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Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care

Standards & Guidance for Safeguarding
Children & Young People

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Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care

Standards & Guidance for Safeguarding Children & Young People

Volunteer Now, January 2022

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“

Ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is treated as a priority and ensuring that all children and young people are treated equally and their views are heard.

”

Foreword



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is not an unattainable ideal but something that must be lived and experienced every day by all the children and young people living in NI. The UNCRC requires government and every adult in society to ensure that children and young people are afforded the full range of rights set out in the Convention and that they are able to develop to their fullest maximum potential.

Although there is no hierarchy of rights there are 4 core principals underpinning the rights of our children and young people which include ensuring that the best interests of the child is the paramount consideration (article 3), that no child experiences discrimination (article 2), that every child has the right to survival and development (article 6) and that every child has the right to

express their opinion and views (article 12). Our Duty to Care is a practical implementation of these rights alongside Article 19 which specifically relates to a child's right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation..."

As someone who has worked with children and young people in a paid and a voluntary capacity I recognise the importance of clear guidance, standards and procedures. Added to training and support, Our Duty to Care should enable those working with children and young people to be more confident in identifying and acting on concerns when a child may be at risk. By tailoring the guidance and templates within this document organisations and groups will ensure that they have the best framework in place to be able to support children and young people during the most vulnerable time of their lives. However it is not the document that protects children but us as adults, therefore I urge you to ensure that all staff and volunteers in whatever capacity are supported to fully understand their role, remit, responsibilities and duties when caring and protecting children and young people.

Koulla Yiasouma

NI Commissioner for Children and Young People

Introduction

“Our Duty to Care” was first published by Volunteer Now over 20 years ago, to support voluntary and community organisations to implement the Volunteer Now “Getting It Right” minimum standards of practice for safeguarding children and young people. Since then, both the standards and guidance have been reviewed and updated a number of times in line with changes to safeguarding legislation, policy and practice in Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now merged the standards and guidance to develop one publication - “Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care”. The publication aims to enable voluntary and community organisations to safeguard children and young people from all forms of harm and to provide them with the highest possible quality of care.

Since the guidance was first published there have been considerable developments in the field of safeguarding children and young people. One of these developments has been the establishment of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) in 2011. The SBNI has responsibility to coordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children and is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together to safeguard children and young people. The SBNI is supported by a number of Sub-Committees including five Safeguarding Panels located within the geographical area of the five HSC Trusts. Safeguarding Panels facilitate safeguarding practice at a local level and are responsible for implementing the SBNI’s strategic vision at a local level. The partnerships are made up of representatives from the main statutory, voluntary and community sectors involved in safeguarding children and young people across Northern Ireland.

Another key development has been the launch of the regional safeguarding children and young people policy “Co-operating to Safeguarding Children and Young People in Northern Ireland”, published by the Department of Health (DOH) in August 2017. The policy makes it clear that safeguarding children and young people is everyone’s business. However, the policy is of particular importance to, and must be adhered to by, those who provide services to children and young people and families. It applies to those who work with children and young people, whether in paid or voluntary capacities.

Within the policy, the term safeguarding is intended to be used in its widest sense, encompassing the full range of promotion, prevention and protection activity. Effective safeguarding will promote the welfare of children and young people; prevent harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention; and protect children and young people from harm when this is required.

Whilst protective safeguarding is led by the HSC Trusts (and the PSNI where a crime is alleged or suspected), voluntary and community organisations are at the forefront of preventative safeguarding. Organisations will be implementing preventative measures by, for example: having robust recruitment and selection procedures in place to screen out unsuitable people; developing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers to ensure they are clear about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours when working with children and young people; and providing staff and volunteers with appropriate safeguarding children and young people training. Prevention also involves increasing public awareness of harm and its effects on children and young people and, where appropriate, equipping, empowering and/or supporting them to keep themselves safe.

All organisations working with children and young people must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place and ensure these are adhered to. “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” sets out clear safeguarding expectations for all organisations working with children and young people. Organisations will find that adherence to the standards and guidance contained within this publication will enable them to meet these expectations.

However, it is important to note that this guidance outlines the minimum standards of practice for organisations.

The guidance is divided into 7 sections. Each section contains:

- **The Standard;**
- **The criteria to meet the Standard;**
- **Supporting information for each criteria; and**
- **Resource material relating to the Standard where referenced in the narrative.**

There are additional generic Appendices at the end of the guidance which contain useful websites and an organisational self-assessment checklist. Organisations can use the self-assessment checklist to identify strengths and weaknesses in their current safeguarding children and young people policy and practice, with a view to making improvements where necessary.

