicly available to our service users, contributors, their parents and guardians, to Tusla and any interested parties on the spunout website. A hard copy of the CCS and its accompanying child protection policies and procedures are available on request.

1. Name of services being provided:

spunout: Information

spunout: Text About It

spunout: YI Chat

spunout: Voices

spunout: Academy

spunout: Compass

spunout: Discovery/Navigator

spunout: Insights

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

spunout is Ireland's youth information and support platform, working towards an Ireland where all young people are supported and empowered to thrive. spunout has a range of free, anonymous online services that are there for you whenever you need them. If it matters to you, it matters to us.

Through our platform, spunout shares factual information on mental health and wellbeing, provides 24/7, free and anonymous support by text, and shares the stories and experiences of young people across Ireland so we can learn from and support each other. We also connect people to trusted services and resources around the country for further support.

Our aim is to support young people to be informed, feel empowered and heard, and to support our peers to access opportunities and services to help us achieve our full potential.



As an organisation dedicated to the wellbeing of young people, spunout is committed to ensuring that all young people are safe from harm while availing of our services.

spunout's interaction with children and young people adheres to the following guiding principles:

- The best interests of children and young people are central to the ethos and work of spunout and we are committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person who avails of our service.
- The safety and welfare of children and young people are of paramount importance.
- Children and young people have the right to be protected from harm, including but not limited to assault, ill-treatment, neglect, or abuse of any kind.
- Children and young people have a right to be heard, listened to, treated with respect and taken seriously.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights of parents/guardians/carers to be consulted and involved in matters concerning their family, while understanding that where a conflict arises, the safety of the child comes first.
- The measures we have in place to safeguard children and young people reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (DCYA, 2017), *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure* (Tusla, 2018) and the *Children First Act 2015*.
- Our guiding principles apply to all personnel within our organisation.
- All spunout personnel, including Board members, staff and volunteers must abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by our child safeguarding statement and accompanying Child Protection Policies and Procedures.
- Child protection is a standing issue on the Board of spunout.
- We will review our CSS and accompanying Child Protection Policies and Procedures every two years, or sooner if necessary.
- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons (DDLPs) for ensuring that our child protection and safeguarding procedures are followed are:

DLP: Eibhlin McNamara (086) 128 7179 eibhlin@spunout.ie	Deputy DLP: Tara Logan Buckley tara@spunout.ie	Deputy DLP: Sinead Beirne sinead@spunout.ie
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- In the event of the DLP role becoming vacant, the Deputy DLPs will act in their place until a new DLP can be appointed; this will take place as soon as possible. The organisation will endeavour at all times to have both a DLP and at least one Deputy DLP in place, and any vacancy must be reported to the Board of Directors. As far as possible, spunout will work



to ensure an outgoing DLP or Deputy DLP can be replaced on the same day they formally leave that position.

3. Risk assessment:

As a relevant service under the Children First Act 2015, and in accordance with Section 11(1)(a), spunout has undertaken an assessment of any risk/potential for harm to a child while availing of our service.

‘Harm’ is defined under Section 2 of the Act as:

“Harm means, in relation to a child -

- (a) Assault, ill treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects, or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or,
- (b) Sexual abuse of the child whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise.”

Below is a list of risks identified and a corresponding list of the measures in place to manage and mitigate against them:

Risk Identified	Who is Responsible?	Measures in place to manage the risk
Engagement with children		
Harm caused to a child while engaged with spunout by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a fellow service user ● spunout personnel ● unauthorised persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead person with responsibility for the relevant work with children. For example, Engagement and Participation Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DLP ● Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Garda Vetting Policy ● Induction process for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Codes of conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Attendance at child protection training
Harm caused to a child through engagement in spunout communications, whether online, social media, by phone, or in person with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a fellow service user ● spunout personnel ● volunteer or intern ● unauthorised persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engagement and Participation Officer ● DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Garda Vetting Policy ● Codes of conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Social Media Policy

<p>Harm caused to a child through engagement with a third-party service or opportunity signposted to or partnered with spunout.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead person with responsibility for the relevant signposting or partnership ● DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● spunout takes reasonable steps to ensure the quality of any youth service or opportunity it signposts children and young people to either online or in any fashion.
<p>Inappropriate recording, including photography and filming of children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead person with responsibility for the relevant work with children. For example, Online Content Producer and Multimedia Producer ● DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Induction procedures for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Attendance at child protection training
<p>Lack of understanding and awareness of CSS and accompanying child protection policies and procedures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DLP ● Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures ● Induction procedures for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Attendance at child protection training
<p>Inadequate supervision of children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead person with responsibility for the relevant work with children. For example, Engagement and Participation Officer ● DLP ● Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Attendance at child protection training ● Action Panel Code of Conduct
<p>Reporting Procedures</p>		
<p>Absence of reporting procedure, including appointment of a DLP and Deputy DLP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DLP ● Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures ● Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members ● Attendance at child protection training
<p>Concerns of reasonable grounds and harm not reported appropriately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff with reporting responsibilities ● DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Protection Policy ● Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures ● Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at child protection training
Lack of understanding and awareness of reporting procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLP • Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Policy • Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures • Induction procedures for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Attendance at child protection training

Recruitment & Selection		
Recruitment of inappropriate spunout personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Designated staff member for Garda vetting • DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe recruitment procedures • Interviews • Reference checks • Garda Vetting • Probationary period • Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members
Lack of understanding and awareness among staff of potential risk of harm to children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and supervision • Child Protection Policy • Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures • Induction procedures for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Attendance at child protection training
Lack of, or unclear, understanding of appropriate engagement with children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and supervision • Child Protection Policy • Induction procedures for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Codes of Conduct for staff, volunteers and Board Members • Attendance at child protection training
Allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers		
Lack of procedures for handling allegations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Policy • Procedure for managing allegations of abuse or misconduct against spunout personnel relating to a child availing of our service



4. Procedures

Our CSS has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (DCYA, 2017) and *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure* (Tusla, 2018). In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following child protection policies, procedures and measures are in place to support our safeguarding commitment to children who avail of our service:

- A Relevant Person has been appointed
- A Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons have been appointed
- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Procedure for managing allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers relating to a child availing of our service
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
- Employee Non Disclosure Agreement
- Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
- Induction procedures (which includes procedures to inform new personnel about the CSS and accompanying child protection policies and procedures)
- Garda Vetting Policy
- All required staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First*
- Staff and Board Members have attended appropriate child protection training
- Incidents Procedure
- Complaints Policy

All procedures listed are available upon request.

