

Avista

Corporate Child Safeguarding Statement

Avista provides a range of health and social services to children and adults with an intellectual disability in a variety of settings, health facilities and communities across Dublin North West, East Limerick and North Tipperary. Avista directly employs approximately 2,000 staff, while a large number of contractors, students and volunteers are also involved in delivering our services.

The safety, welfare and development of children and young people is a core objective and key priority for Avista. We are guided by our Core Values, best international practice and the belief that people with a disability are full and equal members of society.

Every staff member has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that every child/young person availing of our service is safe and protected from harm (physical/emotional/sexual abuse or neglect) is treated with respect, listened to and have their views taken into consideration. The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all Avista staff (employees, students, trainees, volunteers, contractors and any person performing any role or function in, or on behalf of Avista).

This Child Safeguarding Statement is informed by the following risk assessment.

Risk Assessment:

We have 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.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
1	Risk of harm to a child from a member of staff (employees, students, trainees, volunteers, contractors and any person performing any role or function in, or on behalf of Avista.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-employment checks as per HR Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures (DOCS 026). • Induction and probation for new staff (DOCS 040). • Ongoing information, supervision, training and review for staff (DOCS 023; DOCS 006). • Professional standards for healthcare staff through registration and training. • Professional registration required for healthcare professionals. • Codes of behaviour for staff, volunteers and contractors - Employee Handbook 2010. • Trust in Care Policy. • Child Protection and Welfare Policy (DOCS 062). • Policies, protocols, procedures and guidelines regarding safe practice and service delivery.

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive practice policy for Adults and Children (DOCS 053). • Consent Policy (DOCS 055). • Lone Working Policy (DOCS 051). • Accessible complaints policy and procedure (DOCS 003). • Volunteer Policy DOCS 037.
2	Risk of harm to a child from a person who uses the service (adult or child), visitor or member of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision/accompaniment/admission/public access policies as relevant to service provision. • Ongoing training and review for staff (DOCS 023; DOCS 006). • Reporting procedures. • Policy to support person with behaviours that challenge (DOCS 011). • Protection and welfare of children and young people (DOCS 062). • Policy and procedures on missing persons (DOCS 049). • Policy and Procedure on bullying and harassment of people who use the service (DOCS058).
3	Risk of non-compliance with Children First Act and National Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Committee governance structure and assurance process. • Children First compliance checklist completed, monitoring and audit by safeguarding committee. • HIQA registration and CORU registration. • Staff supervision and training.
4	Risk of harm or concern not being recognised or reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff information, supervision and training. • Protection and welfare of children and young people (DOCS 062). • Protected Disclosures Policy (DOCS 071). • Legal and administrative consequences for non-reporting. • Consultation with children and their parents. • Accessible complaints policy and procedure (DOCS 003). • Incident Reporting Policy (DOCS 010). • Policies, protocols, procedures and guidelines regarding safe practice and service delivery. • Support for workers including additional support to those who have dealt with disclosures and/or child protection concerns. (DOCS 033).
5	Risk of harm to child in relation to social media, texting or other electronic devices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff information, supervision and HSEland training. • Protection and welfare of children and young people DOCS 062. • Advice for staff and people use the service on use of information technology, email, internet (DOCS 014); Use of mobile phone Policy (DOCS 038) and Use of social network sites policy (DOCS 048). • Further in service training and support. • Consultation with children and their parents.

Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible complaints policy and procedure (DOCS 003). • Codes of behaviour for staff, volunteers and contractors Employee Handbook 2010.

Procedures:

The Avista 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), Tusla’s *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice and Guidance for HSE Child Safeguarding Statements and Risk Assessment Workbook*. These policies and procedures have been developed to promote safe environments for children and young people; to mitigate the potential for risk to arise; and to manage it safely where it does.

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:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service; (DOCS 062 and Trust in Care Policy).
- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children; (DOCS 026).
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla.
- Risk Management Policy to assess and manage any risk of harm.
- Corporate Safety Statement and accompanying processes, e.g. risk management, critical incident response plan, short term contingency planning, corporate risk registers, Centre Specific Safety Statements, centre risk registers.
- Accident/Incident recording systems and notification process to statutory bodies.
- Procedure for maintaining Designated Liaison Persons and a list of the persons within Avista who are mandated persons.

Avista has expanded the remit of the Service’s national safeguarding committee to incorporate children’s safeguarding. The safeguarding committee will support and monitor the implementation of Children’s First across the organisation, and inform the CEO through the normal reporting structures.

Implementation:

We recognise that implementation is an on-going 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.

Each Service Manager and/or Designated Liaison Person is identified as the Relevant Person(s) for that service area, and are the points of contact in respect of the Child Safeguarding Statement(s). They are responsible for the development of a service specific Child Safeguarding Statement, for the identification of any service specific risks, and for ensuring that the Executive team are informed of any additional policies and procedures required to manage these risks.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in **March 2022** or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed:  (Provider)
[Natalya Jackson, CEO, St. Vincent's Centre, Navan Road, Dublin 7.]

9.12.2021