



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality

**Children
First**

Children First Awareness Week 2025

Communications Strategy



Contents

Executive Summary	3
1.0 Campaign Overview	5
1. Background, Aim & Objectives	5
1.2 What's different in 2025?	6
1.3 Communications objectives	7
Raise awareness	7
Promote understanding	8
Build confidence	8
Encourage action	8
Create national alignment	8
Include youth & community voice	8
1.4 Direct Messaging to Organisations	9
1.5 How we will work together	9
Defined roles and responsibilities	11
2.0 Campaign Approach	12
2.1 Target Audiences	12
2.2 Key Messages Framework	13
Tier 1: Our core message	14
Tier 2: Our supporting messages	14
Tier 3: Your tailored key messages	15
2.2.1 Messaging In Action	17
Social video series	17
2.3 Content & Asset Overview	18
3.0 Campaign Activation	19
3.1 Master timeline	20
3.2 Channels & tactics	21
4.0 Campaign Review	22
4.1 Measurement	23
4.2 Evaluation	23

Executive Summary

Children First Awareness Week 2025 marks the third national campaign to promote child safeguarding across Ireland. This year's strategy reflects an evolution in tone, reach, and ambition, seeking not only to inform, but to deeply connect with the public through a message that is both emotionally resonant and grounded in shared responsibility. The campaign will also communicate with organisations in respect of their statutory obligation to comply with the Children First legislation.

In the broader picture, child safeguarding is more than a set of compliance measures or reporting obligations. It is about how we, as a society, create the conditions for all children and young people to thrive, not only protecting them from harm, but actively supporting their ability to meet their fullest potential. This requires an ongoing commitment to be present, to stay engaged, and to work in collaboration to improve the lives of children and young people. Every person within the community and member of an organisation has a role to play, whether as a parent, a volunteer, a mandated professional, or a member of a child's wider community.

This year's campaign centres on this concept:

We were all children once. Now We Are Children First.

It is a message rooted in a shared human experience, the universal memory of once being a child, and uses that foundation to inspire a collective identity grounded in empathy, responsibility, and action. In doing so, the campaign builds on policy to bring its intent to life in a way that is accessible, striking, and emotionally truthful.

When we state, "We are Children First," we are declaring that childhood, in all its innocence, potential, and right to be nurtured and protected, is an intrinsic value of the Irish nation. It transforms child safeguarding from a mere obligation into a deeply ingrained principle and identifier, something we embody as a people, just as we embody our history, our resilience, and our hopes for the future.

The 2025 campaign places a new focus on reaching parents and responsible adults, expanding the reach of Children First Awareness Week messaging beyond professional and institutional settings. It recognises that the most powerful form of safeguarding often begins in everyday spaces, in clubs, schools, and communities, and is enacted by ordinary people who want to play a role in working with children to reach their full potential.

We also recognise the very real challenges of building cohesion in a landscape where so many committed organisations are working with children, often with varying

administrative, operational, and communication capacity. In a system with diverse objectives, audiences, and pressures, alignment is challenging. This is precisely why we are coming together now, to begin to build the communication infrastructure that ensures Children First principles live not just in policy documents, but in the culture and communication of every organisation that touches the lives of children.

We are not claiming to solve all communications issues around child safeguarding in Ireland in a single campaign. What we aim to do is to contribute to improving the foundation on which child safeguarding is built and to assist in embedding a child centred culture where transparency and accountability are key, and practices are inclusive of all children. The campaign will create a shared space; where Government departments, State agencies, and community organisations join in common cause in promoting this culture. Together, we can grow a deeper understanding, higher expectations, and renewed solidarity around what it means to be Children First.

Strategy Framework

This strategy document sets out the communications framework for Children First Awareness Week 2025, outlining how we will bring this year's campaign to life through coordinated messaging, stakeholder alignment, and inclusive activation. It defines our core message, identifies key audiences, and provides a practical roadmap for how departments, agencies, and organisations can participate meaningfully in the campaign.

The strategy begins by grounding the campaign in the importance of a whole-of-Government approach to child safeguarding communications. Crucially, it also sets out how stakeholders will work together through shared tools, regular coordination, and a centralised communications calendar to ensure cohesion, consistency, and collective impact.

