



# **CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

**Sophia Counselling Centre CLG**

**2024**

# Child Safeguarding Statement

## 1. NAME OF SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES PROVIDED

### **Sophia Counselling Centre:**

Sophia Counselling Centre provides affordable counselling for people of all ages.

### **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

Sophia Counselling Centre is governed by a Board of Directors, in which 8 therapists work. There is a Manager overseeing the day to day running of the centre and liaising between the therapists and Board.



Therapists are mandated people within the definition of Children First 2015. However, all staff have a duty of care to safeguard children from harm and are committed to following Child Safeguarding Procedures as set out within the Child Protection & Welfare Policy.

## 2. COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN FROM HARM

A Child Safeguarding Statement, as defined in the Children First Act 2015, means ‘a written statement specifying the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child while availing of the service, is safe from harm.’

Sophia Counselling Centre believes, upholds, supports and promotes the principle that the best interest of children is paramount and are committed to safeguarding and protecting children from harm. Sophia Counselling Centre is committed to upholding the rights of every child and young person, including the rights to be kept

safe, protected from harm, listened to and heard.

Sophia Counselling Centre's policy and procedures to safeguard children reflect national policy and legislation and are underpinned by *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, DCYA, 2017, *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Practice and Procedure*, Tusla, 2018, and the *Children First Act 2015*.

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 employees/therapist of a child availing of our service
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection and relevant induction of employees and therapists
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla
- Sophia Counselling Centre therapists are committed to promoting a child-centred practice and envelop this in all training facilitated by the company
- Our policy declaration applies to therapists, volunteers, board members, employees and students on work placement within our organisation. All board members, staff, volunteers and students must sign up to and abide by the policies, procedures and guidance encompassed by this policy declaration and our child safeguarding policy and accompanying procedures
- Sophia Counselling Centre upholds the principle of agencies working together in the interests of children and endeavour to be proactive in inter-agency workings
- Sophia Counselling Centre will review its child safeguarding statement and accompanying child safeguarding policies and procedures every year, or sooner if necessary, due to service issues or changes in legislation or national policy
- Sophia Counselling Centre has appointed both a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy DLP for dealing with Child Protection Concerns, as listed below

**DLP: Martina Kennedy**  
**martina121kennedy@gmail.com**  
**Tel 087 6269810**  
**Deputy DLP: Emma Nelson**  
**admin@sophiacounselling.ie**  
**Tel 0892648482**  
**Sophia Counselling Centre,**  
**Kiltegan, Wicklow**

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

In accordance with the *Children First Act 2015*, Sophia Counselling Centre has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while engaging with Sophia Counselling Centre or participating in activities at Sophia Counselling Centre. A written assessment setting out the areas of risk identified is detailed as an appendix to this document, and service procedures for managing those risks are included.

### **4. CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

As required by the *Children First Act 2015* and *Children First National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017*, the following safeguarding policies/procedures/measures are in place.

- A Relevant Person has been appointed
- A Designated Liaison Person has been appointed
- Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures
- Confidentiality Policy
- Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse or Neglect Against Employees/Therapists
- Procedure for Managing Child Protection Records

- Recruitment Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy
- Code of Behaviour for Working with Children
- Induction Policy (which includes procedures to inform new therapists about the Child Safeguarding Statement and safeguarding policies and procedures)
- All staff have completed the Tusla eLearning module – *Introduction to Children First*, and relevant staff have attended ‘Children First Child Protection Training’ and are committed to the ongoing professional development in this area.
- Therapists have access to regular Supervision and Support in line with the service policy.
- Complaints Policy
- Policy for Managing Accidents and Incidents
- Social Media Management Policy

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- Sophia Counselling Centre recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. Sophia Counselling Centre is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the accompanying policies and procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while engaging in our services.
- This Statement will be reviewed every year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.
- This statement will be published on the Sophia Counselling Centre website and will be displayed in the Sophia Counselling Centre. It has been provided to all existing therapists, manager and any other persons involved with the service and will form part of the induction process for any new employees, volunteers, Board members and persons involved with its services. It is readily accessible to stakeholders on request. A copy of this Statement has been made available to Tusla.
- It is an offence under the Withholding Information on Offences Act (2012) to fail to report to An Garda Síochána information regarding certain offences

## **Appointment of a Relevant Person as Designated Liaison Person**

Defined in the Children First Act 2015 as a person who is appointed by a provider of the service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement.

The relevant person acting as Designated Liaison Person within Sophia Counselling Centre is Martina Kennedy, Counsellor

**Telephone:** 087 6269810      **Email:** [martina121kennedy@gmail.com](mailto:martina121kennedy@gmail.com)

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Dr Emma Nelson, Manager

**Telephone:** 089 2648482      **Email:** [martina121kennedy@gmail.com](mailto:martina121kennedy@gmail.com)

This document is valid from: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

The owner of this document is the Board of Management of Sophia Counselling Centre, who must review, approve and, if necessary, update the document at least once a year.

**This policy was reviewed and adopted**

**by Sophia Counselling Centre: on**

Date 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**Signed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:** Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 1: RISK ASSESSMENT

Sophia Counselling Centre has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

**Person(s) carrying out Risk Assessment:** All 6 Board Members (Mr Brian Friel, Fr Patrick Murphy, Dr Pat Carolan, Mr Peter Ledden, Ms Maria McCormack BL, Dr Kathleen Clerkin) and Manager Dr Emma Nelson

**Persons responsible for ensuring actions are carried out:** as above

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**Date of next Risk Assessment:** May 2024

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
1	<p>Risk of harm to a child from a therapist/employee/other member of staff</p> <p>Impact of risk: high</p> <p>Risk likelihood measurement: low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Recruitment and selection procedure</li><li>● Reporting procedure</li><li>● Code of behaviour for staff working with children and young people or vulnerable adult.</li><li>● Child protection and welfare allegations against staff policy and procedure</li><li>● Policies, protocols, procedures and guidelines regarding safe practice and service delivery</li></ul>

2	<p>Risk of harm to a child from a service user (adult or child), visitor or member of the public</p> <p>Impact of risk: high</p> <p>Risk likelihood measurement: low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Supervision/ accompaniment/ admission/ public access policies as relevant to local services.</li> <li>● Policies, protocols, procedures and guidelines regarding safe practice and service delivery</li> </ul>
3	<p>Non-compliance with the Children First Act 2015 and Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children</p> <p>Impact of risk: high</p> <p>Risk likelihood measurement: low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Children First governance structures</li> <li>● Tusla quality and risk management services</li> <li>● Children First commissioning processes</li> <li>● Procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons</li> </ul>
4	<p>Risk of harm or concern not being recognised or reported by staff</p> <p>Impact of risk: high</p> <p>Risk likelihood measurement: low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff information and supervision procedure, mandatory Children First Training</li> <li>● Reporting procedure</li> </ul>