This guidance will contribute to the range of prevention, support and protection measures needed to meet the needs of children, their families and carers. Ultimately, our success will be determined by improved safeguarding outcomes for children who have been or may be at risk of being harmed.

Clarification of Terms

Throughout this guidance the following terms are used:

Child – when reference is made to child/children/young people, all children up to the age of 18 are included.

Parent – where reference is made to parent(s), carers are also included. It is assumed this is the person with parental responsibility for the child.

Parental responsibility – the natural mother always has parental responsibility and the natural father has parental responsibility in the following circumstances:

- If married to the mother at the time of the birth;
- Has gained it through an agreement witnessed by a solicitor;
- Through a Parental Responsibility Order;
- Post 15 Post 2002, if the birth is jointly registered with the natural mother;
- Through re-registering the child's birth.

Section

1

There is a written policy on the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Standard 1

There is a written policy on the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Criteria:

- 1.** There is a written policy statement of the organisation's intention to keep children and young people safe from harm.
- 2.** There is an outline of the procedures and guidelines that the organisation will implement to meet this commitment, in line with the minimum standards.
- 3.** The safeguarding children and young people policy is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 4.** The person(s) with responsibility for approval of the policy is named.
- 5.** The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy is named.
- 6.** There is reference to a review of the policy, at least once every 3 years.
- 7.** The policy outlines how all involved in the organisation are informed about the policy, including children, young people, parents, staff/volunteers and management committee members.

Introduction

As an organisation working with children and young people you will want to provide the best possible care for them; support your staff and volunteers through appropriate procedures and guidelines; and reassure parents that your organisation is child centred.

Organisations working with children and young people have a legal and moral duty to ensure their safety and to protect them from all forms of abuse, harm or exploitation. The most effective way to do this is to have well thought out safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines in place. It is vital that all organisations, irrespective of size and sector (community, voluntary, public and statutory), develop safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and guidelines to inform and promote good practice in their work.

Who is a child?

A child is a child until they have reached their 18th birthday (Children (NI) Order 1995).

The rights of a child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an agreement between countries which sets out the basic rights all children should have. Almost every country in the world has signed the agreement.

The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991. This means that the Government has a responsibility to make sure that all children have basic rights.

[See Resource 1.1 – Legal and Policy Context](#)

Each organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy must be relevant to the organisation and tailored to reflect the ethos, activities and structure of the organisation. To that end it is useful to consult within the organisation and involve as many people as possible in the development/review of the safeguarding children and young people policy.

Policies, procedures and guidelines increase peace of mind for everyone:

Children/young people

Ensuring that the welfare of children and young people is treated as a priority and ensuring that all children and young people are treated equally, and their views are heard.

Parents

Reassuring parents that the organisation with which their child is involved views the child's welfare as paramount and welcomes parental participation.

Staff/volunteers

Giving staff and volunteers clear direction will give them confidence in what they do and help protect them as well as the children and young people in their care. The potential for abuse will be minimised and a positive atmosphere will be created, facilitating a rewarding and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

1.1 There is a written policy statement of the organisation's intention to keep children and young people safe from harm.

A policy is a governing principle of an organisation that requires those connected with the organisation to provide a consistent response to a given situation. A safeguarding children and young people policy outlines your organisation's commitment to practice that safeguards children and young people and outlines the practice to follow in order to protect them. It applies to everyone associated with the organisation.

The organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy will start with an overarching policy statement, outlining the organisation's intention to keep children and young people safe from harm while in its care, followed by an outline of the procedures and guidelines which all involved in the organisation will follow in order to protect the children and young people.

[See Resource 1.2 – Sample Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Statement](#)

1.2 There is an outline of the procedures and guidelines that the organisation will implement to meet this commitment, in line with the minimum standards.

The safeguarding procedures will describe the practice to be followed to uphold the policy in the organisation. These should be made known to children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers at the point of joining your organisation.

Procedures in a safeguarding policy should include:

- Recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Effective management of staff and volunteers;
- Reporting concerns, disclosure of abuse and/or allegations.

In addition to robust safeguarding procedures, clear guidelines should be outlined in the policy. The safeguarding children and young people policy should contain guidelines on how the policy objectives will be upheld.

