

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

Cumann Uiscebhealaigh Intíre na h-Éireann

Child Protection Guidelines

May 2018



INDEX

Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT	4
2.0 DEFINITIONS.....	5
2.1 IWAI CHILD PROTECTION STRUCTURE	7
3.0 WHAT TO DO AT BRANCH LEVEL BEFORE AN EVENT.	8
4.0 GENERAL SAFE PRACTICES AND PREVENTION.....	8
5.0 PARENTS AND GUARDIANS	9
6.0 RECOGNISING SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE	10
7.0 DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS / DISCLOSURES	11
8.0 DEALING WITH THE ABUSED	12
8.1 REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE IN THE IWAI.....	13
9.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF AN EVENT CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (ECPO).....	14
10.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF AN BRANCH CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (BCPO)	15
11.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF NATIONAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON	16
Appendix 1 - Child Safeguarding Statement.....	17
Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment	19
Appendix 3 – Child Safeguarding Report Form	21

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the new edition of the IWAI Child Protection Guidelines. This document replaces the previous IWAI guidance *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Activities*.

Child protection is everyone's concern and in particular for organisations like ours that have family memberships and organise activities which have numbers of children attending. This document has been produced to enable us all to work together to create a positive and safe environment that will offer maximum protection to members and promote the opportunity for our young members to safely enjoy our events fully.

The spirit of this approach has been summarised appropriately by Dr. Katherine Zappone, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs; *"While we must strive to protect children and young people from harm, it is equally important that we do not restrict them from taking all of the opportunities that life has to offer. It is in all our interests to see our children reaching their full potential, and I want to encourage and support people who work with children to continue to do so. The responsibility to protect children and young people can be daunting, but I hope that families, communities and those who work with children will find this revised Guidance a practical and supportive reference resource*."*

These guidelines are complementary to government guidelines both North and South covered in the documents *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* (IRL) and *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland* (Aug 2017)

I would like to thank our volunteers for their valuable work in compiling this document, Karl Byrne for his authorship, Margaret Groarke for reviewing and Tony Byron for coordinating the project, I would finally like to thank all Members for their continued volunteerism without which this Association could not operate.

John Dolan

President

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

12th May 2018

*From Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017 [Children First National Guidance 2017](#)

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Statutory Authorities guidelines on protecting children place clear duties on service providers to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is therefore the responsibility of IWAI to have in place protective procedures and structures and to report any suspicions about physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect to the relevant statutory Authorities identified in section 2 of [Children First National Guidance 2017](#). and section 6 of Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland

The IWAI Child Protection Guidelines are intended for the use of Branch Officers, Committee Members and IWAI Members.

All units of the Association, Branches and Rallies, Special Interest Groups, who organise any activities of any description must implement in full these guidelines when organising any branch events or rallies where children are present.

The Chairperson of each Branch supported by the Branch Executive and Members must ensure that the policy is operating in their respective Branch.

These guidelines are complementary to government guidelines both North and South covered in the documents *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (IRL) and Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland

The full guidelines should be held by all Branch and Event Committees and Child Protection Officers. These are available at [Children First National Guidance 2017](#) and [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)

Any comments on the IWAI Child Protection Guidelines should be addressed to Honsecretary@iwai.ie.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the IWAI Guidelines, relevant definitions are:

“Children” means all young people under the age of 18.

IWAI is a **“relevant service”** under the Children First National Guidance 2017 as we would fall under the following criteria:

“Any work or activity which involves providing:

Educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children

Care or supervision of children

Formal consultation with, or formal participation by, a child in matters which affect his or her life”

Statutory Authorities:

The authorities who promote the welfare and protection of children and who in cases of alleged abuse of children have the responsibility to investigate all such allegations. In the Republic of Ireland, the statutory authorities are An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive and TUSLA, while it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Department of Health Social Services (DHSSPS) who have a similar role in Northern Ireland. The DHSSPS however do not investigate individual cases. These investigations are carried out by the relevant Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT). Health and Social Care Trusts were established as part of a statutory duty under the Children (NI) Order 1995 to ensure the welfare of a child. Where there is a risk that a child is in danger of abuse or serious neglect Social Services must always intervene to safeguard them.

