



# DRCC

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

McGonnell House  
70 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, DE02 VW13  
Telephone 01 661 4911  
e-mail: [info@rcc.ie](mailto:info@rcc.ie) website: [www.drcc.ie](http://www.drcc.ie)  
National 24 Hour Helpline: 1800 77 88 88

## Dublin Rape Crisis Centre's Safeguarding Statement -September 2024

### Service Provider Details:

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre  
McGonnell House  
70 Lr. Leeson St  
Dublin, D02 VW13

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC) is fully committed to the safeguarding of children and adults who come in contact with our services. DRCC is committed to protecting all children equally from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. All permanent, temporary, and contracted staff, board members, volunteers and interns working for or on behalf of DRCC recognise that the welfare of children and adults is paramount. DRCC endeavours to safeguard all individuals who are engaged with our services. As an organisation, DRCC aim is to create a safe and healthy environment for all our clients and service users, and we are always committed to ensure the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre Relevant Person for Child Protection is the Head of Therapy **Vivienne Carson**. The relevant person is the first point of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement and holds the responsibility for ensuring that child welfare and protection concerns that meet the criteria are referred to Tusla. The relevant person was appointed given the Head of Therapy is the Main Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the head of the department that has most engagement directly with Children. The relevant person/ main DLP maintains a list of mandated persons within DRCC which is updated regularly.

If there is a change to the Relevant Person, the Child Safeguarding Statement will be updated to reflect this. The DLP team of staff (Head of Therapy, Therapy Manager, Helpline Manager and Accompaniment Manager) will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safeguarding Statement.

### DRCC's Relevant Person & Main Designated Liaison Person:

Vivienne Carson  
(01) 661 4911

### Services provided by DRCC to adults:

- DRCC operates the National 24-Hour Helpline where callers are offered a listening and support service. There is currently no unique safeguarding legislation for helplines in Ireland, so our procedures are guided by the (HSE) Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and National Standards for Adult Safeguarding 2019 published by HIQA and MHC. Just like face-to-face support services, Helplines must have adequate Safeguarding policies in place. While contact is indirect, we understand that there is still potential for harm to occur.
- DRCC provides a face-to-face counselling service to adults (18+) who have suffered recent or past sexual violence or abuse.
- DRCC provides Accompaniment at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. Each SATU attendee and their family member(s) supporter will have the option of a fully trained, Garda vetted volunteer/support worker present during their time in the unit to provide emotional and practical support.
- DRCC provides reporting and support services, which are provided by our trained



support workers and trained volunteers. The service aims to provide appropriate support to people who are reporting to any organisations such as the Gardaí or giving evidence in any type of court or hearing process. Where they were the victims of sexual violence.

- DRCC provides a Client Advocacy Service to vulnerable adults through our internal client support officer. Appointments are arranged by referral from the client's DRCC therapist only.
- Other staff and volunteers and the We-consent team within DRCC provide stands and information to the public at events and workshops.
- DRCC staff and consultants in Education and Training provide training to external individuals and organisations on a regular basis.
- DRCC campaigning work provides resources, websites and social media accounts for support, awareness and prevention to the public.

### **Services provided by DRCC to children are as follows:**

- Although DRCC is primarily a service for adults from 18 years and upwards, those aged under 18 can access the National 24-Hour Helpline and we offer them a listening and support service. Adults also use the helpline for support and this may include concerned parents or professionals seeking advice about children at risk.
- DRCC provides up to 30 sessions to 16-17 year old young people who have experienced sexual abuse at any stage in their life and also where it involved a family member. Parental consent is required, as is that of the adolescent and parents must accompany their child and remain in the waiting room of DRCC for all sessions until the child is 18.
- DRCC provides accompaniment at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) in the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin to children aged 14-18 years of age. Each child and family members supporter will have a fully trained, Garda vetted volunteer present during their time at the Unit to provide emotional and practical support.
- DRCC provides a reporting accompaniment and support services, provided by trained support workers and trained volunteers. The service aims to provide appropriate support to young people who are witnesses in any criminal trial related to sexual violence
- DRCC's trained outreach staff and volunteers provide talks to secondary school students, information stands and workshops as part of prevention education and campaigning. at the invitation of the school or external organisation.
- Other staff and volunteers and the We-consent team within DRCC provide stands and information to the public at events and workshops.

### **Defining and Identifying Child Harm and Child Abuse:**

The Children First Act, 2015 is the legal context for Child Safeguarding Statements. As defined in the Children First Act, 2015, "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, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances, or otherwise.