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. spunout is committed to the implementation of this CSS and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.



This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there has been a material change in any of the issues to which it refers. The next date for substantive review of this Statement is no later than November 2025.

Signed:

Date:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Power".

21st October 2023

Ian Power
(Relevant Person)
CEO of spunout

For further information on this Statement, contact our Designated Liaison Person:

Eibhlin McNamara

0861287179

eibhlin@spunout.ie



4: Responding to and reporting Child Protection concerns

4.1 Introduction

The guiding principle when a child protection or welfare report has to be made is that the safety and wellbeing of the child takes priority over all other considerations.

spunout must have reporting procedures in place that are understood, implemented, and followed by all spunout personnel.

The responsibility to report child protection or welfare concerns applies to everyone working or volunteering with children.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Comply with the requirement to have a specified procedure in relation to reporting to the statutory authorities by spunout or by spunout personnel (whether a Mandated Person or otherwise).
- To identify the procedures for reporting to the statutory authorities by spunout or by spunout personnel (whether a Mandated Person or otherwise) in accordance with this Act.

4.2 Recognising Child Protection and child welfare concerns

It is important that all spunout personnel are aware of the ways in which children and young people can be harmed and have knowledge about the types of abuse and how they may be recognised. This section and the accompanying appendices provide information on child abuse definitions and features.

Note: The Child Care Act 1991 defines “a child” as a person under the age of 18 years, other than a person who is or has been married. The age of sexual consent is 17 years (other than a person who is or has been married).

Child abuse is categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Abuse and neglect can occur within the family, in the community or in an institutional setting.

The abuser may be someone known to the child or a stranger and can be an adult or another child. The important factor in deciding whether the behaviour is neglect or abuse is the impact of that behaviour on the child, rather than the intention of the person harming them.



The definitions of neglect and abuse referenced in this document are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised.

4.2.1 Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular, children with disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in care or living away from home, LGBTI+ young people, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

All spunout personnel should consider these factors as part of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of the statutory agencies.

4.2.2 Peer Abuse

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, child protection procedures must be adhered to for both the victim(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s). The report will be treated as a child protection issue for the children involved. Any reasonable grounds of concern relating to the abuse or harm of a child by another child will be addressed in line with the procedures as set out in this document.

4.2.3 Bullying

It is recognised that bullying affects the lives of an increasing number of children and young people and can be the cause of genuine welfare concerns.

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression—whether verbal, psychological, or physical—that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children and young people in social environments such as schools or online.

It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyber-bullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of abuse based on gender identity, sexual preference, race, ethnicity, or religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying via mobile phones, the internet, and other personal devices.

While bullying can happen to any child, some may be more vulnerable. These include children or young people with disabilities or special educational needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; those from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQI+) and those perceived to be LGBTQI+; and of minority religious faiths.

spunout is committed to dealing with bullying and has Codes of Conduct and an anti-bullying policy. In cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, spunout will make a referral to the statutory authorities.



4.3 Reasonable Grounds for Concern - Children First National Guidance

spunout will inform the appropriate statutory authorities when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. spunout will not ignore what may be symptoms of abuse, as it could result in ongoing harm to the child.

It is not necessary to prove that abuse has occurred in order to report a concern. All that is required is that there are reasonable grounds for concern. It is the statutory agencies' role to assess concerns that are reported to them. When spunout reports a concern, the information will be considered by the relevant statutory authorities along with any other information available. A social work assessment is conducted to establish the level of risk.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include the following: (Children First National Guidance)

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse

4.4 Responding to Child Protection concern

spunout personnel should deal with any concern/allegation/suspicions of abuse from a child or young person sensitively and carefully. Where a child/young person discloses abuse, spunout personnel must follow the reporting procedures.

A disclosure of abuse from a child or young person meets reasonable grounds for concern and the threshold of harm for making a mandated report. The following approach is suggested as best practice for dealing with any concern/allegation/suspicions, and must also be reported:

- React calmly
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Take the child seriously
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you
- Do not promise to keep anything secret
- Ask questions for clarification only
- Do not ask leading questions
- Check back with the child that what you have heard is correct and understood



- Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser
- Ensure that the child understands the procedures that will follow
- Make a written record of the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible, in the child's own words
- Treat the information confidentially and discuss the matter only with people who really need to know
- Do not conduct an investigation

4.5 Responding to Child Protection Concerns on the Text About It Platform

For disclosures received via our Text About It platform, please refer to the following Text About It Mandatory Reporting Procedure.

Mandated Reporting Procedure for Text About It Platform

1) Tell PSL

Supervisor lets Platform Shift Leader ('PSL') know (or fellow supervisor, if no PSL is on shift) if MR concerns are present in conversation (as early as possible, so PSL can keep an eye on the conversation).

2) Discuss

PSL and supervisor discuss if MR is warranted.

3) Consult previous conversations

Both PSL and Supervisor may consult previous conversations from this texter; to help inform their decision.

4) Log Ambiguous on MR Consideration Form

Staff must log any ambiguous conversation that they discuss but decide not to report to Tusla/HSE on the MR Consideration Form (for oversight and quality assurance purposes).

5) Consult Tusla (if needed)

If consultation with Tusla/HSE is needed, then Supervisor consults the relevant Tusla Regional Offices and proceeds as per Tusla Duty Social Work advice.

6) Handover via MR Consideration form (if needed)



If consultation with Tusla is not possible during their shift, then the Supervisor must hand this over to the next PSL on a 'Tusla office hours' shift, via the MR Consideration Form.

*NB: If any staff members are not comfortable handing over their conversations (for any reason) then they are asked to err on the side of caution and make the submission on Tusla Portal prior to the end of their shift.

Staff may contact Tusla Social Work Emergency Out of Hours Service (https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/EOI_EOHS_Briefing_Information.pdf) for advice in emergency cases, where they feel there is a significant risk to a child's immediate safety. (Note: An Active Rescue is likely to be the best course of action in this case.)

