

**Safeguarding**  
I R E L A N D



# **Strategic Plan**

## **2022 - 2025**

[safeguardingireland.org](https://safeguardingireland.org)



## Table of Contents

Foreword.	3
About Safeguarding Ireland.	5
Mission Statement.	6
Values.	6
Process of Strategic Plan Development.	7
Structure of Our Strategic Plan.	7
Objectives.	9
Objective No.1.	9
Objective No. 2	11
Objective No.3	12
Objective No. 4.	14
Review.	15

## Foreword

The abuse, exploitation and neglect of adults is happening on a daily basis in Ireland. This is confirmed through official figures from the HSE, supported by research into the prevalence of abuse and evidenced in the many legal cases that have come before the courts. Adult abuse is no less a concerning issue than child abuse and, as such, must be viewed with the same gravity and confronted with the same urgency. No civilised society should tolerate the abuse of any person. Clear and unambiguous signals are needed from leaders in all organisations that adult abuse is never acceptable. It undermines our values as a society and demeans us as human beings. It is for this reason that Safeguarding Ireland continues to highlight the issue of adult abuse.

This Strategic Plan, commencing in 2022 and continuing until 2025, has been developed to guide the work, activities and direction for Safeguarding Ireland for the next number of years. It is Safeguarding Ireland's second strategic plan and it continues with many of the main objectives contained in the first plan. However, a central component of this Strategic Plan is the pursuit of the introduction of adult safeguarding legislation in Ireland, with an independent overarching National Adult Safeguarding Authority. The introduction of adult safeguarding legislation is, without doubt, long overdue. We continue to see cases of adult abuse and neglect in this country, despite statements, policies and promises that things will improve. Those engaged in efforts to safeguard adults from abuse are thwarted and frustrated in their efforts as they lack the statutory powers to pursue cases to a conclusion that safeguards at-risk adults.

This results in many at risk adults continuing to experience a poor quality of life and living in unsafe environments. The scale of adult abuse is well documented – indeed the numbers documented represent a significant understatement of the figures. The enactment of adult safeguarding legislation is therefore both necessary and urgent.

The Strategic Plan also identifies a number of other objectives, some a continuation of those that were pursued in the earlier strategic plan. One important element of this Strategic Plan is the commitment to review it on an ongoing basis with a view to amending elements of it in response to a changing environment.

Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse is a long term and enduring challenge. Every individual and organisation must play a part. Safeguarding Ireland, thankfully, has many committed partner organisations with which it works to promote the safeguarding agenda. We will continue to work with those organisations in the coming years in order to combat abuse, exploitation and neglect of adults and promote their human rights.

**Patricia Rickard-Clarke**  
Chair Safeguarding Ireland



## About Safeguarding Ireland

Safeguarding Ireland is registered with both the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulatory Authority. Its primary objectives are to promote safeguarding of adults who may be vulnerable, protect them from all forms of abuse by persons, organisations and institutions and develop a national plan for promoting their welfare. This will be achieved by promoting inter-sectoral collaboration, developing public and professional awareness and education, and undertaking research to inform policy, practice and legislation in the Republic of Ireland.

### Safeguarding Ireland has the following subsidiary objectives: -

- (a)** To raise public understanding of attitudes, behaviours, circumstances and systems that create vulnerability that may result in abuse and that may require a safeguarding response.
- (b)** To promote the protection and rights of people who may be vulnerable by encouraging organisations and services to recognise, prevent and deal with exploitation and abuse effectively.
- (c)** To inform and influence Government policy and legislation to safeguard the rights of people who may be vulnerable.

Safeguarding Ireland is registered with both the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulatory Authority. In that context, Safeguarding Ireland will continue to fulfill its obligations in relation to the requirements of both agencies.



## Mission Statement

**To promote, protect and defend the rights and dignity of adults who are or may be at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect and to support and empower them.**

**To strive for an Ireland free from adult abuse where everyone's rights are respected and promoted - protected and underpinned by adult safeguarding legislation.**

## Values



Safeguarding Ireland is a values-led organisation and we aim to live our Values in all of our actions.



