



**Report on the Review of Child Safeguarding Statements for the
Peter McVerry Trust**

Contents

The Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU)	3
The Peter McVerry Trust	3
Executive Summary	4
Recommendations	5
Acknowledgements	6
Author	6
Introduction	7
Context	7
Methodology	8
CSS Compliance Review & Support	8
Findings	8
Analysis	8
Strengths of a Compliant CSS	9
Challenges of a Non-Compliant CSS	9
Analysis of Findings	9
Risk Assessment	9
Nature of Services & Activities	10
Safeguarding Procedures	10
Safeguarding Principles	11
Relevant Person Details	11
Recommendations	11
Conclusion	12
Appendices	12
Appendix 1: Information & Resources	13
Appendix 2: CSSCU Review Outcome Form	14

The Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU)

The Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit (CSSCU) is the dedicated Unit within TUSLA set up to ensure that providers' Child Safeguarding Statements (CSS) are compliant with the requirements of Sections 10 – 13 of the Children First Act 2015. The unit was established in March 2018 to provide both compliance support and enforcement in relation to Child Safeguarding Statement requirements (s.11). The CSSCU is responsible for Child Safeguarding Statement enforcement (s.12) and maintaining the Public Register of Non-Compliance (s.13).

The Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit works on a supportive compliance basis. Referrals are received through voluntary submissions by providers, unsolicited information, sector compliance reviews and referrals by colleagues within Tusla. Where a service is found to be non-compliant with the requirement to have a compliant Child Safeguarding Statement, Tusla engages with the organisation, highlights areas requiring development in the statement, and affords them the opportunity to comply with requirements. Only when this avenue has been exhausted does the agency move to listing an organisation on the register of non-compliance (the final stage of enforcement).

Under Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, Tusla's statutory role is to ensure that each organisation who is required to do so, prepares a written statement (referred to as a "child safeguarding statement") specifying the service being provided and the child safeguarding principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of the services, is safe from harm. The Child Safeguarding Statement is underpinned by the implementation of the required safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice that may be referenced in the statement. It is necessary that the policies and procedures required for the implementation of the CSS would be in line with the Children First Guidelines 2017. The procedures were not reviewed as part of this process.

The Peter McVerry Trust

The Peter McVerry Trust is a national housing and homeless charity committed to reducing homelessness and the harm caused by substance misuse and social disadvantage. The charity provides low-threshold entry services, primarily to younger people and vulnerable adults with complex needs and offers pathways out of homelessness based on the principles of the Housing First model.

Peter McVerry Trust's national headquarters are in Dublin. The charity has a mid-west regional office in Limerick City, a north-east regional office in Drogheda, Co Louth, a mid-east regional office in Johnstown, Naas, Co Kildare and a southern regional office in Cork City.

In 2024, the charity worked with over 12,000 people and was active in 28 local authorities across Ireland.

Their vision is an Ireland that supports all those on the margins and upholds their rights to full inclusion in society

