

# Children in Hospital Ireland Child Safeguarding Statement

**Name of Service Provided:** CHI Play and Information Service in Hospitals

## Nature of Service

Children in Hospital Ireland (CHI) is a voluntary organisation which provides information and support to children and their families before, during and after hospitalisation of a child. CHI also provides information to professionals and policy-makers and advocates for improved health care for children.

The core work of CHI is the provision of a play service to children and young people availing of hospital services. This play service may be delivered in the hospital playroom, in the wards, in the emergency department or in the outpatient department of the hospital. In addition, CHI provides a 'Just Ask' information service in Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin. In order to deliver these services, CHI recruits and trains volunteers who, following completion of An Garda Síochána vetting process, are placed in hospitals. Volunteers, in general, commit to a shift of 2.5 hours once a week.

CHI is a registered charity (Charity No. 6632), whose work is supervised by a Board of Directors, the members of which act in a voluntary capacity. The management and oversight of CHI's volunteer service and the overall administration of the organisation is carried out by a small staff of paid employees.

## Principles for Safeguarding Children

CHI believes that all children should have the opportunity to grow, learn and develop in an environment which is not only free from harm but also actively seeks to support and protect them. While a period of hospitalisation may present challenges for a child and their family and can be a stressful time, we believe that this should not mean that the child does not continue to have opportunities for play and recreation in a safe environment.

CHI commits to ensuring that the children with whom it works are kept safe from harm while they are availing of its services. We are fully committed to and guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and we are compliant with the legislation and guidelines in the Children First Act 2015 and in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*. As part of our work to ensure the safety of children with whom we work, we have developed a range of support materials to promote best practice and have put in place procedures for an appropriate response should a child safeguarding concern arise. We have a child protection policy for the organisation which outlines the procedures for dealing with incidents and making reports, as well as procedures for the investigation of an allegation against a staff member or a volunteer.

We have carried out a risk assessment of our work to identify potential areas of concern and we have also identified and put in place strategies to manage these risks.

## Key Potential Risks Identified by Children in Hospital Ireland

Potential Risk	Strategies to Address Risk
Recruitment of an inappropriate person as a volunteer or staff member.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruitment policy in place in relation to volunteers and staff members.</li><li>• Compliance with Garda Síochána vetting. Re-vetting every 5 years. Police checks for those who have lived in another country for more than 6 months.</li><li>• Clear job description and person specification for roles.</li><li>• References sought and obtained before recruitment finalised.</li><li>• Training is part of recruitment process.</li></ul>

Lack of awareness of child safeguarding procedures among volunteers or staff members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child protection incorporated into initial training.</li> <li>• Child protection training renewed every 3 years.</li> <li>• Team Leader training events include child protection.</li> <li>• Designated Liaison Person appointed for CHI.</li> </ul>
Incident or inappropriate behaviour brought to the attention of a staff member/volunteer not reported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Code of Conduct included in CHI <i>Volunteer Manual</i>.</li> <li>• Code of Conduct for staff members.</li> <li>• Volunteers and staff trained in reporting procedures.</li> <li>• Regular contact by CHI office with Team Leaders to encourage regular communication.</li> <li>• Performance management system in place to review volunteer performance and take action where performance falls below an acceptable standard</li> </ul>
CHI not informed of a safeguarding incident in a hospital involving a CHI staff member or volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear reporting procedure which requires a report to be sent to CHI and also to the relevant staff member in the hospital.</li> <li>• CHI in regular contact with the Director of Nursing and/or the hospital's, Designated Liaison Person to share information.</li> <li>• Information-sharing protocols included in the Service Level Agreement between CHI and hospitals.</li> </ul>
Volunteer shares personal information or engages with a child in hospital outside of their official role with CHI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Code of Conduct included in CHI <i>Volunteer Manual</i>.</li> <li>• Training for volunteers covers the issue of appropriate communication with children and their families.</li> <li>• Confidentiality agreement signed by all volunteers/staff before starting with CHI.</li> </ul>

### Procedures to Support Safeguarding

CHI's 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* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017); *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice* (Tusla).

*Making hospital a happier place for children through play and advocacy*

CHI procedures to support safeguarding include the following:

- Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Procedures for the provision of training to all new and existing staff members and volunteers, including identifying and responding to a safeguarding concern;
- Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers;
- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct made against CHI workers or volunteers;
- Procedures for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla;
- Procedures for having in place and making known those people who are mandated persons;
- Procedure for appointing a 'relevant person' as defined by the Children First Act 2015.

All procedures are available on request.

### Implementation

Children in Hospital Ireland is committed to the full implementation of this Statement. The implementation of the Statement and of the associated policies and procedures will be monitored on a regular basis. The Statement will be reviewed on an annual basis, with the first review taking place in March 2019 or as soon as possible after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Statement refers.

**Children in Hospital Ireland**

**Date: March 2018**

**Queries in regard to this Statement:** please contact Anna Gunning, CEO ('relevant person' as defined by the Children First Act 2015).