

## Public Appointments Service (publicjobs) – Child Safeguarding Statement

<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Catherine Dobbins, Head of Corporate Services, in conjunction with People & Culture
<b>Head of Division:</b>	Catherine Dobbins, Head of Corporate Services
<b>Most recent review:</b>	September 2025
<b>Approval date:</b>	Approved by Catherine Dobbins, Head of Corporate Services
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<b>Next review date:</b>	1 September 2026

***Transition Year students; Temporary Clerical Officers, Students at careers fairs under the age of 18, Students participating in Marketing & Communications initiatives, and children attending any of our social events.***

### Summary

*This policy is put in place to ensure compliance with our Child Safeguarding requirements. It sets out the supports we put in place to ensure any children (under 18) that we engage with are protected. It includes potential TCO candidates or employees, students on work experience, engaging with students at marketing events and children of staff attending office events. It sets out our relevant obligations under the Children First Act and details the risks specific to this organisation in engaging with the various groups and the controls we have in place to mitigate any risks. It also outlines when and how reports should be made to Tusla. It includes the supports in place such as training and contact details for the Designated Liaison Persons.*

### 1. Background:

We provide recruitment and selection services for the civil and public service. This may involve processing applications from children under 18 for the Temporary Clerical Officer campaign and may include interviewing such candidates.

We may also employ Temporary Clerical Officers [TCOs] who may be under the age of 18.

We also aim to facilitate the placement of transition year students [TYs] and other work experience students. A student is assigned to a unit or units and is the responsibility of the relevant Higher Executive Officer of that unit, for the duration of the placement. Transition

year students are under 18 and fall within the definition of a child, and other work experience students may also be under 18.

We are committed to safeguarding all under 18 year olds working or training in the organisation, in line with Children First legislation and guidance, and best practice. We aim to create a culture of safety that promotes the welfare of children availing of our services.

## **2. Obligations under the Children First Act 2015 in relation to TYs/other work experience students under 18:**

As the placement of transition year students (and other students under 18) in public jobs is considered to be a relevant service to children under the Act [specifically, paragraph 5(a) of Schedule 1 in relation to the provision of training opportunities to children], the following obligations attach:

- a) To keep the child safe from harm while receiving the service [i.e., on the placement] and prevent, as far as practicable, deliberate harm or abuse to children availing of its services;
- b) To assess the risks; and
- c) To address those risks, as required by the Act, in our Child Safeguarding Statement.

*Harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015 in relation to a child means –*

- (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 or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.*

## **3. Risks attaching to TY students (and other work experience students under 18):**

The risks identified in relation to such students are as follows:

- a. That the student will be harmed by a member of staff (or person acting on behalf of staff, including selection board member or other service provider), in the course of their placement [harm having the meaning assigned to it under the Children First Act 2015];
- b. That the student will disclose to our staff that they are being harmed [by persons either within or outside public jobs] and that this disclosure will not be appropriately reported to Tusla.

**4. Risk that a TY student (and other work experience students under 18) will be harmed:**

- a. The procedures in place to mitigate the risk at 3) a) above are as follows:
  - i. On induction to public jobs, all such students will:
    - 1. Be given a copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement, which will be explained to them in detail in relation to their placement;
    - 2. Be given the name and contact details of, and be introduced personally to, a staff member who will be a contact person for them, accessible at all reasonable hours, to raise any issues/concerns around abuse, bullying, inappropriate behaviour, or any issue of concern to the student.
  - ii. The staff member at (2) above will be in People & Culture (P&C), unless the placement is in P&C, in which case a staff member from another unit will be nominated.
  - iii. The contact person will be obliged to make contact with the student halfway through their placement, and again on its conclusion.
  - iv. All staff in the unit to which the student is assigned will have received and signed a copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement and a minimum of one person in the unit will have undertaken the Children First e-learning training.

**5. Risk that a student's disclosure will not be passed on to Tusla:**

The procedures in place to mitigate the risk at 3) b) above are as follows:

- a. A guide to staff for reporting child welfare and protection concerns has been developed [see Appendix A]
- b. The HEO of the unit to which the student is assigned will confirm to P&C in advance of the placement that all staff in the unit have received and signed a copy of this document within the previous 12 months;
- c. The HEO of the Unit involved will check with staff on exit of the student whether any disclosures have been made, and if so, that they have been appropriately passed on to Tusla.