Guidelines in a safeguarding children and young people policy should include:

- Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers;
- Sharing information appropriately with parents, children and young people, staff and volunteers;
- General safety and management of activities.

1.3 The safeguarding children and young people policy is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and guidelines.

In addition to a safeguarding children and young people policy, organisations will have a range of additional and related policies in place. It is essential these policies are linked, and cross referenced to ensure consistent practice in protecting children and young people.

1.4 The person(s) with responsibility for approval of the policy is named.

The person(s) responsible for approving the safeguarding children and young people policy should be named in the policy, so everyone in the organisation is aware who they are and what responsibility they have. This may mean that they sign and date the policy statement and ensures that it is displayed.

1.5 The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy is named.

The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the safeguarding children and young people policy needs to be named in the policy, so that everyone is clear whose responsibility this is and who they can discuss or share their comments with.

1.6 There is reference to a review of the policy at least once every 3 years.

A safeguarding children and young people policy including all related procedures and guidelines needs to be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up to date and continues to be relevant to the work and activities of the organisation. As a minimum, reviews should be carried out at least once every three years and necessary updates made. However, a review will need to take place at an earlier stage if there are changes in practice or legislation, or where there is a change in an organisation's operational procedures.

1.7 The policy outlines how all involved in the organisation are informed about the policy, including children, young people, parents, staff/volunteers and management committee members.

Everyone involved with the organisation, including children and young people, should have a copy (or access to a copy) of the safeguarding children and young people policy statement, and where possible, it should be prominently displayed. As well as protecting children and young people in the organisation, a safeguarding children and young people policy will also benefit parents, staff, volunteers and the organisation itself.

It is important to establish and maintain appropriate contact with the parents of children and young people involved with the organisation. Parents need to be aware of the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy and encouraged to contribute to its development and update.

Parents have the primary responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children, as do those with parental responsibility as defined by the Children (NI) Order. It is also important that staff and volunteers are informed about and understand the safeguarding children and young people policy and are familiar with its contents.

The management committee also has a responsibility to be aware of the policy and ensure that everyone involved with the organisation implements and takes ownership of it. The policy needs to be a working document with which everyone involved in the organisation is familiar.

A management committee has ultimate responsibility for all actions carried out by an organisation. It is therefore essential that management committees ensure robust policy, procedures and guidelines for safeguarding children and young people are in place and being implemented across the organisation.

Resource 1.1 Legal and Policy Context

Legal Context

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 is an international human rights treaty that sets minimum standards for children and young people's civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. The UK Government signed up to the UN Convention in 1991, thereby making a commitment to bring UK law, policy and practice relating to children within its standards.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents/made

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 is the principal statute governing the care, upbringing and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It affects all those who work with and care for children, whether parents, staff or volunteers.

The principles of the UN Convention have had a significant influence on the current UK legislation relating to children and young people.

This is the main legislative basis for the provision of childcare services in Northern Ireland and has five underlying principles, known as the 5P's. The Order states that the child's welfare should be of paramount consideration in matters relating to them.

FIVE P's:

- **Paramountcy** – this means that in all decisions made about a child's upbringing, the welfare of the child must be the court's paramount consideration.
- **Partnership** – the basis of this principle is that the most effective method of ensuring a child's needs are met is by working in partnership with children, young people and their parents. All agencies should consult with children and parents in any decision making about services provided.
- **Prevention** – this principle focuses on preventing the abuse of children and young people. It is about the state's obligation to provide support services to keep children safely within their families and to promote their health and welfare.
- **Protection** – this places a duty on Health and Social Care Trusts to investigate where a child is at risk of significant harm because of lack of care or actual abuse.
- **Parental Responsibility** – means that parents have responsibilities to their children rather than rights over them. Issues of parental responsibility include, for example, decisions about education, health and religious upbringing. The natural mother always has parental responsibility (unless an adoption order has been made).

The natural father has parental responsibility in the following circumstances:

- If married to the mother at the time of the birth;
- Has gained it through an agreement witnessed by a solicitor;
- Through a Parental Responsibility Order;
- Post 15 April 2002, if the birth is jointly registered with the natural mother;
- Through re-registering the child's birth.