It goes on to present a clear messaging framework, centred on the "We Were All Children Once. Now We Are Children First." concept, supported by tailored key messages for parents and responsible adults, professionals, organisations and volunteers. Participating organisation readiness is a key feature of setting us up for success in this strategy.

The campaign activation section outlines how this message will be brought to life through cross-platform public awareness activity. A master timeline will be used as a focal point of collaboration throughout, offering clear asks and deadlines for each component of the campaign.

Finally, the document includes practical guidance on evaluating the campaign outcomes to build toward even greater collective impact in future years.

1.0 Campaign Overview

1. Background, Aim & Objectives

The third National Children First Awareness Week will run from September 15th -21st. The aim of Children First Awareness Week is to raise awareness of Children First and remind wider society, including organisations working with children and young people, of our collective responsibility to keep them safe in our communities.

Children First Awareness Week (CFAW) is a key national initiative, held every two years, aimed at raising awareness and understanding of Ireland's child safeguarding framework. It supports the implementation of the *Children First Act 2015* and the *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, reinforcing the shared responsibility we all have to protect children across all sectors of Irish society.

Children First promotes the protection of children from abuse and neglect. It sets out best practices by describing what persons and organisations need to do to keep children safe, and how to deal with concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

The Children First Act 2015 provides for a number of key child protection measures, including raising awareness of child abuse and neglect, providing for reporting and management of child protection concerns and improving child protection arrangements in organisations providing services to children. The Act operates side-by-side with the non-statutory obligations provided for in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*.

Children First Awareness Week is led by DCDE, in partnership with Tusla and the statutory Children First Inter-Departmental Implementation Group (CFIDIG). A subgroup of the CFIDIG has been convened to manage the overall design and implementation of the campaign.

The campaign is a whole-of Government initiative involving all Government Departments and relevant state agencies, including the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Tusla, the HSE, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, Sports Ireland, and the Arts Council. Individually these stakeholders have a cascade responsibility for engagement and compliance with Children First within their relevant sectors.

Cross-Government communication activities will run in parallel, complementary to, and supported by a Tusla-led programme of communications.

Children First outlines the obligation of all individuals, organisations, and institutions to ensure that children are kept safe from harm. These responsibilities apply across public and voluntary bodies, including education, health, justice, youth services, the arts, sport, and community organisations. Each government department is responsible for a Sectoral Implementation Plan setting out the programme of measures in place to ensure compliance with the provisions of Children First by that Department, its agencies and any organisation providing services to children that receives funding from the Department. Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, provides expert support and guidance on the implementation of Children First through its Children First Information and Advice Service and has a statutory role in managing the Register of Non-Compliance for organisations that are not compliant with the obligations regarding Child Safeguarding Statement via its Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit. In addition to this role regarding support and compliance for child safeguarding, Tusla also has statutory responsibility for receiving and responding to child protection and welfare concerns.

The Department of Children, Disability, Equality (DCDE) chairs the statutory Children First Inter-Departmental Implementation Group (CFIDIG) which works to promote compliance with Children First across Government Departments and key agencies.

As part of the development of this strategy, We the People, the social marketing agency appointed by DCDE to create the overarching strategy, engaged closely with members of the Interdepartmental Group, who are key stakeholders in the campaign. Additional engagement, including consultation with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), helped shape strategies that reflect the diverse lived realities of children and young people across Ireland.

Children First Awareness Week provides a structured opportunity to re-affirm our national commitment to child safety safeguarding and welfare and underline that the protection of children in our society is a function of a national, collective responsibility.

1.2 What's different in 2025?

CFAW 2025 introduces an evolution in strategy by placing a new emphasis on parents and guardians as a primary audience. This shift reflects the understanding that child safeguarding is most effective when rooted in communities where adults are confident, informed, and supported — and when organisations are compliant, transparent, and open to dialogue. As parents become more informed and empowered, services are compelled to become more responsive.

This year's campaign seeks to empower parents, guardians, and responsible adults by helping them understand what they should expect from organisations working with children, including the right to clear safeguarding policies, safe reporting channels, and respectful, supportive engagement. It seeks to equip adults with the knowledge and confidence to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns, and to feel safe raising issues in spaces where they are listened to.