Executive Summary

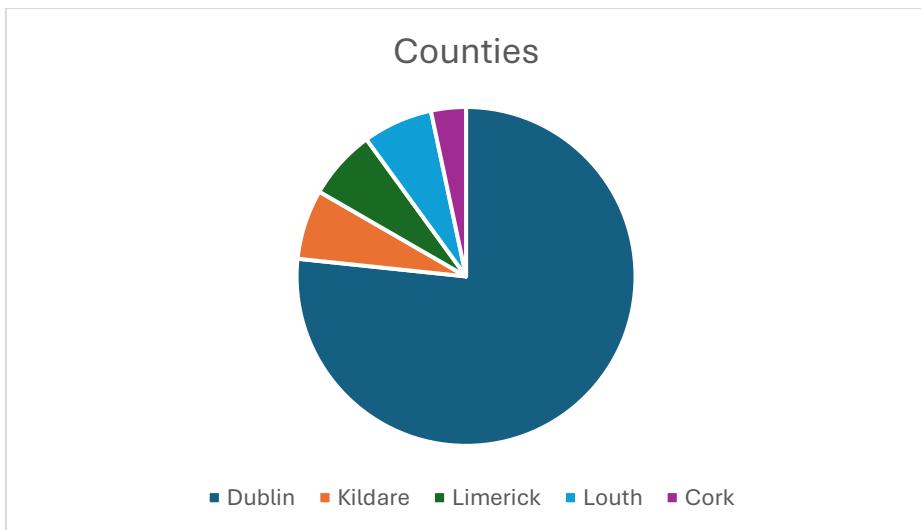
The Peter McVerry Trust voluntarily submitted Child Safeguarding Statements for 30 of their services to the CSSCU in 2025. This report was prepared following review of these statements. It outlines the process of engagement with the Peter McVerry Trust, an overview and analysis of findings in relation to CSS compliance and recommendations to enhance Child Safeguarding Statement compliance within the sector. The information and findings contribute to an improved understanding of CSS compliance within the Peter McVerry Trust. The recommendations emerging from this report aim to support relevant services in developing and reviewing Child Safeguarding Statements.

The CSSCU received positive engagement from the relevant services included in the review.

The statements submitted by the Peter McVerry Trust were of a very good standard. The use of national Peter McVerry template Child Safeguarding Statement document was evident.

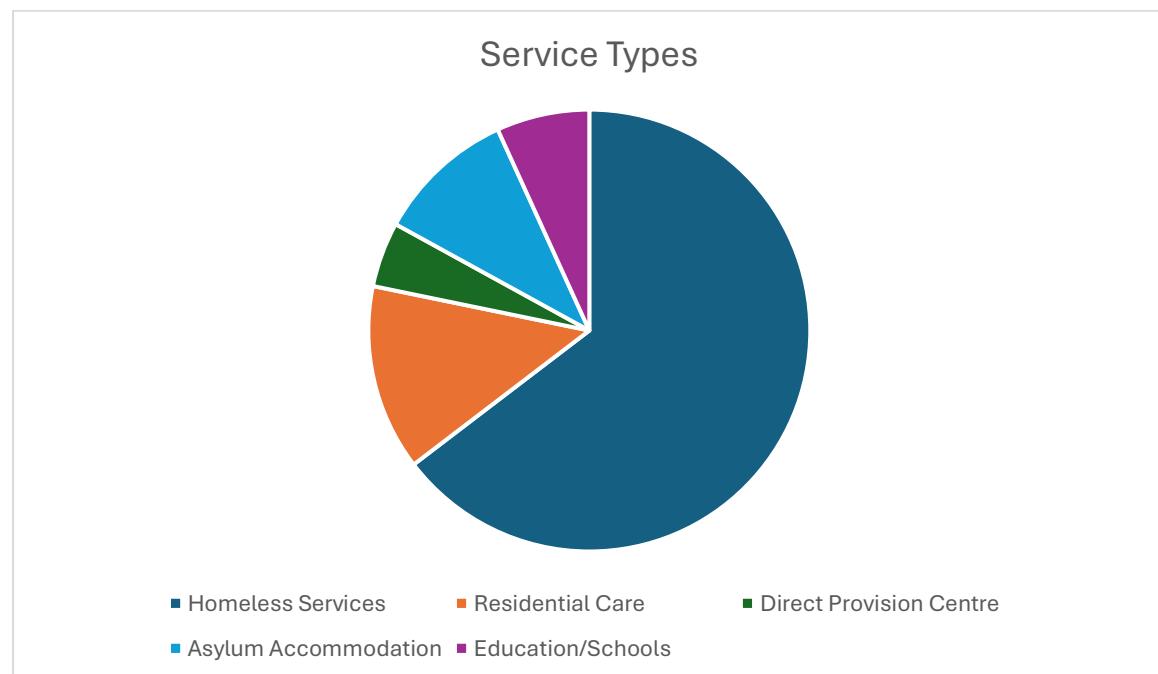
There were 30 Child Safeguarding Statements submitted to the CSSCU. The 30 services are located across 5 counties.

