



EU Children's Participation Platform

Guide for reporting and responding to incidents

February 2025

Introduction

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all children and adults involved in the EU Children's Participation Platform (hereafter, the Platform) is a shared responsibility. The Platform has clear procedures to report and respond to any safeguarding concerns, misconduct, or incidents in line with the Safeguarding Framework, Code of Conduct, and Code of Behaviour.

Reporting a concern

All individuals engaging with the Platform have a duty to report safeguarding concerns. Reports must be made in the following cases:

- A child has directly experienced an incident.
- A person or child has witnessed an incident.
- A person or child has received information about an incident.

Safeguarding incidents must be reported even when the perpetrator is unknown.

Who can report

Any individual engaging with the Platform can report concerns, including:

- Children participating in Platform activities.
- Staff members within the Platform Secretariat.
- Advisory Board members.
- Consultants, facilitators, or contractors.
- Staff of member organisations.
- Adults accompanying children during activities.
- Any adult attending a Platform-organised activity or event, even if not in a contractual relationship with the Platform.

All staff, Secretariat members, contractors, Platform member representatives, and accompanying adults working under or interacting with the Platform may receive information about safeguarding concerns directly or indirectly. It is their responsibility to report using the appropriate channels.

When to Report

A concern should be reported if:

- A child or adult is at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation.

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- Inappropriate behaviour is witnessed or suspected that may violate Platform's safeguarding processes.
 - A child or adult discloses an incident that suggests a risk to their safety or well-being.

How to Report

Concerns can be reported through the following channels:

At EU/Central Level:

- Directly to a Child Protection Officer (CPO) or Child Empowerment Officer (CEO) at an event or activity.
- Via email to the Platform's safeguarding team at cppsafeguarding@icf.com (after 31 October 2026, please use the following email address: EU-CHILDPARTICIPATION@ec.europa.eu).
- By completing a Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form and submitting it to cppsafeguarding@icf.com (after 31 October 2026, please use the following email address: EU-CHILDPARTICIPATION@ec.europa.eu).
- By filling out a safeguarding concern form online at [Safeguarding | EU Children's Participation Platform](#).
- Reports can be submitted in any official EU language.

At the National Level:

- Face-to-face reporting to the activity lead, Child Empowerment Officer (CEO), safeguarding officer, or local safeguarding personnel within member organisations.
- National safeguarding email (if applicable).

How Reporting Channels Are Communicated

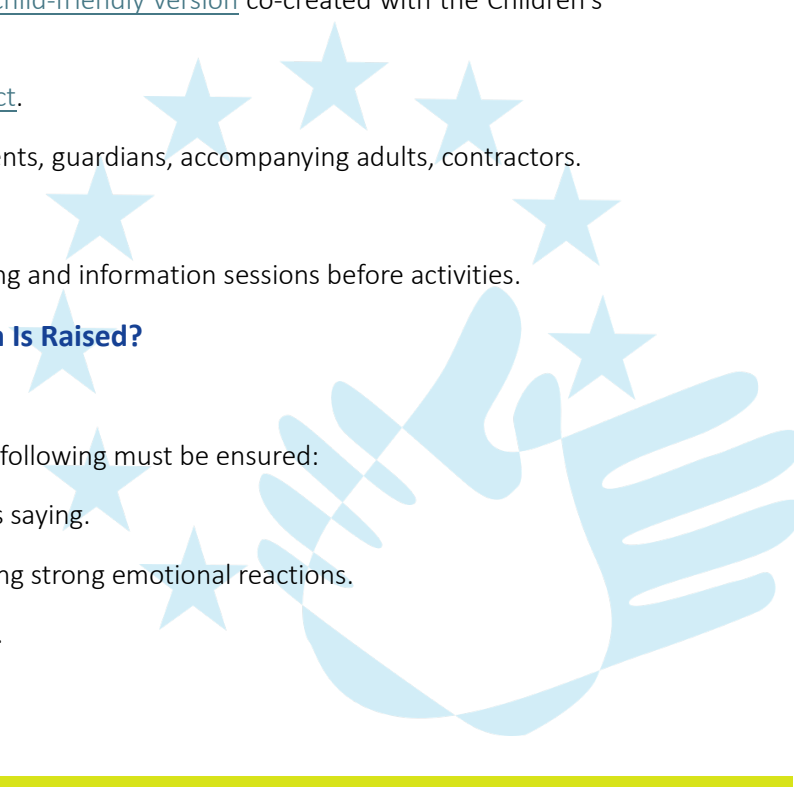
To ensure accessibility and understanding, reporting procedures are communicated through:

- The [Safeguarding Framework](#), including a [child-friendly version](#) co-created with the Children's Panel.
- The [Code of Behaviour](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).
- Activity-specific materials for children, parents, guardians, accompanying adults, contractors.
- The Platform's website
- Pre-activity briefings or safeguarding training and information sessions before activities.

Handling Reports: What Happens if a Concern Is Raised?

Responding to Direct Disclosures

If a child reports a concern directly to an adult, the following must be ensured:

- Listen carefully and accept what the child is saying.
 - Remain professional and composed, avoiding strong emotional reactions.
 - Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
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- Reassure the child but do not make promises that cannot be kept.
 - Respect confidentiality and share information only with designated safeguarding personnel.
 - Ensure the child's safety and well-being, including medical or psychological support if needed.
 - Report the concern immediately using the established channels.

Recording Safeguarding Incidents

All reported safeguarding concerns must be documented in the Child Safeguarding Incidents Register by the Child Protection Officers (CPOs). Records must include:

- Incidents reported to the Platform Secretariat.
- Incidents reported at the national level through member organisations.
- Updates on actions taken, outcomes, and preventive measures.