This year's campaign aims to do four things a little differently. It will:

- Take a new step forward by placing parents and responsible adults at the centre of the communications approach, making safeguarding more visible, more accessible, and more actionable in everyday life, while not losing sight of the central role of organisations and their responsibilities in safeguarding.
- Build on prior interdepartmental collaboration by introducing a cohesive, unified campaign identity to be activated across all Government departments and agencies.
- Seek to normalise child safeguarding, by moving beyond policy language to connect with people on an emotional, accessible level, especially those who may not see themselves as part of a formal safeguarding system.
- Embed youth and child voices in the messaging, reinforcing not just their right to be heard and protected, but their right to inform and shape initiatives that directly impact them.

In alignment with the Children First National guidelines and with Tusla's [Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice](#), this strategy supports the national aim of creating environments where parents, guardians and children are respected, listened to, and safe, in every context. (Please see the appendix for more information on the Children First National Guidance)

1.3 Communications objectives

The overarching goal of Children First Awareness Week 2025 is to increase understanding of child safeguarding, activating parents, guardians and other adults in the community as key actors in child safeguarding, reinforcing the shared responsibility we all hold in keeping children and young people safe from harm.

The core objectives of the 2025 campaign are to:

Raise awareness

- Increase awareness and visibility of Children First legislation and principles among the general public, with a targeted focus on parents and responsible adults.
- Highlight the role of every adult in safeguarding children, not just professionals or mandated persons.

Promote understanding

- Translate safeguarding language and principles into plain English so it resonates with parents, families, volunteers, and wider community members.
- Clarify what safeguarding means in everyday scenarios, and the instinctive, caring actions that contribute to it.

Build confidence

- Empower adults, especially parents, volunteers, and those who may not identify as part of a “child protection system”, to recognise signs of concern, trust their instincts, and speak up where appropriate.
- Provide reassurance, encouragement, and tools to help adults feel capable and supported to ask questions.

Encourage action

- Drive uptake and use of practical tools such as checklists, videos, and shareable assets that promote the safeguarding message.
- Encourage organisations to use the campaign materials and tailor the message to their own audience and voice.

Create national alignment

- Deliver a cohesive campaign identity that is activated across all participating departments and organisations, supported by a central message house (see section 2.2).
- Coordinate efforts to ensure consistency of tone, message, and activation throughout the week and across sectors.

Include youth & community voice

- Ensure that children and young people are represented in the campaign narrative, both as those who should be protected while acknowledging that they also are active participants in their own safeguarding.
- Reflect the diverse and lived experiences of all children and families through campaign messaging and tone of voice.

1.4 Direct Messaging to Organisations

To complement the primary messaging to parents and responsible adults in the community, a strand of direct messaging to organisations will issue via 2 channels.

1. Organisational Readiness Letter

As part of the preparation for this year's campaign, a communication will issue, via the membership of the Children First Inter-Departmental Implementation Group, to all relevant agencies and funded organisations. This will alert organisations that the campaign is en route and that they should take the opportunity to prepare. The objective of this letter is to act as a catalyst encouraging organisations to renew their focus on engaging with parents and ensuring that they are in a position to clearly articulate their safeguarding processes and procedures. Organisations will be urged to ensure staff are ready to respond confidently and appropriately to queries from parents and the wider public.

2. A strand of Tier 3 Call to Action messaging addressing organisations with a robust compliance message will be communicated by Tusla via its social media channels.

Example Tier 3 Messages aimed at Organisations will be:

- *"Are you an organisation working with Children? Are you implementing Children First? It's your duty".*
- *"Are you a relevant service under the Children First Act 2015? Check now."*
- *"Do you have Child safeguarding statement? It's the law."*

1.5 How we will work together

Children First Awareness Week 2025 is a whole-of-Government initiative. It brings together multiple Government Departments, State agencies, and public bodies under a unified communications strategy, supported by clear governance structures and a shared campaign identity:

- **Primary responsibility & national delivery** of the advertising campaign and launch will be given to Tusla, supported by cross-sectoral efforts
- **Oversight, leadership & governance** by the statutory Children First Inter-

Department Implementation Group, via designated subgroup, chaired by DCDE

- **Pre-campaign Stakeholder Engagement** will take place between and by the CFIDIG members with their respective agencies—funded and contracted partners, to ensure alignment with the campaign across all sectors.
- **Creative & overarching approach** developed by We the People, led by DCDE and guided by Inter-Departmental Implementation Group.
- **Implementation** by all organisations working with children and young people, or “participating organisations” as they will be referred to throughout this document.