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1998/1071/contents

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998 came into effect in March 1999 with the aim of consolidating the law on domestic violence and occupation of the family home. It offers protection from harm, vexing and harassing behaviour in family settings and ensures that a Court considers whether a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering any harm through seeing the ill-treatment of another person. It can give the Court the power to include an exclusion on an Interim Care Order if there is reasonable cause to believe that exclusion of the perpetrator would stop the likelihood of significant harm occurring.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/contents

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into force in January 2000 and places a statutory obligation on public authorities to promote equal opportunity with regard to disability, gender, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation. In addition, good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group should be promoted.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)

www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2007/1351/contents/made

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 establishes certain safeguarding requirements when organisations are recruiting staff and volunteers to certain positions which involve close and/or regular contact with children and young people.

Under the Order it is an offence for employers to knowingly recruit barred individuals into 'regulated activity' with children and young people. Organisations can ensure that they are complying by requesting an Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check from AccessNI, before confirming an appointment in regulated activity.

There is also a requirement for organisations to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service any individual who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children and young people, and who has been permanently removed (or would have been had they not left the organisation) from regulated activity.

The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/7/contents

This Act sets out the law for the creation of the regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and the establishment of five Safeguarding Panels to support the SBNI's work at a Health and Social Care Trust level.

The SBNI has responsibility to coordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children and is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together to safeguard children and young people.

The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2015/9/contents

This Act offers a clear path for a member of the public to apply at a police station for disclosure of relevant conviction information regarding a person with access to a particular child or children. The scheme builds on existing processes by the agencies involved in the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland to manage sexual and violent offenders.

Information about relevant criminal convictions will only be provided to the person with primary care responsibility for the specific child(ren) and only if considered as necessary to protect that child.

Policy context

“Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (Department of Health, August 2017)

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland

“Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” was developed and published by the Department of Health (August 2017). The regional policy provides the overarching framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.

The policy highlights how early intervention and appropriate parental support can prevent problems escalating to a point where harm occurs. Where a greater level of support is required, targeted intervention will be provided to assist families to safeguard children and to meet the child’s needs.

Where a child is identified as being at risk of significant harm, statutory intervention to protect the child will be required. This may include the child being the subject of a child protection plan, the child’s name being placed on the child protection register, or the child becoming ‘Looked After’ by a Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

[Go back to Section 1: Introduction](#)

[Go back to Section 2: Introduction](#)

Resource 1.2 Sample Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Statement

A safeguarding children and young people policy statement is a statement of your intention to keep children and young people safe while in the care of your organisation.

It should be a simple statement such as:

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Statement

Staff and volunteers in (insert organisation name) are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of children and young people and protects them from harm.

We wish to ensure that all children and young people can participate in an enjoyable and safe environment in which they can have fun and feel valued.

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children and young people, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We are committed to reviewing our policy, procedures and practice at regular intervals, at least every three years.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Reporting concerns to statutory agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately;
- Adopting safeguarding children guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers;
- Sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers;
- Ensuring safety procedures are adhered to.

We will review our policy, procedures, code of behaviour and practice at regular intervals, at least once every three years.

| | |
|--|---|
| Policy written by: | |
| Policy reviewed on: | |
| Approved by: | |
| Effective from: | |
| For attention of and action by: | Members of the Senior Management Team, Management Committee/Group; managers and leaders; staff and volunteers; children and young people, parents, carers and visitors. |
| Review due on: | |
| Designated Officer(s): | (Name and Contact details) |

[Go back to Section 1.1](#)

Section

2

The organisation consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

Standard 2

The organisation consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

Criteria:

- 1.** There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers, and personnel/volunteer specification outlining key skills and abilities required.
- 2.** There is an open recruitment process.
- 3.** There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering.
- 4.** There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions which are not protected, and investigations, if any.
- 5.** A consent form for an AccessNI check is completed, if required.
- 6.** There is an interview process suitable to the post/role and task.
- 7.** Written references are sought (and followed up orally when necessary).
- 8.** Where required, an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out.
- 9.** The post is approved by management.

Introduction

Most organisations rely heavily on the time and commitment freely given by volunteers and without this many opportunities for children and young people to participate in activities would not exist. The guidelines outlined below should be implemented by organisations that work with children and young people, whether they are recruiting paid staff or volunteers. There are also legal requirements, as outlined in the Legal and Policy Context in [Section 1](#).

It is important to have good recruitment and selection procedures in place within an organisation to minimise the potential for unsuitable people to work or volunteer with children and young people. A robust recruitment and selection procedure is one of the most sensible ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people. It may act as a deterrent to unsuitable people from even applying to an organisation.

