SONAS Freedom from Domestic Violence	**POLICY NUMBER: SER**			
	TITLE: Sonas Domestic Violence Charity Child Safeguarding Statement			
	Version: 1.1	**Issue date: Sept 2025**	**Review Date: Sept 2026**	**Approved by: Board**

Name of service being provided:

Sonas Domestic Violence Charity

Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm

Sonas is the largest provider of domestic violence support services in the State, with over 1,200 women and children supported annually. We support victims of domestic abuse through dedicated support teams working across services. For more information on services see www.domesticabuse.ie

Our approach is client-centred, and outcomes focused. Our guiding principles include early intervention and prevention with particular strengths in secondary prevention, working with diverse range of service users and those with additional and complex needs. We work from a rights-based and empowerment perspective.

We provide a comprehensive range of support services in the country to victims of domestic abuse: Refuge, Safe Homes and Community-Based Services including Outreach, Advise and Information, Court Preparation and Accompaniment, and Peer Support Programmes.

Services are delivered to children and young people in Refuge and Safe Home. Support for children and young people in our Community Based Services are primarily provided through their mothers and take the form of safety and parenting advice in the context of domestic abuse.

Key Principles of best practice in Child Protection and Welfare:

- The welfare of children and young people is of paramount importance.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and young people and respecting the rights and needs of parents, carers and families. Where there is conflict, the child's welfare must come first.
- Children and young people have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
- Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
- Factors such as the child's family circumstances, gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race should be considered when taking protective action. Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation; their circumstances must be understood within a family context.
- The criminal dimension of any action must not be ignored.

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Risk Assessment

We carry out an assessment of any potential harm to a child while they are in our services. Below is the list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing the identified risks.

	Risk Identified	Process in place to manage risk identified
1	Risk from staff	• Sonas has robust policies and procedures in place relating to the recruitment of staff and working with children which are in line with The Children First Act 2015. • Sonas provides significant time and resources to the selection and recruitment of all staff. • All Sonas staff are Garda Vetted, as part of the recruitment process, and re-vetted every three years thereafter. • Sonas provides ongoing training and support to staff in relation to child welfare arrangements. • All staff receive Children First training, and updated every three years. • Sonas has 5 'Designated Liaison Persons' (DLP) with at least 1 of them on duty at all times. • All staff are skilled and trained to identify any potential risks of harm to a child or young person and contact the DLP to discuss devising a report to Tusla in accordance with the Children First Act 2015. • Sonas Children Rooms are equipped with CCTV. • Sonas will always have two staff members present when working with children unless the child's mother is present. • All Sonas complexes have CCTV monitoring the external perimeters and communal areas of buildings. CCTV is used in line with GDPR and child safeguarding best practice
2	Risk from alleged perpetrator	• Sonas staff carry out risk assessments with every client to develop risk management plans. • Personal visitors are not allowed in Sonas Refuge(s) or Safe Homes • Professional visitors that access Sonas Refuge(s) and Safe homes must identify themselves, sign in and out of the building and wear a visitors' badge. • All Sonas complexes have CCTV monitoring the external perimeters and communal areas of buildings. CCTV is used in line with GDPR and child safeguarding best practice
3	Risk from another adult (Sonas client)	• All clients that access a Sonas service are aware of policies and procedures in place relating to work with children and are in line with Children First Act 2015. • All front-line staff are trained to support clients and their children but also to identify and report any potential risks of harm to a child or young person.

		• All Sonas complexes have CCTV monitoring the external perimeters and communal areas of buildings. CCTV is used in line with GDPR and child safeguarding best practice
4	Risk from another adult (Visitors)	• Personal visitors are not allowed in Sonas Refuge(s) or Safe Homes • Professional visitors that access Sonas Refuge(s) and Safe homes must identify themselves, sign in and out of the building and wear a visitors' badge. • Sonas staff member(s) are present when a visitor is in the building. • All Sonas complexes have CCTV monitoring the external perimeters and communal areas of buildings. CCTV is used in line with GDPR and child safeguarding best practice
5	Risk from another adult (Contractors)	• Sonas uses a selection process to ensure that any contractor appointed to do work for, or on behalf of, Sonas has the necessary competence for the work that they are engaged to do. • Sonas contractors sign a declaration that they will comply with all policies and procedures. • All contractors must identify themselves, sign in and out of a Sonas service, and wear a Visitors Badge at all times. • Sonas staff member(s) are present when a visitor is in the building when work is being carried out to offices and children's rooms. • All Sonas complexes have CCTV monitoring the external perimeters and communal areas of buildings. CCTV is used in line with GDPR and child safeguarding best practice

Policy and Procedures

This Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, The Children First National Guidance For the Protection of Children 2017 and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice (2017). In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment, the following procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Welfare Policy to support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our services:

- Management of allegations of abuse or misconduct towards a child availing of a Sonas service by a Sonas staff member(s).
- Recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.
- Provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.
- Reporting of Child Protection or Welfare concerns to Tusla.
- Maintaining a list of the persons in the relevant service who are mandated persons.
- Appointing a relevant person.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

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Implementation

Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service. This Statement is available publicly on our website and displayed in all Sonas services.

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed every year, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers. For queries, please contact Sonya Logan (Relevant Person under the Children First Act 2015).

Signed: Sonya Logan Acting Head of Services
Sonas Domestic Violence Charity
3 Killester Court
Killester Avenue
Dublin 5