To ensure clarity and momentum throughout this collaborative campaign, the following mechanisms to stay connected and aligned will be in place:

- **Monthly Campaign Coordination Meetings**

These meetings will provide a space for updates, troubleshooting, and alignment across all departments and agencies. These meetings will take place in July, August and September and dates will be communicated to the group.

- **Designated Points of Contact (POCs)**

Each Parent Department/Agency on the CFIDIG is asked to nominate a contact within their Department/Agency and a contact for any participating organisations under their remit for CFAW 2025. This will be recorded in the implementation template. This will support streamlined coordination and ensure all implementation plans are aligned, with no gaps or unnecessary duplication across the campaign.

- **Implementation Tracker**

A centralised location where each participating organisation submits their communications and timelines, as set out in their implementation plan (a template for which will be provided). This process will be managed by We the People so that participating organisations can be guided in the planning process, and a sense of interconnectedness will evolve within our implementation approach.

- **Campaign Toolkit Distribution**

All campaign assets (agreed messaging, shared content, imagery, social media assets, etc.) will be made available to partners in a shared folder, along with clear guidance on how to use them.

- **Evaluation & Feedback Loop**

Post-campaign reporting templates and a debrief session will be used to assess what worked well and inform 2026 planning.

Defined roles and responsibilities

Role of DCDE (Department of Children, Disability, and Equality)

- Lead Government Department for the campaign
- Oversight of overall campaign objectives and tone
- Coordination with Ministers and wider Government communications units
- Convening and chairing the Interdepartmental Implementation Group
- Liaison with Tusla and We the People on project progress and key outputs

Role of Tusla

Safeguarding subject matter expertise

- Develop the national advertising campaign plan in line with the overarching communication strategy and inclusive of elements of the consolidated CFIDG Plan prepared by WTP where relevant, including for example engagement with spoke persons, distribution of media assets, etc...
- Deliver the advertising campaign, including a national launch.
- Submit detailed evaluation and review of their campaign.
- Review of messaging and language to ensure alignment with policy and frontline practice
- Provide support for organisations to establish Child Safeguarding Statements
- Provision of support content (e.g. explainer videos, checklists, and safeguarding definitions)
- Hosting of core campaign content on Tusla platforms

Role of the Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group Subgroup

- Serve as the strategic steering group for the campaign
- Share insights and implementation plans from each Department/Agency
- Nominate relevant sectoral or organisational contacts to be added to the implementation tracker
- Support internal communications and leadership alignment within their organisation
- Flag any risks or sensitivities relating to campaign rollout
- Share toolkit, campaign messaging etc with agencies and funded services

Role of Participating Organisations

- Adapt and activate campaign materials in line with their own communication platforms and audiences, as part of their CFAW communication plan.
- Nominate a campaign point of contact
- Submit their communication implementation plan to their parent department for inclusion in the tracker
- Ensure safeguarding messaging aligns with the tone and direction of the campaign
- Support visibility of the campaign through internal and external comms
- Submit detailed evaluation and review of their campaign.

Role of We the People (Communications Agency)

- Develop and deliver the overarching communications strategy
- Produce core creative assets and toolkits
- Coordinate the implementation tracker and campaign schedule
- Monitor campaign reach, engagement, and impact
- Support post-campaign evaluation

It is important to note while Tusla has the primary statutory responsibility for child safeguarding, it is not solely responsible. Children First demonstrates that safeguarding is not the job of any one agency — Child protection is everybody's business and the children first approach is a whole-of-government response. Every department, service, and organisation that interacts with children or families has a role to play.