4.6 Reporting Procedure

All spunout personnel have a responsibility to report any concerns they may have in respect of child protection and welfare. Everyone involved in spunout must raise any concerns relating to child abuse with the DLP. It is important to note that joint reporting exists for all; a joint report can be made with the DLP, parent/guardian, and a non-mandated referrer.

Following a disclosure from a child, or following observations/interactions with a child relating to child welfare, neglect or abuse, the following are the steps to be followed –

- If you consider the child to be at immediate risk, make contact directly and immediately with An Garda Síochána. You should then follow up with a report to the DLP.
- If the concern is not urgent or does not involve immediate risk to the child - Contact the DLP during office hours.

If you are unsure if a report should be made, you should contact the DLP, who can discuss it with you. If the DLP is also unsure if the concern meets the threshold for reporting, they may seek advice from a Duty Social Worker who can provide guidance. It is important to note that if spunout personnel are not satisfied with the DLP decision that the concern does not meet the threshold to report to the statutory authorities, spunout personnel may themselves make a report to the statutory authorities. spunout personnel must inform the DLP that they have made a report. Where a report is made directly to the statutory authorities, a copy must be forwarded to the DLP. It is not appropriate for anyone to hold copies of this information. All information must be stored by spunout centrally and securely.

- If reasonable grounds for concern are reached, the DLP will complete the relevant form and submit it to the relevant statutory authorities.
- Following the report being made, the DLP will continue to liaise with the statutory authorities as appropriate.
- In order to maintain the confidentiality of the process, information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis and must not be discussed among peers in spunout. See Section 7.1 for more information on confidentiality.



The DLP will need to provide as much information as possible about the child when making a report to the statutory agencies. Where possible, when making a report to the DLP, the following information should be included (information being unavailable must not prevent a report being made to the statutory authorities);

- The child's name, address, and age
- Names and addresses of parents or guardians
- Names, if known, of who is allegedly harming the child or not caring for them appropriately
- A detailed account of your grounds for concern (e.g. details of the allegation, dates of incidents, and description of injuries)
- Names of other children in the household
- Name of school the child attends
- Contact details of the reporter who raised the concern, as the statutory authorities may wish to make contact with the

4.7 Mandated Persons Reporting Procedure

Mandated Persons in spunout should inform the DLP if making a report of harm. The DLP cannot make a mandated report on behalf of a Mandated Person, however the DLP and other Mandated Person should make the report jointly. If the Mandated Person and/or the DLP are in doubt about whether the concern reaches the legal definition of harm for making a mandated report, guidance from Tusla should be sought.

Where a Mandated Person has a concern that they believe does not reach the threshold for a mandated report, they should consider whether the concern meets reasonable grounds for concern. If the Mandated Person thinks the concern does meet reasonable grounds for concern, they should report the concern to their DLP, in line with current spunout policies and legislations and spunout reporting procedures.

4.8 Threshold of Harm - Mandated Persons

When a Mandated Person in spunout is considering whether they should make a mandated report of harm to a child, the Children First Act 2015 defines 'harm' in a relation to a child as:

- Assault, ill-treatment, or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development, or welfare, or
- Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances, or otherwise.



Section 14 (1) of the Children First Act 2015 states:

“ ... where a Mandated Persons knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession as such a mandated person, that a child—

- *Has been harmed,*
- *Is being harmed, or*
- *Is at risk of being harmed, he or she shall, as soon as practicable, report that knowledge, belief, or suspicion, as the case may be, to the statutory agencies.”*

In the Republic of Ireland Section 14(2) of the Children First Act 2015 places obligations on Mandated Persons to report any disclosures made by a child:

“Where a child believes that he or she—

- (a) Has been harmed,*
- (b) Is being harmed, or*
- (c) Is at risk of being harmed,*

and discloses this belief to a mandated person in the course of a mandated person’s employment or profession as such a person, the mandated person shall, as soon as practicable, report that disclosure to [Tusla].”

It is important to note that if a Mandated Person is making a report, they must inform spunout’s DLP and a joint report will be made with the Mandated Person and the DLP.

4.9 Non-reporting of Concerns

Where the DLP decides that the grounds for reasonable concern are not met, the DLP must inform the reporter in writing as to the reasons for that decision and advise the reporter that he/she may make a report directly to the statutory authorities.

spunout personnel who do report directly to the statutory authorities must inform spunout’s DLP that they have made a referral directly. Failing to advise the DLP and providing copies of any reports may be subject to a breach of the spunout Code of Conduct. In the Republic of Ireland, persons are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently.

When the decision is taken not to report the concern, the DLP maintains a written record of all actions and communications and records the reason(s) for not reporting. This includes recording of any informal consultations and any advice received from the statutory authorities.

4.10 Retrospective Allegation of Child Abuse

If any personnel within spunout receives a disclosure from another adult about abuse they suffered as a child, this must be reported to the DLP, who will then notify the statutory authorities in line with procedures outlined above. It is important to also ensure that in a retrospective allegation that there is no current risk to children if the person subject to the allegation is still living.



4.11 Withholding of Information

In the Republic of Ireland, the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 makes it a criminal offence to withhold information about a serious offence, including a sexual offence, committed against a person under 18 years of age or a vulnerable person.

The offence arises when a person knows or believes that a specified offence has been committed against a child or vulnerable person and has information that would help arrest, prosecute or convict another person for that offence, but fails without reasonable excuse to disclose that information, as soon as it is practicable to do so, to a member of An Garda Síochána.

The provisions of the withholding information legislation are in addition to any reporting requirements under the Children First Act 2015.

4.12 Anonymous Reports

If the DLP or any spunout personnel receives an anonymous report regarding a concern about child protection and/or welfare within spunout, they will follow the reporting procedure outlined above. spunout personnel must inform a DLP. However, it will likely be much more difficult to establish reasonable grounds for the concern without having information directly from the reporter who has raised the concern, and this may impede any subsequent informal consultation/investigation.



5: Responding to allegations of abuse against spunout personnel

5.1 Introduction

There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- spunout Reporting Procedure to statutory authorities in respect of the child/young person and the alleged abuser.
- spunout internal procedure for dealing with personnel who are the subject of allegations.

spunout endeavours to ensure that when an allegation is made against personnel, a quick resolution will be sought for the benefit of all concerned. However, the welfare and safety of the child or young person will be the primary concern.