**We believe in the dignity of every human being.**



**We are influenced by our belief that everyone is entitled to be afforded respect.**



**We espouse social justice, diversity, inclusiveness and every person's right to live a life free from abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.**



**We are open and accountable in how we do our work.**

## Process of Strategic Plan Development

Understandably, the Board of Safeguarding Ireland has given a lot of consideration to the contents of this Strategic Plan and there have been a number of elements considered over a long period of time. Initially, in the development of the Plan, the Board carried out a review of its earlier Strategic Plan (2017 to 2021) in order to determine how effective it has been in achieving the objectives of that plan and also to consider what elements it might continue with. In addition, Safeguarding Ireland consulted with a number of members of the National Safeguarding Advisory Committee who volunteered to generate ideas and suggestions for the new Strategic Plan. This proved invaluable, with richly varied perspectives and important suggestions, many of which have been included.

This final Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Safeguarding Ireland at its meeting in March, 2022. It will be reviewed and, as deemed necessary, amended over time. However, it's likely that the amendments will largely be related to the actions rather than any changes to the overall objectives.

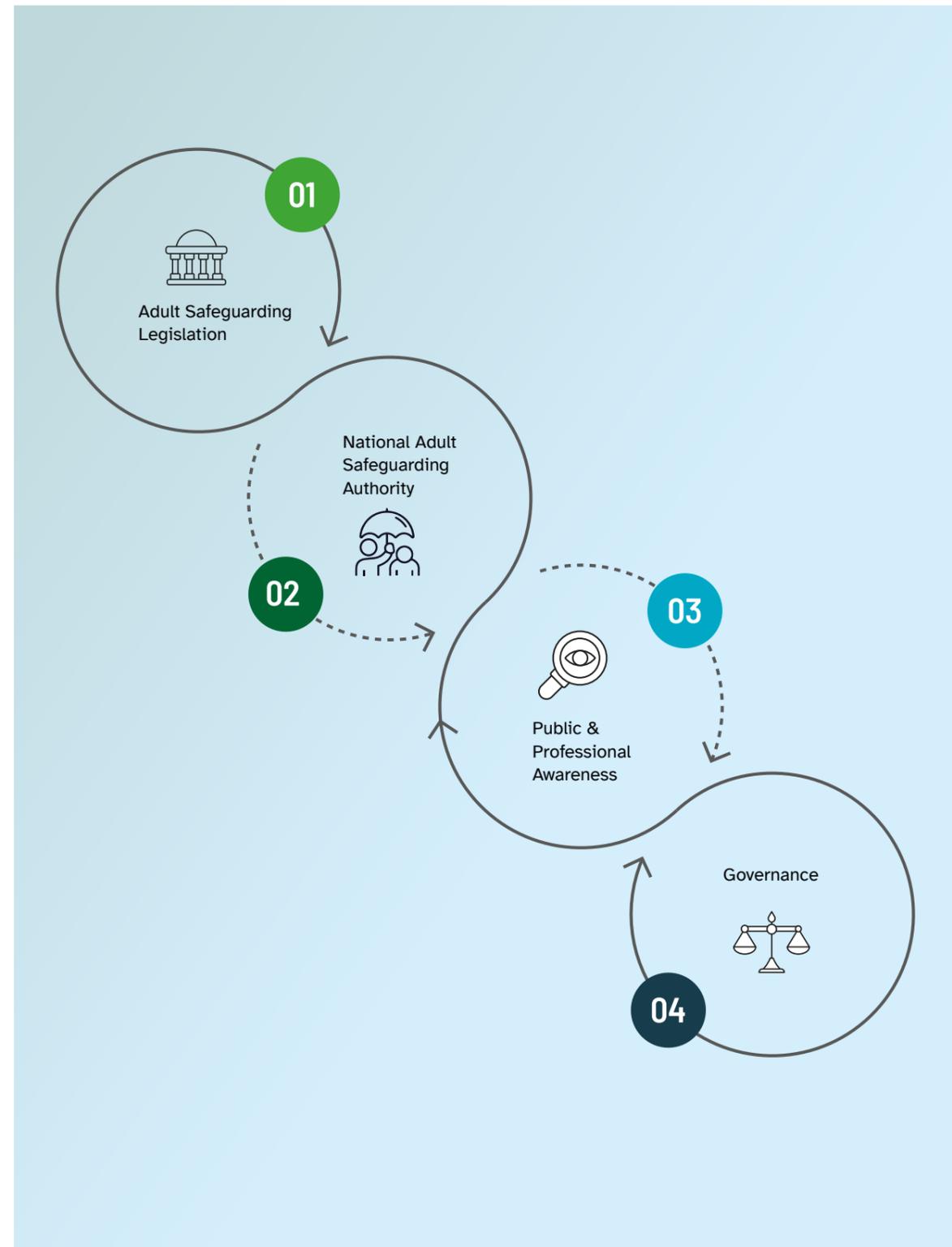
## Structure of Our Strategic Plan

Safeguarding Ireland's Strategic Plan is governed by four key Objectives. Each of these Objectives is underpinned by a set of priorities and supporting actions to achieve the Objectives. In addition, the Strategic Plan is designed as a working and dynamic document which is flexible so that modifications can be made as the external environment changes. In this regard, the Strategic Plan will be formally reviewed every year, with modifications incorporated and adopted as the need arises or as the situation demands.

All of the Objectives are interconnected and complementary to the overall purpose of Safeguarding Ireland. The actions underpinning each one of the Objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive to that objective – rather they are interrelated and consistent with the general thrust of Safeguarding Ireland's plan for the coming years. The following diagram summarises the interconnectivity between the main concepts needed to realise Safeguarding Ireland's mission and objectives.



## Promote Safeguarding Of Adults At Risk.



## Objectives

### Objective No.1.

#### ADULT SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION.

Safeguarding Ireland will promote and pursue the introduction and enactment of Adult Safeguarding Legislation.