Children First signals to the public that safeguarding is a shared national priority, supported across government — not isolated within one agency. It reinforces the message that keeping children safe is a collective responsibility, and one that every adult and institution must take seriously

2.0 Campaign Approach

2.1 Target Audiences

- For 2025, there is a specific focus on parents and all responsible adults. This is our primary audience for the CFAW campaign.
- Our secondary audience includes children and young people, in keeping with our goal to include their voice and understanding in initiatives that influence their lives.
- We also need to factor in organisations and voluntary groups who work with children, who need to be informed that this campaign is coming. As set out

under section 1.4, these will receive a direct communication ahead of the campaign

	Primary		Secondary
Audience	Parents, responsible adults*	Relevant organisations and their service providers e.g. educators, healthcare workers, youth workers, gardai, volunteers	Children and young people
Messaging led by	Overarching campaign	Participating organisations' campaigns	Overarching campaign <i>and</i> (select) participating organisations' campaigns

Motivated by†	Emotive outreach	Directive outreach	Directive outreach
Message tiers	Tier 1 & Tier 2	Tier 1, 2 (as needed) & 3	Tier 1 & 3 (see below)

**For the purposes of this campaign, “responsible adult” is defined as any person who may come into contact with a child or young person over the course of daily life. This adult could be a parent, neighbour, coach, volunteer, teacher, garda, but also the childminder or bus driver. This then captures our wider societal responsibility to safeguard and protect children who use or attend various services in the community.*

†In behavioural change communications, emotive outreach aims to inspire and motivate action by appealing to people's feelings, values, and sense of identity, while directive outreach focuses on providing clear, factual information and instructions to guide a specific behaviour.

2.2 Key Messages Framework

The messaging framework for Children First Awareness Week 2025 is built thoughtfully from feedback from the Children First Interdepartmental Implementation Group Subgroup, on what is critically important to them. This is coupled with the need to find a single core idea, from which every key message then cascades.

To support this, we use a three-tier message house:

- **Tier 1:** Core message. A core umbrella message or hero mission that is universal and emotive and is *visible across every campaign touchpoint*.

- **Tier 2:** Supporting messages. A set of key phrases and proof points to explain and *validate the campaign's purpose, improving belief and understanding.*
- **Tier 3:** These are call to action messages. Which use tailored keywords and phrases that sit underneath tier 1 and tier 2 in organic, *organisation-specific language that echoes the mission in familiar terms.*



Tier 1: Our core message

We are Children First.

We all have a role in child safeguarding, and we now know it as something *we are*, not simply something *we do*. What is new for 2025 is that we are now identifying as Children First.

How we choose to identify is something very close to our hearts, whether on the individual level or on the level of national identity. If we're thinking really big, We are Children First represents a new layer of what it means to belong to Ireland. By stating 'we are Children First', we are asserting ourselves in a new way.

Tier 2: Our supporting messages

1. Child safeguarding is everyone's business.

Proof point: The *Children First Act 2015* and National Guidance place responsibilities on individuals, organisations, and mandated persons to keep children safe from harm. All adults who come into contact with children hold the potential of being that "first touchpoint of safety" for a child in harm's way.

2. We all can make a difference

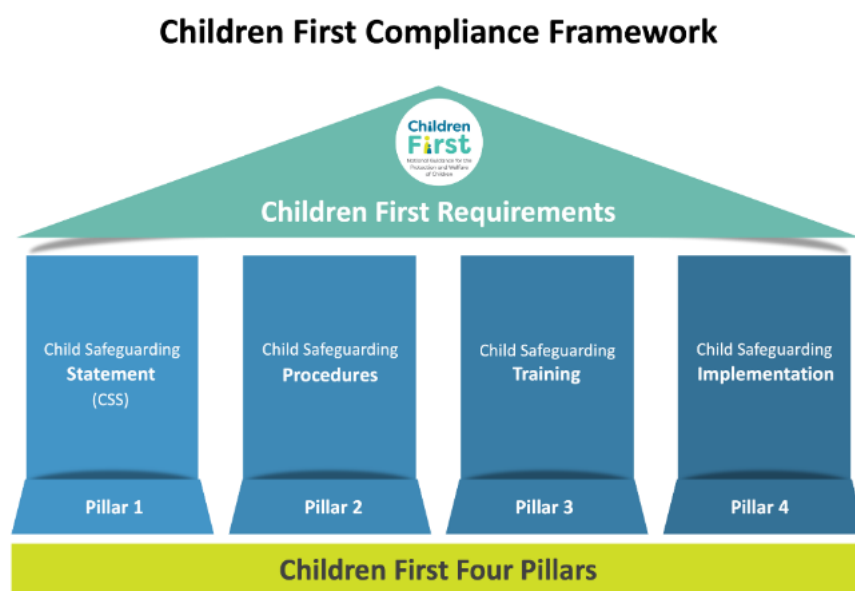
Parents, coaches, volunteers, neighbours, and community members all have a critical, proactive role to play in child safeguarding. As that potential “first touchpoint of safety”, they are in the prime position to recognise concerns early and seek help before escalation becomes necessary.