It is essential that the same procedure is applied consistently with paid staff (part time or full time) and volunteers alike, even those who live locally and are known to the organisation, or those with a lot of experience. The more routine the recruitment and selection procedure becomes, the less challenging it will be for organisations to administer and for genuine and well-motivated applicants to comply with. With time, safe recruitment procedures should become the norm.

This section sets out the procedures that should be followed to ensure good practice. The actual degree of formality applied to procedures will vary from one organisation to another but should be developed in line with these standards.

2.1 There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers, and personnel/volunteer specification outlining key skills and abilities required.

A clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers and a personnel/volunteer specification is required at the outset of a robust recruitment procedure. Defining the job or role involves thinking through what exactly the job of the employee or role of the volunteer will be. A personnel/volunteer specification will identify what skills and abilities will be required of the person to fill the post and what qualifications, and experience, if any, are required.

The job or role description should indicate whether the post constitutes regulated activity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. If a post falls within the scope of regulated activity, an individual barred from working with children and young people by the Disclosure and Barring Service, is prohibited by law from applying for the job or role. Organisations are also prohibited from involving a Barred person in regulated activity.

[See Resource 2.1 – Disclosure and Barring Arrangements in Northern Ireland](#)

2.2 There is an open recruitment process.

In addition to the job or role description and personnel/volunteer specification, detailed recruitment material should be drawn up outlining the activities and aims of the organisation. The recruitment process should be as open as possible in order to ensure equality of opportunity and all posts should be advertised widely; this may be at a regional level for paid posts and at a more local level for volunteer roles, but will depend on the nature of the job or role and the organisation. This will ensure that the organisation is not repeatedly drawing applicants from the same small pool of people.

2.3 There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering.

All applicants should complete an application form. This should be supplied along with a clear job or role description and personnel/volunteer specification. Information about the organisation should be included, as well as a copy of the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy statement. The application form should be drafted to allow applicants to provide all relevant details and should include a written assurance that all information received will be dealt with confidentially. The application process should also make the applicant aware if the post requires an AccessNI check to be carried out on the applicant, prior to commencing the role.

[See Resource 2.2 – Sample Employment Application Form](#)

[See Resource 2.3 – Sample Volunteer Application Form](#)

2.4 There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions which are not protected, and investigations, if any.

All applicants should be asked to sign a declaration form which gives them the opportunity to declare criminal history information, in line with legal requirements. It can also confirm that there is no known reason why they would not be suitable to work with children or young people. The extent of the declaration of criminal history will depend on the nature of the post. The reason for this is to ensure that the information provided by the applicant concurs with the information that appears on any subsequent Disclosure Certificate, if required.

Sometimes details of an individual's criminal record will not appear on their disclosure certificate. They are 'filtered' from Standard and Enhanced checks because they are old and/or minor. The individual does not have to tell a prospective employer/organisation about these convictions and/or cautions. Therefore, where organisations are processing these levels of checks they may only ask applicants for details of convictions and information that is 'not subject to filtering'.

The applicant should also be asked to provide information on any investigation carried out in relation to child abuse in which they have been the alleged perpetrator, and agree to further enquiries being made, relevant to the declaration.

Organisations should make it clear that such information will be dealt with in a confidential manner and not used unfairly to disadvantage the applicant. The declaration form should be returned to the organisation in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential' and only opened when the preferred applicant has been identified.

2.5 A consent form for an AccessNI check is completed, if required.

Where an AccessNI disclosure check will be carried out, the applicant should be provided with a consent form which outlines the level of AccessNI check to be sought and asking the applicant's written consent to the check.

Organisations should make it clear that where consent to carry out an AccessNI check is not provided, the recruitment process will not proceed, and the applicant will no longer be considered eligible for the post.

[See Resource 2.4 – Sample Declaration & Consent form](#)

Note: Regulated activity – the Declaration and Consent form should include boxes 1 – 4.

Non-regulated activity eligible for an Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List

Check – the Declaration and Consent form should include boxes 2 – 4.

