

Kenmare Family Resource Centre
Railway Road, Kenmare, Co. Kerry

We are all



in safe hands!

Kenmare Family Resource Centre

**CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

February 2018



Revised July 2024

TUSLA
An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

INTRODUCTION

This child protection and welfare policy document was developed by the Youth Network of Family Resource Centres in Galway and Mayo and West Training & Development, Regional Support Agency in 2009. It aimed to ensure best practice and promote common standards in relation to child protection across Family Resource Centres in the Region. The current procedures have been drawn up using: *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011); *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011) and *Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2002). More recently (Jan 2018) this policy has been amended by Kenmare FRC to reflect the new *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children* based on the *Children First Act 2015*.

We are grateful to Bríd Burke, Children First Information and Advice Officer, Tusla, Western Area, for her advice and contributions to the on-going development of this document.

Throughout the document:

Child Protection Concern – when there are reasonable grounds for believing that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being physically, sexually or emotionally abused or neglected. *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011) Page 5.

Child Welfare Concern – a problem experienced directly by a child, or by the family of a child, that is seen to impact negatively on the child's health, development and welfare, and that warrants assessment and support, but may or may not require a child protection response. *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011) Page 6.

Abuse - refers to the four recognised, categories of abuse, i.e. neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse;

Child - refers to a person under the age of 18 years, who is not or has not been married *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017) P. 7

Family Resource Centre - Refers to the activities planned, organised, supervised and run by the staff and Voluntary Board of Directors of the Family Resource Centre or those appointed by them to do so;

Volunteer – refers to people who volunteer to run and manage the Family Resource Centre or to undertake activities as directed by the Voluntary Board of Directors;

Staff member – a paid employee of the Family Resource Centre

Parent - refers to parent, guardian and caregiver

Disclaimer: West Training & Development Ltd. has taken all reasonable care in relation to the accuracy of the information in this document. The information is intended as a guide only and does not purport to be a legal interpretation. West Training & Development Ltd. does not make any warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of the data. West Training & Development Ltd. recommends that when Centres require legal advice they should contact their own Solicitors/Legal Advisors and when Centres require information on child welfare and protection they contact Tusla Child and Family Agency or the Gardaí.

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1. CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE STATEMENT

Kenmare Family Resource Centre is actively committed to a child-centred approach to working with children and young people and undertakes to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. By promoting their rights Kenmare Family Resource Centre will support children to participate in matters that affect their lives. Kenmare Family Resource Centre believe that children should be safe and protected in all aspects of their lives and that best practice in relation to child protection and welfare must be at the core of providing community-based family supports and services.

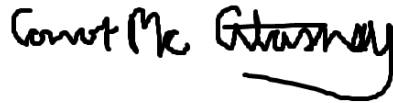
Kenmare Family Resource Centre adhere to the recommendations of *Children First Act (2015)*, *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, Department of Children and Youth Affairs; the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook (2011)* HSE and *Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002)* HSE by implementing best practice procedures on:

- Involving Children and Sharing Information;
- Confidentiality;
- Reporting both child protection and child welfare concerns;
- Recruitment and Selection of staff and volunteers;
- Management and Supervision of staff and volunteers;
- Code of Behaviour for all staff and volunteers;
- Complaints and comments;
- Incidents and accidents;
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse by staff or volunteers;
- Involvement of primary carers.

Based on recommendations from Children First 2017, Kenmare FRC has now developed a Safeguarding Statement which is available for viewing by all service users of the centre. Conor McAtasney (DLP for Kenmare FRC) has been appointed as Relevant Person. His role is to develop the Safeguarding Statement & bring its existence to the attention of all relevant stakeholders.

This policy will be reviewed on: ___February
2025_____

Signature of the Designated

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conor McAtasney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Liaison Person:

Date: __23/07/2024_____

2. POLICY ON INVOLVING CHILDREN AND SHARING INFORMATION

Kenmare Family Resource Centre aims to protect and promote children's rights by centring its activities around their safety, enjoyment and comfort (Appendix 1) and ensuring that they are valued, encouraged and treated as individuals in the Centre. Children's rights and entitlements will be widely communicated within the Centre using posters and age appropriate information leaflets, including information on the Centre's child protection and welfare policy.

Children will be unconditionally respected and will be heard, listened to and taken seriously in the Centre. They will be encouraged to express their opinions, ask questions and depending on their age and level of understanding they will be consulted in planning activities and drawing up codes of behaviour and an anti-bullying policy. Where possible and depending on resources, age appropriate workshops will be facilitated to maximise their participation.

Kenmare Family Resource Centre will engage a variety of communication tools when working with children that have communication difficulties. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to avail of appropriate training and to access whatever additional resources and supports that are available. The Centre will work closely in partnership with parents / carers and other agencies / support services that are working with the individual child.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

Kenmare Family Resource Centre is committed to ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality. Refer to Kenmare FRC Confidential policy. However, in relation to child protection and welfare the Centre undertakes that:

- The Designated Liaison Person and the deputy Designated Liaison Person will immediately be made aware of any information concerning the welfare of a child;
- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given by Kenmare Family Resource Centre where there is a child protection concern. Staff and / or volunteers that are working with a child and his / her family will always make this clear to all parties;
- The Centre will cooperate fully with the Social Worker Department of Tusla Child and Family Agency on the sharing of its records where a child welfare or protection issue arises. Sharing information in this way is not a breach of confidentiality and total confidentiality can never be guaranteed where the best interests of the child are at risk;
- Kenmare Family Resource Centre will take full account of all legal requirements when handling information regarding child protection concerns and will access legal advice as required;
- There are clear procedures in place in relation to keeping records of child protection and welfare concerns or reports. Records will be kept securely until the individual child has reached 21 years of age, after which point records will be shredded. Access to these records will be managed by the Designated Liaison Person and the Chairperson;
- Information in relation to child protection and welfare will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis within the Centre and will always be in the best interest of the child;
- Parents / primary carers and children have a right to know if personal information is being shared and / or a report is being forwarded to Tusla. They will be told unless doing so would put the child at further risk.