#### Key Priorities.

- Work with legislators, key stakeholders and influencers towards the commencement of robust adult safeguarding legislation.
- Develop and promote evidence to inform policy that outlines the State's responsibility to adults that may be at-risk, to include adult safeguarding legislation.

#### Actions.

- Continue to work with, and take advice from, the National Safeguarding Advisory Committee on issues relating to the introduction of Adult Safeguarding Legislation and the development of adult social care policy.
- Build on the work of the Law Reform Commission with regard to A Regulatory Framework for Adult Safeguarding.
- Develop evidence-based resources aimed at informing the advancement of policy on adult social care and support, and Adult Safeguarding Legislation.
- Encourage an international review of states' policies and responsibilities on care and support for adults who are at-risk or in need of care and support.
- Support the development of robust adult social care policy that outlines the State's responsibilities for care and support of its citizens and complements adult safeguarding legislation.
- Consistently engage with Government Ministers, members of both Houses of the Oireachtas, senior civil servants and political advisers to inform and influence them on the issues related to adult safeguarding and the need for legislation.
- Establish an informal cross-party grouping of members of the Oireachtas to provide support on policy and progress on adult safeguarding legislation.

## Objectives



### Objective No.2.

#### NATIONAL ADULT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY.

Safeguarding Ireland will work towards the development of a plan for the establishment of a National Adult Safeguarding Authority.

##### Key Priorities.

- Work with stakeholders and key figures in the Oireachtas, government departments, state agencies, regulatory authorities and publicly funded organisations to plan for the establishment of a National Adult Safeguarding Authority.

##### Actions.

- Undertake an audit of safeguarding issues relevant to each government department and relevant agencies of state.
- Undertake a national and international survey of agencies with a cross-cutting remit to inform how best to structure and establish a National Adult Safeguarding Authority.
- Organise a series of consultations, workshops and seminars to develop understanding of the challenges involved in inter-agency collaboration regarding adult safeguarding issues.
- Provide support and promote awareness of the need for multi-disciplinary, multi-agency and multi-perspective approaches to adult safeguarding.
- Plan for the dissolution of Safeguarding Ireland as a corporate entity and the establishment of appropriate advisory structures for a National Adult Safeguarding Authority.



