



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	1 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Category: Operational Policies

Subject: Child Protection and Welfare

Responsible for Review of this Policy: West Limerick Independent Living CLG Board

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Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Purpose.....	3
3.	Scope.....	3
4.	Glossary of Key Terms.....	4
5.	Guiding Principles.....	5
6.	Legislative Framework.....	6
7.	Risk Assessment.....	6
8.	Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
	8.1 Relevant Person.....	7
	8.2 Role of the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person.....	7
	8.3 Mandated Persons.....	8
	8.4 Procedure for Maintaining a list of Mandated Persons.....	9
	8.5 Mandated Reporting.....	9
	8.6 Mandated Assisting.....	9
9.	Recognising, Responding to and Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns.....	10
	9.1 Recognising child abuse and neglect.....	10
	9.2 Types of Abuse and how they might be Recognised.....	10
	9.2.1 Neglect.....	11
	9.2.2 Emotional Abuse.....	12
	9.2.3 Physical Abuse.....	13
	9.2.4 Sexual Abuse.....	14
	9.3 Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm.....	15
	9.3.1 Parent/carers factors:.....	15
	9.3.2 Child factors:.....	16
	9.3.3 Community factors:.....	16
	9.3.4 Environmental factors:.....	16



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	2 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

9.3.5 Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:.....	16
9.4 Bullying.....	17
10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns.....	17
10.1 Dealing with Disclosures.....	17
10.2 Immediate Safety Concerns.....	18
11. Reporting Concerns of Abuse or Neglect.....	19
11.1 Reasonable Grounds for Concern.....	19
11.2 Reporting Procedure.....	19
11.2.1 A Determination of Reasonable Grounds.....	20
11.2.2 Consultation with Tusla Duty Social Work.....	20
11.2.3 Reasonable Grounds are not Present.....	21
11.3 Dealing with a Retrospective Allegation.....	21
12. Child Protection and Confidentiality.....	21
13. Record Keeping and Storage.....	22
14. Safe Recruitment and Selection Procedures.....	22
15. Management, Supervision and Training.....	23
16. Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers.....	24
17. Information Sharing, Involving Children and Parents.....	25
18. Review.....	25
19. Appendix 1 - Legislative Framework.....	25
20. Appendix 2 – Child Safeguarding Statement.....	29
21. Appendix 3 - Mandated Persons.....	36
22. Appendix 4 – Resources.....	38



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	3 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

1. Introduction.

West Limerick Independent Living (WLIL) is a non-profit organisation established to empower people with disabilities by providing quality Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Care services. Established with a strong commitment to promoting independent living. We are based in Limerick and have an office in Newcastle West.

Our core mission is to support people with disabilities in achieving autonomy, dignity, and inclusion. We accomplish this through a person-centred approach, ensuring that our services are tailored to the unique needs of every individual. By offering practical assistance with daily tasks, mobility, and personal care, our professional staff enable service users to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In addition to direct support services, WLIL advocates for disability rights and works in collaboration with key stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, and local communities, to enhance accessibility and inclusion.

Services we provide to children include:

- Home support services – supporting adults with disabilities, with practical assistance with the care of their children.
- Supervision of children in the home of adults we support.
- Attendance at events for those families that access our services.

2. Purpose.

The purpose of this Child Safeguarding policy is to set out our organisations procedures for keeping children who access our services safe from harm. The information provided supports staff in the prevention, identification and effective management of safeguarding concerns which may arise through their work or contact with children.

The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant organisational policies and procedures and is supported by provision of information and training, to enable staff to carry out their roles effectively.

3. Scope.

This Safeguarding policy is for all West Limerick Independent Living (WLIL) staff including:

- Staff/Employees (full time, part time and temporary).
- Contractors.
- Managers.
- Directors.
- Board members/ Trustees.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	4 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

4. Glossary of Key Terms.

The meanings of the words used in this document should be read as:

Child: Means a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married (Sect 2(1), Child Care Act 1991)

Organisation: West Limerick Independent Living CLG

Parents: Parent's and legal guardians.

Tusla: Tusla, Child and Family Agency

Staff: Staff/employees, students, those on clinical/training/work placements, contractors (that have access to children) Board of Trustees.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The designated liaison person is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within our organisation are followed, so that child safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to Tusla, and staff are supported to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.

Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLp)

The deputy designated liaison person carries out the function of the DLP when they are not available.

Child Safeguarding Statement:

A written statement specifying the services being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of the service, is safe from harm. (Children First Act 2015).

Risk Assessment:

An assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of services.

Harm: As defined by the Children First Act 2015 means, in relation to a child –



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	5 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

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

Mandated Person:

Mandated persons have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports. (Children First Act 2015).

Relevant Service:

Means any work or activity specified in Schedule 1, Children First Act 2015.