4. REPORTING PROCEDURES

If any child that Kenmare Family Resource Centre comes in contact with is identified as being at risk of harm the Centre must act.

The Criminal Justice Act, 2006 introduced the criminal charge of 'reckless endangerment of children'. It states that 'a person having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child or being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence'.

4.1 GUIDELINES FOR RECOGNISING CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE

Protecting children and young people is everyone's responsibility and staff and volunteers in Kenmare Family Resource Centre must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact with may be experiencing abuse and / or neglect. A definition of the four types of abuse with a list of indicators is contained in Appendix 2.

A risk assessment has been carried out of the relevant services, groups & activities of Kenmare FRC to determine any Child Protection Risks to children using the service. This is detailed in our FRC's Safeguarding Statement, based on recommendations from Children First 2017.

4.2 REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN

In Kenmare Family Resource Centre staff and volunteers must follow the reporting procedures outlined below if they have a concern about the protection or welfare of a child or young person that they are working with. Each of the following constitutes reasonable grounds for concern:

- *“Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way*
- *Any concern about possible sexual abuse*
- *Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect*
- *A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused*
- *Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed*
- *An account from a person who saw the child being abused”* (Chapter 2, p. 6, Children First 2017)

4.3 DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

In accordance with Chapter 4, of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017), the Centre has appointed a Designated Liaison Person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and also as a resource for any staff member or volunteer that needs support in relation to child protection concerns. A deputy has also been appointed to cover this role when the Designated Liaison Person is unavailable or if s/he is directly involved in a particular concern or incident. Both the Designated Liaison Person and the deputy are familiar with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017); the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011) and *Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People* (2002).

Designated Liaison Person: Conor McAtasney
Contact details: 064 6642790 / 0858002471
 coordinator@kenmarefrfc.ie

Deputy Designated

Liaison Person: Irene Carey
Contact details: 064 6642790 / irene@kenmarefrfc.ie

4.4 ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON

In Kenmare Family Resource Centre, the Designated Liaison Person and the deputy Designated Liaison Person have participated in Child Protection training.

The role of the Designated Liaison Person is to:

- Be responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within your organisation are followed, so that child welfare & protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla;
- Provide information and advice on the Centre's child protection and welfare policy and procedures and ensure that all of the appropriate procedures are implemented;
- Ensure that new staff and volunteers are supported to implement the Centre's child protection and welfare policy and procedures through the induction process and the ongoing management, support and supervision of their work;
- Receive and consider child protection and welfare concerns and establish, in consultation with the individual who has raised the concern, if reasonable grounds for concern exist;
- Consult informally with the Social Worker Department of Tusla Child and Family Agency: Children and Family Services' Duty Social Worker when unsure if the concern constitutes reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report should be made to the Social Worker Department of Tusla, Child and Family Agency;
- Make a formal referral to Tusla as required using the Child Protection & Welfare Report Form (can be downloaded from www.tusla.ie)
- Make retrospective reports on the Retrospective Abuse Report form (can be downloaded from www.tusla.ie)
- Refer any 'out of hours' emergency situation to an Garda Síochána or if

not on call - ensure that staff / volunteers are aware of their obligation to contact the Garda Síochána in an emergency;

- Maintain confidential records;
- Inform the primary carers that a child protection concern is being reported to Tusla or to An Garda Síochána unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.
- Be aware of any Mandated Person's in the organisation & their role & responsibility
- Be willing to make Joint reports with Mandated Persons where relevant

4.5 DESIGNATED LIASION PERSONS & MANDATED PERSONS

Some designated liaison persons will be working in organisations where mandated persons are also employed. It is important to note that the statutory obligation of mandated persons to report under the Children First Act 2015 must be discharged by the mandated person and cannot be discharged by the designated liaison person on their behalf.

If a mandated person is also the designated liaison person in the organisation, you must fulfil the statutory obligations of a mandated person. This means that if, as a designated liaison person, one is made aware of a concern about a child that meets or exceeds the thresholds of harm for mandated reporting, then the DLP has a statutory obligation to make a report to Tusla arising from the position as a mandated person.

