



Volunteering:

Learning from today,
prepared for tomorrow.

CONFERENCE 2021



THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 2021

Welcome

Keeping Safe: Impact from the Pandemic



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This workshop will look at:

- safeguarding issues during the pandemic;
- statistics and trends;
- organisational response.



Safeguarding issues

- Domestic violence and abuse
- Mental ill - health
- Substance and alcohol misuse



Domestic violence and abuse

'threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former partner or family member'.

www.health-ni.gov.uk

- Causes harm (physical/emotional/neglect)
- Creates an inconsistent and unpredictable environment
- Can cause aggression in children and young people or they may become withdrawn
- Leads to a lowered sense of self worth
- Often causes anxiety and depression



Mental ill - health

Mental health issues, also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — **disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour.**

www.mentalhealth.gov

- Can cause poor attachment
- Often prevents a parent/carer providing consistent care
- Parent/carer may become 'withdrawn or disengaged' and there is often a lack of warmth
- Can lead to children experiencing behavioural problems
- Often creates aggression or withdrawal
- Can increase the risk of harm if the parent is experiencing domestic violence and/or substance misuse



Substance misuse

Substance abuse occurs when an individual use's alcohol, prescription medicine, and other legal and illegal substances too much or in the wrong way.

www.health.ni.gov.uk

- Prevents parent/carer providing consistent care
- Can inhibit a parent's ability to meet their child's basic needs
- Makes parent/carer unable to assess risk to their child
- Children and young people often assume early responsibility for their own and others well-being, affecting their development and achievements
- Can cause serious harm (physical/emotional/neglect)



Domestic violence and abuse

- 32% of over 70's in NI felt more vulnerable to abuse because of the pandemic
- 56% of callers to the Hourglass helpline about domestic abuse were over 75 years of age
- Almost 2000 domestic abuse calls were made to the PSNI in the first 3 weeks of lockdown
- There were almost 1000 more domestic abuse crimes recorded in NI in 2021 than pre pandemic.



Mental ill - health

- A total of 88% of parents (Parenting NI) reported that the pandemic had affected both their own and their children's wellbeing
- The three areas that caused most concern for parents were children's education; mental health; and fear/anxiety about Covid-19
- 53% of parents told Parenting NI that they were not aware of help or support available to them



Substance misuse

- Alcohol consumption has increased in Northern Ireland, with 47% saying that their alcohol intake was up through lockdown
- The number of alcohol related deaths in NI is higher for males
- In the UK as a whole, The British Liver Trust has noted a 500% increase in calls to its helpline since lockdown began
- More than 1 in 10 drug purchases were made on the darknet. Of these purchases, 13% had not previously used the darknet to buy drugs, and over a quarter of the sample stated that they planned to use the darknet to buy drugs if necessary, signalling a shift to darknet markets that may have been prompted by the pandemic.



Additional risk factors

Emotional
distress

Financial
worries

Job insecurity

Few leisure
outlets

Confined
freedom

Home
schooling

Anxiety/fear

Limited support
from family/
friends

Bereavement



Organisational response – Shine a Light on Safeguarding

- **STAY CONNECTED** with children, young people and adults involved with your organisation
- **ADAPT** your delivery of services and activities to meet needs
- **REVISIT** and **UPDATE** your safeguarding policy and procedures
- Continue to **PROMOTE AVAILABLE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES**
- Continue to **PROVIDE INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND TRAINING** to those working/volunteering with vulnerable groups – communicate regularly with your team
- Encourage staff and volunteers to **REMAIN VIGILANT** for possible indicators of abuse
- **PREPARE** staff and volunteers for dealing with disclosures
- **CONNECT** with and learn from other organisations
- Continue to deliver **KEY SAFEGUARDING MESSAGES** – promotion, prevention and protection



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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

WWW.VOLUNTEERNOW.CO.UK