Provider: Means, a person –

- (a) Who provides a relevant service, and
- (b) Who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service –
 - (i) Employs (whether under contract of employment or otherwise) one or more than one person to undertake any work or activity that constitutes a relevant service
 - (ii) Enters into a contract for services with one or more than one other person for the provision by the person of a relevant service, or
 - (iii) Permits one or more than one other person (whether or not for commercial or other consideration and whether or not as part of a course of education or other training, including an internship scheme) to undertake any work or activity, on behalf of the person, that constitutes and relevant service

Relevant Person:

A person who is appointed by the provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement. (Children First Act 2015).

5. Guiding Principles.

We are continuously evolving to meet the growing needs of our service users, and our commitment to best practices in child safeguarding reflects our dedication to those children and families that access services. At West Limerick



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	6 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Independent Living, we believe in the power of choice, inclusion, and dignity. Our work is providing services, to enable people to live the lives they choose, with confidence and support.

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to the protection and welfare of children and recognises its obligation to keep children who avail of our services safe from harm. We promote the key principles that inform best practice in child safeguarding and are committed to upholding the rights of every child who avails of our services. West Limerick Independent Living believes that:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- The best interests of the child should be paramount.
- Children have a right to be protected from harm.
- Children should be treated with respect.
- Children have a right to be listened to and have their views taken seriously.

Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children reflect legislation and national best practice guidance, and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation and staff/s must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

6. Legislative Framework.

There are a number of pieces of legislation that relate to child protection and welfare. Implementation of key legislation is supported by national best practice guidance, standards and supporting information and eLearning programmes from Tusla (www.tusla.ie). (Refer to appendix 1 for an overview of key legislation).

7. Risk Assessment.

West Limerick Independent Living have carried out a child safeguarding risk assessment of any potential for harm (as defined in the Children First Act, 2015), to a child while availing of our services, including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. This has informed our policy and the development of the organisations Child Safeguarding Statement. The Child Safeguarding Statement is publicly displayed at the organisations head office **Sheehan's Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick** and all workers and volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Statement and related policies and procedures when engaged by the organisation. This will ensure that all those working with children are



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	7 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

aware of their obligations to promote their safety and welfare. The Child Safeguarding Statement will also be made available to parents, guardians, Tusla and members of the public on request. (Refer to appendix 2 for West Limerick Independent Living Child Safeguarding Statement).

8. Roles and Responsibilities.

Child Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. West Limerick Independent Living staff must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect and respond appropriately to protect children from harm.

There are a number of key roles within the organisation that support those working with children to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

8.1 Relevant Person.

Defined by the Children First Act 2015 as a person who is appointed by the provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement. West Limerick Independent Living's Relevant Person is the General Manager, who is appointed by the Board, and the first point of contact in respect of the organisations Child Safeguarding Statement.

8.2 Role of the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person.

A named Designated Liaison Person is responsible for dealing with child safeguarding concerns in West Limerick Independent Living, ensuring that procedure is followed. Our Designated Liaison Person can be contacted in relation to any child safeguarding concerns and will be available to receive reports of child safeguarding concerns from staff.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for ensuring that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to Tusla through the correct reporting procedure. A Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) will take over the responsibilities of the DLP, if they are unavailable.

The DLP and DDLP are:

DLP: Service Coordinator

Email: precious@limerickcil.com

Phone: 35369-77320 Mobile: (085) 2578688



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	8 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Deputy DLP: Manager

Email: margaret@limerickcil.com

Phone: 353-69-77320 Mobile: (085) 2511248

West Limerick Independent Living DLP and DDLP will:

- Ensure that they are fully conversant with our organisation's duties for the protection and welfare of children.
- Ensure that they are fully familiar with our organisation's child safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Receive concerns or allegations of abuse.
- Collate relevant information to establish if reasonable grounds for concern exist.
- Utilise consultation with a Tusla Duty Social Worker if unsure if concerns constitute reasonable grounds.
- Ensure all reporting obligations are met.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Provide a clear written statement to a staff member raising a concern if they have decided not to report the concern to Tusla.
- Advise staff that if they continue to be concerned, they are free to consult with and report to Tusla or An Garda Síochána; reasonably and in good faith.
- Inform parents or carers as appropriate.
- Recognise the importance of multidisciplinary work as fundamental to best practice in child protection and welfare i.e. that all those involved with the child will work together in the child's best interests.
- Ensure child safeguarding information and training is made available to staff.

8.3 Mandated Persons.

The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla. If requested to do so, mandated persons must also assist Tusla in their assessment of child protection concerns about children who have been the subject of a mandated report.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	9 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

8.4 Procedure for Maintaining a list of Mandated Persons.

Mandated persons within West Limerick Independent Living are staff who have contact with children or their families who, because of their qualification, training, or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. A list of all mandated persons is maintained by the organisation and is updated as staff join and leave.

8.5 Mandated Reporting.

Mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns of abuse that reach a certain threshold of harm. (Refer to appendix 3 for an overview of each category of abuse at which mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns).

Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 requires mandated persons to report a mandated concern to Tusla 'as soon as practicable'. A mandated person from this organisation will submit a report of a mandated concern to Tusla using the required report form via the Tusla portal on which they will indicate that they are a mandated person, and this report is about a mandated concern.