While mandated persons have statutory obligations to report mandated concerns, they may make a report jointly with another person, whether the other person is a mandated person or not. In effect, this means that a mandated person can make a joint report with a designated liaison person. (ref: p.36, Children First 2017)

4.6 REPORTING A CONCERN

The definitions of abuse and guidelines for responding to a child that discloses are outlined in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively. A child should never be left in a situation that exposes him / her to harm. If a child protection or welfare concern arises the steps below will be followed:

- The Designated Liaison Person (or the deputy Designated Liaison Person) will be informed immediately;
- The Designated Liaison Person may seek advice from the Social Worker Department of Tusla / HSE Children and Family Services' Duty Social Worker to decide whether a formal referral is required. The situation may just require ongoing monitoring. Should this be the case, Kenmare FRC will record in writing that the call was made to Social Work & follow up with a letter, confirming the advice given by Social work staff e.g. 'Thanks for the advise & guidance given today.....I will monitor case as instructed...'
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern the Designated Liaison Person will make a formal report to the Social Worker Department of Tusla using the Child Protection & Welfare Report Form (downloadable from www.tusla.ie).
- If the concern is urgent and there is imminent risk to a child, the Designated Liaison Person will make the report by telephone and then follow it up with the completed form;
- In an emergency outside of Tusla office hours, where the immediate safety of a child is threatened, An Gardaí Siochána will be contacted;
- If the Designated Liaison Person or deputy Designated Liaison Person is not available the person who has a concern, received a disclosure or witnessed an incident, should contact Tusla's Children and Family Services' Social Work Service or An Gardaí Siochána directly;

- Where there is a concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, the Centre will report the concerns to Tusla's Children and Family Services.
- Where there are Mandated Persons working within Kenmare FRC, with child protection concerns, Children First 2017 guides that it is the role of the Mandated Person to make that report directly to TUSLA. The DLP cannot do this report on their behalf. However, the DLP & the mandated person may decide to do a joint report if they both have concerns are information about the welfare of a child.

In addition:

- The staff member / volunteer in Kenmare Family Resource Centre that expressed the concern about a child's welfare will be kept informed;
- If the Designated Liaison Person decides not to pass on a concern to Tusla's Children and Family Services, a clear written statement of the reasons why the Centre is not taking such action should be recorded. Any action taken as a result of the concern should also be recorded. A written explanation will be given to the person who reported the concern initially. They will also be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation that they are free as an individual to consult with, or report to, Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, includes protection from civil liability and penalisation by an employer, once they communicate 'reasonably and in good faith';
- If a report is to be submitted to the Social Worker Department of Tusla's Children and Family Services or to An Garda Síochána, the Designated Liaison Person will inform the primary carers - unless doing so would put the child at further risk.

4.7 MANDATED PERSONS

In Kenmare Family Resource Centre, the “*mandated persons are people who have contact with children and/or families and who, because of their qualifications, training and/or employment role, are in a key position to help protect children from harm. Mandated persons include professionals working with children in the education, health, justice, youth and childcare sectors. Certain professionals who may not work directly with children, such as those in adult counselling or psychiatry, are also mandated persons. The list also includes registered foster carers and members of the clergy or pastoral care workers of a church or other religious community*” (Chapter 3, p. 19, Children First 2017)

“*Mandated persons have two main legal obligations under the Children First Act 2015. These are:*

- 1. To report the harm of children above a defined threshold to Tusla;*
- 2. To assist Tusla, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report”* (Chapter 3, p. 19, Children First 2017)

“*Section 14 of the Children First Act 2015 requires mandated persons to report a mandated concern to Tusla ‘as soon as practicable’. You should submit a report of a mandated concern to Tusla using the required report form, on which you should indicate that you are a mandated person and that your report is about a mandated concern. You should include as much relevant information as possible in the report as this will aid effective and early intervention for the child and may reduce the likelihood of Tusla needing to contact you for further information”* (Chapter 3, P. 24, Children First 2017)

4.8 JOINT REPORTING

As a mandated person, you may make a report jointly with any other person, whether that person is also a mandated person or not. For example, if Kenmare FRC staff and DLP, as well as the mandated person, all have concerns about the same child they may wish to make a joint report to Tusla.

See appendix 13 for the up to date list of Mandated Person's in Kenmare FRC.

4.9 THIRD PARTY REFERRALS

If a member of staff or a volunteer with Kenmare Family Resource Centre receives information regarding a suspicion of child abuse / welfare from a third party this must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person who will then consult appropriately with Tusla's Children and Family Services. The source of the information will be made aware that the information will be acted upon in the usual manner.

4.10 REPORTING A CONCERN THAT A CHILD IS MISSING

If there is a concern that a child or young person has gone missing the Centre will immediately notify An Garda Síochána and the Social Worker Department of Tusla's Children and Family Services. The Centre will provide as much information as possible to these agencies such as: age; gender; height; build; hair colour; date person was last seen; where person was last seen; what person was wearing when last seen; any other relevant personal details or information and a recently taken photograph if available.

4.11 REPORTING A CONCERN ABOUT A COLLEAGUE'S BEHAVIOUR

- If a member of staff or a volunteer has a concern about a colleague's behaviour with regards to a child they should report their concern to their line manager who will liaise appropriately with the Designated Liaison Person;

- If the concern is about the behaviour of the Co-ordinator of the Centre they should report the matter to the Chairperson of the Voluntary Board of Directors who will liaise appropriately with the Designated Liaison Person.

4.12 RETROSPECTIVE DISCLOSURE

If an adult discloses that s/he was abused as a child and it is possible that the alleged abuser is still in contact with and / or responsible for children, the matter should be reported to the Designated Liaison Person, who will consult with the Social Worker Department of Tusla's Children and Family Services. Use the relevant Retrospective Abuse Report form. A mandated person in possession of such information, should report this directly to TUSLA.

