

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

South West Doctors on Call Limited is an out of hours' family doctor service for urgent medical needs.

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

SouthDoc is an out of hours' family doctor service for urgent medical needs. SouthDoc operates from a central Call Centre in Killarney and provides out-of-hour GP service to patients across a network of Treatment Centres located throughout Cork and Kerry.

All staff have an essential role in maintaining the effective operations of the service. The safety and welfare of Children is a core objective and key priority for SouthDoc. All staff members have a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that every child availing of and /or attending our service is safe and protected from harm (physical / emotional / sexual abuse or neglect). All service touch points, and treatment centre sites have implemented Policies and Procedures to promote safe environment for children; to mitigate any potential risk which may arise and to manage it safely. The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all staff throughout the service.

SouthDoc is committed to safeguarding children and young people while they avail of our services and fulfilling our obligations as set out in Children's First Act 2015. As an organisation, we are obliged to:

- Keep children **safe from harm** while they are using our service.
- Listen to children and consider their views in all decisions affecting them.
- Carry out a **risk assessment** to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while availing of our service.
- Develop a **Child Safeguarding Statement** that outlines the Policies and Procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.
- Appoint a **relevant person** to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- **Display** a child friendly poster of the policy at all sites.

Under the Child Care Act 1991, the definition of a child is "a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married". The child protection and welfare concerns for the unborn may need to be considered during pregnancy.

Risk Assessment:

This Risk Assessment has evaluated safeguarding risk of potential harm to a child from abuse while attending our service. It does not include risks to general health and safety.

Harm is as defined by the Children First Act 2015 (Sections 11(1) (a) and Section 2), in relation to a child as.

- (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 combination of acts, omissions or circumstances, or otherwise.

Safeguarding risks are outlined in the context of the following elements of service provision.

- Telephone Triage
- Treatment Centre Visits
- Home Visits
- Interaction with other services

Key Risks Identified are:

- Risk of harm to a child from a staff member.
- Risk of harm to a child from another person attending the service.
- Risk of harm or concerns not being recognised or reported by staff.
- Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a child.
- Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015 and/or related guidance in SouthDoc.

Sr. No	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage 'Risks Identified'
1	Risk of harm to a child from a staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-employment checks – Garda Vetting • Mandatory on-line Children First Training for all staff • Information sessions for staff on requirements of new legislation • Children First National Guidance available on the Intranet. • Professional registration for healthcare staff • SouthDoc Code of Conduct for all staff • SouthDoc Child Protection and Welfare policy available to staff which outlines how to report concerns • Local procedures in place for management of allegations against a staff member • Children will not be examined without a parent/guardian present (unless in the event of a life threatening situation)
2	Risk of harm to a child from a service user (adult or child), visitor or member of the public (includes online risk).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff supervision and training • Children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent/guardian. • Reporting procedure in place
3	Risk of harm to a child due to child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a staff member	<p>Staff information, supervision and training</p> <p>Reporting procedures</p> <p>Legal and administrative consequences for nonreporting</p>

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Sr. No	Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage "Risks Identified"
4	Risk of harm to a child due to a child protection or welfare concern not being recognised or reported by a child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training on an ongoing basis • Staff supervision during hours of service
5	Risk of harm to a child due to not implementing the Children First Act 2015 and/or related guidance in SouthDoc Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training on an ongoing basis • Staff supervision during hours of service • Staff awareness briefings- theme days

Procedures:

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed with due regard to, and in accordance with, the Children First Act 2015, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), HSE Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement and Guidance issued by Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Department of Education circular 0041/2025.

Policies and Procedures have been developed to promote safe environments for children; to mitigate the potential for risk to arise; and to manage it safely where it does. In addition to the procedures outlined in the Risk Assessment, the following Policies and Procedures support our intention to safeguard children availing of any SouthDoc services:

- CSC 050 - Child Protection and Welfare Policy
- CSC 051 - Policy for Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse

All procedures listed are available upon request.

Governance:

The process for completing Child Safeguarding Risk Assessments and Child Safeguarding Statement is governed by the SouthDoc Senior Management. All staff, clinical and non- clinical, throughout the organisation have operational responsibility for ensuring this policy is relevant and all risks are covered with Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and all procedures are in place.

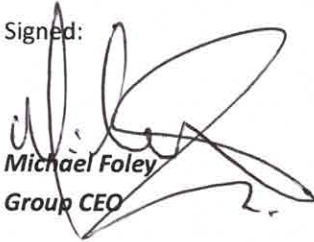
Implementation:

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.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually with the next review date on 01/10/2026 or as soon as practicable if there has been any legislative update or after any significant incident.

The Child Safeguarding Statement will be circulated to all staff members across all operational sites, and each site will display publicly their Child Safeguarding Statement from 1st May 2021.

Signed:



Michael Foley
Group CEO