5.2 Responding to Allegations

If an allegation is made against spunout personnel, the priority of spunout is to protect the child and/or other children, while taking account of the rights of the person against whom the allegation has been made.

spunout will ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and fairly. The allegation will be handled in accordance with spunout's policies and procedures. spunout will apply fair procedure and relevant employment law. spunout may seek legal advice, if deemed necessary.

Where concerns are raised about spunout personnel which:

- do not reach the level of reasonable grounds of concern
- do not constitute harm
- are not considered to be a child welfare or child protection concern by the DLP
- are considered to be a breach of the Code of Conduct

and a report is not made to the statutory authorities, spunout may invoke its Disciplinary Policy.

Where the concerns raised are not related to child safeguarding or child welfare and protection, please see spunout's Grievance and Disputes Process or Complaints Policy as appropriate.

Where there is an allegation, suspicion, or concern of child abuse against spunout personnel that gives rise to reasonable grounds for concern/threshold of harm, then the following procedures must be followed:

- spunout will comply with the reporting procedure to the statutory authorities in respect of the child and the person against which an allegation has been made.
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with spunout personnel will be the responsibility of the Director of People and Operations and the CEO.



5.3 Role of the DLP

When a report is received by the DLP, it will be reviewed by the DLP to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern or harm, and whether a report will be made to the Statutory Authorities. The DLP may wish to contact statutory authorities for advice on the issue.

If there are grounds for reporting, the DLP will follow the normal child protection reporting procedure in spunout - see Section 4.7. This also includes the reporting responsibilities for Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015 - see Section 4.8.

Parents/guardians of a child involved should be informed of any action planned or taken if appropriate, while having regard to the confidentiality rights of others, such as the person against whom the allegation has been made.

All stages of the process will be recorded by the DLP in line with spunout guidance on record keeping in Section 7.2.

5.4 Role of Director of People and Operations and CEO

Where there is an allegation, suspicion or concern of child abuse against spunout personnel that gives rise to reasonable grounds for concern or harm, it will be the responsibility of the Director of People and Operations to engage with the person against whom an allegation has been made.

The following steps will be followed when an allegation is made against spunout personnel:

- The safety of the child is the first priority of spunout, and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure the safety of children. The measures taken will be proportional to the level of risk to children. spunout will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant parties as appropriate. In cases of spunout staff members, these measures should not unreasonably penalise the employee, unless necessary to protect young people. The measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people may include the suspension (without prejudice) from duty of the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- spunout acknowledges that measures such as suspension do not presume guilt on behalf of the individual under suspension.
- If a report is being made to the statutory authorities by the DLP in respect of spunout personnel, the CEO and/or Director of People and Operations will be informed. The person against whom the allegation has been made will be informed by the CEO or Director of People and Operations, on a case by case basis, of the detail of the allegation.
- The person against whom the allegation has been made has a right to respond to the allegation, and should they provide a response this should be documented and retained. The CEO and/or Director of People and Operations should note the response and forward this information to the statutory authorities. The person against whom the allegation has



been made should be offered the option of having representation and should be informed that any response they make will be shared with statutory authorities.

- spunout will ensure fair procedure is applied when dealing with such matters.
- spunout will work in cooperation with the statutory authorities and any action to be taken in regard to the person against whom the allegation has been made, may involve consultation with these agencies.
- The CEO and/or Director of People and Operations, when dealing with the issue, should ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not frustrate or undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by the statutory authorities. Continued liaison between spunout and the statutory authorities should be maintained throughout.
- The person against whom the allegation is made may need support during this period and spunout will consider how best to support them.
- Throughout the process, all interactions will be recorded, and appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained.

5.5 Allegations against Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

spunout will ensure that any allegations made against any individuals/parties involved be dealt with with urgency, and in accordance with the Children's Act 2015.

Where the allegation relates to the DLP, the matter shall be reported to the CEO, and the CEO shall assume the role normally undertaken by the DLP. spunout is responsible for reporting the matter externally to Tusla in any case.

5.6 Dealing with allegations against personnel

Two procedures shall be followed when dealing with allegations/suspicions. These procedures need to be applied with common sense and judgement:

1. Reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the allegation/suspicion; and
2. Procedure for dealing with spunout personnel

The first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. As a matter of urgency, spunout will ensure that any necessary protective measures are taken where there is an urgent child safeguarding requirement. The overriding guiding principle that informs this protocol and its application is the protection and welfare of children.

Tusla shall also be informed as to whether any personnel have been placed on administrative leave. Where it has been decided not to place any personnel on administrative leave, Tusla shall be informed of the alternative child safeguarding actions that have been taken.



5.7 Disciplinary Actions and Procedures in Place for the Management of Allegations

The CEO or Director of People and Operations shall arrange to privately inform the person against whom an allegation has been made of the nature of the allegation and whether or not the allegation has been reported to Tusla.

The person against whom an allegation has been made shall be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegation in writing to Tusla within a specified time period.

spunout will take legal advice as to whether disciplinary proceedings should proceed or be stayed pending the outcome of the Tusla assessment/An Garda Síochána investigation, if involved. The CEO or Director of People and Operations will make a decision on whether or not to proceed with disciplinary proceedings in light of that advice. The decision to stay disciplinary proceedings pending the outcome of any Tusla assessment and the reasons for that decision shall be communicated to the person against whom an allegation has been made. In the communication, spunout shall make clear that

(a) it reserves the right to continue disciplinary proceedings at a later point or once the Tusla assessment/An Garda Síochána investigation is complete irrespective of the outcome of that assessment/investigation.

(b) The CEO may have regard to the outcome of any such assessment/investigation in deciding what, if any, disciplinary action to take.

- Where a decision is made to stay disciplinary proceedings pending the outcome of a Tusla assessment and/or an An Garda Síochána investigation, insofar as is possible, the person against whom an allegation has been made shall be kept up to date on progress.
- Any action taken by spunout, including disciplinary proceedings shall be handled in the strictest confidence. The principles of due process, fair procedures and natural justice shall be adhered to by spunout.
- Any disciplinary action shall accord with established disciplinary procedures and shall only be taken following consultation with Tusla and An Garda Síochána, if involved.
- Whilst spunout has the right to conduct its own disciplinary investigation independent of any Tusla assessment or An Garda Síochána investigation, spunout shall take care to ensure actions do not undermine or frustrate any assessment/investigation being conducted by Tusla or An Garda Síochána.



