



Galway Rape Crisis Centre

Child Safeguarding Statement

The Galway Rape Crisis Centre provides services in relation to Sexual violence and Child Sexual Abuse.

The Galway Rape Crisis Centre (GRCC) is fully committed to the safeguarding of children and young people, who come in contact with our service. Management, staff and volunteers in this organisation recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and our services endeavour to safeguard children and young people. GRCC aims to create a safe and healthy environment for the young people with whom we work directly and indirectly, and we are committed at all times to ensure the safety and protection of children. GRCC are fully committed to ensuring safeguarding practice that reflects the statutory responsibilities and complies with best practice and has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and TúsIa's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

Services provided by GRCC to children/young people, are as follows:

- GRCC provides support and counselling to adult and adolescent survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse from 14 years. Many young people under 18 access our **Helpline** and we offer them a listening and support service. Adults also use the helpline, for support and this may include concerned parents or professionals seeking advice re children at risk.
- GRCC operates an **Adolescent Clinic** for 14 years upwards. Parental or guardian consent is required, and the parent/guardian must accompany the young person to the first appointment.
- GRCC provides a **Psychological Supporter** as a **SATU accompaniment** at the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU) in Galway, to young people aged 14-18. Each child and family member has a fully trained Garda vetted volunteer present during their time at the Unit to provide psychological and practical support.

- GRCC provides a **Garda and Court accompaniment and Support Service** provided by trained Garda vetted staff. The service aims to provide appropriate support to young people who are witnesses in any criminal trial. GRCC also provide a **Legal information clinic**, run by a qualified Solicitor volunteer.
- GRCC run an **education programme** for secondary schools in Transition year, fifth and 6th year, at the invitation of the schools. GRCC's trained staff provide **Disclosure and awareness training** to colleges, institutions and other agencies as requested.
- GRCC utilise the services of casual short-term **Volunteers for fundraising** activities as well as Corporate Sponsors whose staff may volunteer. Though these people will not have direct contact with GRCC clients, they may come in contact with the public who make disclosures, or this work may trigger personal disclosure with identifying information about children at risk.

Risk Assessment

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services, and other risks we may become aware of, directly or indirectly through adults or child disclosures. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

The potential risk in relation to any of the types of disclosures listed in points 1-5 would be that the disclosures might not be handled correctly and the opportunity to protect or help the child/children at risk would be lost. The procedures outlined at 1-5 are designed to manage this risk. Other issues with potential risks are listed from 6-7 below, together with the GRCC procedures designed to manage these issues correctly.

The Designated Liaison Person DP, responsible for dealing with any concerns or reports regarding the safeguarding of GRCC participants is the **Clinical Director, Deirdre Ronan 087 1912176 (Monday to Wednesday)**. The **Deputy DP is Marian Shiels, 087 0904222 (Thursday and Friday)**

" If during the counselling process, at any stage, it emerges that there is an immediate risk to the child, the DP/Deputy DP must make contact immediately with the HSE. In the absence of the DP/Deputy DP the mandated person should contact the on Duty Social Worker (HSE) and inform the DP/Deputy DP as soon as possible. Where it is clear to the personnel of this organisation that there is an immediate risk to the protection/welfare of a child outside of HSE office hours and the DP/Deputy DP is not available, they need to contact an Garda Síochána."

Risks Identified	Procedures in place to manage risk
<p>1. An adult or child may disclose abuse/risk of abuse to a child on the Helpline, to a staff member or volunteer.</p> <p>A parent concerned adult or professional may use the Helpline to seek advice in handling a situation where a child /teenager under 18 may be at risk of abuse or has been abused.</p> <p>Henceforth the Designated Person (DP) refers to GRCC Clinical Director- Deirdre Ronan And the Deputy DP is Marian Sheils.</p>	<p>Contacting the GRCC Helpline offers an opportunity for parents and concerned adults to allow them to explore, usually anonymously, their concerns regarding any child/young person. Children/young people themselves may use the Helpline anonymously to speak about their experience of abuse and to seek some guidance as to how to access help. Concerned parents or professionals seeking referrals for services will receive information and appropriate referral to Túsla or other counselling agencies that will assist them.</p> <p><i>The Frontline counsellor follows the guidelines in the GRCC Child Protection Policy (henceforth CPP) for handling a disclosure of child abuse. Frontline telephone counsellors assist children/young people to explore their situation and identify adults to whom they may disclose their abuse. Adults are supported in taking any necessary steps towards reporting reasonable concerns to the statutory services.</i></p> <p><i>NB If identifying information is received, the Telephone counsellor reports the disclosure to the Designated Person (DP)/Deputy DP, who completes Túsla' Child Protection and Welfare report form and forwards it to Túsla.</i></p>
<p>2. Direct disclosures of sexual violence/abuse in Crisis Counselling, by young clients aged 14-18.</p>	<p>GRCC provides crisis counselling for young people 14-18 following a recent rape or sexual assault. Prior to the start of counselling, the therapist will explain to the child and parents the requirement to notify Túsla of all cases of child abuse and will obtain their written consent.</p> <p><i>Therapists must discuss each case involving an underage client with the DP and complete the Túsla standard report form. The DP will notify Túsla of all cases of alleged child abuse. If the parent or child informs the therapist that there is already a Túsla Social worker involved in the case, the DP will make contact with him/her, as soon as possible to notify them of the report.</i></p>

