



FAI CHILD WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

3rd edition | March 2025





Child Welfare and Safeguarding Roles & FAI Checks & Audits

All Club, League and Members are required to have two key roles in place in order to fulfil the Child welfare and safeguarding roles and responsibilities within the Organisation. These two roles are Children's Officer and Designated Liaison Person.

Please note as detail in the glossary the FAI Child Welfare and safeguarding manager fulfils the following roles for the FAI as Children's officer, Designated Liaison Person, and is considered a mandated person under the Children First Act 2015.

1.1 Children's Officer

- (a) The appointment of a Children's Officer is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere in any relevant service.
- (b) They act as a resource to members with regard to Children's issues and also ensure that Children have a voice in the running of the club and can freely talk about their experiences.
- (c) The Children's Officer should be a member of or have access to, the Club/League/Members Management Committee.
- (d) To undertake the role of Children's Officer, the individual must have completed the Safeguarding 1 and Safeguarding 2 courses and have fully completed current Garda Vetting through the FAI and in date. Please see the training section within section 12 and section 11 for Garda Vetting for further details.
- (e) The Children's Officer roles and responsibilities are:
 - » Be familiar with and follow the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding policy, Complaints and Disciplinary procedures, and any other relevant guidelines
 - » Implement Child centred policies and procedures within the football organisation
 - » Ensure safe recruitment procedures are in place
 - » Have completed the Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement
 - » Promotion of Child Safeguarding Statement and be the first point of call for it, with contact details available on the Statement.
 - » Host regular information meetings and get parental involvement
 - » Ensure that the Relevant Services members are adequately trained and adhere to the Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy
 - » Ensure that there are accurate and up to date records of coaches and volunteers training and Garda Vetting Clearance
 - » Monitor movement and drop out of players and volunteers.
 - » Handle any complaints received regarding poor practice.
 - » Make contact with League, Members and FAI Childrens Officers roles.
 - » In addition to the functions outlined above, all League and Member Children's Officers should ensure that all affiliated clubs and Leagues with members/participants under the age of eighteen have at least one Club/League Children's Officer appointed, that the clubs and leagues have completed a Risk Assessment and have a Child Safeguarding Statement in place. The League

and Member Children's Officer should also maintain a database with all of this information, along with training records of all the Club's Children's Officers which should be forwarded to the Football Association of Ireland's Child Welfare and Safeguarding Manager on an annual basis.

» This is not an exhaustive list.

(f) The club, league & Member may wish to have two children's officers in place or have another person within the club committee trained to fulfil the role in the event there is a conflict of interest of the Children's officer is unavailable.

The Children's officer does not have independent responsibility of investigating or validating Child protection concerns within the Club/League/member. This responsibility lies with the Gardaí and Tusla. Nor do they have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with the HSE.

1.2 Designated Liaison Person

(a) The Clubs, Leagues, and Members Designated Liaison Person shall be the person holding the highest office within the football body (Chairperson) who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of Children.

(b) The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of Child abuse to Tusla and/or An Garda Siochana,

(c) Deal with any information provided to them by Tusla and/or An Garda Siochana in line with policy.

(d) The Football Association of Ireland's Child Welfare and Safeguarding Manager, who is also a Mandated Person, is available to discuss any of the necessary elements of the policy or procedures with the Designated Liaison Person

(e) The Designated Liaison Person may issue Stand Down Orders as necessary, which is outlined further within section 8 of the policy

(f) To undertake the role of Designated Liaison Person, the individual must have completed the Safeguarding 1 and Safeguarding 3 course and have fully completed current Garda vetting through the FAI which is in date. Please see the training section within section 12 of the Policy and section 11 for Garda vetting for further details.

(g) Clubs, Leagues, and Members should make the name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person available to all staff and volunteers working within the Organisation and available on the relevant services Child Safeguarding Statement. It may also be useful to appoint a Deputy Liaison Person who can fulfil the role when the Designated Liaison Person is not available.

(h) The Designated Liaison Person Roles and Responsibilities are;

- » Have knowledge of the FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Policy, and statutory requirements
- » Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse
- » Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures using the correct forms or accessing the online Tusla reporting portal, (see appendix 8 for forms).

- » Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate
- » Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of Child protection training needs
- » Liaise with the League Officers and FAI Child Welfare and Safeguarding Department in relation to Child protection training needs.
- » Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to Child protection, i.e. principal and duty social workers and their contacts.
- » To inform duty social worker in Tusla – Child and Family agency and/ or An Garda Siochana of relevant concerns about individual Children, using the Reporting Form or through the Tusla Portal, keep a copy of this form and ensure acknowledgement of receipt of this form.
- » Report any retrospective reports of abuse to TUSLA
- » Assist with any joint reporting with a mandated person. Please see section 5.19 for more information on this.
- » Inform the FAI Child Welfare & Safeguarding Manager/Child Welfare and Safeguarding department when a report to a statutory body has been made in relation to a participant.
- » Liaise with FAI Child Welfare & Safeguarding Manager when a Stand Down Order has been issued in line with policy.
- » Reporting poor practice to their relevant governing body (For example Club to League) having ensured that any concerns regarding Child protection issues have been reported to the relevant Statutory Authority.
- » Advise Administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

Designated Liaison Persons do not have independent responsibility of investigating or validating Child protection concerns within the Club/League/member. This responsibility lies with the Gardaí and Tusla. Nor do they have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with the HSE.

1.3 Mandated persons

(a) The Children First Act 2015 places a legal obligation on certain people, many of whom are professionals, to report Child protection concerns at or above a defined threshold to Tusla - Child and Family Agency.

(b) As defined in the Children First Act, 2015, “harm” means, in relation to a child

- I. 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
- II. 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.

(c) Some individuals may fulfil this role within the club, league, member, such as doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist.

(d) Some individual may fulfil this role at all times such as members of An Garda Siochana, and foster carers.

(e) With exception to those who fulfil detail in 3.3.3, individuals must fulfil one of the roles detailed in appendix 6 of this policy within the Organisation to be classified as a Mandated Person for that Organisation.

(f) Guidance with a full list of people who are classified as Mandated Persons under the Act can be found within the appendix 6 along with the Mandated Persons thresholds for reporting in appendix 7.

(g) Mandated Persons must assist Tusla, on request, in its assessment of Child protection concerns about Children who have been the subject of a mandated report.

(h) Mandated persons at all levels of the game should follow reporting procedures outlined in section 5.

(i) For the FAI the FAI Child Welfare and safeguarding department, hold a list of those who met their criteria of mandated person for the organisation which collated with the assistance of other relevant departments such as the people and culture department and the international team operations department.

(j) Clubs, leagues and Members should also maintain a list of mandated persons within their organisation as required under the Children First Act 2015.

(k) When recruiting volunteers/coaches for their organisations, clubs, leagues and members should ask if the person fulfils the role of mandated person at all times or could be fulfilling the role within the organisation due to their role in the organisation and then keep a list of all.

1.4 FAI Checks & Audits

(a) To ensure continued compliance with all child protection and safeguarding legislation & measures, the FAI will complete checks at regular intervals.

(b) These checks will take two forms:

- » Spot checks throughout the year on clubs & leagues in different areas of the country.
- » Full audits of all clubs and league bi-yearly.

(c) The areas which will be reviewed during the audit are:

- » The child risk assessment
- » The Child safeguarding statement
- » Safe recruitment practices
 - » Garda vetting
 - » Safeguarding Training
 - » Support and supervision
- » Safeguarding roles
- » Code of conducts
- » Concern-complaints
 - » Procedures in place for handling concerns-complaints
 - » Statistics in relation to complaints received
 - » Themes of complaints received
 - » Learning taken from the complaint

- (d) Relevant documentation should be uploaded onto the organisation's Connect profile under the additional information tab.
- (e) All coaches, volunteers and safeguarding roles should also be connected to the relevant services Connect profile.
- (f) A Self Declaration sample is available in the appendix for Members & Leagues to use when ensuring their members are compliant with FAI Governance Handbook Section 3 Regulation 12.1 e).