

## PLAN INTERNATIONAL IRELAND

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

**Plan International** recognises that violence against children and young people is prevalent throughout the world and in all societies. We are deeply committed to eradicating violence against children and young people and take very seriously our duty to safeguard all children and young people and promote their welfare. This also means holding ourselves to account in ensuring that no child or young person is harmed or placed at risk of harm as a result of their association with us.

**WE STRIVE FOR A JUST WORLD THAT ADVANCES CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY FOR GIRLS.**

**Plan International Ireland** is fully committed to the Plan international global purpose and to the gender responsive safeguarding<sup>1</sup> of all children and young people from all forms of violence. We take very seriously our responsibility and duty to ensure that we, as an organisation, and anyone who represents us does not in any way harm, abuse or commit any other act of violence against children and young people or place them at risk of same.

### Plan's Global Safeguarding Policy

Plan International has a clear and unequivocal safeguarding policy, **Say Yes! to Keeping Children and Young People Safe and Protected**, of which Plan International Ireland is bound. It aims to make sure no child or young person who is associated with Plan International comes to any harm. The policy governs the behaviours of Plan International staff, associates, and visitors, ensuring we minimise risks to children and young people and report any concerns about a child or young person's welfare appropriately. The policy aims to ensure that:

- All who work for and engage with us are skilled, confident, understand, and are well supported in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from violence and engage positively with them in ways that enhance the achievement of our purpose.
- We have procedures in place to prevent and deal with the actions/behaviour of our staff, associates, visitors or us as an organisation that result in violence against a child or young person and/or places them at risk of the same.

### Plan International Ireland's Safeguarding Policy

In addition to Plan's global policy, Plan International Ireland also adheres to Irish child protection standards, as outlined in 'Children First Act' - and as such, in Ireland, the Plan global policy has been enhanced in the form of a national policy **Safeguarding Children and Young People** to further include considerations of the Irish Children First Act 2015, and in line with the TULSA guide, *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

We ensure all who work with and engage with us understand and are supported in their meeting safeguarding roles and responsibilities. We take positive action to prevent anyone who might be a risk to children and young people from becoming involved with us and take stringent measures against any Staff, Associate or Visitor who perpetrates an act of violence against a child.

We promote child and youth safe practices, approaches, interventions, and environments which respects, recognises, and responds to the specific safeguarding needs and addresses the protection risks of the differing gender and other identities. We will challenge and do not tolerate inequality, discrimination, or exclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender Responsive Safeguarding" is a safeguarding approach that: takes full account of gender in considering the specific safeguarding needs of girls, boys and other gender identities; integrates safeguarding measures that address protection risks for children and young people (girls, boys, young women, young men, and children of other gender identities) that stem from issues relating to gender bias and discrimination; and supports the empowerment and fosters the inclusion of girls, particularly in the safeguarding process, in a manner that promotes equality, equity and ultimately their increased safety and protection

Children and young people we work with are aware of our responsibilities to prevent and respond to any harm against them arising from actions and behaviours of our staff, associates and visitors, and the routes for reporting such incidents.

We respond to a child or young person who may be in need of protection and or psycho-social support and intend that their welfare and best interests will at all times be paramount consideration.

We promote the active involvement of children and young people in their own protection.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES BEING PROVIDED:**

Plan International Ireland's Global Citizenship Programme works to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality, globally and locally.

### **IN IRELAND**

Our Irish based programme aims to inspire, motivate, and promote collaboration. We use participatory methodologies to challenge learner's values, increase their knowledge of global issues and develop their skills of teamwork, public speaking, and advocacy:

- **We deliver talks and workshops directly to students.**  
Plan International Ireland facilitate talks and workshops for schools, communities, and youth groups. Our workshops use interactive methodologies, challenge participants perceptions, and provide tangible examples from our work experience overseas.
- **We have an active Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) working on global justice issues.**  
The aim of the YAP is to engage young people as ambassadors and advisors for Plan International Ireland. Through *Global Citizenship Education* processes, the YAP becomes empowered to represent Plan International Ireland.
- **We create up-to-date Development Education resources**  
In Plan International Ireland, we want to help make Global Citizenship Education a part of daily lessons. We have created a user-friendly Teachers Handbook and Interactive Student Resources which are fun, and all linked to all aspects of the Primary and Post Primary Education curriculum.

### **GLOBALLY**

Plan International strives for lasting and large-scale impact to ensure that children, including our sponsored children, **LEARN, LEAD, DECIDE**, and **THRIVE** through programming and influencing activity<sup>2</sup>.

Plan International run programmes around the world designed to make a lasting difference in children's lives by addressing the problem of violence against children. These programme activities are linked to, but distinct from our efforts to ensure that we as an organisation 'do no harm' to children.

Plan International Ireland invests time and money into designing and supporting the implementation of quality programmes across four key areas:

#### **1. Inclusive Quality Education**

*Vulnerable and excluded children, and particularly girls, access and complete inclusive quality education from pre-primary to secondary.* Education, under the LEARN pillar of the Global Strategy is the flagship programme for Plan International Ireland, both in humanitarian and development programmes.