Dublin 23 Kildare 2 Limerick 2 Louth 2 Cork 1



The service types of the 30 services are as follows;

Homeless Services	19
Residential Care	4
Direct Provision Centre	3
Asylum Accommodation	2
Education/Schools	1



All 30 statements were fully complaint on first review.

Recommendations

For the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit:

1. Share report from the CSS compliance review with The Peter McVerry Trust.
2. For The Peter McVerry Trust
 1. Relevant persons/Centre Managers to share learning from their CSS compliance review within Peter McVerry Trust to consider findings when reviewing Child Safeguarding Statements as is required.
 2. Relevant persons/Centre Managers to liaise with information, advice, and training support services to strengthen the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures specified in the Child Safeguarding Statement if required. E.g., Tusla's Children First Information and Advice Service.
 3. Continue implementation plan in respect of Child Safeguarding Statement across all service provision sites.
 4. Review CSS as per statutory requirements.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and thank those who contributed to these CSS reviews.

- The Peter McVerry Trust Centres who engaged with the CSSCU as part of the process.
- The CSSCU team who conducted the review.

Author

This report was prepared by Trudy Dooley, Senior Regulatory Support Officer.

Introduction

The CSSCU prioritises supporting Child Safeguarding Statement compliance by working in partnership with providers of relevant services and sectors to ensure these groups are meeting their obligations to have statements in place. The purpose of the engagement is to conduct a comprehensive review to ensure that services had compliant Child Safeguarding Statements in place.

This report outlines the process of engagement with The Peter McVerry Trust, methodology utilised in the sector compliance review, an overview and analysis of findings in relation to CSS compliance and recommendations to enhance CSS compliance within the sector. The report is intended to contribute to an improved understanding of Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) compliance within the Peter McVerry Trust.

Context

A key strategic objective of the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit is to advance children's safety, development, and wellbeing by strengthening partnerships with providers of relevant services (as defined under schedule 1, Children First Act 2015). A provider of a relevant service is any organisation where more than one person

works with children in a voluntary or paid capacity. The Peter McVerry Trust are providers of relevant services under part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Children First Act, 2015 that refers to;

1. Any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children in—

(d) a designated centre within the meaning of section 2 of the Health Act 2007, in so far as it relates to an institution at which residential services are provided in accordance with the Child Care Act 1991 or to children with disabilities in relation to their disabilities,

(g) a reception or accommodation centre which provides residential accommodation services to applicants for asylum under contract to the Department of Justice and Equality where children may be accommodated,

Under Section 11 of the Children First Act 2015, Tusla's statutory role is to ensure that each organisation who is required to do so, prepares a written statement (referred to as a "child safeguarding statement") specifying the service being provided and the child safeguarding principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of the services, is safe from harm.

Harm as defined in the Children First Act 2015, means 'in relation to a child—

- a) 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*
- b) 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'.*

The Child Safeguarding Statement is underpinned by the implementation of the required safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice that may be referenced in the statement. The CSSCU does not have oversight of the policies and procedures, but it is expected that they would be in line with the Children First Guidelines 2017 and implemented consistently by the Relevant Service.

Methodology

This report is based on data generated from the Child Safeguarding Statements from 30 providers of the Peter McVerry Trust. This process of engagement with these services for a CSS compliance review began in May 2025 and concluded in September 2025.

CSS Compliance Review & Support

On receipt of a Child Safeguarding Statement the CSSCU utilised the units review outcome form (see Appendix 2) to conduct a desktop review to record areas of compliance or noncompliance within the CSS document. Feedback was issued to all relevant services on the outcome of the review. If there were statements where amendments were required, CSSCU staff would have engaged with relevant services to support them in achieving compliance with the requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act, 2015.

