

# DRUMCONDRA MEDICAL

## CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### **Policy Statement**

Drumcondra Medical provides a primary care service caring for our patient's medical needs in a courteous, professional and confidential manner. Drumcondra Medical is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children and young people with whom our staff come into contact. Our policy on child safeguarding is in accordance with "Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and "Our Duty to Care" and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

We are committed to promoting the rights of the child to be protected, to be listened to and to have their own views taken into consideration.

### **Principle**

This policy is underpinned by the "Children First", National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and "Our Duty to Care"

### **Purpose**

This policy applies to all employees / volunteers / students who have contact with children and young people on the premises of Drumcondra Medical or through their work on behalf of Drumcondra Medical.

It is of high importance to ensure all employees / volunteers / students have an ability to recognise abuse as it can be defined in many ways.

### **What is the role of Drumcondra Medical in the context of child protection and welfare?**

We are committed to safeguarding children. We have responsibilities to all our patients; The Children First policy states that the welfare of a child must be paramount. The staff at Drumcondra Medical recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance and we fully comply with its statutory obligations. We commit to fully cooperating with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters and adopting safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm to children.

If we become concerned that a child may be at risk of, or the subject of, abuse of any kind, we will follow necessary procedures with Tulsa - the Child and Family Agency without delay.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every two years.

## **Drumcondra Medical - Risk Management Procedure**

We have carried out a risk assessment to identify areas of potential risk to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk identified:	Procedure in place to manage this risk:
Risk of harm to child in the practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parent/guardian to accompany child</li> <li>● Chaperone to be present</li> <li>● Policy for managing and reporting aggressive behaviour</li> </ul>
Risk of harm to a child by a member of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-employment check in place for new employees</li> <li>● Garda vetting</li> <li>● Professional standards for healthcare workers</li> <li>● Professional registration for healthcare professionals</li> <li>● Code of behaviour for staff</li> </ul>
Risk of harm/concern not being reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff information, supervision and training</li> <li>● Review of child protection policy every 2 years</li> </ul>

### **Procedure for reporting child protection or welfare concerns:**

The employee who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns about a child should bring them to the attention of a GP. The GP is responsible for ensuring that the child protection guidelines are appropriately implemented.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the GP must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child/ young person.

Reporting concerns is done in line with this document:

<http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/mandated-persons/making-a-mandated-report/>

## **Procedure to appoint a relevant person to oversee the assessment of risk and development of a service specific Child Safeguarding Statement.**

A Relevant Person as defined in the Children First Act 2015 as a person who is appointed by a provider of a relevant service to be the first point of contact in respect of the provider's Child Safeguarding Statement. In this instance Dr. Brian King and Dr. Sinéad Cronin are appointed the "relevant persons".

## **Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children**

A minimum of two references (one from the most recent employer) will be obtained for each staff member followed by a telephone reference check. References should be in writing. Garda Vetting will be undertaken for all staff at Drumcondra Medical. All employees will have up to date training in Child Protection (Children First eLearning training) and will be asked to sign the Drumcondra Medical Child Safeguarding Statement.

These guidelines will apply both to the recruitment of new employees and to the selection of internal candidates for promotion or job change.

Drumcondra Medical will not knowingly employ, contract or involve as a volunteer, any person to work with children or young adults who has a criminal conviction for criminal offences deemed inappropriate in relation to work with children.

## **Policy to investigate an allegation made against a staff member**

The practice policy is to adhere to Tusla's National Policy and Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Abuse and Neglect will be implemented in the case of an allegation made against a staff member.

Upon receipt of an allegation relating to a staff member the GP Partners (the GP Partners at Drumcondra Medical are also known as the Designated Liaison People), will immediately be made aware. If the allegation relates to one of the GP Partners, all GP Partners will immediately be made aware.

If an allegation is made against an employee or a GP Partner, in these situations there are two parts to the process, i.e. dealing with the allegation of abuse and dealing with the employee. Where possible these two aspects should be dealt with by two different people.

There are two different procedures to be followed:

### **1. The reporting procedure in respect of the child**

- The safety of the child is the first priority of Drumcondra Medical and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child and other children/young people are safe.
- The GP Partners will deal with the procedure involving the child/young person and the reporting to Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

### **2. The procedure for dealing with the employee**

- In making an immediate decision about the employee's presence in the organisation, the GP Partners should, as a matter of urgency, take any measures necessary to protect the child/young person. These should be proportionate to the level of risk to the child/young person; 'protective measures' do not presume guilt.
- The GP Partners should privately inform the employee that an allegation has been made against him/her and the nature of the allegation.
- If a formal report is being made, the GP Partners will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained. Furthermore, Drumcondra Medical will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- While Tusla will not provide advice on employment matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to children/young people will be sought from the local Tusla social work office. The GP Partners at Drumcondra Medical will engage with their indemnifiers.
- The GP Partners, will liaise closely with the HSE Children and Family Services/An Garda Siochana to ensure that the actions taken by Drumcondra Medical Doctors will not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
- The protective measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following:
  - suspension of duties of the person accused
  - reassignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children / young people

- working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
- or other measures as deemed appropriate

## **List of Mandated Persons**

Mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families who, by virtue of their qualifications, training and experience, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Drumcondra Medical's list of Mandated Persons as at 1st February, 2021:

- Dr. Brian King
- Dr. Sinéad Cronin
- Dr. Patrick Kelly
- Dr. Martin Maguire
- Dr. Nichola Moran