Child Safeguarding Statement

National Disability Authority

August 2025



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# Introduction

The National Disability Authority (NDA, 25 Clyde Road, Dublin, D04 E409) is the independent statutory body providing evidence-informed advice and research to Government on disability policy and practice and promoting Universal Design.

The NDA has approximately 53 FTE staff who work across the three departments of Policy, Research and Public Affairs, Corporate Services and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design and Standards and Monitoring.

The NDA is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of children while they are participating in activities conducted by, or on behalf of, the NDA. The NDA Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the following:

* [Children First Act 2015](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf)
* [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/114c50-children-first-national-guidelines-for-the-protection-and-welfare-of/)
	+ [Including 2019 addendum relation to online safety](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c7ee34-action-plan-for-online-safety/)
* [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_-_Child_Safeguarding_-_A_Guide_for_Policy%2C_Procedure_and_Practice.pdf)

Child safeguarding is about protecting the child from harm and promoting their welfare. In doing so this creates an environment which enables children and young people to grow, develop and achieve their full potential. Child safeguarding involves ensuring safe practice and appropriate responses by employees to concerns about the safety or welfare of children, including online concerns, should these arise. Protecting children from harm requires processes and procedures that give children a voice, listens to that voice, empowers children to act or acts on their behalf.

The NDA is also committed to protecting the data rights of children and complying with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all staff and interns working in the NDA, Authority members and any person performing any role or function in or on behalf of the NDA. The majority of contractors or grantees used by the NDA will have their own Child Safeguarding Statements. Those who do not will be required to comply with the NDA child safeguarding policies and procedures. Those who have their own Statement must provide assurance to the NDA that their policies and procedures comply with the legislation listed above.

The Statement will be linked to in any participation information leaflets for children or their parents or guardian that are shared in advance of research or consultations.

# Definition of a child

The standard definition of a child is someone under the age of 18 years. However, when considering consent to participate in research the NDA adopts the definition of a child set out in the HSE National Policy for Consent in Health and Social Care research and the definition of certain adolescents as ‘young people’. [[1]](#footnote-1) Relevant definitions from the HSE National Policy for Consent in Health and Social Care Research are outlined below:

* **Recognising "Young People"**: The Policy now defines individuals aged 16 and 17 years old as “young people” who are capable of independently consenting to participate in research and to the processing of their personal data. Parental involvement is still encouraged but not needed.
* **Changed Definition of “Child”**: The Policy now defines a child as a person under 16 years old. Parental consent is still required for their participation in health and social research.
* **New Definition of “Minor”**: The Policy now defines a minor as a person under the age of 18 years.

The HSE policy further advises thatyoung people’s autonomy should be respected. Thus, young people who may lack decision-making capacity should be supported, where possible, to fully exercise their right to provide a valid consent. The same principles related to adults lacking capacity should be applied to research involving young people.

For the remainder of this document we refer to children unless specifically talking about consent when children and young people are referenced which is only relevant in the context of research.

# Garda Vetting

Under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012-2016 the NDA are not considered a [relevant organisation](https://vetting.garda.ie/RegisteredOrganisation/Relevant). Therefore, the NDA finds alternative ways to ensure that staff engaging with children are Garda vetted where relevant. This may be through a third-party organisation such as the HSE.

NDA staff who are required to undergo Garda Vetting as part of their role are obliged to do so. They must accurately and completely disclose requested information during the process of Garda Vetting. Within the NDA, Garda Vetting is only valid for three years. Those acting on behalf of the NDA e.g. contracted researchers will need to provide evidence of having valid Garda Vetting.

Staff who make disclosures about suspected child abuse or neglect are protected by relevant legislation, including the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act,1998. This provides for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse or neglect ‘reasonably and in good faith’ to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána. Staff should know that they are always correct to raise reasonable concerns, even if these are not validated in a subsequent Tusla assessment or Garda investigation, and the NDA always encourages responsible action.

# NDA engagement with children

Occasionally, the NDA conducts research, consultations and educational activities with disabled and non-disabled children either directly or through a contracted organisation.

## Research & Consultation

The NDA regularly engages with disabled people to ensure the advice and guidance we provide to Government is informed by their lived experience. This research and consultation process can include disabled and non-disabled children. This consultation or research can be conducted directly by NDA employees or may be subcontracted to a third party. Ethical principles are followed in relation to research with children.

## Awards and Competitions

The NDA presents awards and holds competitions and supports other educational related initiatives that involve contact with children. Some of these are contracted to third parties (such as the Someone Like Me annual primary school art competition and the Big Idea). Some are organised internally (such as the annual award at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition). Contact with children and young people ranges from meeting them at the award ceremony or at photoshoots, having a booth with information at an event where children are present, or receiving a presentation from the child or young person on their project. All in person interactions occur in the presence of other adults or in schools with the teacher present.

The NDA requires subcontractors commissioned in this context to comply with the provisions of the Children First Act.

## Partner activity (non-funded)

The NDA works with many stakeholders across the public engagement landscape. This can involve working with partners in a collaborative manner, rather than through a formal funded or contracted arrangement. This may involve the NDA taking part in a third-party programme where that programme involves site visits and workshops with children. In this case, the NDA is not the ‘provider of the service’ as defined by the Act.