Findings

There were 30 Peter McVerry Trust services included in the CSS compliance review who submitted a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) to the CSSCU.

All documents submitted were accepted as a valid Child Safeguarding Statement.

Analysis

The compliance review received positive engagement from relevant services.

The statements submitted by the Peter McVerry Trust were of a very good standard demonstrating the service's commitment and objective of reaching CSS compliance. All statements referenced the required sections of the legislation.

Strengths of a Compliant CSS

Providers of relevant services have a responsibility under section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service. An effective Child Safeguarding Statement is underpinned by the implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice that may be referenced in the CSS. A compliant Child Safeguarding Statement must reflect the specific service being provided and set out clear principles of safeguarding. It must identify possible risks of harm to a child as defined in the Children First Act, 2015 and the procedures in place to mitigate against those risks. These risks should correlate with the service being provided to assist assessment of any potential harm that a child or young person may experience in that specific service. The CSS must state that required safeguarding procedures are in place and implemented.

Service contact details, plans for CSS review and details of the relevant person must be clearly provided on the CSS. All information provided within the CSS must be accessible to service users, children, parents, and members of the public.

Therefore, a compliant statement is effective when it provides the required information, is presented clearly and is specific to the service being provided which in turn leads to greater outcomes upon implementation.

Challenges of a Non-Compliant CSS

A Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) that is non-compliant with the requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act, 2015 can impact the safety of children and young people while availing of a service. Without a clear commitment to keeping children safe from harm, a risk assessment and appropriate procedures in place, lack of clarity may arise within a service causing confusion for staff and volunteers in respect of how to prevent harm or how to respond to any child welfare or protection concerns. Omissions in a CSS document can also indicate potential gaps in training and subsequent implementation of safeguarding practice within services if a required procedures are absent or not known. Additional challenges related to different parts of the CSS are expanded on in the analysis of findings below.

Analysis of Findings

Child Safeguarding Statement non-compliance was identified in none (0%) of the Peter McVerry Trust Services involved in this compliance review.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment that considers any potential harm to a child while availing of the service needs to be fit for purpose in respect of the nature of service and activities provided to be deemed compliant. If potential risks of harm are omitted from a CSS, there can be limited awareness or understanding amongst personnel (staff/volunteers) that a particular risk may occur. The identification of a particular risk also prompts the development and implementation of appropriate safeguarding procedures to mitigate against the risk and to ensure that children availing of the service are safe from harm.

Potential risks that apply to most relevant services are risk of harm to a child by a member of staff/volunteer; harm by a visitor to a service; bullying by an adult or peer; harm during outings or overnight activities; harm due to lack of supervision; harm through use of unauthorised photography; or online harm through social media/internet. If these risks and associated procedures to manage the risks are not considered during a risk assessment, relevant services are advised to consider if they are applicable to the service.

Nature of Service & Activities

A comprehensive description of the nature of the services and activities being provided allows the relevant service to consider all possible risks of harm to a child or young person while availing of a service.

Safeguarding Procedures

The Children First Act, 2015 specifies that the following procedures must be both referenced in a Child Safeguarding Statement as being in place and implemented in practice within the service. These documents were not requested as part of this project and services self-declared that they were in place.

1. Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers.
2. Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.
3. Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
4. Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla.
5. Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
6. Procedure for appointing a relevant person for the purpose of the statement.

Having these procedures in place supports services in reducing risks of harm to children and to respond appropriately if an incident occurs.

Safeguarding Principles

A declaration of the service commitment to safeguarding principles supports the relevant service in communicating to children, parents, and members of the public that the responsibility to safeguard children while availing of the service is a priority and taken seriously. By clearly stating the service intention to prioritise safeguarding, parents are provided with a baseline of safety measures to be expected while children may be availing of the service.

Relevant Person Details

A relevant person is appointed for the purpose of being the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement. Having the name and contact details clearly identified on the CSS assists the relevant service in being accessible to children, parents or members of the public who may have a query or concern related to the Child Safeguarding Statement.