#### **2. Child Protection**

*Vulnerable and excluded children, adolescents, and young people – particularly girls and young women – are protected from all forms of violence and the gender dynamics that drive it.* Child protection, under the THRIVE pillar of the Global Strategy, is fundamental to the work that Plan International Ireland does in all areas as the absence of protection inhibits the enjoyment of other rights and is a violation in itself. Protection issues such as Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage are defined by the DECIDE pillar of the global strategy while at the same time being fundamental to Plan International Ireland's child protection work.

#### **3. Participation**

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<sup>2</sup> Plan International 100 Million Reasons Global Strategy 2017-2022 (Nov 2016)

*Vulnerable and excluded children and young people, and particularly girls and young women are active citizens.* Under the LEAD pillar of the Global Strategy, Plan International Ireland seeks to advance child participations, so that vulnerable and excluded children have the power to take action on issues that matter to them.

#### **4. Global Emergency Response**

Plan International Ireland will be a key support to Plan International's efforts to ensure that during and after conflicts and disasters, the education of girls and boys is not disrupted. We work to strengthen Education in Emergencies (EiE) in existing Plan International countries and as a key response in conflict-affected countries where we are beginning to work. In times of disaster, children are particularly vulnerable. Separation from family and friends causes uncertainty, anxiety, and shock, with a significant impact on children's emotional well-being. Our disaster response work focuses on children's urgent needs, such as food and water. We then prioritize child protection and education, to help re-establish a sense of security and normality.

### **PRINCIPLES TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM HARM**

Plan International Ireland recognises the rights of all children within our care to be protected from harm in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Unfortunately, all children are potentially at risk from abuse and exploitation by adults. Everyone has a responsibility and a role in protecting children and it is essential that we follow all practical and reasonable steps to counteract any risk to the children within our care.

Plan International Ireland operates within the National Children's First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children. We believe in promoting the general welfare, health, development and safety of children and youth.

We will contribute to the [Plan International Global Strategy, 100 Million Reasons: Learn, Lead, Decide and Thrive](#). As part of our national strategy, Plan International Ireland have added '**Survive**' to highlight our humanitarian mandate and response.

#### **GIRLS**

Due to our Purpose, Plan International's Safeguarding Policy, has a particular focus on girls and young women aged up to and including 24 years. Girls may be especially vulnerable and at risk from certain forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence. Violence against girls is not only against the values and principles we uphold as described in the Global Policy, but also in direct opposition to the aims of our work. As such, we are particularly concerned with ensuring that girls do not experience harm, abuse, exploitation, or any other form of violence as a result of their engagement with us or our programmes, projects, events, and processes. Furthermore, we need to ensure that our safeguarding approach and response to safeguarding concerns are gender responsive.

#### **YOUNG PEOPLE**

We work with Young People, and therefore the protective scope of Plan International's Safeguarding Policy extends to young people we are supporting or are in contact with, through our youth engagement work. We recognise that young people have particular safeguarding needs requiring distinct consideration. For example, some young people engaging with and attending events supported by Plan International Ireland may be over the formal age of legal majority and so face fewer legal restrictions in what is permissible, but still require protection from violence and we retain a duty of care towards them.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

Plan International Ireland has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Plan International Ireland has identified seven overarching areas of risk and the list of procedures for managing these risks:

	Risk Statement	Policy and Procedures to Manage the Risks
1	Recruitment	<p><i>Plan International Ireland's Safeguarding Policy Document outlines the procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers.</i></p> <p><i>Staff members, who will conduct programming in Ireland must obtain Garda Vetting or police clearance where possible.</i></p>
2	Failure to report allegation of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service	<p><i>Plan International Ireland responds to allegations abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child or young person availing of our service in Ireland in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and Tusla Guidelines.</i></p> <p><i>Allegations of abuse or misconduct in Country Offices of operation will be responded to according to Plan International Global Reporting and Responding procedures.</i></p> <p><i>When a report is first received (e.g. from child, parent, staff, etc.) or if a staff member or associate wishes to report a concern in writing, details must be recorded immediately or as soon as possible (within 24 hours) on Plan International's 'Incident/Loss Notification Form'. The recording should be as clear, factual, and objective as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Plan has an internal whistleblowing protocol including a confidential hotline to allow any staff member to confidentially raise any concerns including safeguarding or protection concerns.</i></p>
3	Failure to report Safeguarding Concerns from staff/volunteers:	<p><i>It is everyone's responsibility to report any potential or actual risk to a child's wellbeing and safety. Our Safeguarding Policy requires all Plan International Staff, Associates and Visitors to report any child abuse and child protection concerns they may have in accordance with local procedures and the policy.</i></p> <p><i>An incident report form should be used to record any abuse, attempted abuse or suspected abuse of a young person and passed to the DLP.</i></p> <p><i>The DLP will follow up with the CEO, the local Plan office and relevant external bodies, as relevant and appropriate. All actions taken in relation to the individual case must be adequately documented to reflect the rights of the child and of the abuser/suspected abuser and securely stored.</i></p> <p><i>If the risk is identified in Ireland, the Children First Guidelines (of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs) will be followed. If the risk is identified in another country, any local guidelines will be followed under the direction of the local Plan office.</i></p>
4	Plan Supporters	<p><i>Plan International Ireland retain the right to turn down requests to support Plan at our discretion.</i></p> <p><i>While visits are strongly discouraged, where a visit is arranged, Plan requires supporters visiting communities, and</i></p>