Children First Act 2015 obligations

The Children First Act 2015 places the following obligations on *“organisations which provide services to children and young people”* which includes IWAI:

Keep children safe from harm while they are using our service

Carry out a risk assessment (see Appendix 2) 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

Appoint a relevant person to be the first point of contact in respect of the organisation’s Child Safeguarding Statement

Event Child Protection Officer (ECPO)

An Event Child Protection Officer (ECPO) will be appointed for each event. The ECPO oversees all child protection matters at the event on behalf of the Branch.

Branch Child Protection Officer (BCPO)

The Branch Child Protection Officer (BCPO) is the designated liaison person for their branch.

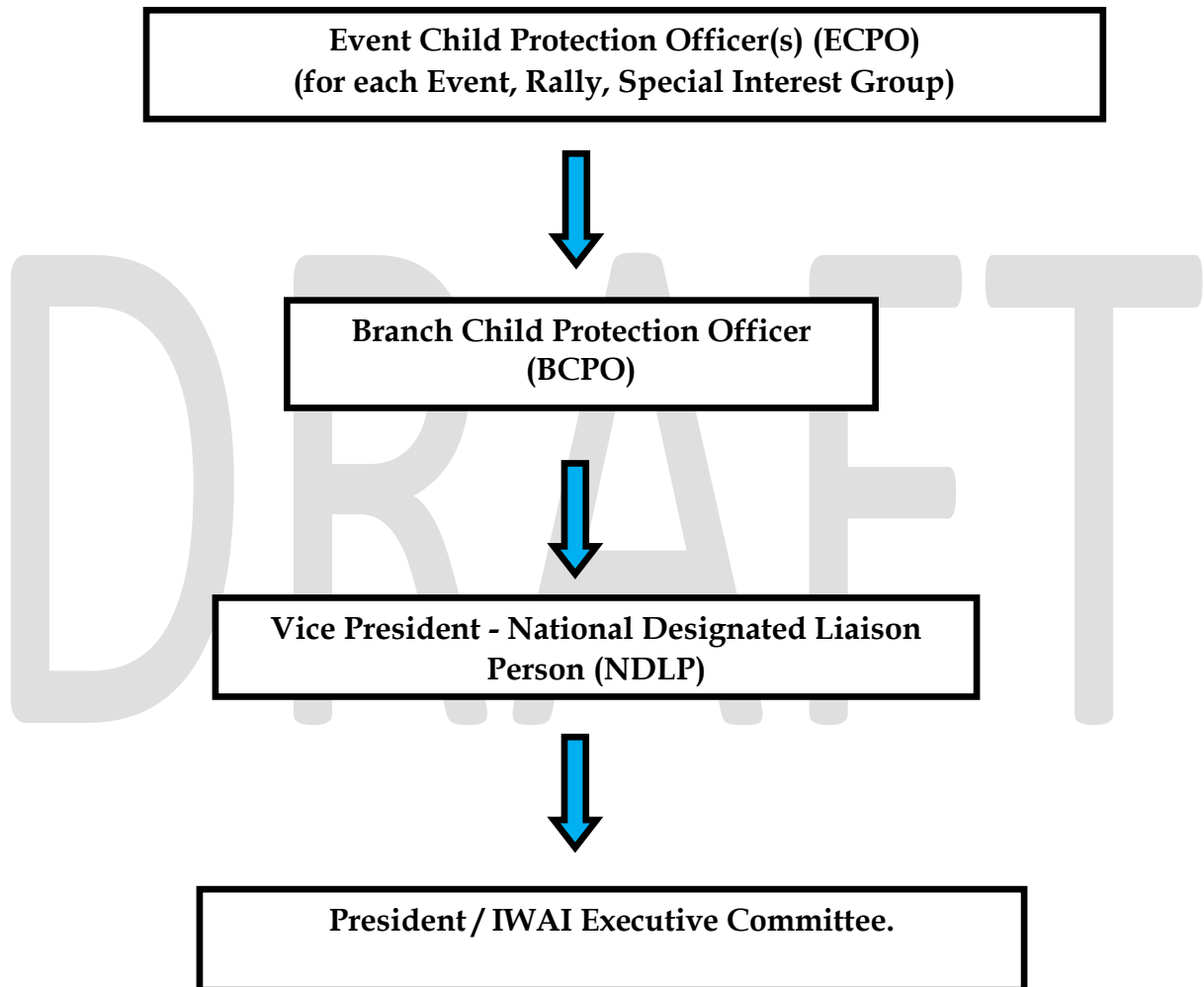
National Designated Liaison Person (NDLP)