Mandated person(s) within West Limerick Independent Living is aware that the legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 to report mandated concerns rests with them. However, concerns may be shared, and a report submitted jointly by the mandated person with our DLP/DDLP.

If a mandated person(s) within West Limerick Independent Living feel that a child protection concern may require urgent attention in order to make the child safe, they will alert Tusla in advance of submitting a written report. They will then submit a mandated report to Tusla within three days. (Section 14(7) Children First Act 2015).

A mandated person who makes a report to an authorised person is protected from civil liability under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998.

8.6 Mandated Assisting.

Mandated persons can be asked by Tusla to provide necessary proportionate assistance to aid Tusla in assessing the risk to a child arising from a mandated report. Mandated person(s) within West Limerick Independent Living will comply with this request, regardless of who makes the report. Mandated assistance may include a request to supply further information over the telephone, produce a verbal or written report or attend a meeting.

Mandated Persons within West Limerick Independent Living will complete training to ensure they understand their obligations to safeguard children and carry out this function effectively.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	10 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

9. Recognising, Responding to and Reporting Child Safeguarding Concerns.

9.1 Recognising child abuse and neglect.

Child neglect or abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the context of the child's situation and family circumstances.

The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child neglect or abuse:

- (i) considering the possibility.
- (ii) looking out for signs of neglect or abuse.
- (iii) recording of information.

There are a number of ways in which a concern in relation to a child's safety or welfare may come to light:

- a child may disclose something that has upset or harmed them
- someone else might report something that a child has told them, or that they believe that a child has been or is being harmed
- a child might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
- a child's use of language or behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- the behaviour or attitude of an adult towards a child in their care might cause concern
- a child might demonstrate worrying behaviour towards other children

9.2 Types of Abuse and how they might be Recognised.

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subject 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. In a situation where abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, you should consider it a child safeguarding issue for both children and follow child protection procedures for both the child who is harmed and the child who is alleged to have caused the harm.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	11 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

The important factor in deciding whether behaviour is abusive or neglectful, is considering the impact of that behaviour on the child rather than the intention of the person who is alleged to have caused the harm.

The definitions of neglect and abuse presented in this section are not legal definitions. They are intended to describe ways in which a child might experience abuse and how this abuse may be recognised. This information is taken from Children First National Guidance 2017 (www.tusla.ie)

9.2.1 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 the 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 violent, 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



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	12 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- 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
- 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

9.2.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systemic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a care giver 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 is 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 or 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 a 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



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	13 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- 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 overprotectiveness
- 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.

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.

9.2.3 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:

- 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



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	14 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- 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 disciplined a child. The change in 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 an adult.

9.2.4 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 siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse may 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:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- Any 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 the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	15 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- 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, video tape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means)
- Inviting, inducing or coercing 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 the child's safety be compromised because of concern for the integrity of a criminal investigation.

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse in Ireland is 17 years of age 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 be regarded as child sexual abuse.

9.3 Circumstances which may make children more vulnerable to harm.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. There may be particular times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. In particular children who have disabilities, children with communication difficulties, children in alternative care settings or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more susceptible to harm.

The following list is a range of issues that may place a child at greater risk to abuse or neglect. However, it is important to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not necessarily mean that a child in these circumstances or setting is being abused.

9.3.1 Parent/carer factors:

- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Addiction, including gambling
- Mental health issues



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	16 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability
- Conflictual relationships
- Domestic violence
- Adolescent parents

9.3.2 Child factors:

- Age
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide
- Communication difficulties
- Trafficked/exploited
- Previous abuse
- Young carer

9.3.3 Community factors:

- Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child protection and welfare required in this jurisdiction
- Culture specific practices, including
 - Female genital mutilation
 - Forced marriage
 - Honour-based violence
 - Radicalisation

9.3.4 Environmental factors:

- Housing issues
- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently
- Poverty/begging
- Bullying
- Internet and social media related concerns



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	17 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

9.3.5 Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:

- Non-attendance at appointments
- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected
Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with services
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed plans

9.4 Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, whether it is verbal, psychological or physical, that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating.

It is recognised that bullying can be the cause of genuine concerns about a child's welfare. In cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, West Limerick Independent Living may need to make a referral to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

Refer to West Limerick Independent Living, Anti-Bullying policy and procedure.

10. Responding to Safeguarding Concerns.

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect will always elicit a response from West Limerick Independent Living, as we understand that ignoring the indicators or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to a child.

10.1 Dealing with Disclosures

If a member of West Limerick Independent Living staff becomes aware of a concern of abuse from a child disclosing to them as a trusted adult, it is important that staff are prepared for this and respond appropriately. If a child tells you about abuse, they are experiencing, you should consider the following response:

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked.
- Do not panic.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	18 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child.
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child. Allow them to disclose at their own pace using their own words.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- Do not give an undertaking of secrecy.
- Accept what the child has to say – false disclosures are very rare.
- Don't ask the child to repeat their story.
- Make a detailed note of what the child disclosed to you, using the child's own words, as soon as possible afterwards, and date and sign it.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.
- Inform the child that you will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and can help.