3. Think Children First.

What makes someone a good parent, coach, or community member cannot be captured in a checklist of behaviours. Much of it is rooted in instinct — our natural urge to care, to protect, to step in. But instinct alone is not always enough. Thinking Children First is the conscious step that turns instinct into action. It reminds us to stay alert, to stay informed, and to take responsibility. It connects what we feel with what we do.

Tier 3: Your tailored key messages

Tier 3 is the point in which organisations have the most freedom in how they communicate. It ensures they can deliver the campaign in a way that makes sense for them; that is, according to organisation voice, tone, function, and existing Children First activity. They may use the Children First Compliance Framework four pillars as a reference point.



In addition to the Children First Governance Framework, respective Departments/Sectors and Organisation will have their existing materials however it will need to consider the below messaging in the table and cross reference that they are in line.

Information for parents and organisations is outlined below.

Below are questions for parents and prompts for organisations to prepare for the campaign examples of adaptable phrases on child safeguarding for use by participating organisations across their campaign materials, internal communications, and sector-specific content.

Audience	Tailored Language
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and guardians have primary responsibility for the care and protection of their children • Parents and carers can play a key role in keeping children and young people safe in their activities by understanding what child safeguarding measures are required to be in place • Parents and guardians need to understand what child safeguarding means • Through their understanding of child safeguarding, parents and guardians contribute to ensuring there is a culture of safety and protection • Parents and guardians should be welcomed to ask the right questions
Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good Child Safeguarding Culture, promoted at every level within your Organisation, that values feedback and transparency. • Ensure your Child Safeguarding Statement, Policy and Procedures are up to date, visible and easily accessible • Appointment of Child Safeguarding Roles with clearly defined Responsibilities • Ensure your organisation and staff/volunteers are implementing your child safeguarding measures and practices across all the services you provide. • Appropriate staff Recruited and Selected, Garda vetted and trained in child safeguarding • Assurances that Implementation and Compliance of Children First occur across your organisation. • Communicate to parents in an open transparent way and welcome questions, complaints and queries on practice matters and always provide follow up. <p><i>For example: Do you know what to do if a child discloses something of concern to you?</i></p>

2.2.1 Messaging In Action

The following are illustrative examples designed to show how the campaign's messaging framework could be brought to life across selected formats. These are not final creative executions, but early-stage concepts that demonstrate how the language and ideas can translate into public-facing content. Fully developed assets, including final scripts, storyboards, and designs, will be delivered as part of the campaign toolkit at a later stage. For now, these examples are included to help stakeholders visualise how the message house can inform tone, structure, and engagement across platforms.

Sample mock-up of the message house in action, noting the colour coding of language tiers:



Social video series

A suite of three short-form videos will anchor the campaign rollout. These videos are designed to interrupt familiar moments in the lives of parents and responsible adults,

prompting reflection and activating a renewed sense of responsibility in child safeguarding.

Core Treatment Concept:

The shared busy-ness of parenting vs. the shared business of child safeguarding.

