



## CHILDRENS FIRST 2017:

The Children First Legislation in the Republic of Ireland was passed and signed into law on 19th November 2015. On Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017 the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, announced that following almost two years of preparations all remaining provisions of the *Children First Act 2015* will be commenced on **11th December 2017**. **This is important to sports clubs** as the Act places specific obligations on organisations which provide services to children and young people, including the requirement to:

- **Keep children safe from harm** while they are using your service
- Carry out a **risk assessment** (It should be noted that risk in this context is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety risk) to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving your services
- Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified, see below for more detail
- Appoint a **relevant person** to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement

### What is a Child Safeguarding Statement?

After the risk assessment has been completed, organisations are required to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified. This is a written statement that specifies the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed in order to ensure, as far as practicable, that a child availing of the service is safe from harm. The IABA have a safeguarding statement in place 'The Safeguarding Young People in Boxing Policy' that all clubs affiliated to IABA must agree to and we would recommend adapt and use at club level. Please see link below:

<http://www.iaba.ie/site3/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Safeguarding-Young-People-in-Boxing-Policy.pdf>

A Child Safeguarding Statement should contain the following (according to Children First Act 2015), outline actions to;

1. To keep children safe from harm while they are using the service [section 10]
2. To carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed which using the service [section 11(1)(a)] and
3. To develop a Child Safeguarding Statement [section 11(3)] which must include both the written risk assessment and the procedures that are in place to:

- Manage any risk identified
- Investigate an allegation against any staff member/volunteer about any act, omission or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the service
- Select and recruit staff/volunteers that are suitable to work with children
- Provide information and training to staff on child protection and safeguarding issues



- Enable staff members/volunteers, whether mandated persons or otherwise, to make a report to Tusla in accordance with the Act or any guidelines issued by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
- Maintain a list of persons in the organisation who are mandated persons under the Act
- Appoint a relevant person in the organisation for the purposes of the Act

The Child Safeguarding Statement should provide an overview of the measures that our organisation has in place to ensure that children are protected from harm. It may also refer to more detailed policies which can be made available on request. Our safeguarding policy will address all these issues.

Background information:

- ***National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children [2017]*** which revises and replaces the 2011 edition of the Children First Guidance.  
[http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children\\_First\\_National\\_Guidance\\_2017.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf) .
- Tusla published an accompanying suite of Children First resource documents for those individuals and organisations who will acquire legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015 - <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/support-documents>

In the context of good practices by our sport, these guidance documents, applicable in ROI jurisdiction, are relevant to all our clubs/organisations as we seek and adopt the highest possible standards and practices on an All-Ireland basis.

In the coming months we shall be required to review our reporting of abuse procedures regarding the use of Designated Liaison Persons and Mandated Persons, the Act will require us to carry out risk assessments (Safeguarding only) at all levels of our sport and we (including clubs) will have to publish and put on display a 'Child Safeguarding Statements' and much more.

Further information regarding carrying out risk assessments and the child safeguarding statement will follow in due course.