10.2 Immediate Safety Concerns.

West Limerick Independent Living staff who becomes aware of a concern of abuse should:

- Ensure the child is safe from any immediate danger.
- Make a direct report to the relevant statutory authorities if a child is at immediate risk of harm.
 - In an emergency, any person can directly report a child abuse or neglect concern to Tusla or to An Garda Síochána. A report can be made in person or by telephone. The safety and welfare of the child is the priority, if a concern needs to be reported to statutory agencies, Staff will not delay.
 - If a staff member makes a direct report (in an emergency) they must notify the DLP/DDLP of their contact with the statutory authorities. This enables West Limerick Independent Living to ensure the process is undertaken in line with this policy and procedure.
 - The DLP/DDLP will also offer support and guidance to the staff member regarding their concerns.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	19 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

11. Reporting Concerns of Abuse or Neglect.

If a concern arises regarding the safety and welfare of a child, in the context of the work of West Limerick Independent Living it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (or Deputy in their absence). If **reasonable grounds for concern** exist, that is, if a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected, a report will be submitted by the organisation to Tusla.

11.1 Reasonable Grounds for Concern.

Tusla, Child and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

Reasonable grounds for a child protection or welfare concern include:

- 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 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 they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

- (i) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority,
- (ii) reports should be made without delay to Tusla, The Child and Family Agency.

11.2 Reporting Procedure.

West Limerick Independent Living staff will:



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	20 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- Contact the DLP/DDLP the same day to share information about the concern(s).
- Work with the DLP/DDLP to ensure all relevant information is collated.
- Make a written factual record of the concern(s).
- Be available to the DLP/DDLP for information/clarification.

The DLP/DDLP will:

- Be available to receive information from staff about safeguarding concerns.
- Assess the information received and determine if reasonable grounds exist.
- Determine if it is appropriate to inform the parents/carers, that is, the child will not be endangered by doing so.
- Ensure that procedure is followed.

11.2.1 A Determination of Reasonable Grounds.

If the DLP/DDLP assesses the information provided about the concern and determines that there are reasonable grounds for concern (as set out in section 11.1 of this policy), they must submit a report to Tusla. This will be submitted via the Tusla portal which can be accessed via the website [Report a ConcernTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)

11.2.2 Consultation with Tusla Duty Social Work.

If the DLP/DDLP is unsure of whether the criteria of reasonable grounds are met and are unsure if a report to Tusla is required, they can consult with Tusla by contacting the Duty Social Worker to discuss the concern (without providing identifying information). This consultation provides an opportunity to discuss the concern in general and to decide whether a formal report of the concern to Tusla is appropriate at this stage. The DLP/DDLP should

- Keep a record of this contact including, date, time method of contact, name of social worker and any advice given.
- Request that the Tusla Duty Social Worker confirm their advice to you in writing for your records.

[Contact a Social WorkerTusla - Child and Family Agency](#)



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	21 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

11.2.3 Reasonable Grounds are not Present.

If the DLP/DDLP determine that reasonable grounds are not present they must make a written record of the reasons for not reporting to Tusla. This record should also include:

- Any actions taken by the organisation as a result of the concern.
- A clear written record of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla at this stage, which should be shared with the staff member who raised the concern.

If the DLP/DDLP decides not to make a report but the staff member raising the concern believes that reasonable grounds exist, they can make a report directly to Tusla and inform the DLP/DDLP they are reporting independently. This staff member is entitled to receive support from the DLP/DDLP with making a report directly and has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently.

11.3 Dealing with a Retrospective Allegation.

At West Limerick Independent Living we recognise that adults may disclose abuse that took place during their childhood, and such disclosures may come to light when staff are providing support services to adults.

If a retrospective concern arises, staff will follow the reporting procedure (as set out in section 11 of this policy) and the DLP/DDLP should report this information to Tusla, as the alleged abuser may pose a current risk to children. The DLP/DDLP will make a report using the retrospective abuse report form (RARF). (Refer to the Tusla website at www.tusla.ie).

12. Child Protection and Confidentiality.

Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child. No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given to either adults or children in relation to child protection concerns, disclosures or allegations.

The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection. West Limerick Independent Living will cooperate with the Tusla Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána on the sharing of information and records where a child welfare or protection issue arises. Relevant staff will attend and share information, as required, at formal child protection and welfare meetings as organised by the Tusla, for example. Child Protection Conferences and Strategy Meetings.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	22 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

West Limerick Independent Living understands that parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk.

All records held by the organisation will be kept in a safe and confidential manner, taking full account of legal requirements.