## Online queries

Queries to the NDA are generally by phone to reception or via e-mail which are handled or routed by a member of our administrative staff. While queries are mostly from adults, some may be received from children. These are often obvious as the person introduces themselves. For example, a transition year student doing a project related to disability seeking information. Requests from children (where it is clear from the information in the correspondence that it is a child) are responded to by the senior staff member with the relevant subject matter expertise. Staff members responding should use their own e-mail but copy the relevant shared mailbox (e.g. info@nda.ie) in their response. If the issues raised by a child are more complicated, the child is responded to and requested to ask their parent or guardian to contact the NDA on their behalf. If the parent or guardian makes contact, then the query is responded to in the normal manner.

## Videos and photographs

As part of the promotion of the NDA in the media and across other associated social media channels, photographs/video footage of children can be used if parental consent has been obtained. This is usually obtained via the principal of a school or by one of our contractors. The assent of the child should also be obtained.

# Safeguarding principles and obligations

The NDA will uphold the following safeguarding principles in its work with children:

* Recognise that the safety, protection, and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
* Fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
* Fully respect confidentiality requirements when dealing with child protection matters;
* Implement measures to raise awareness among all staff engaged in research and consultation with children regarding child safe-guarding principles and best practice;
* Ensure that staff engaged in research and consultation with children:
	+ Familiarise themselves with the NDA’s Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedures for responding to child protection concerns which come to the attention of staff during their interactions with children;
	+ Undertake Children’s First training;
	+ Undertake Garda vetting, if appropriate;
* Nominate a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and deputy DLP in the NDA. Both of whom must undertake Children’s First: Designated Liaison Person Role and Responsibilities training;
* Adopt practices and procedures that minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect researchers from the need to take unnecessary risks that may leave them open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
* Keep children safe from harm while they are using our service;
* Carry out a risk assessment to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while receiving our services;
* Develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified; and
* Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation’s Child Safeguarding Statement.

# Policies and procedures

The policies and procedures developed by the NDA associated with this Child Safeguarding Statement are:

* Child protection policies and procedures declaration form for external contractors;
* NDA Garda Vetting Policy and Procedure;
* NDA’s Child Protection and Welfare Reporting Procedure;
* Consent policy for research with children and young people;
* Procedure for Child Safeguarding Training;
* Procedure for responding to allegations of abuse against NDA staff;
* Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children; and
* Procedure to appoint a relevant person.

All policies and procedures listed are available upon request.

# Risk Assessment

The NDA will carry out an assessment of any potential for harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child at the commencement of a piece of research or consultation with children. We have outlined sample risks relevant to the work we carry out with children with any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. This includes the area of online safety when accessing the internet. A summary of the risks is outlined below. The NDA has created a more detailed risk assessment including the procedures in place to manage identified risks. The main potential risks identified are:

* Child is harmed during the research or consultation process;
* A child discloses to and NDA staff member that they are being harmed by persons either within or outside the NDA;
* The nature of the activity, or material to which a child is exposed as part of the research of consultation is inappropriate and potentially harmful;
* There is inappropriate utilisation of data;
* Inadequate consent has been obtained; and
* Children object to or become upset at how their data, image or other materials are disseminated.

# Key Contacts

## Relevant person

Dr Rosalyn Tamming, Head of Policy Research and Public Affairs is the relevant person for the NDA and is the first point of contact in respect of the NDA’s Child Safeguarding Statement. The relevant person was appointed as per the NDA’s Procedure to Appoint a Relevant Person.

**E-mail:** Rosalyn.tamming@nda.ie

**Phone**: 01 608 0409

## Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

This person is the resource person for any staff member, intern or Authority member who has child protection concerns and is the person who will liaise with outside agencies. The DLP is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within the NDA are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla. The DLP should record all concerns or allegations of child abuse brought to their attention, and the actions taken in relation to a concern or allegation of child abuse. The DLP is:

Dr Rosalyn Tamming, Head of Policy Research and Public Affairs.

Contact details as above for relevant person.

## Deputy Designated Liaison Person

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person will take on the responsibilities of the DLP when the DLP is not available. The Deputy DLP is:

Ms Evelyn Moore, Head of Corporate Services.

**e-mail:** Evelyn.moore@nda.ie

**Phone:** 01 608 0493

## Mandated Persons

Section 2 of Schedule 2 of the Act outlines the classes of persons specified as mandated persons. The NDA does not have any mandated person on its staff.

## Training

Relevant training has been undertaken by the DLP and Deputy DLP.

# Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. The NDA 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 annually by the Senior Management Group. It will also be reviewed after any legislative changes in the area of child protection, changes to the NDA’s services, or any material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: 

(Aideen Hartney, Director NDA)

For queries please contact Rosalyn Tamming, Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.

1. [HSE National Policy for Consent in Health and Social Care Research (2024)](https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/ncr/20250107_HSE-National-Policy-for-Consent-in-Health-and-Social-Care-Research-V2.0.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)