3.	<p>Direct disclosures of current abuse of children/risk of current abuse, by adult clients in the course of therapy in GRCC.</p>	<p>Some adults may disclose in therapy in GRCC that one or more of their own children, or a child or children known to them, is currently being abused or has recently suffered abuse, or is currently at risk of abuse.</p> <p><i>The therapist will remind the client of the GRCC's policy re Child protection. The situation will be explored and, the therapist will inform the client that s/he will have to discuss the current risk to the child/children with the (DP)/Deputy DP and the risk to the child will have to be reported to Túsla. The (DP)/Deputy DP will report the case immediately to the relevant Túsla Social Work Department, or to the Gardaí, in a case of an emergency where a social worker is not available. The Standard Report form will be completed and will then be forwarded to Túsla, by the (DP)/Deputy DP, as a matter of urgency.</i></p>
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4.	<p>Retrospective disclosures of historic abuse, by adults or young people in the course of therapy, through accompaniment services, while receiving GRCC training or while volunteering to fundraise for us.</p> <p><u>SATU Accompaniment</u> A Psychological Supporter with concerns can liaise directly with their line manager Sarahjane Grennan.</p> <p><u>Court Accompaniers</u> with concerns can liaise directly with their line manager Edna Mac Namara.</p> <p>Staff involved in <u>Education</u> can liaise directly with the Head of Education & Training Michelle Caulfield.</p> <p>Volunteers involved in <u>Fundraising</u> can liaise directly with their Fundraising Manager Susan Costello.</p>	<p>Some adults and young people may disclose in therapy, while attending SATU and Court services, while in receipt of GRCC training, or while Fundraising, abuse that took place during their childhood or teens.</p> <p>In the case of retrospective disclosure from a client/family member that they were abused as a child or teenager: for all cases in which it is the professional judgement of the (DP)/Deputy DP, together with the relevant staff member, where identifying information has been disclosed, that a child or children may currently be at risk from a known offender, the (DP)/Deputy DP will notify Túsla, using the standard report Form.</p> <p><i>All potential clients are informed of this policy from the outset. Some sessions will be given to exploring the client's fears about reporting to Túsla, to help them to come to terms with the need for reporting. However, under the Children First Guidance, the (DP)/Deputy DP will report such cases/concerns, even when the client does not consent.</i></p>
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5.	<p>Direct disclosures between GRCC volunteers or staff with young people under 18, or with adults referring to children at risk, through accompaniment services, education talks/ disclosure training or while fundraising.</p>	<p>GRCC Volunteers/Staff who provide accompaniment for underage clients/their family members at the SATU or at Garda Stations/Courts or who provide educational talks to young people are Garda vetted and receive intensive training in relation to maintaining the proper boundaries of their role, in each situation. Fundraising Volunteers pass on the Helpline details and do not deal directly with clients.</p> <p><i>SATU Accompaniment a Psychological Supporter with concerns can liaise directly with their line manager Sarahjane Grennan.</i></p> <p><i>Court Accompaniers with concerns can liaise directly with their line manager Edna Mac Namara.</i></p> <p><i>Staff involved in Education can liaise directly with the Head of Education & Training Michelle Caulfield.</i></p> <p><i>Volunteers involved in fundraising can liaise directly with their Fundraising manager Susan Costello. Each line manager can report directly to the (DP)/Deputy DP who will make a joint report to Túsla.</i></p>
6.	<p>An allegation of abuse or misconduct in relation to a child availing of GRCC services is made against an employee or volunteer.</p>	<p>In the event of allegations being made against a GRCC staff member/volunteer, the protection of the child/young person is the first and paramount consideration.</p> <p><i>GRCC's Child Protection Policy Document CPP Section 6 & 7 clearly outlines the procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against Staff/volunteers of a child availing of our service.</i></p> <p><i>The child protection issues, including the reporting of concerns or allegations, fall within the remit of the DP and the Executive Director.</i></p>