13. Record Keeping and Storage.

Record keeping is of critical importance in this area of work. The ability to protect children, requires accurate records to be maintained. It is essential that all staff keep contemporaneous records of all safeguarding concerns; this will include contacts, consultations and any actions taken. All records relating to child protection and welfare such as records of concerns, allegations or disclosures, or reports to statutory agencies should be kept in a safe and confidential manner. Paper records will be stored in locked filing cabinets with restricted access. Records held on PCs, servers or mobile devices will be encrypted and password protected. Child protection reporting records are held in perpetuity.

14. Safe Recruitment and Selection Procedures.

Safe recruitment is an integral part of good safeguarding practice. In addition to standard good HR practice (refer to HR Recruitment policy), the organisation will:

- Advertise/publicise all prospective positions as widely as possible.
- Provide a worker's job and role description.
- Provide all applicants with information about the organisation and activities.
- Provide an application form.
- Seeking Garda vetting, and police clearance for other jurisdictions, and adhere to the organisations criteria on decision making regarding suitability in the event of disclosures.
- Adhere to the 'Specific factors criteria' which would exclude applicants from working in the organisation.
- Ensure that interviews are conducted by at least two representatives of the organisation and all candidates will be measured against a set criterion.
- Seek a minimum of two recent references which will be validated prior to engagement with the organisation.
- Seek proof of identity.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	23 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- Require a completed Declaration Form from all workers.
- Contracts agreed by management and workers, including that workers will comply with the organisation's child protection and welfare policy.
- Ensure all workers will receive induction in the child protection and welfare policy and regular refresher or updating training will be provided as required.
- Ensure all staff whose roles include or could potentially include contact with children, receive appropriate safeguarding training, in line with Children First.

It is the expectation of the organisation that all applicants and staff disclose any convictions or if they have been given the benefit of the Probation Act.

15. Management, Supervision and Training.

Staff whose roles or duties include or may include contact with children receive appropriate support and supervision from their line manager or other appointed manager. This will include team meetings, informal/formal supervision on an individual and/or peer group basis. The organisation understands that staff who are dealing with or have dealt with child protection and welfare concerns, may require additional support and supervision. This will be provided by the staff members line manager/other appointed manager in consultation with the organisations DLP.

All staff will be provided with information and training in child safeguarding in line with Children First. Staff will be supplied with copies of relevant policies and procedures and access training to support them in their roles. Staff will avail of Tusla's e-learning programmes (www.tusla.ie), which include introductory/foundation level programmes as well as programmes for Mandated Persons and Designated Liaison Persons. West Limerick Independent Living will keep records of training programmes attended by each staff member and ensure that they attend refreshers as required.

West Limerick Independent Living will ensure that the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person have access to appropriate training to undertake their roles and have regular support and supervision from a suitably qualified person. Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Liaison Person will complete initial training on appointment and complete refresher training every 2 years at minimum.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	24 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

16. Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Abuse Against Workers.

Should an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct in relation to a child be made against a West Limerick Independent Living CLG staff member(s), it will be assessed promptly and carefully by the organisation. Two people will be appointed to manage the two separate procedures for:

1. The child (child safeguarding policy and procedure)
2. The worker (organisational HR policy and procedure)

Action taken in reporting an allegation of child abuse against a worker should be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith, using the standard reporting procedure (as per the reporting procedure set out in section 11 of this document). West Limerick Independent Living's first priority is to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk and the organisation will take necessary protective measures. These measures will be proportionate to the level of risk and will not unreasonably penalise the staff member (e.g. staff member(s) removed from duties, including possible suspension with pay pending a full investigation). All action taken by the organisation will be in line with agreed policies and procedures, employment contracts and rules of natural justice.

A senior manager will be appointed to advise the staff member that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of the allegation. The person will be afforded an opportunity to respond, and the response will be noted, and submitted to Tusla, Child and Family Agency should a report be submitted.

The person who the allegation has been made against will be informed if it is the decision of the organisation to submit a report to the statutory authorities and that West Limerick Independent Living will cooperate fully with any assessment or investigation that ensues. This will be undertaken without delay. The Designated Liaison Person will liaise closely with investigating bodies (Tusla, Child and Family Agency / An Garda Síochána) to ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not undermine or frustrate any investigations.

The parents/legal guardians of the child will be kept informed of the process in respect of the allegation.

The CEO and Board will be informed with due regard for privacy and fair procedure of the individual involved.

The outcome of any investigation and/or assessment by the statutory authorities, will inform and assist the organisation in reaching a decision about the action to be taken in the longer term concerning the worker. An internal investigation under West Limerick Independent Living's Disciplinary and Grievance Policies may be undertaken.

In line with the West Limerick Independent Living Code of Conduct, should a statutory investigation or criminal proceedings be undertaken against an employee in relation to a child outside the context of an employee's role, this must be reported to the Human Resources department of the organisation.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	25 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

17. Information Sharing, Involving Children and Parents.

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to facilitating child and parental involvement in the provision of services. On initial contact with the service all parents and children will be made aware of the organisations Child Safeguarding Statement and associated policies and procedures. The Child Safeguarding Statement is displayed, and all policies and procedures can be made available to parent/legal guardians of children who are accessing services, upon request. The Child Safeguarding Statement provides the name of the relevant person and details of how to contact them if a child or parent has questions about child safeguarding within West Limerick Independent Living.