The national designated liaison person is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within IWAI are in place, so that child welfare and protection concerns can be referred promptly to TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust.

DRAFT

2.1 IWAI CHILD PROTECTION STRUCTURE

IWAI Child Protection Structure



3.0 WHAT TO DO AT BRANCH LEVEL BEFORE AN EVENT.

As outlined in the Children First Act 2015, the branch must put in place a plan to keep children safe from harm while they are attending any IWAI branch or rally events.

The Chairperson of each Branch must ensure that the branch nominates a Branch Child Protection Officers (BCPO) and inform the Branch membership of the appointments. The BCPO must ensure the appointment of an Event Child Protection Officer (ECPO) for each branch event. The BCPOs & ECPOs must complete Children First training (available by registering online at <https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/registration>).

The Chairperson of each Branch must ensure that the Branch carries out a risk assessment (see Appendix 2) to identify whether a child or young person could be harmed while attending any IWAI branch or rally events. Refer to Appendix 2 for sample template. Note: No event should be organised or take place without this assessment.

The Chairperson of each Branch must ensure that the Branch develops 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. Refer to Appendix 1 for a Child Safeguarding Statement sample template.

4.0 GENERAL SAFE PRACTICES AND PREVENTION

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children they are in contact with may be experiencing abuse or neglect and TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust must be informed where there are "*reasonable grounds for concern*". Child abuse can be categorised into five different types:

- neglect;
- emotional abuse;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse; and
- exploitation

More detailed explanations or examples of the above categories are available at Chapter 2 of [Children First National Guidance 2017](#) and S 2.6 of [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#).

TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust will decide on what action should be taken following a report of those concerns. Examples of what might involve “*reasonable grounds for concern*” are:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

Remember:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made
2. Reports of concerns should be made without delay to TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust.

5.0 PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and Guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children. They should encourage their children to participate fully in all activities organised for the children in order to get maximum fun and enjoyment out of Association activities. They should always remember that children take part in these activities for their own enjoyment and not that of their parents. Parents and Guardians should work in partnership with members organising children’s activities. They should ensure that the IWAI is fulfilling its responsibility towards the children. They should encourage the children to tell them about anyone causing them harm.

ALL members, parents or not, are responsible for reporting any issues which concern children to the ECPO, BCPO or any committee member.

For general information for members, details of symptoms of abuse, signs of abuse and things to look out for are set out below. More specific detail can be found in [Children First National Guidance 2017](#).

6.0 RECOGNISING SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Bullying

The risk of bullying and harassment by children and adults should be anticipated by taking active steps to prevent it. A decisive response should be made to any indications that it is happening. Remember, it is the response of the victim not the intention of the doer that is important i.e. a child may feel bullied although the person committing the behaviour doesn't believe it is bullying.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury that causes significant harm to a child. This would include shaking or the use of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is a crime and any instance will be reported to Gardai /PSNI.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her arousal or that of others.

For example:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child.
- Intentional touching of the body of a child for the purpose of sexual arousal.
- Sexual exploitation of a child.

It may include non-contact activities such as involving the child in looking at pornographic material.

Signs of Child Abuse

Signs of child abuse can be physical or behavioural. A pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator. The following indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse is not a factor. The list is not exhaustive.