**6. Temporary Clerical Officers [TCOs]:**

- a. The employment or recruitment of TCOs does not fall within the definition of the provision of relevant services to children as set out in Schedule 1 of the Children First Act 2015. However, in the case of TCOs who may be under the age of 18, we are committed to best practice in relation to child safeguarding.

- b. The risks to employing underage TCOs are considered to be similar to those applying to work experience students under 18, as set out in paragraph 3) a) and b) above, and in that context, the mitigating procedures set out in the preceding paragraphs (4) and (5) will be adapted as appropriate to be applied to TCOs under the age of 18 employed in publicjobs.
- c. The risks to recruiting underage TCOs will be mitigated by a recruitment process which involves two staff members being present at the TCOs interview and any in-person interview being conducted in an interview room with the blinds open.

## **7. Risks attaching to children attending careers events or any Marketing & Communications events at which publicjobs staff are working or running**

The risks identified in relation to such students are as follows:

- a) That the student will be harmed by a member of staff (or person acting on behalf of staff, including selection board member or other service provider), in the course of the event [harm having the meaning assigned to it under the Children First Act 2015];
- b) That the student will disclose to our staff that they are being harmed [by persons either within or outside publicjobs] and that this disclosure will not be appropriately reported to Tusla.

The procedures in place to mitigate the risk at 7 a) and b) above are as follows:

- All staff attending careers events or any Marketing & Communications events at which children are attending will complete the relevant e-learning training and will receive, and sign, a copy of this Child Safeguarding Statement.

With regard to The Pitch - The publicjobs.ie Schools Advertising Challenge Prize Days, this includes:

- Working with an external provider with a Child Safeguarding Statement and Code of Behaviour as well as Internal Guidelines for Child Protection and Student Events.
- All external provider permanent staff are screened, interviewed and reference checked prior to commencing work with the external provider.
- Where appropriate, the external provider hires staff with a proven record of working with children (trained teachers, etc).
- As part of each event that the external provider runs, the external provider creates a safety statement and risk assessment procedure, tailored to that specific event.

- Our staff will ensure a suitable crew to teacher/student ratio at all our Prize Days. This ratio is covered with event staff and attending teachers/guardians.
- Students are not permitted to attend Prize Days unless accompanied by a teacher or guardian (and if more than 25 students are attending, 2 teachers are requested to accompany them).

#### **8. Children Invited by Staff to publicjobs Events**

In the case of children (under the age of 18) invited by staff to publicjobs events, we are committed to best practice in relation to child safeguarding. The staff member who brings children to the office is responsible for their care at all times.

#### **9. Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**

This is a resource for any staff member or student who has child protection concerns and will liaise with Tusla if required. The Designated Liaison Person will be knowledgeable about child protection and will be provided with the required training. The DLPs for publicjobs are:

- **Emma Adams**, People Operations Manager (emma.adams@publicjobs.ie / 018587694)
- **Ann Marie Brennan**, L&D Partner (annmariebrennan@publicjobs.ie / 018587702)

In the case of 4), 5), and 6) above the HEO of the unit to which the student or TCO is assigned will inform the DLP of any incidents/reports that arise.

The DLP will be responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within the organisation are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.

The DLP will record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to his/her attention and the actions taken. If a decision is taken not to report a concern to Tusla, the following steps will be taken:

- Reason for not reporting concern will be recorded.
- Any actions taken will be recorded.
- The staff member who raised the concern will be provided with a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla.
- The staff member will be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

#### **10. Management of Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct Against Staff**

Such allegations will be investigated under the Disciplinary Code. This process will be used to investigate any allegation against any staff member about any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of our services.

#### **11. Training**

Training will be provided to staff in all units who will work with children (as discussed above). All staff will be given access to the e-learning training provided by Tusla (*Introduction to Children First*) and the Training Officer will ensure such training is completed. The training covers:

- Recognising and reporting child abuse
- The responsibility of organisations working with children to safeguard children
- The role of the DLP

#### **12. Communication**

This statement will be circulated to all staff and displayed publicly in our organisation. It will be made available to all students (under 18) and to their parents if requested.