[See Resource 2.5 – AccessNI Information](#)

2.6 There is an interview process suitable to the job/role and task.

An interview/meeting with the shortlisted applicants either formally or informally and with appropriate representatives from the organisation should then take place. At least two representatives from the organisation should conduct the interview/meeting at which information contained in the application form should be explored against the kinds of qualities and skills needed for the job or role. For example, any previous experience of working or contact with children and young people would be of particular relevance. At this meeting expectations should be discussed, along with working/volunteering conditions etc. The organisation may take this opportunity to gauge the applicant's understanding of safeguarding children and young people issues to ensure that they are able and committed to meet the safeguarding requirements of the organisation.

An acceptable form of identification, ideally a form of photographic identification such as a passport or driving licence, should be produced by the applicant at the interview. Where required, documentary evidence of qualifications and any accredited training should also be produced.

Based on the interview/meeting, it should be possible to identify a preferred candidate and make a conditional offer of the job or role, subject to satisfactory references and the result of an AccessNI check (where relevant).

2.7 Written references are sought (and followed up orally when necessary).

References should be taken up in writing with at least two people who are not family members, and ideally one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of any previous work/volunteering the applicant has undertaken with children and young people. A more accurate and reliable reference will be obtained by asking specific questions on the reference form. In particular, referees should be asked to confirm in writing that they have no concerns about the applicant working/volunteering with children and young people. This should be followed up orally if there are any concerns or issues to be clarified.

[See Resource 2.6 – Sample Employee Reference Request Form](#)

[See Resource 2.7 – Sample Volunteer Reference Request Form](#)

2.8 Where required, an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out.

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, it is an offence for organisations to knowingly recruit Barred individuals into 'regulated activity' with children and young people. Organisations can ensure they are complying by requesting an Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check, before confirming an appointment in

regulated activity. This check will be carried out by AccessNI, either through a Registered Body or an Umbrella Body.

A Barred individual is legally prohibited from working or volunteering in regulated activity and is committing an offence by applying for or offering to undertake such work.

If the post meets the former definition of regulated activity (i.e. pre 2012 definition) the organisation can choose to request an Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List Check on the preferred applicant.

If the post does not meet either of the above definitions, there is no eligibility to undertake AccessNI checking at enhanced level. Organisations may decide to request a Basic Check.

[See Resource 2.1 Disclosure and Barring Arrangements in Northern Ireland](#)

[See Resource 2.5 AccessNI Information](#)

Information obtained through an AccessNI check will ensure that decisions about appointments are made based on all available information. Once the disclosure certificate has been received by the applicant and forwarded to the organisation, it should be cross referenced with the applicant's self-declaration form. At this point the organisation will be able to make a final recruitment decision. Where the organisation is satisfied, the conditional offer of employment/volunteering should now be confirmed with the preferred candidate.

Discretion needs to be applied when a Disclosure Certificate reveals criminal history information. A number of factors should be considered including the nature of the information or conviction, any frequency or pattern of offending, and care needs to be taken to consider this information alongside the requirements of the post.

2.9 The post is approved by management.

The management committee of each organisation have a responsibility to ratify every appointment. This is to ensure that the management group understand their responsibilities and to ensure that the recruitment of an individual into an organisation is never the sole responsibility of one person, it is an organisational responsibility.

Safeguarding children and young people from harm must be a primary consideration in developing a thorough method of recruiting, selecting and managing staff and volunteers. There are, however, a range of other matters which you should consider which will enhance the standard of care provided for children and young people involved in your organisation.

In addition to your role in protecting children and young people, we all have a duty to provide them with the highest possible quality of care to allow them to develop fully. The composition of staff and volunteers should be responsive to the needs of the children.

Some issues that may need to be considered are:

- Attempting as far as possible to attain an appropriate gender balance of staff and volunteers;
- Taking into account the particular skills required to meet the needs of children, for example, a child with a disability, a child with English as a second language or a child with other support needs;
- Aiming to ensure there are staff and volunteers representative of any minority, cultural or linguistic group for whom the organisation's user groups may be made up;
- Adopting a policy of non-discrimination within the terms of the equality legislation;

- Making appropriate and sensitive enquiries about staff and volunteers with disabilities or health issues, which may affect their ability to perform the tasks required of them, making reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure inclusion. Care needs to be taken when asking such questions and responses dealt with confidentiality.

[See Resource 2.8 – Asking about Disability in the Recruitment Process](#)

Resource 2.1 Disclosure and Barring Arrangements in Northern Ireland

Organisations delivering services and activities to children and young people must ensure they comply with disclosure and barring arrangements which are in place through law and/or best practice. The following information should be read in conjunction with **Resource 2.5 AccessNI Information**.