Physical Indicators

- Unexplained bruising.
- Repeated injury.
- Inconsistent stories and excuses relating to injuries.

Behavioural Indicators

- Unexplained changes in behaviour - becoming withdrawn or aggressive.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Distrustful of adults or excessive attachment to adults.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness, behaviour or language.

7.0 DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS / DISCLOSURES

Response to a Child reporting any form of Abuse

Any allegation/disclosure should be immediately reported by the member to the Event and/or Branch Child Protection Officer with details. The following should be of assistance to a member who may receive an allegation/disclosure from a child to help in knowing what to say to the child.

- (i) It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a competent and sensitive way, listening and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened.
- (ii) It is important to stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Take what the child is saying seriously.
- (iii) It should be understood that the child has decided to tell about something very important. The experience should be a positive one so that the child will not mind talking to those involved on the investigation.
- (iv) The child should understand that, recognising the need for confidentiality, it is not possible that this information be kept secret.
- (v) No judgemental statement should be made regarding the person against whom the allegation is made.
- (vi) The child should not be questioned unless what he/she is saying is unclear. Use only open questions such as “can you tell me what you mean by that” The child should be given some indication and reassurance of what would happen next such as informing parents/guardian, Health Board or Social Services. Bear in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues about the welfare of children. It is important that the rights of the child and the person against whom the complaint has been made are protected.

Bear in mind the following:

- (i) A guarantee of absolute confidentiality or secrecy cannot be given as the welfare of the child will supersede all other considerations.
- (ii) All information should be treated sensitively and should be discussed only with those who need to know.
- (iii) Information conveyed to the parents/guardian of the child should be done in a sensitive way.
- (iv) Giving information to others who “need to know” is not a breach of confidentiality.

Anonymous Complaints

There may be a feeling that anonymous complaints should be ignored. In this case in the interest of the safety of children no complaint should be ignored. Any such complaints should be brought to the attention of the ECPO or the BCPO the information should be checked out in a confidential manner. If the ECPO/BCPO has reasonable grounds for concern the procedures outlined in this Code should be followed.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours circulating, relating to inappropriate behaviour, should be brought to the attention of the ECPO or BCPO without delay and checked out confidentially and sensitively. If the ECPO/BCPO has reasonable grounds for concern the procedures outlined in this Code should be followed.

8.0 DEALING WITH THE ABUSED

Key Points regarding reporting and dealing with child protection concerns:

- where a concern has been brought to an ECPO or BCPO, they should complete the IWAI Child Safeguarding Report and decide if “reasonable grounds”¹ for concern exist;
- if reasonable grounds exist, a verbal report should be made immediately to the relevant Statutory Authority;
- the completed IWAI Child Safeguarding Report form should be sent by registered post to the NDLP in either case and receipt retained;
- copies of the report must **NOT** be retained by either the ECPO or BCPO.
- the NDLP will report, on an anonymised basis, to the Executive;
- note that if reasonable grounds are reported it is not for the IWAI to investigate but to immediately notify the relevant Statutory Authority

In the event of non-availability of the ECPO, the BCPO or the NDLP, reports and/or allegations of abuse may be made directly to the relevant Statutory Authority.

¹ Informal contact may be made with TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust if there is a question about, or if the NDLP is unsure of, the “reasonable grounds”.

8.1 REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE IN THE IWAI

Reporting Allegations of Child abuse in the IWAI

Allegation of child abuse received by Event Child Protection Officer and/or Branch Child Protection Officer. An IWAI Child Safeguarding Report (See Appendix 3) must be completed.

If not reported to a Statutory Authority – completed Child Safeguarding Report must be sent by registered post to the NDLP

Reasonable grounds for concern established
Report to Statutory Authorities.

Completed Child Safeguarding Report must be sent by registered post to the NDLP.
No copies are to be retained by ECPO/BCPO.

NDLP may refer an unreported event to the Statutory Authorities.
Where report has been made locally NDLP will follow up with TUSLA and complete on-line report where required.

NDLP will report, on an anonymised basis, to the Executive.

