



Child Safeguarding Statement

Midlands Regional Youth Service clg.

Trading as

Youth Work Ireland Midlands

1. The services we provide are:

Youth Work Ireland Midlands is a community-based youth work organisation operating an Integrated Youth Service Model providing services to young people in youth centres, community houses and facilities at the heart of the community in Counties Westmeath, Offaly and Roscommon. The service we provide are as follows:

- a. **Youth Club Development & Volunteer Support:** 18 volunteer led youth clubs work with children and young people across the region.
- b. **Community Youth Projects, UBU Your Place Your Space:** 3 youth projects engage with the local community to identify and respond to the needs of young people in their area.
- c. **Youth Justice Work:** 4 projects support young people to divert from crime and anti-social behaviour.
- d. **Youth Information Services:** 1 Youth Information Service.
- e. **Education:** Acorn Midlands Education & Training Service (AMETS) supports young people who are out of school and adult learners with access to educational programmes and is a QQI Accredited Provider.
- f. **One to One Support:** For young people with additional needs, the organisation delivers tailored support on an individual basis where appropriate
- g. **Comhairle Na nÓg:** Youth Work Ireland Midlands facilitates Comhairle Na nOg (Child & Youth Council) in Counties Westmeath & Roscommon and supports young people to participate in Comhairle na nOg in Co. Offaly.

Other Services: In addition to the services delivered directly to young people, Youth Work Ireland Midlands delivers the following services:

- h. **C.E. Scheme:** This scheme supports long term unemployed adults, including young adults to access supported employment, training and progression routes
- i. **Traveller Men's Project:** Supporting young Traveller men to participate in youth work activities and pre-employment programmes with a view to progression to education / employment.
- j. **Here4U:** Non-judgemental listening and support service to young people experiencing anxiety through separation / divorce / bereavement.

- k. **International Programmes:** Supporting young people to engage in development under the Erasmus+ programme including Transnational Youth Work activities, European Voluntary Service and Youth Exchanges

2. Principles to Safeguard Children from Harm:

Youth Work Ireland Midlands is committed to the principles laid out in Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. These are:

- The safety and welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility.
- The best interests of the child should be paramount.
- The overall aim in all dealings with children and their families is to intervene proportionately to support families to keep children safe from harm.
- Interventions by the State should build on existing strengths and protective factors in the family.
- Early intervention is key to getting better outcomes. Where it is necessary for the State to intervene to keep children safe, the minimum intervention necessary should be used.
- Children should only be separated from parents/carers when alternative means of protecting them have been exhausted.
- Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect, and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/carers and families.
- Child protection is a multiagency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of the children.

3. Risk assessment of potential harm to children whilst availing of our services:

Youth Work Ireland Midlands has included the risk of harm to a child as a new category in the organisations Risk Management Policy & Procedures. A comprehensive risk assessment has been conducted to identify potential areas of harm and to implement measures to reduce the risk as per the Risk Management Process.

Risk Identified:	Procedures in Place to Manage Identified Risk:
<p>1. A member of the organisation fails to report an issue or concern of harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Statement has been circulated to all staff and volunteers. • Mandated reporters have been identified and made aware of and briefed on their mandatory reporting and assisting obligations. • Safeguarding is a standing item for staff induction, staff meetings and staff supervision. • The Designated Liaison Person (DLA) is clearly identified to all staff and volunteers. • Reporting and safeguarding issues are reiterated to staff and volunteers at all external events. • Safeguarding is a standing item in Management Reports for Board meetings. • Plans, projects and programmes are safeguard-proofed to ensure compliance with Children First legislation and practice, and to identify any risk to young people. • Staff disciplinary and volunteer code of behaviour are updated to include

	<p>failure to report a concern or harm, as set out in the appropriate reporting procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff and volunteers undertake agreed briefing and trainings as per our procedures and guidelines including the E-Learning module.
<p>2. An allegation, complaint or report of abuse is made against a volunteer, staff member or other third party engaged:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear procedure for raising concern and complaint against staff and/or volunteers is in place. • A clear procedure is in place for the reporting and management of investigation of allegations against any member of staff /volunteer. • Staff and volunteer codes of conduct are in place and either informed as part of staff induction, or as part of the initial briefing and training for volunteers. Regional staff and volunteers will have been through their local compulsory briefings and trainings. • All staff and volunteers are subject to our recruitment and selection process. • All staff and volunteers are subject to an initial and repeat Garda Vetting through the National Vetting Bureau prior to commencement of any duties/role with organisation. • A procedure is in place for dealing with complaints made against third party such as contractors and or others engaged with Youth Work Ireland Midlands. • Youth Work Ireland Midlands has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with key partners. • It is the policy of Youth Work Ireland Midlands to support investigations by An Garda Siochana and/or Tusla as requested. • Youth Work Ireland Midlands’s Service Level Agreement (SLA), Constitution and compliance function include and reference safeguarding and child protection.
<p>3. Allegation, report or observation of peer abuse of peer:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear procedure is in place for reporting all issues of harm or concern by all staff and volunteers as appropriate. • There is a clear procedure for raising complaints. • A clear policy and procedure on anti-bullying is in place. • All volunteers and staff are trained in line with Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. • All events are adequately planned staffed and supervised. • All groups and activities will have a set of agreed ground rules that have been discussed and agreed with young people. • Staff and volunteer training covers dealing with bullying and discriminatory behaviour. • All venues are checked, and risk assessed with actions identified in the planning and delivery of any events.
<p>4. Activities, programmes and events may create a level of additional risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities, events and programmes are planned to include a full risk assessment. • All participants provide informed consent to activities. • All staff are briefed and will have undertaken appropriate induction, briefing and training. • Bona Fides of third party providers are checked, including qualifications and vetting. • All off site events are subject to a pre-visit check and are risk assessed. • Programmes are either in house or from a bona fide source that has an

<p>due to the nature of the event:</p>	<p>evidence base in practice and are both age and young person proofed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers are bound by the code of conduct and internal policies and procedures and are expected to act within their duties in <i>Loco Parentis</i>. • Controls identified through the risk assessment are put in place. • All planning is young person centred and is cognisant of the group and community that is taking part.
<p>5. Possibility of abuse through online activity:</p>	<p>All the above applies to online activities, and to instances of abuse causing harm or concern.</p> <p>In addition, Youth Work Ireland Midlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors online activity. • Has produced and delivers online guidelines, supports and training for young people, volunteers and staff. • Any activity that is unacceptable or reportable that occurs in an online or other media format will be dealt with in the appropriate way and through the relevant procedures.

5. 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 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 services.

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers by a young person while availing of our service.
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with young people.
- 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 mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available on request.

6. Implementation:

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 services. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed by March 2024 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:  Geraldine Lacey, CEO.

For queries please contact: Geraldine Lacey, glacey@youthworkmidlands.org / 086 1237142 / [090 6477075](tel:0906477075)

Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015