6: Managing Information

6.1 Confidentiality

When child protection and welfare concerns arise, information will only be shared on a need to know basis and in the best interest of the child or young person. It is important that young people engaging with spunout are made aware that if they disclose abuse, they understand that it cannot be kept secret, but that it will only be shared with people who are in a position to help them.

Individuals have a right to know if their personal information is being shared, unless doing so puts a child or young person at further risk or may impact on the assessment/investigation being conducted by statutory authorities.

NOTE: “The principles of data protection recognise that in certain circumstances, necessary and proportionate information can be shared in the interests of child protection.” Children First Act 2015.

6.2 Recording and Sharing of Information

spunout will ensure that:

- Records will be factual and include details of contacts, engagement and any actions taken.
- Records will be shared with the Statutory Authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
- spunout records on child protection concerns, allegations and disclosures will be kept securely and safely within the organisation. This will be coordinated and managed by the DLP.
- Records will only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Records will only be shared on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child or young person.
- Records will be held confidentially under the custody of the DLP and CEO at spunout, Sean McBride House, 48 Fleet Street.
- All records will be maintained in line with our Data Protection policies and procedures and the GDPR.

6.3 GDPR and Data Protection

spunout ensures that our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures are consistent with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and with the Data Protection Act 2018. The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.



7: Safeguarding measures for spunout personnel who engage with children and young people

spunout is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people. There are several additional areas of procedure and practice which combine to create safer environments when working with children and young people and the following information below describes best practices.

In addition, the implementation of guiding principles in safeguarding will require spunout to ensure that all procedures and practice are child and youth-centred at all times. Child and youth-centred practice means working in a way that puts the welfare and best interests of the child and young person at the core of how we work. Child and youth-centred practice supports the legal principle that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.

This section outlines the safeguarding measures in place to ensure the well-being and protection of children and young people in all interactions with spunout personnel.

7.1 Recruitment and Training

a. Thorough Screening: All personnel who will have direct contact with children and young people will undergo a comprehensive screening process, including reference checks, garda vetting and interviews, to ensure their suitability to work with this vulnerable demographic.

b. Training: All personnel engaging with children and young people will receive regular training on child protection, including recognising signs of abuse, appropriate behaviour, and communication guidelines. This training will be refreshed in line with statutory requirements to ensure awareness of best practices and legal requirements.

7.2 Code of Conduct

a. Professional Boundaries: All personnel must adhere to strict professional boundaries when interacting with children and young people. Inappropriate relationships, interactions, or communications that may compromise the well-being or safety of children and young people are strictly prohibited.

b. Appropriate Communication: Personnel will communicate with children and young people in a respectful and age-appropriate manner, ensuring clarity and transparency. Private communication channels, such as personal social media accounts, should not be used for engaging with children and young people related to spunout activities.



7.3 Supervision and Monitoring

- a.** Supervision: Interactions between personnel and children/young people will take place in open and observable settings whenever possible. One-on-one interactions should be avoided, and if required, they should occur in a space that is easily visible to others.
- b.** Oversight: Activities involving children and young people will have designated responsible personnel who will oversee the interactions and ensure compliance with safeguarding measures.

7.4 Reporting and Response

- a.** Reporting Mechanisms: Any concerns or suspicions of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behaviour must be reported immediately to the Designated Liaison Person. This reporting mechanism ensures a swift and appropriate response to protect the child or young person involved.
- b.** Whistleblower Protection: Personnel who report concerns in good faith will be protected against any form of retaliation and will be supported throughout the reporting process.

7.5 Confidentiality

- a.** Data Protection: Personal information and data of children and young people will be handled in compliance with relevant data protection laws. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, sharing information only with those who have a legitimate need to know.

7.6 Continuous Improvement

- a.** Regular Review: This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if necessary, to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in safeguarding children and young people.
- b.** Feedback Mechanisms: Children, young people, and their families will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences and the effectiveness of safeguarding measures, contributing to ongoing improvements.

At spunout, the safety and well-being of children and young people are paramount. These safeguarding measures aim to create a secure and nurturing environment for all interactions between our personnel and the youth we serve.

7.7 Garda Vetting

All prospective personnel who will be regularly working with children and young people in spunout will be required to complete the Garda Vetting procedure, which should be processed only for successful candidates. Garda Vetting is helpful in gathering information about the preferred applicant's history to help determine suitability.



Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016, it is a crime to employ someone in certain work or activities without undertaking Garda Vetting. It is also a crime to inappropriately Garda Vet someone whose role does not meet the criteria set out by the National Vetting Bureau, and therefore personnel should only be vetted where their role involves regular and sustained work with children and young people.

For further information please see our Garda Vetting Policy.

7.8 Responsibilities of spunout for external events and activities

A vital part of keeping children and young people safe and reducing the likelihood of harm is having clear guidelines in place regarding how activities are organised and run. The following sections outline some of the issues you should consider when planning and running activities to minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to children/young people while in your organisation.

spunout requires the return of signed consent form for any young person under the age of 18 to attend any events or activities which are run by spunout. This can be found in Appendix 5.

7.8.1 Keeping a register of children and young adults attending/record keeping

- Have criteria for membership of the organisation;
- Have a registration system for each child/young person;
- Keep a record on each child/young person, including address and family contact numbers;
- Keep medical details, any individual needs and emergency contact telephone numbers accessible.

7.8.2 Health and Safety responsibilities

spunout takes all measures to comply with the Health and Safety Act 2005. spunout ensure that:

- Insurance cover is adequate.
- Fire precautions are in place;
- First aid facilities and equipment are adequate;
- There is access to a phone;
- Equipment is checked regularly.

Please see our Health and Safety Policy for more information.

7.8.3 Safe supervision of children and young people

All youth orientated activities or events that are run by spunout are organised to maximise participation, fun and learning in a way that minimises risk. spunout always ensures that:

- A work schedule is displayed so that everyone knows who is on duty or volunteering in an activity;



- Children/young people are not left unattended;
- Adequate numbers of workers/volunteers are available to supervise the activities;
- Workers/volunteers know at all times where children/young people are and what they are doing;
- Any online activities or events are age appropriate and monitored.



