



# IRFU ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY- for persons with a Disability

2021



This policy of the Irish Rugby Football Union will be updated every 2-years

## Irish Rugby Football Union

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[www.irishrugby.com](http://www.irishrugby.com)   



## IRFU Adult Safeguarding Policy

For this policy “Adult safeguarding” is working with adults with care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect.

The IRFU adult safeguarding policy applies to an adult who:

- is a person with a disability aged 18
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect, as a result of care and support needs

\*A glossary of terms and useful contact number are held on pages 8,9 & 10

### Adult Safeguarding Statement

The IRFU recognises that health, well-being, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person’s resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help. We recognise that these factors can vary at different points in people’s lives.

The IRFU recognises that we have a duty of care to safeguard adults with a disability that have needs for care and support and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves and will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding adult legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures.

The Irish Rugby Football Union is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and accepts our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of “adults at risk” involved in Rugby in the Island of Ireland.

The IRFU believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

The IRFU is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

The IRFU acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody’s responsibility and is committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all involved.

Actions taken by the IRFU will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.

The IRFU expects those involved within all adult rugby to adopt and supervise the implementation of these safeguarding principles and standards. The IRFU recognises that implementation is an ongoing process. It is committed to the implementation of this Adult Safeguarding Statement and accompanying Adult Safeguarding Policy to keep “adults at risk” involved in rugby safe from harm.

Information is based on guidelines from Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of abuse - HSE (Ireland), Adult Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - DHSSPSNI (Northern Ireland) and Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity - Ann Craft Trust (UK).

This Adult Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed in March 2023, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers. For queries please contact David McKay, [david.mckay@irfu.ie](mailto:david.mckay@irfu.ie) number: 07414477848

Signed:  
Chair of Spirit

Signed:  
Chair of Disability

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## Principles

IRFU is committed to this policy adult safeguarding and, by working under the guidance of our staff, both volunteers and employed, working with “adults at risk”, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for all adults to grow and develop within sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

## Safeguarding Objectives

- Meet the required standards for safeguarding for Adults with disabilities in Ireland & Northern Ireland
- Maintain a robust case management system and disciplinary process for rugby
- Ensure well trained and informed staff and volunteers in relation to safeguarding topics and issues
- Ensure “adults at risk” are listened to, ensuring their experiences of rugby are safe and enjoyable

## Compliance with Safeguarding Policy & Guidance

- The IRFU’s Disability Chair who shall be appointed on an annual basis to the Spirit Committee oversee this policy. They will be assisted by the Spirit of Rugby team, including the National Disability & Inclusion Officer and Branch Welfare Officers
- The IRFU will monitor compliance with and alleged breaches of this Policy and will discuss same when necessary for the benefit, protection and information of adults at risk, Players and where appropriate their legal guardian where it is permissible and reasonable.
- The IRFU will implement its ‘Case Management Policy’ to review breaches of the policy and ensure adults at risk protection and welfare issues are correctly reported. It will also ensure existing disciplinary, complaints will be regularly reviewed to accommodate the implementation and enforcement of this Code.
- The IRFU will review its Safeguarding Policy every 2-years and/or as legislative changes occur in Ireland and/or Northern Ireland
- It is the role and responsibility of all those working with adults at risk to make sure this policy implemented and monitored successfully.

## Adult safeguarding What are the types of Abuse or Neglect

Defining abuse or neglect is complex and rests on many factors. The term “abuse” can be subject to wide interpretation. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect, or occur where an adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not or cannot consent.

Abuse or neglect may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Exploitation can be a common theme in the experience of abuse or neglect. Whilst it is acknowledged that abuse or neglect can take different forms, below are of abuse or neglect:

### Physical abuse

- Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions

### Sexual abuse

- Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting

### Emotional abuse

- Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

### Neglect and acts of omission

- Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

### Self-neglect

- This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings

Other forms of abuse not covered in this policy can be found using these links:

ROI:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/socialcare/safeguardingvulnerableadults/safeguardingvuladts.html>

NI:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/recognising-adult-abuse-exploitation-and-neglect>

### Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. Abuse may be inflicted by anyone in the organisation who an individual comes into contact with, or club members, workers, volunteers or coaches may suspect that an individual is being abused or neglected outside of the setting. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. **These include but are not limited to** and are not a one off event but a series of events that lead to concern

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.
- Evidence of self-harm.
- Fear or anxiety of a particular group or individual.
- Person telling you / another person that they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure.

Staff or volunteers witnessing repeated behavior over period of time should report their concerns [here](#).

