

About us:

Kerry Services, as part of Saint John of God Community Services(SJOGCS) clg, Ireland, is a HSE funded service. We provide services and supports to children 0 – 18 years of age with a Mild, Moderate and Severe/Profound Intellectual Disability. Our services are designed to support the developmental, social, and emotional needs of each child in a safe, inclusive, and person-centred environment. We work in partnership with families, carers, and relevant professionals to ensure that each child receives appropriate care and support tailored to their individual needs. Referrals to our services are received through the Health Service Executive (HSE) Respite Forum.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people who engage with our services, ensuring that their safety and wellbeing are at the core of all our practices.

Kerry Services, SJOG has a responsibility to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and to help protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and neglect as outlined in the **Children First Act (2015)**.



1. SJOGCS Commitment to Safeguard Children :

- The safety, welfare and development of children and young people are core objectives and key priorities for Kerry Services, SJOGCS
- Every staff member has a responsibility and a duty of care to ensure that every child/young person availing of our service is safe and protected from harm.
- Policies and procedures have been developed to promote safe environments for children and young people; to mitigate the potential for risk of harm to arise, and to manage it safely where it does arise.
- The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all staff (students, trainees, volunteers, contractors) and any other person performing any role or function in, or on behalf of Kerry Services, SJOGCS.

2. Risk Assessment: This Child Safeguarding Statement was informed by a comprehensive Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and the Implementation and Compliance Self Audit Checklist. The risks applicable to this Child Safeguarding Statement are:

<u>Risk of harm to a child:</u>	Controls
Risk 1 - Risk or harm to a child by a staff member, volunteer or student, including risks related to online activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's First Compliance; Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement. • SJOGCS Human Resource Policy: Recruitment, onboarding & selection procedure, education and mandatory Children's First training. • SJOGCS SOP Child Protection and Welfare Policy - adopted from HSE Policy • SJOGCS Policies, Protocols and Guidelines regarding safe practice. Online safety and risk assessment.
Risk 2 – Risk of harm to a child from a service user (adult or child), visitor or member of the public, including risks related to online activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supervision and mandatory children's first training • Designated Liaison Persons- roles with mandated persons data base in place • SJOGCS Oversight Children First Group • SJOGCS Policies, Protocols and Guidelines regarding safe practice
Risk 3 – Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a staff member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJOGCS Policies, Protocols and Guidelines regarding safe practice. • Staff information, supervision and mandatory training. • Reporting Procedure/ including retrospective disclosures with legal consequences of not reporting/Mandatory Reporting. • SJOGCS Oversight Children First Group.
Risk 4 – Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJOGCS Policies: A full list of SJOGCS policies is available. • Local risk assessments as required. • Child friendly Safeguarding Statement and signposting of accessible materials. • Staff training in effective communication with children and recognising signs of abuse. • SJOGCS Oversight Children First Group
Risk 5 – Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015 and/or related guidance and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children First Staff Training Requirements • Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) and Deputy DLPs roles and mandated persons database. • Staff Support and supervision in support of each child's care and support needs • Risk Assessment as required. • Joint Protocol for Interagency Collaboration • SJOGCS Oversight Children First Group
Risk 6 - Risk of harm to a child due to a service failing to ensure safe access to ICT (incl. social media, web access and electronic contact).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SJOGCS Programme Policies: A full list of SJOGCS policies is available including SJOGCS ICT Policies; • Risk assessment per region in place as required; • Education for children and families on staying safe online • Designated Liaison Person in place

3. Procedures

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed with due regard to, and in accordance with, the Children First Act 2015, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2026), Tusla Child and Family Agency Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement. The following policies and procedures support our intention to safeguard children availing of this service:

- “An Introduction to Children First” mandatory eLearning training for all staff in SJOGCS
- HSE National Child Protection and Welfare Policy 2026, which has been adopted by the SJOGCS as a SOP which includes guidance on reporting to Tusla in accordance with the Children's First Act.
- SJOGCS Human Resource- Recruitment policies to ensure the selection and recruitment of staff who are suitable to work with children (with Garda Vetting);
- Trust in Care Policy and related procedures to investigate an allegation made against a staff member;
- Procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons.
- Procedure for appointing a Relevant Person.
- HSE Incident Management Framework 2025 and a SJOGCS Policy aligned to this Framework has been adapted by SJOGCS Board and implemented in SJOGCS to inform management of any incident where a child has been harmed while availing of the service; .
- HSE Integrated Risk Management Policy and a SJOGCS Policy aligned to this has been adopted by SJOGCS Board to assess and manage any risk of harm;
- And SJOGCS Policies; list is available.

4. Governance

The CEO of SJOG Community Services and the Regional Director of Kerry Services Claire O'Dwyer, have operational responsibility for ensuring Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments and Child Safeguarding Statements are completed.

Governance is supported through the Quality & Safety function, the management structures in Kerry Services and the SJOGCS Safeguarding Oversight Group..

5. Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Kerry Services, SJOGCS 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 services. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by March 2028 or as soon as practicable, if there has been any material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Relevant Person: Claire O'Dwyer, Regional Director, Kerry Services, Claire.odwyer@sjog.ie and 087 9080871

(Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015
Contact Persons; .Designated Designated Liaison Persons: .
Sheila Marie Fitzgerald , DLP,
Sheilamarie.fitzgerald@sjog.ie,(087-0511388) Catriona M
Murphy, PIC, Catriona.murphy2@sjog.ie (087)-3820692,
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Note: The definition of harm in relation to a child is: 'assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child' The Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment carried out by SJOGCS outlines the procedures and control measures that are necessary and/or in place to mitigate any risks identified. Where necessary, risks are managed in line with the SJOGCS Integrated Risk Management Policy. Queries regarding the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment carried out by this service for the purpose of developing this Child Safeguarding Statement should be directed to the named relevant person.