



Child Safeguarding Statement

(September 2026 – update)

1. Name of service being provided:

International Protection Appeals Tribunal

2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:

a. Mandate of the Tribunal

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal was established in accordance with section 61(1) of the International Protection Act 2015 (hereinafter referred to as 'the 2015 Act'). The Tribunal is a statutorily independent body and exercises a quasi-judicial function under national and EU law.

The Tribunal determines appeals of those persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should not be given a refugee declaration and should be given a subsidiary protection declaration and of persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should be given neither a refugee declaration nor a subsidiary protection declaration. The Tribunal also determines appeals under the Dublin System Regulations, as well as appeals against recommendations that an application be deemed inadmissible and appeals against recommendations that the making of a subsequent application is not permitted. The Tribunal's jurisdictional mandate has also been added to by the Reception Conditions Regulations 2018, as amended, under which the Tribunal is the 'judicial authority' for determining appeals from decisions made by officials of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and the Department of Social Protection, as the case may be.

The Tribunal must be regarded as a court or tribunal of first instance, tasked with performing the judicial scrutiny function provided for in Article 39 of Directive 2005/85/EU and its mission is to provide an effective remedy within the international protection system that is of the

highest quality and to do so in the most efficient, sustainable and user-focused manner, ensuring compliance with national, EU and international law.

The positions of Chairperson, Deputy Chairpersons and Members of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal are quasi-judicial office holders appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, following the holding of a competition by the Public Appointments Service.

The Registrar of the Tribunal, who manages and controls generally the staff and administration of the Tribunal and performs such other functions as may be conferred on him or her by the Chairperson is also appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, pursuant to section 66(1) of the International Protection Act 2015, as amended. All other officials of the Tribunal are administrative and legal support staff currently assigned to the Tribunal from the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration. Staff of the Tribunal do not work directly with children in their day-to-day activities. Children and unaccompanied minors¹ who have an appeal before the Tribunal are at all times accompanied by a parent, a guardian or a Tusla appointed guardian. It is the general policy of the Tribunal to restrict attendance by children at its premises to those directly involved in appeal hearings, however, exemptions may be made where to do so is in the overriding best interest of the child, e.g. a breastfeeding infant.

b. Commitment to safeguard children

i. Declaration of child protection principles

The Tribunal is committed to maintaining the highest standards of child safeguarding, in line with all relevant legislation including the Children First Act 2015 and informed by best practice including Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) and its addendums as published by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

ii. Key child safeguarding principles:

- The safety and protection of children who come into contact with Tribunal Members and staff is of paramount importance.
- The Tribunal is committed to ensuring best practice is applied to keep children safe while availing of its services and that staff and Tribunal Members comply with the obligations for all persons encountering children as set out in the Children First Guidance.
- The Tribunal has implemented measures to raise awareness among all staff and Tribunal Members regarding child-safeguarding principles and best practice and these will be monitored and updated as necessary.
- In addition, the Chairperson's Guideline No. 2025/3 on Appeals from Child Applicants provides further guidance to Tribunal Members determining

appeals from child applicants and enables them to adapt the conduct of hearings and the assessment of evidence to take into consideration children's various sensitivities and vulnerabilities.

- The Tribunal recognises that all Tribunal Members and staff have responsibilities to protect children and therefore have a duty to report child abuse as set out in the Children First Act 2015 and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).
- In line with best practice under the Children First National Guidance, Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) have been appointed in the relevant functional areas of the Tribunal. The Tribunal has also appointed a Relevant Person, who is the first point of contact in respect of the Tribunal's Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Tribunal Members or staff who make disclosures about suspected child abuse or neglect are protected by relevant legislation, including the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 which provides for the protection from civil liability of persons who have communicated child abuse or neglect "*reasonably and in good faith*" to Tusla or An Garda Síochána. This protection applies to organisations as well as to individuals.
- A general instruction has issued to Tribunal Members and staff to contact their assigned Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) regarding any specific child safeguarding concern of which they may become aware in the course of their work.
- The DLPs have received the mandatory training relevant to their role as provided by Tusla and all staff and Tribunal Members are informed of the [Children First E-Learning Programme](#) available on the Tusla website.
- All applicable Tribunal and, where appropriate, associated Department of Justice Home Affairs and Migration policies and procedures will be disseminated to Tribunal Members and staff by the DLPs, with administrative support from the Relevant Person.
- The Tribunal will not knowingly engage with any person, organisation or service provider that poses a risk to children or that does not meet the child protection safeguards outlined in the Children First Act and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017).