This definition is understood as the harm caused to children by physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. In the context of safeguarding, it may also relate to the bullying of children, child trafficking and or sexual exploitation, or the harm caused to children through the misuse of digital technology or on internet platforms. More information on types of abuse and how to recognise abuse can be found here - <https://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/definitions-of-child-abuse/>

### Risk Assessment:

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

<i><b>Risk Identified</b></i>	<i><b>Procedure in place to manage risk</b></i>
Risk of hurt or harm from staff or volunteers of DRCC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DRCC operates a safe recruitment policy.</li> <li>2. Staff and volunteers who regularly and consistently engage in relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable persons are Garda vetted in accordance with current legislation<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>3. All staff and volunteers sign an agreement that they will comply with DRCC's Child Safeguarding, Protection and Welfare Policy and Procedures.</li> <li>4. All staff and volunteers working with children/young people in the counselling, accompaniment and other services are trained in Children's First and have received training in working with vulnerable people.</li> <li>5. All staff are subject to regular manager supervision to ensure policies are adhered to.</li> <li>6. When an allegation of abuse against a staff or volunteer are made, the protection of the child is first and paramount consideration and procedures are in place in the main child safeguarding policy.</li> </ol>
Risk of harm to a child through social media/internet use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children/young people engaging in our services through counselling, workshops and accompaniment do not use social media and internet as part of these services;</li> <li>2. Children/young people using our service are supervised by therapists, accompaniment staff, volunteers, Gardai and school or youth work staff in case of workshops.</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 – 2016 (Schedule 1)  
<https://revisedacts.lawreform.ie/eli/2012/act/47/revised/en/html#SCHED1>



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<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk</b>
Risk of harm to of a child through lack of supervision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children/young people using our services are supervised at all times by therapist/staff/volunteers, Gardai or associated school /or youth work staff;</li> <li>2. Recruitment/selection procedures ensure a person's suitability to work with children/young people;</li> <li>3. Procedures are in place for reporting concerns to statutory agencies in accordance with Children's First.</li> </ol>
Risk of harm of bullying of a child by an older child / peer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children/young people using our service are predominantly on a one-to-one basis in therapy and accompaniment. In workshops, in schools or with youth work settings, the children/young/people are under the supervision of the school or youth work staff and associated policies;</li> <li>2. Recruitment/selection procedures ensure person's suitability to work with children/young people;</li> <li>3. Procedure in place for reporting concerns to statutory agency in accordance with Children's First.</li> </ol>
Risk of harm to a child through the use of unauthorised photography	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DRCC does not use photographs on our websites or in other online/hard copy publications of young people that could can pose a direct and indirect risk to them.</li> </ol>
Risk of harm to a child by a visitor to the service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A child/young person visiting DRCC is always accompanied by a parent or guardian or by the gardai in SATU;</li> <li>2. Reception staff, therapists and accompaniment workers receive training on specific processes and engagement with children/young people.</li> </ol>
Delay in our ability to offer counselling and support to under 18's on the waiting list who have suicidal ideation or are self- harming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A priority list exists where children/young people can to be seen as soon as possible given the constraints of our staffing level;</li> <li>2. Work on coping and self- management skills in the initial session by the counsellor and provision of information regarding other supports the child/young person can access while waiting</li> <li>3. Lobby for increased funding to enable us to better deal with waiting list.</li> </ol>
Lack of understanding and implementation by staff and volunteers in identifying and reporting child protection issues that arise throughout the various services or outreach activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear procedures and guidance for identifying and responding are set out in DRCC Child Safeguarding, Protection &amp; Welfare Policies and Procedures.</li> <li>2. Regular training and information on child protection issues provided to staff and volunteers.</li> <li>3. Increased liaison with local social workers and Tusla personnel.</li> <li>4. Quarterly meetings with the DLP to review cases and implementing processes where gaps in staff or volunteer knowledge is arising.</li> </ol>



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<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage risk</b>
Fear and distress expressed by the young person involved in relation to reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Initial intake appointment will outline the procedures in relation to child protection reporting so the young person is clear on the possibility of this occurring.</li><li>2. A clear presentation of DRCC's obligations are on the website, to all engaging with DRCC services.</li><li>3. Support and reassurance by the counsellor.</li><li>4. Involvement of parents and guardians as appropriate.</li></ol>

### Procedures:

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:

1. DRCC will ensure that staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised to provide a safe environment for all children and young people.
2. DRCC will follow best practice in staff and volunteer recruitment which adheres to the Employment and volunteer recruitment policies.
3. Clear guidance has been put in place in relation to our policies and procedures and all staff and volunteers are made aware of those procedures.
4. Staff and volunteers have been provided with and have access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm and processes to follow when a child protection concern arises in each department.
5. DRCC have procedures in place to appoint a Relevant Person.
6. All therapists are mandated for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla.

A more comprehensive outline of the above procedures can be found in the DRCC Child Safeguarding, Protection & Welfare Policy and Procedures which is available upon request.

### Implementation:

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in August 2026 and every 2 years thereafter or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: 

Dated: 27/09/2024

Rachel Morrogh  
DRCC CEO

For any queries regarding this statement, please contact DRCC's DLP:  
Vivienne Carson at (01) 6614911