

Extern Safeguarding Statement

Extern supports children and adults with a range of needs to realise their potential - to empower them, to promote their well-being and encourage them to make their own decisions and provide informed consent. We take our responsibility to keep people safe seriously, prevent the risk of abuse, neglect, or harm from violence and/or exploitation. Extern continually strives to embed good practice by taking those views, wishes, feelings and beliefs into account, to promote positive working relationships/partnerships across the organisation and beyond.

We understand safeguarding to be about ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone with whom we work - including individuals, families, carers, and other professionals, as well as members of all communities. This responsibility naturally extends to our own staff, trustees, volunteers, students and interns, as well as those in our partner organisations and other personnel associated with Extern

Our approach to safeguarding involves promoting a culture of safety for all and practicing this in every aspect of the organisation's day-to-day life. It also involves taking action for and on behalf of children and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of abuse, exploitation or neglect.

Extern has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, violence, exploitation and abuse, and so we have made the following commitments to keep people safe:

Our staff will maintain the highest standards of conduct and practice. Our staff are carefully selected to ensure that they are suitable to carry out their roles. The standards that they are expected to uphold are set out in organisational policies, (codes of conduct, professional boundaries) which reflect the standards and practice set out by NISCC and CORU for social workers, social care workers and Extern as an employer. As Extern is a leading social care/justice charity it takes into account all aspects of inclusion and in doing so strives to ensure that all standards of practice and conduct are embedded into Extern throughout all Directorates and departments. This is reinforced through regular training, and endorsed by a positive work culture which openly discusses and promotes good safeguarding practice.

We will support our partners and others to build and endorse good practice. Partnership and collaboration is fundamental to our work, and so we often involve other organisations and groups in the delivery of our programmes. We seek to understand the policy, procedure and practice of our partners and to support them where assistance is required to build and strengthen good practice.

We will listen to all safeguarding concerns that are reported to us and take appropriate action. We have a clear procedure to report a concern. When a report is made, our response will be guided by this procedure. We will establish actions that are appropriate to the nature of the case and aligned with the legal obligations and reporting mechanisms. In our handling of reports, we will respect confidentiality as far as possible, involving individuals on a 'need to know' basis.

As part of our efforts to uphold these commitments, Extern continues to develop a comprehensive Safeguarding System – a suite of policies, procedures, tools and resources to guide good safeguarding practice in all aspects of our work. A number of key policies form a central component of the Safeguarding System. These include:

- Child Protection Safeguarding policies NI & ROI

- Vulnerable Adult Policy
- Codes of Conduct
- Professional Boundaries Policies
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Compliments & Complaints Policy
- AccessNI Policy
- Garda Vetting Policy