

You should consult the full list of organisations which are classified as relevant services under the Act to establish if your organisation is a relevant service. This list can be found in Appendix 1 of this Guidance.

To qualify as a relevant service under the Act, the service provider must employ at least one other person to provide that service. In effect, this means that types of activity and services provided by persons who work alone and do not employ another person (e.g. tutors who provide one-to-one tuition or childminders) are exempt under the Act. Activities which are undertaken in the course of a family or personal relationship for no commercial benefit, for example a grandparent who minds their grandchild or the person who gives the neighbour's children a lift to school, are also exempt.

Risk assessment

Under the Children First Act 2015, if your organisation is providing a relevant service, you must undertake a risk assessment. This considers the potential for harm to come to children while they are in your organisation's care. It should be noted that risk in this context is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety risk. Your organisation then uses this risk assessment to draft a Child Safeguarding Statement to outline how these risks will be managed.

A risk assessment is an exercise where your organisation examines all aspects of your service from a safeguarding perspective to establish whether there are any practices or features of your service that have the potential to put children at risk.

The risk assessment process is intended to enable your organisation to:

- Identify potential risks
- Develop policies and procedures to minimise risk by responding in a timely manner to potential risks
- Review whether adequate precautions have been taken to eliminate or reduce these risks

UNDERSTANDING WHAT RISKS TO ASSESS

Section 11(1)(a) of the Children First Act 2015 defines risk as “any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service.” Section 2 of the Act defines harm as follows:

“harm means in relation to a child –

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

(b) Sexual abuse of the child,

whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise.”

CARRYING OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT

As part of the risk assessment process, your organisation should reflect on what specific risks arise as a result of the service you provide and how these risks can be managed. The following steps in the diagram are a guide to help your organisation consider where the potential for risk lies and how these risks can be managed.



It is not possible to eliminate risk completely, but risks can be significantly reduced if they are properly managed.

After the risk assessment has been completed, organisations are required to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement that outlines the policies and procedures which are in place to manage the risks that have been identified.