4.13 PROTECTED DISCLOSURE

Protected disclosure provides legal safeguards for people who want to report serious concerns they have about standards of safety or quality in Irish health and social care services and was introduced into legislation via the Health Act, 2007. A disclosure to an authorised person is protected if that disclosure is made by (a) an employee of HSE/Tusla, (b) other public health agencies, (c) service providers or bodies funded by the HSE/Tusla, if it is made in good faith, on reasonable grounds and in accordance with the procedures outlined in the legislation. Each Centre should clarify the situation in relation to protected disclosures when it is negotiating funding levels and / or a Service Level Agreement with HSE or Tusla. (See *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook* (2011), Paragraph 4.6 for further details).

4.14 RECORDS AND SHARING INFORMATION

- All details in relation to a child protection or welfare concern including the date, time, people involved in the concern, disclosure or incident and actions and outcomes will be recorded and held securely by the Designated Liaison Person in Kenmare Family Resource Centre. As

much information as possible will be obtained to establish the grounds for concern. With each individual case, whether or not a formal report was made to Tusla's Children and Family Services: Social Work Service and the reasons for doing so, or not doing so, will also be noted;

- In cases where neglect is indicted over time there may be no requirement for a formal report to be made to Tusla initially. However, a chronological record of the evidence or symptoms in the child that gave rise to the concern will be maintained. Thus, daily records of incidents /observations may become significant if a pattern of neglect / abuse emerges and may become part of the record of a child welfare or child protection concern;
- Access to records and the extent to which information will be shared will be managed by the Designated Liaison Person and the Chairperson;
- Kenmare Family Resource Centre has a policy of cooperating fully with Tusla's Children and Family Services on sharing the Centre's records where a child welfare or protection issue arises;
- Information regarding concern or assessment of child abuse will be shared on a 'need to know' basis within the Centre and always in the best interests of the child.

5. POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Kenmare Family Resource Centre is committed to ensuring best practice in the recruitment and management of staff and volunteers. Where Staff & volunteers have access to children, then they will follow Kenmare FRC's Guidelines on Recruitment & the Volunteering Policy of Kenmare FRC. All staff & volunteers coming in contact with youth will be interviewed, garda vetted, reference checked, provided with regular support & supervision to ensure good professional practice. Refer to Recruitment Guidelines and Volunteering policy of Kenmare FRC for more detailed overview of procedures

5.1 GARDA VETTING

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012-2016, which came into effect on 29 April 2016, make it mandatory for people working with children or vulnerable adults to be vetted by the Garda Síochána National Vetting Bureau.

The process of Garda vetting the successful candidate must be completed prior to that person commencing work with the organisation.

Family Resource Centres should contact the FRC Garda Vetting Officer in Ballymote FRC (071 9197818) for further details. It is the policy of the FRC National program to vet all staff, board members & volunteers involved in the FRC.

Furthermore, Kenmare FRC carries out reasonable check on external groups using the centre in connection with activities involving young people. See Procedure for Groups Using the Centre.

5.2 PROBATION

Staff complete a probation period of 10 months while volunteers will complete a probationary period of at least three months. During this time, their interaction with children and young people and their willingness to abide by, and actively implement, this child protection and welfare policy and procedures will be assessed.

5.3 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Staff and volunteers are expected to abide by the Code of Behaviour that is an integral part of this child protection and welfare policy.

5.4 STAFF / VOLUNTEERS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Kenmare Family Resource Centre will clarify the nature of its relationship with the other organisation immediately – particularly in relation to management of staff and volunteers and agreement of the required policies and procedures to ensure a safe environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. See Kenmare FRC Procedure for groups Using the Centre

- (a) If the external organisation is renting a space / room from the Centre the organisation will be expected to be fully responsible for managing their own activities and to have the appropriate policies and procedures in place. They will also be required to show evidence of appropriate insurance cover;

- (b) Where students, Community Employment Scheme participants or people on work placements are engaged by the Centre the Designated Liaison Person will explore with their employer / Line Manager the child protection and welfare policy that the organisation operates under and will agree who has responsibility for addressing any child protection or welfare issue that might arise. Codes of Behaviour will be discussed to identify any variances in work practices and to agree a shared approach as part of the placement

agreement. Complaints procedures / how to address allegations of inappropriate behaviour will also be part of this discussion and both organisations will have agreed procedures in place regarding information sharing, should such issues arise;

- (c) Where Kenmare Family Resource Centre is co-managing an activity / programme in the Centre a written contract will be agreed with the other organisation(s). The contract will stipulate the agreed policies and procedures that are required to ensure the safe management of the activity / programme and will identify the Designated Liaison Person to lead any child protection or welfare concern that may arise. Information sharing / record keeping protocols will also be agreed in relation to each and every procedure outlined in the contract.

6. SAFE MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

6.1 INDUCTION

- New staff and volunteers in Kenmare Family Resource Centre must undertake an induction process which includes:
 - (a) An introduction to the management / staff / volunteers in the Centre;
 - (b) A guided tour of the premises and its facilities;
 - (c) The background to the Centre e.g. history / guiding principles / management structure / aims and objectives / work plan etc.
 - (d) Relevant promotional material about the Centre e.g. copy of most recent annual report / SPEAK report / recent newsletter etc;
 - (e) An introduction to / information about other agencies working in the area;
 - (f) Information on the policies and procedures of the Centre particularly this child protection and welfare policy.