		<p><i>who will have direct or indirect contact with children, to obtain Garda Vetting.</i></p> <p><i>We screen all communications from sponsors to sponsored children for any inappropriate, written, or visual material and contact details. This is to protect both sponsor and child from unregulated and possibly inappropriate contact.</i></p> <p><i>We have a zero-tolerance policy on unsupervised direct/indirect contact (such contact may include but is not limited to visits and any form of communication via social media, emails, letters etc.) that is intended to establish personal relationships with any child associated with Plan.</i></p>
5	Improper storage or publication of photos of children	<p><i>All information and images are held securely, databases are password protected and access to information is given on the basis of role.</i></p> <p><i>We will only use children's images or personal information in our marketing, advocacy, fundraising, communication, and programme work in ways that will safeguard their dignity and protect their rights. Permission is always obtained for these images and information.</i></p> <p><i>Plan International Ireland is a signatory of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages which provides a set of guiding principles on communicating programmes and values in a coherent and balanced way.</i></p>
6	Data protection	<p><i>The nature of our work means we hold details of children and their families. We are solely responsible for ensuring that the information is not abused and is used for the intended purpose.</i></p> <p><i>All information and images are held securely, in accordance with GDPR legislation. Databases are password protected and access to information is given on the basis of role.</i></p>
7	Accidents and injuries on site	<p><i>Accidents and injuries that occur on the premises shall be managed in accordance with the Accident and Injury Policy.</i></p>

## **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES TO MANAGE RISKS IDENTIFIED ABOVE**

Plan International Ireland's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, 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 service:

- **Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service**
  - *Plan International Ireland responds to allegations abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service in Ireland in accordance with the Children First Act 2015 and Tusla Guidelines.*
  - *Allegations of abuse or misconduct in Country Offices of operation will be responded to according to Plan International Global Reporting and Responding procedures.*
- **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers.**
  - *Plan International Ireland's recruiting procedures are outlined in the Employee Handbook.*
  - *All appointments or contracts of employment offered by Plan International Ireland may be subject to Garda Vetting.*
  - *References from 2 previous employers are obtained before employment may commence.*
- **Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm**
  - *Plan International Ireland has two trained Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) who are responsible for ensuring all policies and procedures related to safeguarding are upheld within the organisation and are updated as required. The DLPs also act as the main points of contact within Plan International Ireland in the instances of any safeguarding concerns.*
  - *All staff, volunteers, board and associates receive a Safeguarding Induction from the DLPs and staff must complete an online training on Safeguarding that has been developed by Plan International Headquarters. New staff also must complete the TUSLA Children First e-learning programme. Annual refresher training is provided by the DLP, supported by Plan International Headquarters. Awareness and updated training is arranged and provided as necessary.*
  - *All staff members have a responsibility to consider and help minimise child safeguarding and protection risks within their own areas of responsibility.*
  - *All staff and associates are made aware of their duty to report concerns or disclosures of abuse that they receive in the course of their duties to Plan International Ireland's Designated Liaison Person.*
  - *All staff must sign and abide by Plan International Ireland's Code of Conduct which enumerates the expectation of Plan in their staff's conduct and behaviour.*
- **Procedure for the reporting of Irish Based child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla**
  - *All mandated persons shall report a mandated concern to Tusla as soon as practicable in accordance with the Children First Act.*
  - *The DLP shall act as a resource to the mandated person to ensure that reporting procedures are followed correctly and promptly.*
  - *On completion, a report shall be forwarded to the relevant Duty Social Worker by the DLP, Mandated Person.*
  - *In the event the report is forwarded by the DLP, the Mandated Person shall be informed in writing that the report has been forwarded.*
  - *In the event that the report is forwarded by a mandated person without the assistance of the DLP the DLP shall be informed, and any copies provided to be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.*
- **Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons**
  - *Mandated persons, as defined in the Children First Act 2015, have a statutory obligation to report concerns which reach a particular threshold to Tusla and to cooperate with Tusla in the assessment of mandated reports.*
  - *All members of the Development Education team are mandated persons.*
- **Procedure for appointing a relevant person**
  - *In Plan International Ireland the DLP also holds the position of relevant person*

All procedures listed are available upon request.

## **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 by February 2023, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:

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**Paul O'Brien, CEO, Plan International Ireland**

*(Provider under the Children First Act 2015)*

11 Harrington Street

Dublin 8

D08 EK7D

**Phone:** + 353 1 5685861

For queries please contact: Emily Lyon

*(Relevant Person as defined by the Children First Act 2015)*