8: Recruitment and selection of spunout personnel

8.1 Introduction

spunout is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that only suitable personnel work with young people in our organisation. This includes a robust recruitment and selection procedure which includes background checks (including Garda Vetting where appropriate), training, meeting with the applicant, a probation period of six months, and ongoing support.

All personnel must comply with current vetting legislation in their respective jurisdiction, adopt and agree to abide by this document, the Code of Conduct, and to attend training.

8.2 Legislative Requirements

As spunout is an organisation that provides relevant services under the Children First Act we are obliged to maintain a procedure for recruitment and selection of personnel.

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Comply with the requirement to have a specified procedure in relation to the selection or recruitment of any person as personnel of the provider with regard to that person's suitability to work with children
- To identify the procedures adopted in relation to the selection or recruitment of any person as spunout personnel regarding that person's suitability to work with children
- The procedure is intended to provide information to spunout personnel, the Board of Directors and to members of the public in respect of the procedure used to select and recruit personnel.

In line with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, spunout's recruitment procedures are obliged to include the following:

- Clear role descriptions for all personnel, accompanied by a person specification describing the attributes required.
- Advertisement of all personnel roles.
- The use of an application form for all recruitment processes, including a declaration form to allow prospective personnel to self-declare any relevant information in relation to their suitability to work with children or young people.
- A robust Garda Vetting policy, which requires all appropriate prospective personnel to consent to Garda Vetting where their role involves working directly and consistently with children.
- The use of interviews in the recruitment process.



- Gathering of a minimum of two references for prospective personnel, to include their most recent employer.
- Seeking evidence to verify qualifications and experience.
- Requesting identification via official documentation.
- Sign-off of appointments by the Leadership Team or Board of Directors, as appropriate to the role.
- Clear and comprehensive induction periods for new personnel, to include familiarisation with spunout's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Use of a probationary period of not less than six months for all personnel.

8.3 Further detail on recruitment procedures

spunout's recruitment and selection procedures can be examined in detail in the following policy documents:

- For employees: the Human Resources Policy
- For Action Panel members: the Action Panel Handbook
- For Text About It volunteers: the Text About It Volunteer Handbook
- For members of the Board of Directors: the Board Handbook



9: Provision of Information, Instruction and Training of spunout personnel in relation to the identification of occurrence of harm

9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to:

- Comply with the requirement to have a specified procedure in relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to members of staff and volunteers of the provider in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm
- To identify the procedures adopted in relation to the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training, to members of staff and volunteers of the provider in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm

9.2 Training Approach

This procedure is intended to provide information to spunout personnel, the Board of spunout and to members of the public in respect of the procedure used in the provision of information, instruction and training to members of personnel (employees and volunteers) in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm.

If all checks in the recruitment procedure are considered successful, the adult will then complete a spunout induction/onboarding programme tailored to their role. spunout aims to ensure that all staff members receive appropriate training for the job they do and that the staff members' training interests are balanced with the organisation's needs and priorities. The details of this induction for personnel including training is contained in our Human Resource Policy, Employee Handbook and our volunteer policies.

9.3 Training Provided

In support of the above we provide training as follows:

- Employee Training
- Volunteer Training
- Board of Directors Safeguarding Training



Additional training is required for the spunout's Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Persons, who will complete specific training on their roles and responsibilities.

The Board of Directors of spunout will receive regular briefings on their governance responsibilities in relation to Child and Youth Safeguarding and Protection. Safeguarding Training/Information to all spunout Personnel will include the identification of the occurrence of harm.

9.4 Further detail on training

In support of the above we provide training as follows to various personnel:

- spunout's Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
- spunout's Safeguarding Statement
- spunout's Risk Assessment of Harm
- Monitoring and Review points
- Staff Training and Development Days
- Volunteer Training
- DLP & DDLP Training

All personnel receive training during their onboarding period. In addition, they will, as required, depending on their role, receive appropriate training refreshment in line with statutory requirements. Further, all personnel will be updated should any legislative or best practice changes be made to this document and supplementary processes. The monitoring and engagement of training is supported by our Human Resources Team.



10: Code of Conduct for spunout personnel

10.1 Introduction

spunout is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people who engage with our services and activities. This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected from all employees, volunteers, and board members to create a secure and nurturing environment for children and young people engaging with spunout.

10.2 Safeguarding Code of Conduct requirements

The Safeguarding Code of Conduct:

- makes clear what is required of all spunout personnel
- supports spunout personnel in meeting their obligations
- enables spunout personnel to raise concerns without fear of recrimination
- reduces the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations by clarifying responsibilities

10.3 Further information the Safeguarding Code of Conduct

spunout Safeguarding Code of Conduct found at **Appendix 6** will be provided to all personnel during their onboarding / induction process.

All personnel are expected to review, sign and conduct themselves in accordance with this Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Any breach of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including dismissal, or the termination of your working agreement or involvement as a volunteer with spunout as appropriate. In certain circumstances, if following investigation breaches of the Code are found, such action will also result in reports to regulatory bodies, relevant authorities and/or An Garda Síochána, as appropriate.



11: Non-Compliance with spunout Policies and Procedures

11.1 Introduction

The following outlines how spunout will address alleged non-compliance with its safeguarding policies and procedures.

11.2 Breaches of policies and procedures

In situations involving less serious allegations which do not give rise to an immediate child safeguarding concern but are breaches of the Code of Conduct which have been reported to the DLP, spunout will deal with the matter as part of its Disciplinary Process.

These actions may include requiring the adult to undertake re-training, re-vetting, re-assignment of duties or working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation, or other measures as deemed appropriate.

When the allegation is related to child protection or welfare, the procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied. See section 6.1.

11.3 Non-compliance with policies and procedures

spunout will take non-compliance of its Code of Conduct or the Child and Youth Policies and Procedures very seriously and will deal with the matter under its Disciplinary Process. If it is considered by spunout that an adult involved in spunout has breached the procedures contained in this document, or the Code of Conduct, a decision regarding their future involvement with this organisation will be taken.

11.4 Whistleblowing / Protected Disclosure

All spunout adult volunteers and personnel must report to the DLP any safeguarding or child welfare and protection concerns there may be about the behaviour of another adult within spunout. These concerns will be acted upon appropriately by the DLP.