- All staff members and volunteers (as appropriate) will be provided with clear job descriptions that outline their particular roles and responsibilities;
- All volunteers and staff that work with Kenmare Family Resource Centre are required to sign and abide by this child protection and welfare policy.
- As stated above - if the volunteers or staff members are external to the Centre then it will be agreed beforehand with their respective employer or Line Manager what policies and procedures they will be governed by as well as the level of responsibility both organisations have in implementing the placement agreement. Appropriate induction will be an integral part of each placement agreement;
- Where Kenmare Family Resource Centre is managing an activity / programme in the Centre in partnership with another organisation (or organisations) a contract will be drawn up and agreed with the relevant organisation(s). The contract will include procedures for the safe management of staff and volunteers for the particular co-managed activity / programme.

6.2 SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS IN THE CENTRE

- The Co-ordinator of Kenmare Family Resource Centre provides support and supervision for staff at least every six weeks;
- All staff members have regular access to the Staffing Sub-group of the Voluntary Board of Directors. Meetings are scheduled at the beginning of each year;
- Staff team meetings are held monthly and volunteers are invited to attend as appropriate;
- Staff appraisal meetings take place annually and / or in line with the terms of staff contracts and are overseen by the Staffing Sub-group of the Voluntary Board of Directors. Child protection and the promotion of child welfare will be addressed during the appraisal meeting;

- Volunteers are supported and supervised by the Co-ordinator;
- Volunteers will be facilitated to meet at least annually, or more often as required, to review their performance and discuss any emerging issues;
- Volunteers may request a meeting with the Co-ordinator to discuss their work at any stage. They may also request a meeting with the Staffing Sub-group of the Voluntary Board of Directors;
- Appropriate support and supervision structures for staff / volunteers from an external organisation will form part of the placement agreement or contract described above.
- Also refer to Kenmare FRC Staff Support, Supervision & Appraisal Procedures

6.3 TRAINING

“It is the responsibility of your organisation to identify what training your staff and volunteers need and to ensure that they receive adequate and appropriate child welfare and protection information and training. Your organisation should provide all staff members and volunteers with good-quality information on the recognition and reporting of child protection and welfare concerns. Training should also include clear information about the role of the statutory agencies with primary responsibility in child protection and welfare, namely, Tusla and An Garda Síochána.” (chapter 4, Children First, 2017)

7. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Kenmare Family Resource Centre promotes a child centred-approach to creating a safe environment for children and young people. Staff and volunteers are provided with clear good practice guidelines on what is acceptable behaviour when working with children and young people.

7.1 EQUALITY STATEMENT

Kenmare Family Resource Centre will treat all people, including children & young people, equally, regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community.

7.2 WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL

- Behave in a respectful manner towards children;
- Listen to and value children's opinions and beliefs;
- Include children in appropriate decision making;
- Create a safe, inclusive, accessible environment;
- Recognise and nurture the individual potential of all children;
- Use encouragement and praise to positively develop confidence and self worth;
- Facilitate the young people to draw up an Anti-bullying Code of behaviour that will be followed while they are in the Centre or involved in any activities with Kenmare Family Resource Centre.

7.3 WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT

- Bully children;
- Ordinarily be on their own with young people. Meetings with individual children or young people will take place as openly as possible and will be part of a planned piece of one to one work, with prior written consent from parent
- Shout at or show aggression towards children,
- Subject children to any form of verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse;
- Exclude children from groups or activities because of difference;
- Show favouritism towards individuals;
- Have inappropriate physical contact with children;
- Tell jokes of a racist, sexual or derogatory nature;
- Refuse to act on a child welfare concern about someone in their care;
- Engage in slagging or joking that belittles children.
- Give lifts to young people in their cars

7.4 ORGANISING ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

- Appropriate transport arrangements will be made for all activities;
- Activities will be age appropriate;
- Registration forms, parental consent forms etc will be provided as required;
- Incident / accident report forms and safety procedures will be used to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people;
- Clear lines of communication between organisers and parents/guardians regarding attendance, location, drop-off and pick-up, duration of activities

will be agreed.

7.5 TOUCHING

- Touching will be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult;
- Touching should always be with the child's permission – resistance from the child will be respected;
- Breasts, buttocks and groin should always be avoided;
- Touching should be open and not secretive;
- Any touching should be governed by the developmental stage of the child
- Tasks of a personal nature will only be undertaken with the utmost of discretion in an emergency situation; for very young children or disabled children and always with the full understanding and consent of the parents.

7.6 COMMUNICATION

- All communication, including electronic email and text, between staff, volunteers and children will be appropriate and will only be done with parental consent;
- Communications will not contain inappropriate images or text that might be construed as pornographic, racist, derogatory or contain innuendo or material that in any way might be inappropriate or offensive;
- Young people will not be contacted by staff & volunteers through social networking sites;
- Photographs, video or other images of children or young people will not be taken without the consent of the parents / carers and the young people themselves and only appropriate images will be used to promote the activities of the Centre.

8. COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Kenmare Family Resource Centre promotes best practice and welcomes feedback at all times. We would encourage people to address their comments / concerns to us as soon as possible - as this will facilitate us to address the matter most effectively.