3. Risk Assessment:

The Tribunal has carried out an assessment of any potential for harm 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	Control Measures
1	Any risk to the safety of a child whilst on the Tribunal's premises.	It is the stated policy of the Tribunal that children should only attend the Tribunal premises when they are involved in a specific hearing with the exception of breastfeeding infants who may be brought to the Tribunal, if desired. Every effort will be made to facilitate the provision of a suitable space for breastfeeding, on request, and regular breaks given. Adult applicants, due to attend a hearing in the Tribunal, are advised, in advance, that there are no facilities for children on the premises the Tribunal is located in or in the offices of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal. Staff are directed not to take charge of any child attending the Tribunal. The care of the child is a matter for the parent, designated guardian or Tusla representative. 'Unaccompanied minors' whose cases are to be heard by the Tribunal are always accompanied by a Tusla representative and a legal representative. A record is kept of all 'unaccompanied minors' attending the Tribunal premises and the details of the accompanying guardian or Tusla representative who is responsible for their care.
2	Child in hearing when sensitive issues, which might be considered inappropriate for a child, are being discussed as part of the hearing.	Where a child is accompanied by a parent or guardian, it is a matter for the Tribunal Member, in consultation with the parent or guardian and, where available, the child's legal representative, to make a decision on whether it is appropriate for the child concerned to remain at the hearing. Tribunal Members dealing with unaccompanied minors' cases have all received specific training on 'Children in the International Protection System'. The Chairperson's Guideline No. 2025/3 on Appeals from Child Applicants provides guidance to Tribunal Members determining appeals from children, including unaccompanied minors, and enables them to adapt the conduct of hearings accordingly and to take into consideration various sensitivities and vulnerabilities.
3	Failure to take appropriate action where a concern about	The Tribunal's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the

	the welfare or safety of a child comes directly to the Tribunal Member's attention, is noted in information received in connection with an appeal lodged or is raised in the course of a hearing.	Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's Child safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice. Staff and Tribunal Members have been instructed to contact their assigned DLP regarding any specific child safeguarding concern of which they may become aware in the course of their work. The DLPs have received the mandatory training relevant to their role. All Staff and Tribunal Members are briefed on the Children First E-Learning Programme available on Tusla's website.
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4. Procedures:

The Tribunal's Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the Children First: National Guidance, and Tusla's [Child safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#). In addition to the measures listed in the above risk assessment concerning the safeguarding of children in the international protection appeals process, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of the Tribunal's service:

a. Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service

In the first instance, all child protection and welfare related concerns must be referred to the relevant DLP. If the concern meets the threshold detailed by Tusla, it will be submitted to them using the official [Child Protection and Welfare Report Form](#). Should any information be required to ascertain whether a specific issue meets this threshold, the relevant DLP will seek further guidance directly from Tusla.

Please note that the DLPs for the Tribunal are **Shauna Gillan, Deputy Chairperson**, for Tribunal Members and **Nicola Meneses, HEO**, for all staff of the Tribunal.

b. Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children

All administrative and legal support staff of the Tribunal are currently assigned to the Tribunal by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and are subject to the Department's vetting procedures prior to assignment to the Tribunal.