When the relevant person is not clearly identified with contact details on the publicly displayed CSS or is unavailable to communicate, it can make it difficult for an agency, parent, or member of the public to request further information about the CSS.

Recommendations

To continue to strengthen the safeguarding of children in Peter McVerry Trust Services there are four core recommendations.

For the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit

1. Share learning from the CSS compliance review with The Peter McVerry Trust.
2. Provide information to The Peter McVerry Trust regarding Tusla's Children First National Office in relation to guidance and supporting documentation to promote CSS compliance within The Peter McVerry Trust.

For Peter McVerry Trust

1. Relevant persons/Centre Managers to liaise with information, advice, and training support services to strengthen the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures specified in the Child Safeguarding Statement if required. E.g., Tusla's Children First Information and Advice Service.
2. Relevant persons/Centre Managers to liaise with information, advice, and training support services to strengthen the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures specified in the Child Safeguarding Statement if required. E.g., Tusla's Children First Information and Advice Service.

Conclusion

This report outlines the process of engagement with relevant services, the methodology utilised in a CSS compliance review, an overview and analysis of findings in relation to CSS compliance and recommendations to enhance Child Safeguarding Statement compliance within The Peter McVerry Trust. The information contributes to an improved understanding of CSS compliance within the Peter McVerry Trust. The findings emerging

from the sector compliance review aim to support relevant services in developing and reviewing Child Safeguarding Statements.

Appendices

Appendix 1: CSS Information & Resources

Appendix 2: CSSCU Review Outcome Form

Appendix 1: CSS Information & Resources

Tusla has published advice and guidance and a sample template to assist providers in developing a Child Safeguarding Statement which are available on the Tusla website or through the links below:

- What is a Child Safeguarding Statement (Video)
- Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement
- Template to develop a CSS
- CSSCU Review Outcome Form
- Understanding Risk Assessments in Child Safeguarding Statements (Video)
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice
- Child Safeguarding Resource List
- Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit on Tusla Website
- Children First on Tusla Website

Appendix 2: CSSCU Review Outcome Form

CSSCU Review Records Relevant Service Details

Name of Service	
Name of Provider of Relevant Service	
Name of Relevant Person	
Relevant Service Type (as per Schedule 1, CFA, 2015)	Choose an item.
Nature of Service / Sector	Choose an item.
Affiliated Organisation	

CSSCU Review of Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance with Requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act, 2015

Checklist for Compliance Review			Feedback to Relevant Service	
No.	CSS Compliance Requirements	Assessment	Reasons for areas of non-compliance requiring amendment within CSS	Suggestions to improve quality of CSS for consideration
1.1	Child Safeguarding Statement s.11(1b) <i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has a Child Safeguarding Statement in place. <i>Verification:</i> The document submitted for review is a Child Safeguarding Statement.	Choose an item.		

1.2.	<p>Child Safeguarding Statement s.11(1b)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has a Child Safeguarding Statement in place.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The document submitted for review is titled correctly as a Child Safeguarding Statement.</p>	Choose an item.		
2.1.	<p>Service Details s.11(1b)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service provides details of the service and activities provided to children and young people (under 18 years).</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The name of the service is included on the CSS.</p>	Choose an item.		
2.2.	<p>Service Details s.11(1b)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service provides details of the service and activities provided to children and young people.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes details of the nature of service and activities provided to children or young people.</p>	Choose an item.		