- Informal comments or complaints should initially be addressed to the person(s) in question;
- Alternatively the Co-ordinator of Kenmare Family Resource Centre can be contacted. S/he will be responsible for directing the complaints / comments to the appropriate person;
- All comments or complaints will be treated properly, fairly and impartially;
- If the complaint relates to the safety and welfare of a child, it will be dealt with in accordance with this child protection and welfare policy and procedures;
- Where a complainant feels that their comment / complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily through the informal process outlined above, the comment / complaint should be put on a formal basis using the template provided in Appendix 8. Where possible formal complaints / comments should be made in writing; See our complaints procedure for guidance.
- Complaints / comments will be acknowledged immediately and responded to in detail within 15 working days of receipt of the written comment or complaint;
- If there are outstanding issues for either party - these can be addressed with the chairperson, who will be guided by the policies and procedures of the Centre.

Please ask for Kenmare FRC Complaints Procedures for a more comprehensive overview of this process.

9. PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

If an allegation of abusive behaviour is made against a staff member or volunteer two separate procedures will be followed and managed independently by different people in the Centre:

- (1) The Designated Liaison Person will deal with the child welfare or protection issue;
- (2) A member of the Voluntary Board of Directors (employer), ideally a member of the Staffing Sub-group and / or the Chairperson, will deal with the allegation against the staff member / volunteer.

Where an allegation of abuse is made against the Designated Liaison Person, the deputy Designated Liaison Person or the chairperson, then others in the Centre will be charged with dealing with the allegations.

CHILD PROTECTION / WELFARE ISSUE	ALLEGATION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER / VOLUNTEER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer is received - it will be dealt with promptly and strictly in accordance with these procedures; • The safety of the child is paramount and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. Kenmare Family Resource Centre will ensure that no other children or young people are put at risk during this period. This may include any of the following: suspension of duties pending the outcome of an investigation; re-assignment of duties so that the accused will not have contact with children or young people; working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation; • Kenmare Family Resource Centre will inform other relevant agencies and the primary carers as appropriate; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an allegation has been made against a staff member or volunteer a member of the Staffing Sub-group and / or the chairperson will privately inform them of (1) the fact that an allegation has been made against them and (2) the nature of the allegation; • The employee or volunteer will be afforded an opportunity to respond and their response will be noted in any subsequent report to Tusla or an Garda Síochána; • Once the person has been informed of the allegation made against them, the Designated Liaison Person will consult with the Tusla: Children and Family Services and complete the standard reporting form (Appendix 3) as required; • The Centre will ensure that the principles of 'natural justice' apply throughout the process; • An investigation will take place into the allegation(s) as soon as possible and in accordance with the Centre's disciplinary procedures;

CHILD PROTECTION / WELFARE ISSUE	ALLEGATION AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER / VOLUNTEER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision to make a formal report will be based on reasonable grounds for concern and in consultation with the Tusla Duty Social Worker. It will also be done in accordance with the role of the Designated Liaison Person and the Centre's reporting procedures; • Both the child and the primary carers will be informed of any actions planned and taken; • The child will be dealt with in an age appropriate manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Staffing Sub-group and / or the Chairperson will inform the person against whom the allegation has been made of the outcome of the investigation • The Centre will work in consultation with the Tusla: Children and Family Services and an Garda Síochána on what action(s) should be taken in regard to the staff member / volunteer; • The person against whom the allegation has been made will need support and the Centre will advise on how to access relevant support services.

Kenmare Family Resource Centre recognises that the reactions of other members of staff / volunteers to the allegations may include anger, disbelief and shock. Staff and volunteers will be supported in a manner that protects the child, facilitates a fair investigation into the allegation(s) and outlines the behaviour expected of staff and volunteers whilst the matter is under investigation.

The Centre also recognises the need to support the child and his / her primary carers and other family members throughout the process of assessment and investigation and will work with the Social Worker Department of Tusla: Children and Family Services to provide this support.

10. ACCIDENTS

Kenmare Family Resource Centre has a Health and Safety Statement that includes a risk assessment of each area of operation. Procedures to follow in the event of an accident are clearly described in this.

PROCEDURES

- All accidents in Kenmare Family Resource Centre must be reported to the Health and Safety officer Conor McAtasney who has participated in First Aid training;
- All accidents / incidents must be recorded using the Centre's Incident / Accident Report Form (Appendix 6);
- If a child has an accident the primary carers are always informed of the nature of the accident and any treatment given;
- An up to date register is maintained of the contact details of all children or young people involved with Kenmare Family Resource Centre;
- The location of the First-aid boxes are known to all staff members / volunteers and they are re-stocked regularly;
- Children and young people are advised of any possible health and safety risks when participating in any activities / programmes in the Centre;
- Where trips are made 'off site', requirements in relation to having staff members / volunteers trained in first aid will be an integral part of the planning process;
- External organisations that Kenmare Family Resource Centre works with are obliged to provide proof that they have adequate public liability insurance.