In situations where the DLP decides not to make a report to the statutory authorities the person making the report will be informed in writing by the DLP of this decision. Should they disagree with this decision they may report the matter directly to the relevant statutory authorities.



12: Implementation, Monitoring and Review

12.1 Introduction

The procedures contained in this document will be reviewed regularly by the DLP and implementation will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

12.2 Implementation and monitoring procedures

A Safeguarding Risk Assessment will be conducted annually.

All spunout personnel will be required to undergo ongoing appropriate training (see Section 9 above).

Ongoing communication and information relating to child welfare and safeguarding will be circulated to personnel via the organisation's communication channels as required.

12.3 Review schedule

The DLP will ensure that this document, and spunouts' Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, will be reviewed at least every two years.

The DLP will also ensure they are updated to take account of any substantive changes to relevant policy, legislation or changes in work practice.

12.4 Oversight

The CEO in their report to the Board of Directors will provide the number of mandatory reports for that reporting period.

The DLP will report to the Board of Directors, through the CEO, any issues that are considered to be significant in respect of child and youth safeguarding.

Such reports will be cognisant of confidentiality and will be anonymised, unless exceptional circumstances exist, where in the view of the CEO such information is required by the Board of Directors in order to discharge their statutory obligations.

13: Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions and features of child abuse

Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead to the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors

include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food, or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing and inattention to basic hygiene



- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency, and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme over-protectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development



There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

Note: It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of

incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting, or kicking
- Pushing, shaking, or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking, or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically discipline a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older and extended family members. Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms. It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a young person may be sexual abuse even if the young person concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal, or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means].
- Inviting, coercing, or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent, or obscene act
- Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. An Garda Síochána will deal with any criminal aspects of a sexual abuse case under the relevant criminal justice legislation. The prosecution of a sexual offence against a child will be considered within the wider objective of child welfare and protection. The safety of the child is paramount and at no stage should a child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.
- Within the Republic of Ireland - In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent* to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it



may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. Details on exemptions for mandated reporting of certain cases of underage consensual sexual activity can be found in page 23 of Children First: National Guidance 2017

*The age at which a person may consent to sexual activity in the Republic of Ireland is 17 years old and in Northern Ireland is 16 years old.

Exploitation

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Note: These categories of abuse are not mutually exclusive, and many situations will involve a combination of types of abuse.





Appendix 2: Names of the Mandated Persons under Legislation within spunout

The Children First Act 2015, defines certain persons as “Mandated Persons”. Within spunout the following personnel are deemed ‘Mandated Persons’ under this legislation:

Role	Person	Position
Designated Liaison Person	Eibhlin MacNamara	Deputy Director Clinical Support
Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Tara Logan Buckley	Director Clinical Support
Deputy Designated Liaison Person	Sinead Beirne	Head of Engagement and Participation
CEO	Ian Power	CEO of spunout
All Platform Shift Leaders	n/a	n/a
All Platform Supervisors	n/a	n/a
Volunteers who self-declare as Mandated Persons	n/a	n/a



Appendix 3: Relevant Legislation & Publications

There are a number of publications and pieces of legislation relevant to the safeguarding of children. The following indicative list is not intended to be comprehensive but rather to give a sense of the breadth and wide array of relevant legislation.

- Child and Family Agency Act 2013: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2013/a4013.pdf>
- Child Care Act 1991: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1991/act/17/enacted/en/print.htm>
- Children Act 2001: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/act/24/enacted/en/pdf>
- Children First Act 2015: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/24/enacted/en/pdf>
- Criminal Justice Act 2006, Section 176: Reckless Endangerment of Children: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/act/26/enacted/en/pdf>
- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1988/act/25/enacted/en/html>
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2003/act/6/enacted/en/pdf> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/act/7/enacted/en/pdf>
- Domestic Violence Act 1996: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1996/act/1/enacted/en/pdf>
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/acts/2000/a2200.pdf>
- Education Act 1998: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/pdf>
- Freedom of Information Act 2014: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/30/enacted/en/pdf>
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/47/enacted/en/pdf>
- Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1997/act/26/enacted/en/pdf>
- Protected Disclosures Act 2014: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/14/enacted/en/pdf>
- Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/49/enacted/en/pdf>
- Children First: National Guidance: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>
- NYCI publication: Let's Beat Bullying <https://www.youth.ie/documents/lets-beat-bullying>



Appendix 4: Schedule 2 of the Children First Act 2015 specifies the following classes of persons as Mandated persons for the purposes of the Act

01. Registered medical practitioner within the meaning of section 2 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.
02. *Registered nurse or registered midwife within the meaning of section 2(1) of the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.*
03. *Physiotherapist registered in the register of members of that profession.*
04. *Speech and language therapist registered in the register of members of that profession.*
05. *Occupational therapist registered in the register of members of that profession.*
06. *Registered dentist within the meaning of section 2 of the Dentists Act 1985.*
07. *Psychologist who practices as such and who is eligible for registration in the register (if any) of members of that profession.*
08. *Social care worker who practices as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register of that profession.*
09. *Social worker who practices as such and who is eligible for registration in accordance with Part 4 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 in the register (if any) of that profession.*
10. *Emergency medical technician, paramedic and advanced paramedic registered with the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council under the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (Establishment) Order 2000 (S.I. No. 109 of 2000).*
11. *Probation officer within the meaning of section 1 of the Criminal Justice (Community Service) Act 1983.*
12. *Teacher registered with the Teaching Council.*
13. *Member of An Garda Síochána.*
14. *Guardian ad litem appointed in accordance with section 26 of the Child Care Act 1991.*
15. *Person employed in any of the following capacities:*
 - a. *manager of domestic violence shelter;*
 - b. *manager of homeless provision or emergency accommodation facility;*
 - c. *manager of asylum seeker accommodation (direct provision) centre;*
 - d. *addiction counsellor employed by a body funded, wholly or partly, out of monies provided by the Oireachtas;*



- e. *psychotherapist or a person providing counselling who is registered with one of the voluntary professional bodies;*
- f. *manager of a language school or other recreational school where children reside away from home;*
- g. *member of the clergy (howsoever described) or pastoral care worker (howsoever described) of a church or other religious community;*
- h. *director of any institution where a child is detained by an order of a court;*
- i. *safeguarding officer, child protection officer or other person (howsoever described) who is employed for the purpose of performing the child welfare and protection function of religious, sporting, recreational, cultural, educational and other bodies and organisations offering services to children*
- j. *child care staff member employed in a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991;*
- k. *person responsible for the care or management of a youth work service within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.*