3.1.	<p>Principles to Safeguard Children s.11(1b)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service specifies the principles to be observed to keep children and young people safe from harm while availing of the service.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes details of how the service intends to safeguard children and young people from harm and the principles that will be followed to keep them safe while using the service.</p>	Choose an item.		
4.1.	<p>Risk Assessment s.11(1a)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has undertaken a written assessment of any potential risk of harm to a child or young person while availing of a service.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes details of a written assessment of risks of harm (assault, ill-treatment, neglect, or sexual abuse) as defined in the Children First Act, 2015.</p>	Choose an item.		
4.2.	<p>Risk Assessment s.11(3a)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has undertaken a written assessment of any potential risk of harm to a child or young person while availing of a service.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes details of risks identified in the written assessment</p>	Choose an item.		

	that consider all potential risks of harm that are sufficient, relevant, and realistic in relation to the purpose, function and nature of the service and activities being provided to children and young people.			
4.3.	<p>Risk Assessment s.11(3a)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has undertaken a written assessment of any potential risk of harm to a child or young person while availing of a service.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes specific details of the procedures that are in place to manage any risk identified in the assessment of potential harm.</p>	Choose an item.		
5.1.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s11(3b)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure in respect of any member of staff who is the subject of any investigation (howsoever described) in respect of any act, omission, or circumstance in respect of a child availing of the relevant service.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers is in place.</p>	Choose an item.		

5.2.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s.11(3c)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure for selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff of the provider with regard to that person's suitability to work with children.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children or young people is in place.</p>	Choose an item.		
5.3.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s11(3d)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure for the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training to members of staff of the provider in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for the provision of safeguarding information and training is in place.</p>	Choose an item.		

5.4.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s.11(3e)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure for reporting to Tusla by the provider or a member of staff of the provider (whether a mandated person or otherwise) in accordance with this Act or the Children First guidelines.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for reporting child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla is in place.</p>	Choose an item.		
5.5.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s.11(3f)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for maintaining a list of mandated persons is in place.</p>	Choose an item.		
5.6.	<p>Specified Safeguarding Procedures s.11(3g)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service has in place a safeguarding procedure for appointing a relevant person for the purposes of the Child Safeguarding.</p>	Choose an item.		

	<p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS states that a procedure for appointing a relevant person is in place.</p>			
6.1.	<p>Implementation s.11(1-10)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> A provider of a relevant service has responsibility for the implementation and governance of a CSS. These responsibilities include undertaking a risk assessment, preparing a written statement, appointing a relevant person, implementing the specified safeguarding procedures, conducting regular reviews, displaying the CSS within the service, and providing copies of the CSS to staff, parents/guardians, the agency, or members of the public on request.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The person responsible for providing the relevant service is identifiable on the CSS by name, role title or signature.</p>	Choose an item.		
6.2.	<p>Implementation s.11(7&8)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> CSS implementation includes a review of the statement every 24 months or as soon as there has been a material change in any of the issues to which it refers.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes a date that the CSS was adopted or reviewed within a 24-month period.</p>	Choose an item.		

7.1.	<p>Relevant Person s.11(1c)</p> <p><i>Requirement:</i> Relevant service appoints a Relevant Person for the purpose of being first point of contact for the CSS.</p> <p><i>Verification:</i> The CSS includes the name and contact details for the Relevant Person within the service who is the first point of contact for the purpose of the statement. It clearly states the person who holds the role of relevant person.</p> <p>E.g. For queries in relation to this statement, please contact Joe Bloggs (insert contact details – phone/email), relevant person under the Children First Act, 2015.</p>	<p>Choose an item.</p>
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Compliance Review Outcome

Date of Review	Compliance Review Outcome	Recommendation	Signature
	<p>Compliant: The information declared on the CSS document is compliant with the requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act, 2015.</p> <p>Non-compliant: The information declared on the CSS document is non-compliant with requirements of Section 11 of the Children First Act, 2015 and requires amendment.</p>		

Tusla's CSSCU advises providers of relevant services of their responsibility under section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child availing of the service from the provider is safe from harm while availing of that service. An effective Child Safeguarding Statement is underpinned by the implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice that may be referenced in the CSS. It is the responsibility of every organisation to regularly review their safeguarding statement, policies, procedures, practice, and implementation frameworks against guidance provided in [Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#) and [Tusla Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#) to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm while availing of services. For more information please refer to the [CSSCU](#) and [Children First](#) sections of the Tusla website.