11. POLICY ON SHARING INFORMATION WITH PRIMARY CARERS

SHARING INFORMATION WITH PRIMARY CARERS

Primary carers are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the work of Kenmare Family Resource Centre and the Centre is committed to keeping them informed of all aspects of the activity / programme that their child is involved in. A copy of the Centre's child protection and welfare policy and procedures is available to all primary carers. In the event of a child protection concern arising, the practice in Kenmare Family Resource Centre is to inform primary carers' immediately unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

Kenmare Family Resource Centre undertakes to:

- Advise primary carers of the Centre's child protection and welfare policy and procedures;
- Ensure that information is made available to primary carers on all of our activities and potential activities;
- Issue all relevant documentation including registration forms, attendance sheets, comment / complaint forms (Appendix 5), accident / incident report forms (Appendix 6), parental consent forms (Appendix 7) as required. As part of this process the Centre will provide clarification as required on who has guardianship rights to give parental consent (www.treoir.ie);
- Fully comply with health and safety procedures;
- Operate child centred policies in accordance with best practice;
- Adhere to the Centre's recruitment, selection and management procedures for staff and volunteers;

- Ensure that all activities are age appropriate;
- Actively encourage primary carers to ask questions and comment on the supports and services that are provided by the Centre in order to support their right to ensure that their children are safe at all times (e.g. *Keeping Children Safe: Helping Parents and Carers Choose Safe Services and Activities for Children* – information leaflet produced by Mayo Local Child Protection Committee)
- Where possible support the involvement of parents, carers and / or responsible adults.

If Kenmare Family Resource Centre has concerns about the welfare of any child or young person the Centre will:

- Respond to the needs of the child and ensure that the interests of the child are paramount;
- Inform the primary carers unless it is thought that this action would put the child at further risk;
- Encourage the primary carers to work in partnership with the Centre and ensure that they have an opportunity to consult with the Designated Liaison Person;
- Liaise with Tusla: Children and Family Services and or An Garda Síochána as appropriate;
- In the event of a complaint against a member of staff or a volunteer with Kenmare Family Resource Centre the Centre will immediately take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child and inform the primary carers as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Staff and volunteers in Kenmare Family Resource Centre have a responsibility to promote children's rights by:

- Treating them with dignity, sensitivity and respect;
- Making time to listen, talk to and get to know the children;
- Making sure that children know the Centre's rules about behaviour;
- Encouraging children to have an input into how things are run;
- Helping children to be safe, happy and having as much fun as possible;
- Never favouring one child or children over others;
- Enabling children to regard their bodies as their own property;
- Encouraging them to express feelings, fears and experiences openly;
- Giving written information about the Centre to children and their parents / carers;
- Knowing about the principles and practices of child protection including their legal duties;
- Never engaging in sexually provocative games or making suggestive comments, even in fun;
- Respecting children's privacy in bathrooms and in changing rooms;
- Sensitively ensuring that children know about the child protection policy;
- Always responding to complaints or allegations;
- Helping children realise the difference between confidentiality and secrecy;
- Being sensitive to the fact that some children are more vulnerable and have special needs;
- Never using physical punishment with children.

Our Duty to Care: Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002) p.6.

APPENDIX 2

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE RECOGNISED

Neglect

Child neglect is the most frequently reported category of abuse, both in Ireland and internationally. Ongoing chronic neglect is recognised as being extremely harmful to the development and well-being of the child and may have serious long-term negative consequences.

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of an omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety. Emotional neglect may also lead the child having attachment difficulties. The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Neglect is associated with poverty but not necessarily caused by it. It is strongly linked to parental substance misuse, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and disability.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. This may become apparent where you see the child over a period of time, or the effects of neglect may be obvious based on having seen the child once.

The following are features of child neglect:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision
- Malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding
- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. a child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also emotional deprivation
- Failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental needs, including intellectual stimulation
- Inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture
- Lack of adequate clothing
- Inattention to basic hygiene
- Lack of protection and exposure to danger, including moral danger, or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age
- Persistent failure to attend school
- Abandonment or desertion

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. Once-off and occasional difficulties between a parent/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse. Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs. Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Emotional abuse may be seen in some of the following ways:

- Rejection
- Lack of comfort and love
- Lack of attachment
- Lack of proper stimulation (e.g. fun and play)
- Lack of continuity of care (e.g. frequent moves, particularly unplanned)
- Continuous lack of praise and encouragement
- Persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child
- Bullying
- Conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on his or her behaviours or actions
- Extreme overprotectiveness
- Inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g. locking child in bedroom)
- Ongoing family conflicts and family violence
- Seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development

There may be no physical signs of emotional abuse unless it occurs with another type of abuse. A child may show signs of emotional abuse through their actions or emotions in several ways. These include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, risk taking and aggressive behaviour.

It should be noted that no one indicator is conclusive evidence of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is more likely to impact negatively on a child where it is persistent over time and where there is a lack of other protective factors.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/ or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

The Children First Act 2015 includes a provision that abolishes the common law defence of reasonable chastisement in court proceedings. This defence could previously be invoked by a parent or other person in authority who physically disciplined a child. The change in the legislation now means that in prosecutions relating to assault or physical cruelty, a person who administers such punishment to a child cannot rely on the defence of reasonable chastisement in the legal proceedings. The result of this is that the protections in law relating to assault now apply to a child in the same way as they do to an adult.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and in some instances, occurs over a number of years. Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or his or her siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- Any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- An invitation to sexual touching or intentional touching or molesting of a child's body whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or the involvement of a child in an act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal
- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes:
 - Inviting, inducing or coercing a child to engage in prostitution or the production of child pornography [for example, exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of an image by computer or other means]
 - Inviting, coercing or inducing a child to participate in, or to observe, any sexual, indecent or obscene act
 - Showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the 'grooming' process by perpetrators of abuse
- Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person
- Exposing a child to inappropriate or abusive material through information and communication technology

APPENDIX 3

Guidelines for Responding to a Disclosure

Do

Stay calm
Listen to the child
Accept what the child says
Reassure the child
Maintain confidentiality
Remain supportive to the child
Record in writing child's words
After disclosure and not during
Conversation

