

1 Name of Service Provider

NOVAS, registered as Arlington NOVAS Ireland Clg. Registered Charity Number 20041533

2 Nature of services provided

NOVAS provides a range of services and accommodation throughout Ireland that includes, Tenancy Sustainment, Housing First, Social Housing, Supported Temporary Accommodation, Outreach Services, Residential Children's services, and Addiction Services. We operate 19 locations and employee approximately 300 staff. Staff contact with children and young adults can vary from minimal contact to 24 hour supported accommodation.

NOVAS Bellevue House is a six-bed residential service for unaccompanied minors from outside the EU, seeking asylum. It is a long-term specialised children's service, catering for minors between the ages of twelve and eighteen.

NOVAS Ennis Family Hub is a residential service providing emergency accommodation for five families. Referral pathway is through Clare County Council Homeless Action Team. The service provides Housing support for single and two-parent families.

NOVAS Outreach Support Services works with families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the areas of, emergency accommodation supports, prevention, resettlement, and tenancy sustainment support. We work with parents and carers and support children from birth to 18 years of age.

3 Principles to safeguard children from harm

We recognise the rights of the child to be protected from harm, treated with respect, listened to, and have their views taken into consideration in all matters that affect them.

NOVAS wholly recognises that the welfare of children is paramount, and we commit to this principle by:

- Fully complying with our obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children.
- Fully co-operate with all safeguarding matters
- Promote safety and minimise the risk of harm to all children who access our services.
- Protect workers from taking risks that may leave them open to allegations of abuse or neglect.

4 Risk Assessment

We have assessed any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the risks identified and the procedures to manage these risks.

Child-to-Child Harm

- Compliance with required staffing levels.
- Active staff presence, supervision, and accompaniment.
- Anti-bullying policies in place.
- Clear admission and induction procedures.
- Policies and guidelines in place for safe practice and service delivery.

Risk of Harm from a Staff Member or Volunteer

- Garda vetting, recruitment, and selection procedures in place.
- Clear child protection policies, procedures, and reporting structures.
- Mandatory Children First training for all staff.
- Lone working and code of conduct policies outlining procedures for working with children.
- Comprehensive safety statements for each service.

Exposure to Violence, Challenging Behaviour, or Substance Misuse

- Adherence to the child safeguarding policy, with contact made to TUSLA and Gardaí when required.
- All staff trained in Trauma-Informed Practice and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.
- Additional staffing and resources provided when necessary.
- Substance misuse policies and procedures in place.

Risk of Harm from Contractors or Visitors in Accommodation Services

- Children have access to a safe space, with all children in NOVAS residential services having their own bedroom.
- Visitors and contractors are required to sign in and remain supervised by staff.
- Adequate staffing levels maintained.
- Incident reporting procedures in place.

Child Sexual Exploitation

- Each child has a risk assessment completed with consideration given to their history and vulnerabilities.
- Services provide safe and supportive environments that reduce vulnerability to exploitation.
- All staff are trained in recognising sexual exploitation
- Links with stimulatory partners & Garda
- Referral pathways with counselling services
- Mandatory reporting structures

Child Trafficking

- Each child has a risk assessment completed with consideration given to their history and vulnerabilities.
 - Services provide safe and supportive environments to children who may have been trafficked.
 - Staff training, workshops and seminars.
 - Mandatory reporting.
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Safeguarding of children in digital environments, cyberbullying and ICT misuse (e.g., Social Networking, Gaming, Webcams, Messaging Apps)

- Staff trained to identify and understand different forms of cyberbullying.
- Awareness of common social media language (as per Children First, p.106-111).
- Educational workshops for children to raise awareness and encourage reporting of incidents.
- Staff must document all reported incidents, inform parents/legal guardians, and report concerns to TUSLA and Gardaí immediately.
- Firewalls installed on computers accessible to children.
- Staff monitor and regulate content to ensure only age-appropriate material is shown.

Non-Compliance with the Children's First Act 2015 and National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children

- Governance structures for children's residential services in place.
- Quality auditing and risk management procedures established.
- Mandatory Children First training for all staff.
- Staff support and supervision policies implemented.

Risk of Harm Due to a Child Protection Concern Not Recognised or Reported by Staff

- Mandatory training for staff.
- Regular team meetings, support, and supervision.
- Client reviews and governance structures.
- Trauma-informed practices.
- Quality auditing and risk management procedures.
- Opportunities for informal conversations to encourage open discussions.

Risk of Harm Due to a Child Protection Concern Not Recognised or Reported by a Child

- Children are educated about their rights.
 - Child-friendly, easily accessible information provided.
 - Clear complaints procedures.
 - Trauma-informed practices in place.
 - Quality auditing and risk management procedures.
 - Opportunities for informal conversations to encourage open communication.
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5 Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, *Children First: National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, 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 relating to allegations of abuse or misconduct of a child by employees and volunteers.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers to work with children.

- Procedures 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 in the relevant service who are the mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

6 Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. Our organisation 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 services.

This Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed in January 2025 and will be reviewed in January 2027 or as soon as is practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

For queries on this statement please contact:

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Designated Named Person under the Children's First Act 2015

Signatories of this statement:



Chairperson: Michael O'Connell



C.E.O: Úna Deasy