Tribunal Members are appointed by the Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, following the holding of a competition by the Public Appointments Service (PAS), in

accordance with the International Protection Act 2015, as amended, and they are subject to Garda vetting procedures.

c. Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm

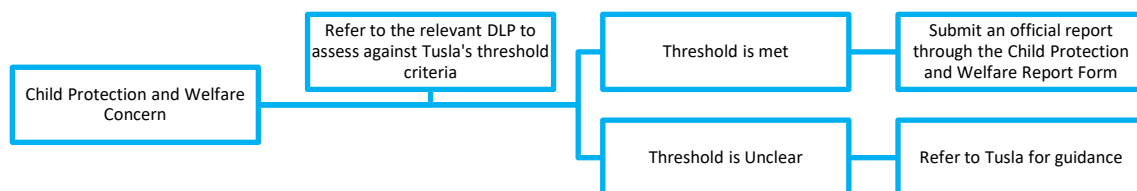
The DLPs have received the mandatory training required for their role. In tandem, staff and Tribunal Members are informed of the Children First E-Learning Programme. To maintain continuous awareness, the DLPs, with the assistance of the Relevant Person, will circulate training updates and relevant safeguarding information to all staff and Tribunal Members as they arise.

In addition, the Chairperson of the Tribunal has issued [Chairperson's Guideline No. 2025/3 on Appeals from Child Applicants](#) and all Tribunal Members dealing with appeals from 'unaccompanied' child applicants have completed specific training on 'Children in the International Protection System'.

The provision of further child safeguarding training will be ensured through the Tribunal's Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).

d. Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla

In the first instance, all child protection and welfare reports must be referred to the relevant DLP. If the concern meets the threshold detailed by Tusla, it will be submitted to them using the official [Child Protection and Welfare Report Form](#). Should any questions arise regarding whether a specific issue meets this threshold, the relevant DLP will seek further guidance directly from Tusla.



The Tribunal is not responsible for investigating allegations or concerns relating to a child's protection or welfare. The role of the Tribunal, its Members and staff is to recognise, record and report child protection or welfare concerns in accordance with the Children First Act

2015, Children First: National Guidance, and the Tribunal's Child Safeguarding Statement and procedures.

In carrying out their functions, Tribunal Members are also required to comply with the [Chairperson's Guideline No. 2023/2 – Code of Conduct and Rules on Conflict of Interest](#), ensuring that any child protection concerns are managed appropriately while maintaining the Tribunal's independence, impartiality and integrity.

e. Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons

Not applicable.

f. Procedure for appointing a relevant person

In compliance with the Children First Act 2015, [Nonito Barbero](#), (NXBarbero@protectionappeals.ie) has been appointed as the Tribunal's "Relevant Person" and primary point of contact for the Child Safeguarding Statement for members of the public, staff and Tribunal Members who have queries regarding the Tribunal's child safeguarding policies.

The relevant person is responsible for providing the Statement to parents or guardians upon request, acts as the Tribunal's liaison with Tusla, and managing administrative updates to the policy. Additionally, the relevant person collaborates closely with the DLPs to coordinate and relay safeguarding training and information to all staff and Tribunal Members. While the relevant person oversees these administrative and training coordination channels, the handling of day-to-day child protection or welfare concerns remains the separate responsibility of the DLP.

5. Implementation:

The Tribunal recognises that implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement is an ongoing process. The Tribunal is committed to the implementation of this Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of the Tribunal's services. This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed annually, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the Statement refers.

Signed:



Hilka Becker
Chairperson

Signed:

George Sinclair

George Sinclair
Registrar

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IPAT Child Safeguarding Statement (September 2026 update)

Final Audit Report

2026-09-03

Created:	2026-09-01
By:	Hilkka Becker (hcbecker@protectionappeals.ie)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAASxI4wp_QLueazuWi79IGF66apW2fMM3h

"IPAT Child Safeguarding Statement (September 2026 update)" History

-  Document created by Hilkka Becker (hcbecker@protectionappeals.ie)
2026-09-01 - 9:17:39 AM GMT
-  Document emailed to gysinclair@protectionappeals.ie for signature
2026-09-01 - 9:18:37 AM GMT
-  Email viewed by gysinclair@protectionappeals.ie
2026-09-01 - 9:19:11 AM GMT
-  Signer gysinclair@protectionappeals.ie entered name at signing as George Sinclair
2026-09-03 - 8:25:47 AM GMT
-  Document e-signed by George Sinclair (gysinclair@protectionappeals.ie)
Signature Date: 2026-09-03 - 8:25:49 AM GMT - Time Source: server - Signature Appearance Selected: TYPE
-  Agreement completed.
2026-09-03 - 8:25:49 AM GMT