Youth worker who –

- a. *holds a professional qualification that is recognised by the National Qualifications Authority in youth work within the meaning of section 3 of the Youth Work Act 2001 or a related discipline, and*
- b. *is employed in a youth work service within the meaning of section 2 of the Youth Work Act 2001.*
- l. *Foster carer registered with Tusla.*
- m. *A person carrying on a pre-school service within the meaning of Part VIIA of the Child Care Act 1991.*



Appendix 5: Action Panel Participation Consent Form for Under-18s

spunout Action Panel 2023

Participation Consent Form for Under-18s

Please complete all sections clearly. All information will be treated confidentially and will be retained by spunout only for as long as the individual concerned is a member of an Action Panel. You can request all personal data held by spunout be deleted by emailing hello@spunout.ie at any time.

Name (Young person):	
Date of Birth:	

Emergency Contact Name and Relationship to Young Person:	
Emergency Contact Phone:	

Give details of dietary requirements, medical conditions or medications of which we should be aware:
Please give details of any additional supports your young person may need during their time volunteering with us:



Consent:

By signing this form, you state your agreement that your young person may take part in the spunout Action Panel and Town Hall meetings, along with any other additional meetings that will take place both online and in person.

These meetings include:

February/March: Introductory Zoom call with other new members

April: Phase 1 meetings (consultation and training) online with other members of the Action panel

August/September: Phase 2 meetings (consultation and training) in person with other members of their Regional panel

November: Phase 3 meetings (consultation and training) online with other members of the Action panel

An in person Town Hall event with all staff, volunteers and board members from spunout.

Each spunout Regional Action Panel will have their own private Slack channel, which will allow for communications between fellow members and staff along with channels that will involve all Action Panel members, aged 16-25, from each Regional Panel. Relevant members of staff will have access to these at all times. Action Panel members are expected to read and abide by the spunout Slack usage policy which you will have received with this form.

Action Panel members have no obligation to engage with one another outside of the spunout Slack channels. spunout is not able to monitor any individual contact between members, and the responsibility for monitoring such contact, should it occur, remains with parents/guardians as long as an Action Panel member is under 18 years of age.

You can find more information on the Action Panel [here](#).

By signing, you are agreeing that your young person may join the Slack channels associated with Action Panel participation. You further indicate your understanding of the following:

- the importance of your young person's good behaviour and compliance with spunout staff both online and offline in matters relating to Action Panel participation;
- that medical treatment, including First Aid, may be given to your young person in in-person settings if necessary.

By signing, you further agree that the information contained in this form may be held by spunout for the duration of the remainder of their time on the spunout Action Panel. You can withdraw this consent at any time by emailing hello@spunout.ie, subject to confirmation of your identity.



Please contact sinead@spunout.ie if you would like additional information or have any questions or concerns.

Print Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____



Appendix 6: spunout's Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct



Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

spunout is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people who engage with our services and activities. This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected from all employees, volunteers, and board members to create a secure and nurturing environment for children and young people engaging with spunout.

Respectful and Professional Behavior:

- Treat children and young people with the utmost respect, dignity, and sensitivity.
- Exhibit professionalism in all interactions, employing appropriate demeanour, language, and conduct that is age-appropriate.

Communication:

- Demonstrate respect for children and young people by valuing their opinions and voices.
- Foster an environment where open communication is encouraged, ensuring children and young people feel at ease expressing themselves.
- Define clear boundaries for online interactions, refraining from private messaging or inappropriate communication on digital platforms.
- Utilise positive reinforcement to empower and support children and young people, avoiding the use of offensive or sexually explicit language.
- Maintain transparent and respectful communication with children/young people and their parents/guardians, keeping them informed as necessary.

Supervision and Safety:

- Ensure vigilant supervision of children and young people at all times, prioritising their well-being and minimising potential risks and hazards.
- Maintain diligent adherence to Children First standards, guaranteeing the safety of children and young people by minimising risks and hazards and fostering a secure environment.
- Establish appropriate supervision ratios to facilitate effective oversight, ensuring that risks are mitigated.

No Tolerance for Abuse:

- Prohibit any form of physical, emotional, sexual, or verbal abuse towards children and young people.
- Reject and condemn behaviours that could potentially harm or exploit children and young people.

Confidentiality:

- Uphold the privacy of children and young people.
- Refrain from disclosing personal information unless authorised and ensure that any confidential details are shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

Transport and Travel:

- Secure parental consent and requisite documentation when transporting children and young people, regardless of transportation mode.
- Adhere to established adult-to-child ratios during transportation, safeguarding the safety of all participants.

Safe Activity Management:

- Design and organise activities and events that ensure the inclusion and participation of all children and young people.
- Promptly address concerns involving substandard practices and communicate effectively with all children.
- Maintain accurate completion of consent and registration forms for every activity.

Reporting Concerns:

- Upon suspicion or awareness of abuse, neglect, or harm to a child or young person, promptly report to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and/or An Garda Síochana/Tusla, as applicable.

All personnel are expected to review, sign and conduct themselves in accordance with this Safeguarding Code of Conduct. Any breach of the Safeguarding Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including dismissal, or the termination of your working agreement or involvement as a volunteer with spunout as appropriate. In certain circumstances, if following investigation



breaches of the Code are found, such action will also result in reports to regulatory bodies, relevant authorities and/or An Garda Síochana, as appropriate.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have thoroughly read and comprehend spunout's Safeguarding Code of Conduct and pledge to adhere to its provisions.

Name Printed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Appendix 7: spunout’s Schedule of Safeguarding and Child Protection Training

Personnel Type	Training	Frequency
Employee	Children First Training Tusla	During onboarding and every following three years or earlier if significant updates are made
	Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Awareness	During onboarding Every bi-annual review
Volunteer (Platform)	Safeguarding Training Tusla	During onboarding and every following three years or earlier if significant updates are made
	Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Awareness	During onboarding Every bi-annual review
Board of Directors	Child and Youth Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Awareness	During onboarding Every bi-annual review
	Safeguarding Awareness Training	Bi-Annual