REMEMBER you are not accusing or making a decision. It is not the responsibility of staff/volunteers to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is important however, that they report any concerns/suspicions to the appropriate person

### What to do with your concerns

Organisation members, staff and volunteers are not expected to be an expert in recognition of a safeguarding concern; however, all adults working, volunteering and participating have a duty of care to be vigilant and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice, abuse or bullying. They should also respond to any indication of abuse that may be occurring outside of the rugby setting.

This does not mean that it is your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it is your responsibility to report your concerns to your Club Welfare Officer and/or Spirit of rugby Officer (Branch Welfare Officer) / National Disability & Inclusion Officer

## Responding to Adult Safeguarding Concerns

There are some key responsibilities and actions for anyone who identifies the possibility of abuse or neglect. These responsibilities must be addressed on the **same day** as the concern is raised.

- **Immediate protection** - Take any immediate actions to safeguard anyone at immediate risk of harm, including summoning medical assistance
- **Speak to the adult wherever it is safe to do so** – get the views of the adult on the concern or incident and see what they would like to happen next. Listen to what they have to say, and ensure they are given the support they need from local help system in the area e.g. Adult Protection Gateway Services (NI) or Safeguarding and protection Teams (ROI)
- **Detection and prevention of crime** - Where there is evidence a criminal offence has taken place, or a crime may be about to be committed, contact the Police or Garda Síochána immediately
- **Record** concerns think who, what, where and when.
- **Inform** Club Welfare Officer and complete safeguarding reporting form and inform Branch welfare Officer / National Disability Officer or in their absence please contact National Safeguarding Officer and Mandated Person.
- **Report and inform** - Report to Adult Protection Gateway Services (NI) or Safeguarding and protection Teams (ROI) and National Disability & Inclusion Officer as soon as possible, and in all circumstances on the same day as the concern is raised.

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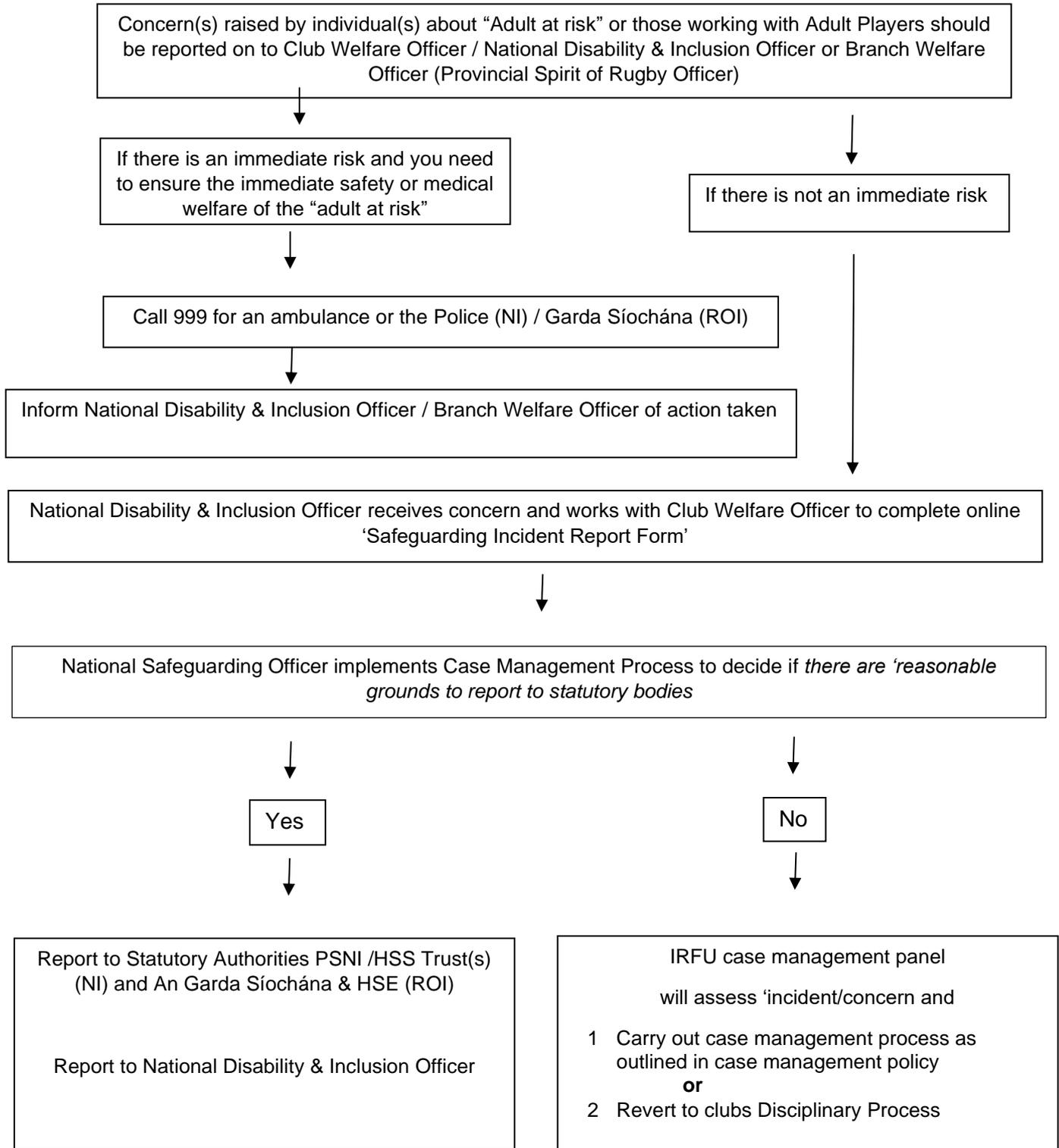
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## Do you have concerns about an adult?

### Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

If you have concerns about an adult's safety and or wellbeing in your care you must act on these, It is not your responsibility to decide whether or abuse has taken place. It is important however, that you report any concerns/suspicions to the appropriate person



## Dealing with a concern in the club

Some concerns may not involve Statutory Authorities; however, the complaint may require a response. In such cases all adults have a responsibility to protect at risk adults from harm. Should you witness or receive information that leads you to believe that a serious breach of this Safeguarding Policy has occurred, you should bring the matter to the attention of your Club Welfare Officer who will contact National Disability & Inclusion Officer and/or Branch Welfare Officer

- You are not to discuss the matter with persons not already involved, unless required to assist with an investigation of the matter
- The IRFU Case Management process will be implemented
- Report to Club welfare officer who will complete online safeguarding incident report form and submit to National Disability & Inclusion officer
- Case Management Panel will inform club of the process
- Club Welfare Officer will in some cases deal with the concern using a safeguarding disciplinary panel to decide if codes of conduct have been breached
- National Safeguarding Officer will deal with issues between clubs and inform Branch and Clubs of the concern(s) and action taken where appropriate.
- Clubs or Branches should not carry out their own internal investigations until directed by IRFU case management panel.

**Please note:** Should a person not be happy with the initial outcome of the process they may refer this issue to the National Disability & Inclusion Officer / National Safeguarding Officer

## Data Protection

All safeguarding documents will be kept according to, or each case of any amending legislation, the requirements of the Irish Data Protection Act 1988, the amended act 2003, and the UK Data Protection Act 1998; and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive 2009/136/EC and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("GDPR"). This includes requirements for the collecting, storage and requests of personal data. For general information on Data Protection consult the Data Protection Commissioner's Irish web site on [www.dataprotectionact.ie](http://www.dataprotectionact.ie) or the UK Information Commissioner's web site [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)  
Exclusion in data protection includes:

Information about a data subject, which would be likely to affect the way crime is detected or prevented, catching or prosecuting offenders, the assessment of taxes or duty, need not be made available. There are also specific rules on information, which reveals the name of a third party (i.e. any other person mentioned in the data such as, for example, the name of a spouse or dependent).

## Contacts for All Concerns

### National Disability & Inclusion Officer

David McKay: [david.mckay@irfu.ie](mailto:david.mckay@irfu.ie)

### Branch Welfare Officer(s)

- Connacht: Luke Murphy: [luke.murphy@connachtrugby.ie](mailto:luke.murphy@connachtrugby.ie)
- Leinster – Stephen Gore: [stephen.gore@leinsterrugby.ie](mailto:stephen.gore@leinsterrugby.ie)
- Munster – Emily O'Leary: [emilyoleary@munsterrugby.ie](mailto:emilyoleary@munsterrugby.ie)
- Ulster – Kerry Spence: [kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:kerry.spence@ulsterrugby.com)

### National Safeguarding Officer

Anne Marie Hughes: [annemarie.hughes@irfu.ie](mailto:annemarie.hughes@irfu.ie)

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## Glossary of terms for this Policy

**“Abuse”** includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, self-neglect and sexual abuse

**“Branch”**. **“Branch Welfare Officer”** is the spirit of rugby officer based in your province the person appointed by a Branch to implement the directions of the “National Safeguarding Officer”. This position will be held by the Spirit of Rugby Officer in each Branch.

**“Club”** means a club (including a school) affiliated to the IRFU.

**“Club Welfare Officer”** is a person appointed by a Club to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and the Branch Welfare Officers and to be the voice of the child within clubs. This position is the equivalent of Designated Liaison Person as per ‘Children First Guidance’ and Cooperating to Safeguarding Children

**“IRFU”** means the Irish Rugby Football Union.

**“National Disability Officer”** is an employee of the IRFU with responsibility for adult safeguarding in relation to this Policy.