Each 15-30 second video will eventually be fully storyboarded. However, to aid understanding, they will all follow the exact same have 4 stages:

1. **Opening scene | visual and sound only:** with fast-paced, everyday busy parenting scenes which involve clear preparation for a child's event or activity (e.g. school run chaos, packing the kit bag, leading the child to the camp gates, side-of-the-pitch distractions, etc).
2. **Problem Solution |** "you always remember the little things, so don't forget the bigger issues too"
3. **Reflective** Introduce a **pause |, freeze-frame stoppage with voiceover** or verbal interruption **onscreen text:** introducing a pensive pause with clear action or voiceover — *Wait. Stop. Think Children First* — shifting the tone from reactive to reflective and empowering.
4. **Call to action | reveal** Deliver a simple, **striking message that triggers action:** a direction that calls on busy adults to know and act on their safeguarding responsibilities, e.g.:
 - a. Ask your club to show you their child safeguarding statement
 - b. Are their safeguarding policies and procedures up to date?
 - c. Are you confident chaperones are Garda-vetted?
 - d. Who is the child safeguarding officer for this event?
5. **Campaign recall | activity resumes onscreen and circle back to campaign:** Conclude with the campaign line — "We Are Children First" is a national safeguarding initiative from the Government of Ireland" — and direct viewers to learn more or take a clear, practical step.

2.3 Content & Asset Overview

The assets will be delivered in a toolkit, which will be comprised of two principal categories of items, as follows:

- A suite of digestible, easily understood, campaign assets for social media and web, with printable materials and guidance for group activities.
- A series of internal communications templates to assist participating organisations in their implementation needs. All the communications assets will

support an organisation to execute, simply and effectively implement their Children First Awareness Week campaign.

Campaign assets:

- **Campaign guidelines:** Campaign logo and social media template, with guide for application across print and digital assets.
- **Animated logo asset:** an animated GIF that can be used across social media, website, presentation decks and internal email signatures.
- **Video series:** three videos for use on social media or for deployment in classroom engagement, parent's association outreach or volunteer training.
- **Team of "i" Activities Toolkit:** printable poster template accompanied by a pack with suggestions for the facilitator for further engagement. A toolkit with a suite of assets will be provided for all partners to use throughout the campaign.

Internal communications items:

- **Campaign explainer:** Clearly state the "what" and "why" – the overall goal of Children First Awareness Week 2025 and its significance.
- **Messaging guide:** A brief explainer, setting out the Tier 1, 2, and 3 structure in clear terms, explaining how messages can be used and adapted.
- **Timeline:** a clear calendar of important dates leading up to, during, and after the campaign.
- **Organisational readiness guidance:** a simple one pager on how organisations can ready themselves in the areas of safeguarding compliance, ahead of rollout.
- **Template implementation plan:** a template implementation plan to populate, so that participating organisations can be guided in the planning process, and a sense of interconnectedness will evolve within our implementation approach.

3.0 Campaign Activation

The Children First Awareness Week 2025 campaign will run over a coordinated week-long period in September 2025. However, campaign activation includes two coordinated periods before and after:

- pre-campaign preparation in the build up to this activation week during August, including toolkit rollout and stakeholder prep;
- post-campaign review and reflection period, directly succeeding activation week which includes evaluation, reporting, knowledge-sharing, and planning for 2026.

3.1 Master timeline

Date	Milestone	Action
July 25, 2025	Finalised Strategy circulated and Implementation plan template shared	DCDE to share
July 1-29, 2025	Creative assets development & finalisation	WTP to share final creative assets to DCDE & Tusla for review
Aug 4-8, 2025	Implementation plans collected	CFIDIG members to furnish DCDE with 2025 implementation plans
Aug 15, 2025	Master implementation plan and calendar	WTP to share central link to master planning documents
Aug 15, 2025	Toolkit prepared and distributed	WTP to share all assets and guidelines shared
Aug 18+, 2025	In-house readiness period for campaign	Participating orgs to activate organisational readiness guidance
Sept 1-5, 2025	Pre-campaign coordination and alignment call	DCDE to schedule and lead final alignment and Q&A call
Sept 8, 2025	Reminder and Call to Action to all CFIDIG members	DCDE to issue communication
Sept 15+, 2025	Launch of Children First Awareness Week 2025	ALL to activate per implementation plan, as campaign goes live nationwide