### Objective No.3.

#### PUBLIC and PROFESSIONAL AWARENESS.

Safeguarding Ireland will raise public and organisational awareness of issues of abuse, neglect and exploitation and of the need for a rights-informed approach to adult safeguarding issues.

##### Key Priorities.

- Collaborate with members of the National Safeguarding Advisory Committee on raising public and professional awareness.
- Measure and measurably improve public awareness and understanding of issues related to abuse, exploitation and neglect of adults who are, or may be, at-risk of abuse.
- Promote awareness, and capacity and capability, among professionals in health and social services, policing, income support, financial services and other relevant agencies regarding issues related to abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults and the importance of collaboration.
- Collaborate with at-risk adults in the design of educational/awareness-raising activity.
- Publish a quarterly Safeguarding Ireland information bulletin for dissemination to stakeholders and all media.
- Designate and support an annual National Adult Safeguarding Day, a Charter for Adult Safeguarding and an associated recognition/award scheme for efforts in promoting adult safeguarding.
- Further develop the Safeguarding Ireland website as an easily accessible and intuitive repository of information relating to safeguarding.
- Commission and publish relevant research relating to adult safeguarding and abuse through an annual grant scheme.

##### Actions.

- Review the public awareness work to date of Safeguarding Ireland and prepare to operationalise and implement a plan for targeting those groups identified as most in need of focused messaging.
- Consider how best to develop awareness among the diversity of professional groups identified as in need of targeted information and awareness initiatives.
- Promote access to and provision of education, training and skills development related to adult safeguarding.
- Develop and deliver a programme of public awareness campaigns on adult safeguarding and related topics using print, broadcast and social media.
- Develop a wide range of resources to address public and professional awareness needs suitable for use across print, digital (social) and broadcast media, and professional publications and journals.
- Collaborate with other relevant agencies and the National Safeguarding Advisory Committee to promote the safeguarding agenda.
- Encourage financial and utilities service providers to develop and design products and services that empower at-risk adults as a means of prevention of abuse, exploitation and neglect.
- Support the development of a module in adult safeguarding for those engaged in the provision of essential consumer services.



## Objectives

### Objective No.4.

#### GOVERNANCE.

As a registered charity, Safeguarding Ireland will work to ensure the highest standards of Governance in the delivery of its objectives and obligations.

#### Key Priorities.

- Demonstrate compliance with all legal and governance obligations.
- Ensure transparency and stewardship of all its resources.

#### Actions.

- Make all necessary returns in a timely way to the CRA, CRO, HSE and other funding agencies and relevant organisations.
- Complement the annual audit of accounts with a social return on investment study (SROI) commissioned from an organisation skilled in social impact studies.
- Review and, where necessary, enhance and add to the existing suite of governance policies and procedures.
- Conduct audits as required and demonstrate value for money.

## Review

Safeguarding Ireland will launch its Strategic Plan in early 2022 and the Plan will encompass the years 2022 to 2025 inclusive. Each of the Objectives, and the Priorities and Actions outlined to support the Objectives, will be formally reviewed each year. These reviews will examine the extent to which Safeguarding Ireland is meeting its Objectives and identify suggested areas for improvement, as well as areas where Safeguarding Ireland is complying with its Objectives and supporting Actions. These reviews may lead to a greater or lesser emphasis, over a period of time, on certain elements of the Strategic Plan, depending on whether or not Safeguarding Ireland is meeting its Objectives and on the prevailing environment.

In addition to reviewing the extent to which Safeguarding Ireland is complying with its Objectives and supporting Actions, the review will focus on areas where Safeguarding Ireland may need to provide a greater focus and energy, taking account of the prevailing political, social and legislative environment. Any significant changes or amendments to the overall Strategic Plan will be highlighted by Safeguarding Ireland in its bulletin and on its website.