Children will be informed of their rights to be protected from harm and information will be provided in an age-appropriate manner. The communication tools and resources used by West Limerick Independent Living promote child engagement and ensure information is shared in a way that is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

Written parental consent will be required by West Limerick Independent Living prior to services being supplied to children.

At West Limerick Independent Living we are interested in the views of those who access our services and appreciate service user and stakeholder feedback, which is used to inform and develop our services.

Copies of organisational policies and procedures can be made available to children, their parents/legal guardians, statutory agencies and the public on request.

18. Review

It is the responsibility of our Board and Senior Management to ensure that policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively. This Child Safeguarding policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if there has been a material change in any issues to which it refers.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	26 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Margaret O'Connor

Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: *09-10-2026*

19. Appendix 1 - Legislative Framework

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that relate to child protection and welfare. The information below gives a brief overview of relevant legislation, (it is not intended as legal opinion or advice and the original legislation should be consulted as required).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international treaty that recognises the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. It was adopted by the UN in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992. It pledges to protect and promote children's rights to survive and thrive, to learn and grow, to make their voices heard and to reach their full potential.

The Childcare Act 1991 (and 2001) is the primary legislation regulating child care policy in Ireland. Under the Child Care Act 1991 Act, as amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, the Child and Family Agency (CFA) has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection. Under the Act, the definition of a child is a person under 18 years of age who is not or has not been married. It establishes the principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Children First Act 2015 places a number of statutory obligations on specific groups of professionals and on particular organisations providing services to children. Through the provision of the Act, it is intended to:

- Raise awareness of child abuse and neglect
- Provide for mandatory reporting for key professionals
- Improve child safeguarding arrangements in organisations providing services to children
- Provide for cooperation and information-sharing between agencies when Tusla, Child and Family Agency, is undertaking child protection assessments

This legislation also contains a provision that removes the defence of reasonable chastisement in relation to corporal punishment as part of court proceedings'.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	27 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 makes provision for the protection from civil liability of persons who have reported suspected child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of the Child and Family Agency or to any member of An Garda Síochána.

This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals. This means that even if a communicated suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the person who communicated the concern had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

The Act also provides protection from penalisation by an employer. The Criminal Justice Act (2006) (Section 176 Reckless Endangerment of Children) states that "a person, having authority or control over a child or abuse, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by:

Causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse or

Failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation."

National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016. Under these Acts it is compulsory for employers to obtain vetting disclosures in relation to anyone who is carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable adults. The Acts create penalties for persons who fail to comply with their provisions. Statutory obligations on employers in relation to Garda vetting requirements for person working with children and vulnerable adults are set out in the Acts.

The Domestic Violence Act 2018 replaces the Domestic Violence Act 1996 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2002 and improves legal protections available to victims of domestic violence. The Act introduces factors that the Court shall consider when deciding on an application for an order under the Domestic Violence Act. These factors include (but are not limited to); history of violence by the respondent towards the applicant or any dependent person (i.e. child), any conviction of the respondent for an offence under the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act 2001 that involves loss to the applicant or child, increase in severity or frequency of violence towards the applicant or their children, exposure of children to violence inflicted by the respondent on the applicant or other child, any action of the respondent, not being a criminal offence, which puts the applicant or a dependent person in fear for his or her own safety or welfare.

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, addresses the sexual exploitation of children and targets those who engage in this criminal activity. It creates offences relating to the obtaining or providing of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation. It also creates offences of the types of activity which may occur during the early stages of the predatory process prior to the actual exploitation of a child, for example, using modern technology to prey on children and



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	28 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

making arrangements to meet with a child where the intention is to sexually exploit the child. The act also recognises the existence of underage, consensual peer relationships where any sexual activity falls within strictly defines age limits and the relationship is not intimidatory or exploitative.

Data Protection Act 2018 applies to the processing of personal data. It gives a right to every individual, irrespective of nationality or residence, to establish the existence of personal data, to have access to any such data relating to him or her, and to have inaccurate data rectified or erased. It requires data controllers to make sure that the data they keep are collected fairly, are accurate and up to date, are kept for lawful purposes and are not used or disclosed in any manner incompatible with those purposes. It also requires both data controllers and data processors to protect the data they keep and imposes on them a special duty of care in relation to the individuals about whom they keep such data.

Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 enable members of the public to obtain access, to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy, to information in the possession of public bodies.

The Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. An act to provide, in connection with the protection of children and certain vulnerable adults, for offences of withholding information relating to the commission of certain arrestable offences (including certain sexual offences) against children, or certain arrestable offences (including certain sexual offences) against such adults.

