



CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Description of this service and its activities:

The National Maternity Hospital (NMH) provides a broad spectrum of gynaecological, maternity and neonatal care to women, mothers, unborn infants and new-born infants. These services are provided at the primary hospital facility but also across a variety of satellite facilities. Services are provided as inpatients and outpatients and we operate a 24/7 emergency service. Some specialist services are provided within the homes of mothers who are in receipt of care.

We are dedicated to the overall health, well-being and safety of infants (unborn and new born) who avail of our service through careful consideration of bio—psycho—social factors which could impact on the health, safety and well-being of infants.

We are committed to providing safe services to all persons served less than 18 years of age including mothers who are considered children in their own right.

We are guided by HSE principles to safeguard children from harm:

The safety, welfare and development of children and young people are core objectives and key priorities of the HSE. The following guiding principles to safeguard children from harm are informed by Children First Guidance and legislation:

- 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 heard, listened to and to be 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.
- All children must be treated equally.
- Child protection is a multi-agency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the best interests of children.

Risk Assessment

This Child Safeguarding Statement is informed by an assessment, undertaken for this service, of any potential for harm (risk) to a child while availing of this service.

Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk Category	Main procedures and controls in place to manage risk identified
1. Risk of harm to a child by a staff member volunteer or student, including risks related to online activities.	NMH Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Mandatory Referrals to Medical Social Work Department Guidelines. Recruitment and selection procedures and termination of employment policy. Trust in Care Policy, which includes the procedure for managing allegations of abuse made against a staff member HSE Code of Standards and Behaviour. NMH Whistleblowing Policy. Staff supervision policies. HSE National Information Technology Policies & Standards to ensure online safety (includes Electronic Communications Policy and Internet Content Filter Standard).
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.	Guidance on Safe Supervision of Children through posters and Admissions Policy. Public access policies as relevant to local services. HSE National Information Technology Policies & Standards to ensure online safety (includes Electronic Communications Policy and Internet Content Filter Standard).
3. Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a staff member.	Mandatory training "An Introduction to Children First" eLearning for all NMH staff. NMH Child Protection and Welfare Policy, NMH Reporting Procedure & Mandatory Referrals to MSW Department Guidelines. Procedure for maintaining a list of Mandated Persons. Children First included in Employee Induction. HSE Children First National Office Training and Resource Strategy.
4. Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a child.	"An Introduction to Children First" mandatory eLearning training for all staff; Child friendly information in relation to how to report if they feel unsafe.
5. Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015 and/or related guidance in HSE services.	Procedure for appointing a Relevant Person for the purpose of this Child Safeguarding Statement. HSE Children First Governance Structures in place. Internal Audit and compliance assurance measures.
6. Other (Additional risks and/or controls identified).	NMH Child Protection & Welfare Policy, NMH Chaperone Policy, NMH Policy on Obtaining Consent, NMH Guidelines in place for the Care of Children attending the service (ongoing development), NMH Child Friendly Safeguarding Information (ongoing development).

Note: The definition of harm in relation to a child is:

"(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" (Children First Act 2015)

Note: This is an amalgamated list of risks, grouped into themes. This Statement has been informed by a more detailed secondary risk assessment document which can be made available on request.

Procedures - (All HSE National Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidance are available at www.hse.ie).

This 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), HSE Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement and Guidance issued by Tusla – Child and Family Agency. In addition to the policies and procedures named above the following HSE policies and procedures also support our intention to safeguard children availing of this HSE service:

- Integrated Risk Management Policy to assess and manage any risk of harm.
- HSE Incident Management Framework 2020 to inform HSE management of any incident where a child has been harmed while availing of the service.

Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015

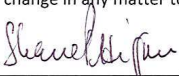
Name: Laura Harrington, Head Medical Social Worker

Contact Details: 01 6373236

All queries about this statement, and the risk assessment it is informed by, should be directed to the Relevant Person.

Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing 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. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on 11th of March 2026 or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.


Master Dr. Shane Higgins


Director of Midwifery Mary Brosnan


Secretary Manager Ronan Gavin