#### **13. Implementation**

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Margaret McCabe,

Chief Executive,

Public Appointments Service

## **Appendix 1 – Reporting and Recognising Child Protection and Welfare Concerns**

### **Guide to Staff Reporting Child Welfare and Protection Concerns**

Anyone can report a concern about a child. If you have any concerns about a child, you should report it to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla). A report can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Any member of the public who has a concern about a child can contact the local social work duty service in the area where the child lives for advice about reporting your concerns. If a child is in danger outside office hours you can contact the Gardaí. Under The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, so long as you report what you believe is true and it is done in good faith you cannot be sued.

### **Child Protection and Welfare Report Form (CPWRF) – Guidance Notes:**

Tusla – Child and Family Agency has a statutory responsibility under the Child Care Act 1991 and the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 to promote the protection and welfare of children. Tusla therefore has an obligation to receive information about any child who is not receiving adequate care and/or protection.

**Reports should generally be made using the electronic Child Protection and Welfare Report Form, which is available at <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/>**

This report form is for use by:

- Any professional, individual or group involved in services to children, including Tusla personnel, who becomes aware of a child protection or welfare concern, or to whom a child protection or child welfare concern is reported.
- Designated Liaison Persons in any organisation.
- Any member of the public who has a child protection or welfare concern which they believe should be reported to Tusla.

Please fill in as much information and detail as is known to you. This will assist Tusla and the Social Work Department in screening the report, assessing the level of risk to the child or the support services required, and when necessary, in assigning a priority status to the case. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate this by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Tusla aims to work in partnership with parents and others. If you are making this report in confidence, you should note that Tusla cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality for the following reasons:

- A Court could order the information be disclosed.
- Under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, the Freedom of Information Commissioner may order that information be disclosed.
- Any individual against whom allegations of abuse are made has a right to fair procedures; however at times this right may need to be secondary to the protection of children at risk. The right of fair procedure applies equally to adults, adolescents and children who have allegations made against them.

You should also note that in making a 'bona fide report', you are protected under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998.

**Consideration must also be given to responsibilities under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children).**

Before reporting a concern you may wish to read A Guide for the Reporting of Child protection and Welfare Concerns at [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA\\_Guide\\_to\\_Reporters\\_Guide\\_A4\\_v3.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4214-TUSLA_Guide_to_Reporters_Guide_A4_v3.pdf).

If you are unsure if you should report your concerns, please telephone the Tusla duty social worker and discuss your concerns with them (see <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/> for local contact details).



## Appendix 2

### Risk assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below are a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Risk that candidates attending for assessment are harmed by a staff member, another candidate, or a Selection Board Member or Test Administrator / Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All staff are Garda vetted before commencing employment.</li><li>• All candidates who are children wait in communal areas.</li><li>• Candidates under the age of 18 are not interviewed or tested on a one-to-one basis.</li><li>• There are separate toilet facilities for males/females on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors, and the toilet facilities on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor are opposite the reception desk which is staffed by publicjobs staff at all times.</li><li>• Child Safeguarding Statement in place and communicated to all staff.</li></ul>
Risk that a transition year student, or other work experience student, or TCO under 18, is harmed by a staff member or member of the public while working in publicjobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All staff are Garda vetted before commencing employment.</li><li>• There are separate toilet facilities for males/females.</li><li>• All transition year students are assigned to open plan areas.</li><li>• All transition year students are assigned a buddy to provide support and assistance.</li><li>• Transition year students are not left alone with only one other person at any time.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safeguarding Statement in place and communicated to all staff and students.</li> </ul>
Risk that children attending careers fairs/Marketing & Communications events are harmed by our staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff are Garda vetted before commencing employment.</li> <li>• Child Safeguarding Statement in place and communicated to all staff.</li> <li>• All staff attending careers fairs will receive a copy of this statement and will complete the relevant training.</li> </ul>
Risk that children in the care of staff are harmed while visiting the office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staff member who brings children to their office are responsible for their care at all times.</li> <li>• All staff are Garda vetted before commencing employment.</li> </ul>
Risk that a report of harm / disclosure would not be communicated to Tusla.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedures for reporting have been developed and included in the Child Safeguarding Statement</li> <li>• All staff are Garda vetted before commencing employment.</li> </ul>