Protected Disclosures Act 2014 is defined as a disclosure of relevant information related to wrongdoing made by a worker in the manner specified under the Act. **The Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022** gives effect to Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law, and amend and extend the Protected Disclosures Act 2014; to provide for the establishment of the Office of the Protected Disclosures Commissioner and to confer functions on it; to amend the Freedom of Information Act 2014, the Ombudsman Act 1980 and the Workplace Relations Act 2015; and to provide for related matters.

Guidance and Standards.

Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People (2017). The Guidance document is intended to assist people in identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect and deal effectively with concerns. It emphasises that the needs of children and families must be at the centre of child protection and welfare services, and that the welfare of children is of paramount importance. It highlights the roles and responsibilities of



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	29 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Tusla, Child and Family Agency, An Garda Síochána and Mandated Persons under the Children First Act 2015, and provides information about how the statutory agencies respond to reports of concerns made about children.

The National Standards for the Protection and Welfare of Children have been developed by the Health Information and Quality Authority (the Authority) to support continuous improvements in the care and protection of children in receipt of HSE child protection and welfare services. These outcome-based Standards provide a framework for the development of child-centred services in Ireland that protect children and promote their welfare.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	30 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

20. Appendix 2 – Child Safeguarding Statement.

West Limerick Independent Living – Child Safeguarding Statement.

Our Services:

West Limerick Independent Living (WLIL) is a non-profit organisation established to empower people with disabilities by providing quality Personal Assistant (PA) and Home Care services. Established with a strong commitment to promoting independent living. We are based in Limerick and have an office in Newcastle West.

Our core mission is to support people with disabilities in achieving autonomy, dignity, and inclusion. We accomplish this through a person-centred approach, ensuring that our services are tailored to the unique needs of every individual. By offering practical assistance with daily tasks, mobility, and personal care, our professional staff enable service users to lead fulfilling and independent lives. In addition to direct support services, WLIL advocates for disability rights and works in collaboration with key stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, and local communities, to enhance accessibility and inclusion.

Services provided to children include:

- Home support services – supporting adults with disabilities, with practical assistance with the care of their children.
- Supervision of children in the home of adults we support.
- Attendance at events for those families that access our services.

Guiding Principles:

We are continuously evolving to meet the growing needs of our service users, and our commitment to best practices in child safeguarding reflects our dedication to those children and families that access services. At West Limerick Independent Living, we believe in the power of choice, inclusion, and dignity. Our work is providing services, to enable people to live the lives they choose, with confidence and support.

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to the protection and welfare of children and recognises its obligation to keep children who avail of our services safe from harm. We promote the key principles that inform best practice in child safeguarding and are committed to upholding the rights of every child who avails of our services. West Limerick Independent Living believes that:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- The best interests of the child should be paramount.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	31 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

- Children have a right to be protected from harm.
- Children should be treated with respect.
- Children have a right to be listened to and have their views taken seriously.

Our guiding principles and procedures to safeguard children reflect legislation and national best practice guidance, and we will review our guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures every two years. Our guiding principles apply to everyone in our organisation and staff/s must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of our organisation.

Risk Assessment:

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm (as defined in the Children First Act, 2015), to a child while availing of our services, including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the procedures for managing these risks.

	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	32 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1.	Risk of harm to a child from Risk of Harm to a Child from a member of Staff	- Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. - Reporting procedure for any concern of abuse to a child. - Information sharing and record keeping procedure. - Code of conduct between staff and children. - Safe recruitment and selection procedures (including garda vetting). - Procedure for the provision of information and training for staff. - Procedure for management and supervision of staff. - Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against staff members. - Procedure for safe management of services. - All staff will be recruited in line with the organisations safe recruitment policy and procedure. - All staff will be asked to sign to say they have read, understood and will adhere to the organisations policy and procedure. - Typically, parents are present when staff have contact with children, as recorded in the assessment of need, care plan and in agreement with the HSE.
2.	Risk of Harm to Children from access to/ inappropriate use of information, including online safety - Record Keeping, Social Media and ICT.	- Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. - Reporting procedure for any concern of abuse to a child. - Information sharing and record keeping procedure. - Code of conduct between staff and children. - Safe recruitment and selection procedures. - Procedure for the provision of information and training for staff. - Procedure for management and supervision of staff. - Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against staff members. - Procedure for safe management of services.

	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	33 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

		• Policy and procedure for information management. • All staff will be recruited in line with the organisations safe recruitment policy and procedure. • All staff will adhere to all the organisations polies and procedures, including: GDPR, Freedom of information and confidentiality. • All records will be stored securely, with access to information controlled and monitored by the organisation. • Records will be shared as required with statutory agencies in respect of child protection and welfare. • Any contact via social media will be at the express consent of the child's parent/guardian. • All communication with those who use services will be via the official accounts. • Staff are not permitted to communicate with those who use services via social media – apart from using official accounts. • Images of children will only be taken with the express consent of the parent/guardian. • Images will only be used for the purpose for which they were taken (and agreed by the parent/guardian), for example advertising. • Images of children will only be taken on official devices. • Images will be stored in accordance with record management policy and procedure. • All information created and stored will be maintained securely, including password protection, encryption and data access restrictions. • Clear desk policy.
3.	Risk of Harm to Children from those in Attendance at Events and Activities.	• Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. • Reporting procedure. • Information sharing and record keeping procedure.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	34 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