End Oct 2025	Post-campaign report	WTP to share final performance report on CFAW 2025, including lessons learned
End Oct 2025	Debrief with full Children First IDIG	DCDE to schedule and lead reflective debrief meeting on CFAW 2025

3.2 Channels & tactics

1. Campaign Launch Moment

A strong, shared launch moment will open Children First Awareness Week with:

- A photocall with the Minister to create photographic assets for press, website, and social media
- A coordinated digital push across all partner accounts
- A press release issued by DCDE and Tusla
- Feature of the message house core statement: *"We Were Children Once. Now We Are Children First."*
- Option for local photo opportunities or symbolic activities (e.g. pledge events, artwork walls)

2. Digital and Social Media

- Content activated across X, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn
- Carousel assets, short-form videos, quote graphics, Community content
- Youth- and parent-focused content adapted by platform and tone
- Reels content designed to reach younger audiences with campaign messaging

3. Stakeholder & Organisational Channels

- Disseminate via Government departments and State agency platforms
- Internal comms across intranet, newsletters, and staff briefings
- Assets localised by community partners (schools, clubs, family centres)

4. Web Presence

- A central landing page (hosted by Tusla and DCDE) featuring:

- Overview of the campaign
- Downloadable toolkit and resources
- Contact points and safeguarding guidance
- Cross-linking from partner websites to boost reach and SEO

5. Media Engagement

- Press release announcing CFAW 2025 with Ministerial endorsement
- Media briefings and op-eds to position safeguarding as a societal issue
- Inclusion of real stories, stats, and quotes to anchor the campaign in lived experience

6. Sector-Based Activation

- Assets tailored to:
 - Schools and early years settings
 - Health and social care professionals
 - Sports and arts organisations

4.0 Campaign Review

Our final step is the foundation of long-term accountability. We believe that the We are Children First campaign has enduring potential to become something synonymous with both child-safeguarding and national identity in Ireland. With that in mind, the communications agency, We the People, are committed to measuring and evaluating to ensure that we hit the mark. This ensures that every communication output is assessed not only for activity and performance, but for strategic impact.

For Children First, we will implement a robust, evidence-based measurement and evaluation framework that aligns with the campaign's objectives and with the campaign's complex governance, reporting, and stakeholder requirements.

This framework will apply to all strands of the campaign, pulling in insights from both the overarching campaign and the arms of the campaign led by participating organisations. We will deliver both real-time oversight and retrospective analysis. Our evaluation will produce clear, actionable insight, tracking reach, resonance, behaviour, and alignment with national and sectoral priorities.

4.1 Measurement

All campaign components will be benchmarked against previous years of Children First Awareness Week. Specific KPI's will be developed upon receipt of the implementation plans. These may include:

- Volume and quality of earned media coverage, including tier-one national, regional, and trade outlets
- Share of voice relative to comparable organisations or sectoral peers
- Media sentiment analysis and message pull-through tracking
- Referral traffic to digital assets using tagged links and campaign-specific tracking codes
- Engagement metrics, such as enquiries generated, content shares, or tool downloads
- Qualitative indicators including stakeholder feedback, media relationships, and policy engagement outcomes.

Our measurement and reporting capabilities are powered by best-in-class tools that ensure accuracy, transparency, and comparability:

- Coverage Book for earned media aggregation, valuation, and visual reporting
- Meltwater and LexisNexis for real-time media monitoring and sentiment tracking
- Google Analytics for traffic reporting and conversion metrics
- LinkedIn, Instagram, and Meta platform insights for post reach, engagement, and audience demographics.

4.2 Evaluation

At the close of each major campaign phase, we will produce a detailed performance report. This will assess both quantitative and qualitative outcomes, with a focus on insight and learning. Reports will include:

- KPI-by-KPI performance review, KPIs set in collaboration with all partners
- Media quality assessment, including tier analysis, message accuracy, and tone
- Web and social media analytics, using platform-native and third-party data
- Audience engagement outcomes, where measurable
- Stakeholder feedback and influence assessment
- Recommendations for optimisation in future phases, including message refinement and content performance insights
- Looking ahead and recommendations for the next campaign.