The following examples would constitute *reasonable grounds* for concern and should be reported:

- specific indication from the child that (s)he was abused;
- an account by a person who saw the child being abused;
- evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- an injury or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indicators of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- consistent indication, over a period of time, that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

9.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF AN EVENT CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (ECPO)

All units of the Association, Branches, Rallies and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), who organise any activities of any description at which children might be present MUST appoint an Event Child Protection Officer (ECPO). This Event Child Protection Officer should complete the Children First online training (by registering at <https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/registration>) and be Garda/PSNI vetted to enable him/her to carry out their responsibilities.

The ECPO must be appointed by the Rally Committee or Branch Committee, as appropriate. Their name should be recorded in the Minutes and contact details made available on event literature to ensure they are available to all members and parents.

DUTIES

- (i) Ensuring child protection and safeguarding procedures are complied with for the event.
- (ii) Ensuring that a Risk Assessment (see Appendix 2) is completed for the event.
- (iii) Completion of a IWAI Child Safeguarding Form in all instances. Do not make copies of this form.
- (iv) Reporting to a Statutory Authority, if relevant.
- (v) Deliver original IWAI Child Safeguarding form to the BCPO (by hand or registered post).
- (vi) Liaising with the BCPO/NDLP where required.

See “Reporting Allegations of Child abuse in the IWAI” chart on page 13.

10.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF AN BRANCH CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (BCPO)

Branches and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) MUST appoint a Branch Child Protection Officer (BCPO). The BCPO must complete the Children First online training (at <https://childrenfirstuniversal.hseland.ie/registration>) and be Garda/PSNI vetted to enable him/her to carry out their responsibilities.

The BCPO can be a sitting member of the Branch Committee and may also hold another officer role. Non-committee members may also be appointed on a job specific basis provided they are proposed and seconded etc at a branch meeting and willing to do the job. A BCPO may also act as an ECPO. Their name should be recorded in the Minutes and contact details made available on the Branch website to ensure they are available to all members and parents.

DUTIES

- (i) Ensuring that the child protection structures and reporting procedures operate within the Branch and are followed.
- (ii) Ensuring that any child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to TUSLA/ Health and Social Care Trust.
- (iii) Completion of an IWAI Child Safeguarding Form, in all instances. Do not make copies of this form once completed.
- (iv) Reporting to a Statutory Authority, if relevant.
- (v) Deliver original IWAI Child Safeguarding form to the NDLP (by hand or registered post). (Copies of this form must NOT be retained either by the ECPO or BCPO)
- (vi) Liaising with ECPOs/NDLP where required.

11.0 APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES OF NATIONAL DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

The Vice President of the IWAI shall be the National Designated Liaison Person (NDLP).

The NDLP shall be responsible for the IWAI's child safeguarding policy and procedures.

DUTIES

- (i) Ensuring that all Branches/Special Interest Groups and Rallies (or other events) have the relevant Child Protection Officer in place (ECPO/BCPO).
- (ii) Ensuring all Child Protection Officers have completed the relevant training and are Garda/PSNI vetted.
- (iii) Ensuring that all necessary reporting has been made to the relevant Statutory Authorities.
- (iv) Completion of an IWAI Child Safeguarding Form, in all instances.
- (v) Reporting to a Statutory Authority, if relevant.
- (vi) Safe and appropriate storage of IWAI Child Safeguarding forms received from ECPOs or BCPOs.
- (vii) Liaising with ECPOs/BCPOs where required.