7.	<p>Confidentiality, and data protection, in relation to Child Protection issues and Communication between GRCC and other agencies, especially Túsla.</p> <p><i>Records of Child Protection Referrals are stored in a central file, which can be accessed only by the DP. All client information is of a sensitive nature and information regarding Child Protection is of particular concern. The DP has responsibility for the safety of this information.</i></p>	<p>The GRCC is committed to ensuring people’s right to confidentiality. Adherence to strict confidentiality regarding information received relating to service-users and related issues forms part of the contracts of both employees and volunteers of GRCC. Therapists will discuss the limits of confidentiality with clients from the outset.</p> <p>However, in relation to child protection and welfare, the GRCC undertakes that: -</p> <p>Any information with child protection implications will be shared with relevant individuals/agencies like Tusla, on a need-to-know basis in the best interest of the child/young person. Parents and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child at further risk. This includes statutory and non-statutory services.</p> <p>With regard to reporting under the Children First guidelines, staff and volunteers have ‘privilege’ in relation to such cases, as set out in legislation by The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998. However, such information must never be disclosed inappropriately, either inside the GRCC or in the public domain. Before disclosure to a third party, staff must discuss the matter fully with the (DP)/Deputy DP.</p> <p><i>Staff should only access records on a need-to-know basis in relation to their role. GRCC is committed to sharing information in relation to child protection with TUSLA Child and Family Agency and therapists are available to liaise in the best interest of the child. GRCC will share what is necessary and proportionate in the circumstances of each individual case. This is in keeping with the principles of Data Protection which recognise that in certain circumstances information can be shared in the interest of child protection.</i></p>
	<p>For queries, or concerns re child protection, please contact: GRCC’s Designate Person for Child Protection and Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015.</p>	<p>Deirdre Ronan- Clinical Director</p> <p>Email: clinicaldirector@grcc.ie</p> <p>Phone: 091-564800 during office hours.</p>

Conclusion

GRCC's **Child Safeguarding Statement 2020** has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Túsła'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:

GRCC's Child Protection Policy CPP includes:

- Having a Designated Liaison Person, the Clinical Director.
- The management of allegations of abuse and misconduct on the part of staff and volunteers against a child availing of our services is held by the Executive Director Designated Person DP and procedures have been put in place in relation to this. Section 5 CPP.
- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- A clear reporting procedure to respond to concerns around children's welfare and safety, Section 5 CPP.
- A code of behaviour for staff and volunteers. Section 6, CPP.
- A safe recruitment and selection procedure, including Garda vetting or all staff and volunteers. Section 7, CPP.
- A procedure to respond to complaints. Section 5, CPP.
- Mandated Reporting: All counsellors are mandated for the reporting of child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla. This is done jointly with the Designated Person- Clinical Director or the Executive Director.
- An updated list of all mandated persons in the service is kept by the Executive Director and the Clinical Director.
- Defining and Identifying child harm and abuse.
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of key staff.
- Induction and ongoing training of staff in relation to GRCC's Child Protection Policy.
- Provision of supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children.
- Sharing information about the child protection policy and good practices with families and children.
- Reviewing DRCC's child protection policy and practices on a regular basis. All GRCC policies are available on request.
- Child protection Concerns in relation to our Education Programme Section 5.3
- Child protection Concerns in relation to GRCC Satu Accompaniment 5.5 Attach for SATU
- Child protection Concerns in relation to GRCC Court Accompaniers 5.6 Attach for Court
- Irish law also provides some legal protection for people who report child abuse. The *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998* means that a person who reports suspected child abuse reasonably and in good faith cannot be sued successfully for making that report, even if it subsequently turns out to be incorrect.
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0049/print.html>

Review of and Feedback on these Policies and Procedures

We recognise that these GRCC Child safeguarding protection and welfare policies and procedures will need to be reviewed and updated regularly in light of any legislative or other relevant developments. The Executive Director, Clinical Director, Board and team will review these Policies and Procedures on an annual basis.

Please fill in the below table regarding the dates that these policies and procedures came into force and the next date for their review.

If you have any comment about changes or additions that you feel would be helpful, please discuss with the Executive Director or email in your comments/suggestions.

Version	Date of issue	Written by	Reviewed by	Next review date
V5	March 2021	GRCC	BOM	29/03/2022
V6	July 2022	GRCC	Clin Director	01/07/2023

For queries, please contact the Designated Person; Deirdre Ronan: clinicaldirector@grcc.ie