The Platform ensures that data confidentiality is maintained at all times. All safeguarding records are securely stored and accessed only by designated safeguarding officers. Statistical data on reported incidents is included in the Annual Safeguarding Report.

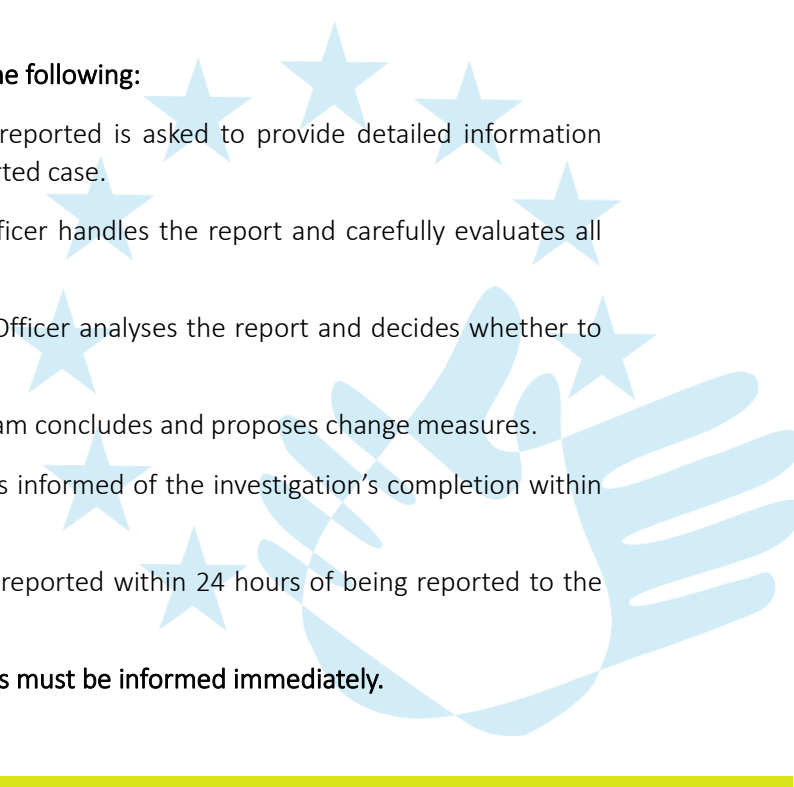
Responding to Reports: Investigation and Action

All Platform staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibility and their duty to report any concern within 24 hours of learning about it. After a concern is recorded, the Child Protection Officer evaluates the concern and decides if the concern needs further investigation or can be referred to the safeguarding contact or representative from Platform member organisations to solve the request or provide additional support depending on the concern that was raised.

The investigation of each concern starts within 3 to 5 days when involved parties might be contacted to share detailed information about the incident. This practice considers first the safeguarding risks and puts the best interest of the children first to prevent further harm.

The timeframe for investigating safeguarding cases is 60 days, after which the person who reported is informed about the outcome of the investigation and is provided with additional support if the solution of the case requires this.

The process of handling safeguarding concerns is the following:

- Information Provision – The person who reported is asked to provide detailed information regarding the reason for concern/the reported case.
 - Case Evaluation – The Child Protection Officer handles the report and carefully evaluates all provided information.
 - Case Investigation – The Child Protection Officer analyses the report and decides whether to initiate an investigation if necessary.
 - Investigation Results – The investigation team concludes and proposes change measures.
 - Case Closure – The person who reported is informed of the investigation's completion within 60 days from the initial report.
 - Each safeguarding incident or suspicion is reported within 24 hours of being reported to the Child Protection Officer.
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If an incident requires legal intervention, authorities must be informed immediately.



Principles for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All responses to safeguarding concerns follow these core principles:

Accountability of Organisations- Acknowledging and appreciating that Platform's members have strong safeguarding frameworks and processes in place, the Secretariat team strongly affirms and recognises the leading role of each member organisation to address and respond to safeguarding incidents affecting children and adults under their responsibility.

Immediate Support- The safety and well-being of the affected child or adult is the top priority. Necessary steps, such as medical care or psychological support, are provided immediately.

Shared Responsibility- Securing a safe environment for everyone to participate meaningfully is a common responsibility. The Secretariat team assumes the responsibility to support the coordination among member organisations when the response to safeguarding incidents and suspicions demands it.

Consistency in Terminology- In its Safeguarding Framework the Platform's Secretariat team suggests the definitions used to define key safeguarding concepts. This list is not exclusive, and member organisations might have more comprehensive lists.¹ Whatever the terminology in use, this should support building trust in the response mechanisms of the organization, without blaming the alleged perpetrator or a certain behavior of the survivor.

Compliance with National Laws - Every organisation operates in a country context with specific responses to safeguarding incidents and suspicions. Similarly, activities of the Platform take place in different countries. Safeguarding arrangements stipulated in the national legislations applying to a region where an activity is happening is to be given priority in the response mechanisms, or the safeguarding work of a member organisation is to be considered when responding to safeguarding incidents and suspicions.

Obligation to Inform Authorities- Where legal intervention is required, **authorities must be informed immediately** by the responsible member organisation.

By ensuring **clear reporting procedures, accountability, and immediate action**, the Platform strengthens its commitment to safeguarding children and adults across all activities.

¹More usual definitions of safeguarding related concepts can be found on this webpage maintained by Bond, the UK network of organisations working in international development: <https://www.bond.org.uk/resources-support/safeguarding/safeguarding-definitions-and-reporting-mechanisms-for-uk-ngos/>