Appendix 1 - Child Safeguarding Statement

TEMPLATE GUIDE

ORGANISERS SHOULD ADD TO THIS TEMPLATE BASED ON THE SPECIFICS OF THEIR EVENT.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

1.	Name of service being provided:	IWAI (Inland Waterway Association Ireland)
2.	Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm (brief outline of what our service is, what we do and our commitment to safeguard children)	IWAI is a voluntary leisure organisation interested in boating and related activities on Ireland's inland waterways. From time to time, the association organises rallies (groups of boats meeting together with organised activities, the largest of which lasts for 10 days in late July). IWAI is a family friendly organisation and children attend, with their parents or guardians, these rallies or other activities arranged by the IWAI. To that end, the IWAI will safeguard the children that attend our events using by following the policy set out in [IWAI Child Protection Guidelines].
3.	Risk Assessment	Parents/guardians will be in attendance at IWAI organised activities and will have given permission for their child/ren to be photographed (including video) and for participation in activities.
3.1	Adults alone with children	Minimum 2 adults supervising children's activities; approx. 1 adult per 7-10 children, depending on age group
3.2	Taking children on boats alone	IWAI practice is that members should not be alone with children
3.3	Bullying	Supervision and oversight
3.4	Children not knowing who to talk to	ECPO/BCPO, as appropriate, will advise parents and children
3.5	Safety around water	IWAI are very safety conscious and promote safe boating at all gatherings including life jacket wearing, safety in dinghies, etc.
3.6	Camping	At some events, teenagers may be permitted to camp. Permission must be specifically obtained from parents.
3.7	Appropriate activities	All children's activities must be approved by the

		event committee
4.	Procedures	Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service.
		Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service
		Procedure for safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children
		Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm
		Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla
		Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons
		Procedures for appointing a relevant person
5.	Implementation	We recognise that implementation is an ongoing 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 on [December 2018] or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: _____

Provider

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

[address and contact details]

For queries, please contact _____

Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015

Appendix 2 – Risk Assessment

RISK ASSESSMENT

BRANCH: _____

EVENT NAME: _____

DATE(S): _____

Please note: The Executive has informally noted some areas of risk/concerns. Please complete the Risk Assessment with risks/actions particular to your Branch and/or Event.

Risk Identified	Action Taken
Spending time with children alone or away from others	Ensure that another adult or the child's parent is present.
Taking lone children in a car or on a boat	In no circumstances should members be alone with children.
Photography/video including children	Specific Opt-in is required on an event registration form.
Use of social media by Committee/Branches (e.g. photos at rallies)	As above
Children to children bullying/abuse	Ensure that no unsupervised children's activities take place
Camping at rallies	Ensure that one or more responsible committee member is in charge of where camp is set up and regularly check on children/teenagers. Specific permission to be on event registration form.
Games and activities being age appropriate	Ensure that committee has approved ALL activities/games/etc. for children to ensure that all committee members have discussed any relevant risk. Parents MUST give consent to any activities taking place away from them.
Children feeling unable to report concerns either on their own behalf or on others	Committee members, in particular any appointed CPOs, should encourage children to talk to them.
Inappropriate behaviours around children	Members should be aware that children are around and try to consider their behaviours accordingly. Children should not be allowed to night events if not in parents

Risk Identified	Action Taken
	company or without specific parental permission.
Allegations of any kind of abuse being made by a child to any member	Member should immediately contact [<i>Name and phone number of ECPO and/or BCPO</i>] who will ensure that the disclosure/allegation by the child is dealt with in accordance with IWAI policy.
Allegations/disclosures being investigated by members/committees or others	Member should immediately contact [<i>Name and phone number of ECPO and/or BCPO</i>] who will ensure that the disclosure/allegation by the child is dealt with in accordance with IWAI policy.
Other Risks Identified	

Signed: _____ (ECPO) Date _____
 _____ (BCPO) Date _____
 _____ (Branch Chairman) Date _____
 _____ (Rally Chairman) Date _____

Appendix 3 – Child Safeguarding Report Form

IWAI CHILD SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM

Event Name: _____

Date Held: _____

Name of child:	
Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):	
Name of Boat:	
Date of Report:	
IWAI Officer taking Report:	
<p>Details of Report: <i>(it is important when completing this section to record the language used by the person making the report to you)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.2; font-weight: normal;">DRAFT</p> <p><i>(Use continuation sheet if necessary)</i></p>	
<p>Information passed to: <i>(By registered post/hand)</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> ECPO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> BCPO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> NDLP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> TUSLA (via online Portal)</p>
<p>Any other relevant comments/remarks:</p>	