		• Code of conduct between staff and children. • Safe recruitment and selection procedures. • Procedure for the provision of information and training for staff. • Procedure for management and supervision of staff. • Procedures for responding to allegations of abuse against staff members. • Procedure for safe management of services. • Anti-bullying policy and procedure. • All events/activities will be individually risk assessed to ensure that all potential risks are identified, and control measures put in place to minimise and manage risk. • Children will only be allowed to participate in events and activities where the parent/guardian supervise their children and has provided consent. • All events/activities will be supervised by appropriately trained staff. • Any accidents or incidents will be managed and reported in accordance with the organisations policy and procedures.
4.	Risk of Harm to Children through staff non-Compliance with policies and procedures.	• Support staff will be scheduled to ensure minimal contact with children. • Support staff will be asked to complete garda vetting as per safe recruitment policy. • All staff must adhere to all the organisations polies and procedures (and will be made aware of sanctions for non-compliance) • Staff receive information and training to support them in carrying out their roles effectively. • Work will be monitored via -Regular contact between the service coordinators and the lone worker is standard practice as it fosters good reporting, communication, and supervision. This coupled with online management system (CarePlanner) and regular contact with service users ensures that any service-



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	35 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

		related issues can be addressed in an effective manner • All visitors will access the office via reception, who will permit access if acceptable to do so. • All staff will adhere to the organisations Lone Working policy and procedure. • All staff must adhere to the organisations Code of Conduct.
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Procedures:

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against staff.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of staff to work with children.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All policies and procedures listed are available upon request.

Implementation.

At West Limerick Independent Living we recognise that implementation is an on-going 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.



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	36 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in May 2027 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: *Margaret O'Connor* West Limerick Independent Living (Provider).

Date: 28th May 2025

For queries, please contact, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

Manager

Email: margaret@limerickcil.com

Phone: 353-69-77320 Mobile: (087) 948 7506



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	37 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

21. Appendix 3 - Mandated Persons.

As a mandated person, under the legislation you are required to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, to the Authorised Person within Tusla.

Definition of Harm:

The threshold of harm for each category of abuse at which mandated persons have a legal obligation to report concerns is outlined below.

“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.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as ‘to deprive a child of adequate food, warmth, clothing, hygiene, supervision, safety or medical care’. The threshold of harm, at which the mandated person must make a report to Tusla under the Act, is reached when it is known, believed, or there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child’s needs have been neglected, are being neglected, or are at risk of being neglected to the point where the **child’s health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Emotional Abuse/Ill-Treatment

Ill-treatment is defined as ‘to abandon or cruelly treat the child, or to cause or procure or allow the child to be abandoned or cruelly treated’. Emotional abuse is covered in the definition of ill-treatment used in the Children First Act 2015.

The threshold of harm, at which a report must be made to Tusla under the Act, is reached when the mandated person knows, believes, or has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child, is being, or is at risk of being ill-treated to the point



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	38 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

where the **child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is covered in the references to assault in the Children First Act 2015. The threshold of harm, at which a mandated person must report to Tusla under the Act, is reached when you know, believe, or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being or is at risk of being assaulted, and that as a result the **child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

Sexual Abuse

If as a mandated person, you know or believe or have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being sexually abused, then you must report this to Tusla. Sexual abuse to be reported under the Act (as amended by section 55 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017) is defined as an offence against the child, as listed in Schedule 3 of the Children First Act.

As sexual abuse falls within the category of **seriously affecting the child's health, welfare or development**, mandated persons must report all concerns about sexual abuse as a mandated report to Tusla.

Mandated person within West Limerick Independent Living CLG are:

Manager

Service Coordinator, Mandated person



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	39 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

Acceptance of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I have received and read a copy of the West Limerick Independent Living Child Protection and Welfare Policy I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined within the handbook.

When you have read this policy, you should sign this page within a week of receiving the handbook. Please return a signed copy of this sheet to your Coordinator.

I acknowledge receipt of the Child Protection and Welfare Policy, which I have read and understood

Signed by employee:

Date:

Please print your name here in **BLOCK CAPITALS:**



	West Limerick Independent Living				
Title:	Child Protection and Welfare Policy				
Page:	40 of 38	Policy. No.: WLILP	Date March 2025	Issue No.	0

22. Appendix 4 – Resources.

Tusla eLearning Programmes:

[Children First E-Learning Programme](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Mandated Person eLearning module](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Designated Liaison Person\(s\)](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

Information/Resources:

[Children First Guidance and Legislation](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Child Safeguarding Resource List.pdf](#)

[Children First](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Parents and Guardians](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Children and Young People](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

Contacts:

[Contact a Social Worker](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency

[Report a Concern](#)Tusla - Child and Family Agency