



**CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY
FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**
LIFE CHANGING INTERVENTION

Blue Box Child Safeguarding Statement

Address: Unit 4B, LEDP, Roxboro, Limerick. V94 HC9X

The Designated Liaison Officer is:

Name. Bryan Gough – Executive Director
Contact telephone number 083 394 2501
Email Address bryan.gough@bluebox.ie

The Deputy Designated Liaison Officer is:

Name. Niamh Corkery – Clinical Manager
Contact telephone number 083 465 8776
Email Address clinical@bluebox.ie

Date of Adoption: 28/05/2024

Date of Review: 28/05/2025

This safeguarding statement must be read in conjunction with the Blue Box Child Safeguarding Policy.

Statement of Purpose

Blue Box supports vulnerable children, young people, and their families to realise their potential through professionally delivered Creative Arts Therapies. Blue Box works in Limerick DEIS schools and regeneration areas, as well as in-house services, prioritising disadvantaged and marginalised children and youth. As a children's therapy intervention service, we work with children who could be traumatised by environmental and domestic abuse, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, grief, suicide ideation, PTSD and bullying.

Blue Box Safeguarding Principles

Blue Box believes that the best interests of children and young people attending our services are paramount. We believe that all children attending our service have the right to be protected, treated with respect, listened to and to have their views taken into consideration in all decisions affecting them. Blue Box set out with a commitment that all children will be equally protected from harm regardless of race, ability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Our guiding principles are underpinned by Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Tusla’s Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and current legislation such as the Children First Act 2015, Child Care Act 1991, Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 and the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012. Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, contractors, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers, and students must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

Blue Box is committed to maximising safety and minimising risk in our contact and work with children, young people, and their families. We deliver our services with these underlying safeguarding principles:

- Children and young people’s safety and well-being is of paramount concern to us.
- Everyone’s age, gender, culture, sexual-orientation, religion, and mental and physical abilities are taken into consideration and respected when designing client interventions.
- Blue Box will promote children and young people’s self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth through a strengths-based and trauma informed approach.
- Blue Box will promote children and young people’s capacity to make positive choices and take responsibility for their own behaviour and in doing so promote their capacity to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Children and young people and their families who engage with Blue Box services are respected and heard through consultation, communication, and regular evaluation.

Specific Safeguarding

There are a range of possible safeguarding concerns, risks, and allegations which we need to be aware of within our service:

	Risk identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
1	<p>Inappropriate/ dangerous adults gaining access to children/ young people through Blue Box.</p> <p>Examples of inappropriate/ dangerous adults include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff / volunteers verbally or physically interact with a child in any way that causes harm. • Staff / volunteers ignoring, ostracising, or picking on children to the extent that it causes harm to a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & selection processes in place including Garda vetting, international police check where appropriate, 2 written references and verbal reference checks for employees, volunteers, contractors, and students. • Vetting of employees & volunteers renewed on a 3 yearly cycle. • Policies to manage these risks include: Recruitment & Selection Policy; Complaints Policy; Code of Behaviour Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy; Child Safeguarding Training; Disciplinary & Grievance Policy; IT & Mobile device Policy; Social & Digital Media for employees Policy;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff / volunteers developing inappropriate relationships outside their role. • Staff / volunteers making direct contact and/or using social media / electronic means to contact children outside of Blue Box services for the intention of grooming / exploitation. 	
2	<p>Employees, contractors, volunteers, or students unclear of their responsibilities in relation to recognising and/or reporting safeguarding issues.</p> <p>Examples of this risk include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children placed at risk due to inadequate supervision. • Children being harmed as a result of staff not reporting appropriate concerns. • Children being harmed by inappropriate actions or interactions by staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction & core training includes Children First training, completion of online Tusla safeguarding training and child protection training, • ED and CM are trained as (DLPs) for reporting of poor practice, concern, or allegation. • All employees receive professional supervision inclusive of case planning and review. • Regular team meetings occur which include policy updates and best practice discussions. • Policies to manage these risks include Supervision Policy; Complaints Policy; Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy; Child Safeguarding Training; Disciplinary & Grievance Policy.
3	<p>Young people re-traumatised through inappropriate questioning or staff intervention approaches.</p> <p>Examples of this risk include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff asking leading questions or going beyond their support role during a discussion or disclosure. • Inappropriate interventions with young people that don't take account of their previous experience or trauma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff are provided with training in relation to child protection, including managing disclosures. • All staff are individually supervised, and intervention approaches agreed with supervisor and captured in individual intervention plans. • Interventions are agreed and reviewed with the young person, primary carer, and Clinical Manager. • Policies to manage these risks include Supervision Policy; Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy; Child Safeguarding Training; Disciplinary & Grievance Policy;
4	<p>Exposure to risks of harm (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) through lone therapy sessions in school or on-site</p> <p>Examples of risk include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An incident of sexual abuse by a staff member, contractor, student, volunteer during one-to-one work. • An incident of physical abuse by a staff member, contractor, student, volunteer during one-to-one work. • Emotional abuse by a staff member taking place during one-to-one work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff members and contractors are Garda vetted and vetting is renewed every 3 years. Staff are required to complete annual declarations in relation to criminal investigations, convictions, and conflicts of interest. • All therapy sessions to happen in a building with a second adult present within earshot or vision. • Individual risk assessment processes to identify and manage a variety of environmental and behavioural risks. • Policies to manage these risks include Supervision Policy; Code of Conduct Policy, Staff Induction Policy; Risk Assessment Policy; Child Safeguarding Policy; Child Safeguarding Training; Disciplinary & Grievance Policy.

Safeguarding Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015. In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures listed below support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for reporting to Tusla by Blue Box or a member of staff of the provider (whether a mandated person or otherwise) in accordance with this Act or the [Children First] guidelines issued by the Minister under section 6" i.e. A reporting procedure.
- Procedure for selection or recruitment of any person as a member of staff with regard to that person's suitability to work with children.
- Procedure for the provision of information and, where necessary, instruction and training to members of staff in relation to the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.
- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service

Safeguarding Controls

Due to the vulnerability of children in our care, the following risks should be managed and mitigated:

- A child is not left alone in a building with a staff member.
- A child is not to be transported alone by a staff member.
- Personal care needs are not to be met by a staff member.
- A child should not be contacted independently of their parent/carer.
- All information is kept confidential unless there is a specific safeguarding concern or the client consents to information sharing.
- A safe physical environment, free from hazards or potential dangers should be ensured.
- An adult should be in earshot of all therapy sessions when a therapist is working one to one with a child.
- Thorough and accurate documentation of therapy sessions, including allegations should be always kept.
- Risk assessments to identify any potential risks should be kept at all times.

Definition of Harm:

As defined in the Children First Act, 2015, "harm" means, in relation to a child

(a) Assault, ill-treatment, or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development, or welfare.

(b) Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances, or otherwise.

This definition is understood as the harm caused to children by physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. In the context of safeguarding, it may also relate to the bullying of children, child trafficking and or sexual exploitation, or the harm caused to children through the misuse of digital technology or on internet platforms.

Safeguarding Responsibility and Action:

In accordance with the Blue Box Safeguarding Policy, our staff have a responsibility to recognise safeguarding concerns and allegations and report these to our Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in writing or verbally.

The DLP will follow protocol in terms of emergency reporting to appropriate child and adult services inclusive of An Garda Síochána in the event any criminal aspect is associated with the concern.

If the DLP is unavailable, the DDPL or designated person should be contacted directly for advice and support.

Signed: _____ (provider and relevant person under the Children First Act 2015)

Bryan Gough Executive Director

083 3942501

bryan.gough@bluebox.ie