Don't

Panic
Pressurise the child
Promise to keep secrets
Ask leading questions or
details or make suggestions
Start to investigate
Delay or do nothing

APPENDIX 4

Protections for Persons Reporting Act, 1998

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to the Tusla or and Garda Síochána. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

Its main provisions are:

1. The provision of immunity from civil liability to any person who reports child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers of Health Boards or any member of the Garda Síochána;
2. The provision of significant protections for employees
3. Who report child abuse. These protections cover all employees and all forms of discrimination up to and including, dismissal;
4. The creation of a new offence of false reporting of child abuse where a person makes a report of child abuse to the appropriate authorities “knowing that statement to be false”. This is a new criminal offence designed to protect innocent persons from malicious reports.

However, where a person reports abuse or makes a complaint their anonymity cannot be guaranteed and their identity may be revealed as part of investigations and considerations by the Tusla, an Garda Síochána and the Courts.

APPENDIX 5

Comment / Complaint Form

COMPLAINTS RECORD FORM	
NAME OF PERSON COMPLAINING:	
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FRC:	
ADDRESS :	
TELEPHONE:	
MOBILE No:	
EMAIL:	
DATE OF COMPLAINT:	
Describe in detail the nature and facts of the complaint. Be as accurate as possible.	
SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT:	
DATE:	
COMPLAINT RECORDED BY:	
DATE:	

APPENDIX 6

Incident / Accident Report Form

Event / where the incident / accident occurred:

Date: _____

Location: _____

1. Brief description of what happened:

2. Who was involved?

3. Name and contact details for any witnesses:

4. Any injury sustained / damage done to property?

5. Who dealt with the situation?

6. How was it resolved / dealt with?

7. Any follow up required?

8. Additional information

Signature: _____

Name
(Block letters): _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 7

Parental / Guardian Consent Form

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Parent/Guardian's Name:

Address (if different to above):

Contact details:

Phone:

Email:

Can we put your contact number on our text list?

Yes

NO

Any medical info/allergies/ learning challenges /emotional challenges you would like to inform us of regarding the child:

Does Kenmare FRC have permission to administer First Aid to your child if necessary?

Yes: _____ No: _____

Does Kenmare Family Resource Centre (FRC) have permission to take photos for use in publications, Facebook, website?

Yes.....

No....

Will your child be collected _____

Walk home _____

Kenmare FRC has a Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy & Confidentiality policy. All staff & volunteers of Kenmare FRC have been Garda Vetted

Parental/ Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 8

Parent Friendly Version of Kenmare FRC Child

Protection Policy

Kenmare Family Resource Centre is actively committed to a child-centred approach to working with children and young people and undertakes to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the welfare of the child is paramount. By promoting their rights Kenmare Family Resource Centre will support children to participate in matters that affect their lives. Kenmare Family Resource Centre believe that children should be safe and protected in all aspects of their lives and that best practice in relation to child protection and welfare must be at the core of providing community-based family supports and services.

Children's rights are respected here at Kenmare FRC

Parents! We want you to be as involved as you can in your child's activities at Kenmare FRC. Please ask us questions! Discuss with us, any concerns you might have.

Confidentiality at Kenmare FRC is an absolute given. What you do here or what you attend here is YOUR business only. We will keep your personal information safe & secure. Ask for a copy of our Confidentiality policy!

We will only break confidentiality if we believe somebody is being harmed or there is a potential risk of danger. In most cases, we will talk to you before we pass on any information.

Kenmare FRC will have to report any child protection concerns to TUSLA or An Garda Siochana.

All staff & volunteers follow a recruitment process and are given ongoing support & supervision as relevant.

Staff & volunteers are offered regular, ongoing training throughout their time with Kenmare FRC

All staff & volunteers abide by a Code of Behaviour & Good Practice

All accidents & incidences will be dealt with sensitively at Kenmare FRC.

Adults & young people are invited to give feedback to Kenmare FRC at any time. Please contact Conor McAtasney, Co-ordinator to do this or any staff member who is available at the time.

A more detailed copy of our Child Protection Policy is available if you wish to read it.

The Designated Liasion Person is Conor McAtasney. The Deputy Designated Liasion person is Irene Carey. Both can be contacted at the centre on 064 6642790 / 085 8002471 or just call in!

APPENDIX 9

Child Friendly Version of Kenmare FRC Child Protection Policy

Children & Young People!

We want you to feel welcome when you are in Kenmare Family Resource Centre (FRC)

We want you to feel safe & secure here

Your rights are respected here at Kenmare FRC

Everything at Kenmare FRC is kept confidential. What you do here or what you attend here is YOUR business only!

However, we cannot promise to keep a secret. If you tell us something that causes us to worry about your safety, then we will have to pass on that information to someone who can help.

All staff & volunteers that you meet at Kenmare FRC have been trained, garda vetted and get support often to make sure they are doing a good job.

All staff & volunteers follow a Code of Behaviour & Good Practice

You are invited to give us your ideas at any time.

If something is bothering you, you are welcome to talk to us about it.

You can talk to Conor McAtasney. You will find Conor at the centre most days!
Or you can ring him on 0858002471.

APPENDIX 10

List of Mandated Persons at Kenmare FRC

Harriet McGuigan – Child and Adolescent Counsellor - 0862685916