**“National Safeguarding Officer”** is the senior employee with responsibility for safeguarding within the organisation and who leads the implementation of the safeguarding directions of the Spirit Committee.

**“Parents”** includes legal guardians.

**“Statutory Authorities”** means in Ireland Health Service Executive (HSE) and An Garda Síochána (“Gardaí”) and in Northern Ireland the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCNI) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (“PSNI”).

**“Adult”** is anyone aged 18 or over.

**“Adult at Risk”** is a person with a disability aged 18 or over

**“Capacity”** refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision unless it can be established that they lack capacity.

**Information is based on guidelines from Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of abuse - HSE (Ireland), Adult Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - DHSSPSNI (Northern Ireland) and Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity - Ann Craft Trust (UK)**

## Useful Contact

### If you are in Northern Ireland (NI): Adult Protection Gateway Services

Health and Social Care Trust

Telephone: (Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm)

Email: (Monitored Monday to Friday – 9.00am to 5.00pm)

Belfast 028 9504 1744 adultsguarddutydesk@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Northern 028 94413659 randal.mchugh@northerntrust.hscni.net

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South Eastern	028 9250 1227	<a href="mailto:adultprotectiongatewayteam@setrust.hscni.net">adultprotectiongatewayteam@setrust.hscni.net</a>
Southern	028 3756 4423	<a href="mailto:adultsafeguard.team@southerntrust.hscni.net">adultsafeguard.team@southerntrust.hscni.net</a>
Western	028 7161 1366	<a href="mailto:adultsafeguarding.referral@westerntrust.hscni.net">adultsafeguarding.referral@westerntrust.hscni.net</a>

### **Regional Emergency Social Work Services**

Monday to Friday between 5.00pm and 9.00am, plus Saturday and Sunday (24hrs)

Telephone – 028 9504 9999

### **Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)**

In an emergency call: 999

To report your concerns, call: 101

### **If you are in Republic of Ireland (ROI): Safeguarding and protection Teams**

#### **Dublin North, Dublin North City, Dublin North West**

Ms. Mary McNutt, St Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park, Dublin 20

Tel: [01 7959528](tel:017959528) Email: [Safeguarding.cho9@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho9@hse.ie)

#### **Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth and Meath**

Ms Maura Seabrooke, Ashbourne Primary Care Centre, Unit 12, Killelland Walk, Declan Street, Ashbourne, Co. Meath A84 A627

Tel: 01 6914632 Email: [safeguarding.cho8@hse.ie](mailto:safeguarding.cho8@hse.ie)

#### **Kildare, West Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City, Dublin South West**

Ms. Celine O'Connor, Beech House, 101-102 Naas Business Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: 045 920410 Email: [Safeguarding.CHO7@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.CHO7@hse.ie)

#### **Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East**

Mr. Tony McCusker, Ballinteer Health Centre, Ballinteer Avenue, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.

Tel: 01 2164511 Email: [Safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie)

#### **South Tipperary. Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford, Wexford**

Ms. Geraldine Sutton, HSE Offices, Dublin Road, Lacken, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny

Tel: 056-7784325 Email: [Safeguarding.cho5@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho5@hse.ie)

#### **Kerry and Cork**

Mr. Darragh Bergin, Unit 24/25 Doughcloyne Industrial Estate, Wilton, Cork. Eircode T12Y821

Tel: 021 4927550 Email: [Safeguarding.cho4@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho4@hse.ie)

#### **Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and East Limerick**

Ms. Maggie McNally, Tyone Health Centre, Tyone, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

Tel: 067 46470 Email: [Safeguarding.cho3@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho3@hse.ie)

#### **Galway, Roscommon and Mayo**

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Ms. Pauline Levins, La Nua, Ballybane, Castlepark Road, Galway

Tel: 091 748432 Email: [Safeguarding.cho2@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho2@hse.ie)

**Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan**

Ms. Donna Carroll, HSE Office, Community Health Care Organisation Area 1, Ballyshannon Health Campus, An Clochar, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. Tel: [071-9834660](tel:071-9834660) Email: [Safeguarding.cho1@hse.ie](mailto:Safeguarding.cho1@hse.ie)

**HSE Information Line**

Monday to Saturday, 8am-8pm

Call : [1850 24 1850](tel:1850241850)

Email: [info@hse.ie](mailto:info@hse.ie)

**Garda Síochána**

In an emergency call: 999 or 112

**Non-emergency or general enquiries**

For non-emergency or general enquiries, contact your nearest and/or local Garda Station.

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