Disclosure arrangements

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 defines 'regulated activity' with children and adults. Regulated activity is work which a Barred person must not undertake. It is a criminal offence for a Barred person to seek or undertake work from which they are Barred, and it is an offence for organisations to 'knowingly employ' a staff member or involve a volunteer in regulated activity if they are Barred. Organisations can ensure they are complying by requesting an Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check, before confirming an appointment in regulated activity.

Definition of regulated activity relating to CHILDREN

From 10 September 2012 regulated activity relating to children includes:

- 1 Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, providing advice/guidance on well being, driving a vehicle only for children;
- 2 Work for a limited range of establishments (specified places) with opportunity for contact with children, for example, schools, children's homes, childcare premises, children's hospitals. Work undertaken by supervised volunteers in these places is not regulated activity;

Work under 1 or 2 is regulated activity if undertaken regularly. Regular means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more) or on four or more days in a 30 day period or overnight.

- 3 Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing, or health care by or supervised by a professional (even if carried out once);
- 4 Registered childminding and foster care.

Note: the day to day line manager/supervisor of an individual in regulated activity is also in regulated activity.

Definition of former regulated activity

Pre 10 September 2012 regulated activity relating to children includes:

- 1 Activity which is of a specified nature including teaching, training, instructing, caring for, supervising, providing advice or guidance, providing treatment or therapy, transport, moderating a chat room;
- 2 Activity in a specified place which includes schools, children's hospitals and childcare premises where there is an opportunity for contact with a child;
- 3 Specified position of responsibility, for example, a school governor, director of social services, trustees of certain charities;
- 4 Fostering, childminding or daycare provision.

The activity must take place frequently (once per week or more) or intensively (four or more days in a 30 day period or overnight).

Posts which meet the former definition of regulated activity (pre-10 September 2012) are still eligible for AccessNI checking. Organisations may request an Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List Check prior to appointment to these posts.

Barring arrangements

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for maintaining the list of individuals barred from engaging in regulated activity with children and/or adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Organisations who have permanently removed an individual from regulated activity (or would have done had the employee/volunteer not left) because of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, are required by law to refer the individual to the DBS who will then consider inclusion on a Barred list.

Guidance on how to refer and in what circumstances is available on the DBS website

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Individuals who have been convicted or cautioned for very serious offences against children or adults at risk will be automatically barred. A list of relevant offences is available on the DBS website listed above.

[Go back to Section 2.1](#)

[Go back to Section 2.8](#)

Resource 2.2 Sample Employment Application Form

Application Form

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Candidate Reference Number | |
| JOB TITLE | Return to |
| | |
| | |

PERSONAL DETAILS (Please complete using block capitals and black ink)

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------|----|
| Surname | | Forename | |
| Address | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | Postcode | |
| Home Tel No | | Work Tel No | |
| Mobile No | | | |
| May we contact you at work? | | Yes | No |
| Email Address | | | |
| Where did you see the vacancy advertised? | | | |

CURRENT OR MOST RECENT EMPLOYER

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| Name | | | |
| Address | | | |
| Postcode | | Tel No | |
| Position held and brief outline of duties | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Date Started | | Date Left | |
| Reason for leaving | | | |
| Job Title | | Salary | |
| Notice Period (if applicable) | | | |

Section 2

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT Please give details of employment (paid or unpaid) over the last 10 years.
Please give your most recent first.

| Name & Address of Employer and Nature of Business | Dates of Employment | | Position Held | Reason For Leaving |
|--|---------------------|----|---------------|--------------------|
| | From | To | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |

EDUCATION Please give details of all qualifications obtained, along with grade and date achieved.
Please give your most recent first.

| Level: Secondary/Further/Higher | Dates | | Course Details and Exam Results | Date Obtained |
|------------------------------------|-------|----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | From | To | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (Held or working towards)

| Professional Body/ College/University | Dates | | Course Details and Exam Results | Date Obtained |
|--|-------|----|------------------------------------|---------------|
| | From | To | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

SPECIALISED TRAINING OR COURSE ATTENDED

| Course Taken | Organised By | Location | Date |
|--------------|--------------|----------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES Please give details of membership or any professional duties

| Course Taken | Organised By | Location | Date |
|--|--------------------------|--|-------------|
| Name of Professional Body (e.g. NMC, NISCC, HPC) | Level/Type of Membership | Registration Details (e.g. Part of Register) | Expiry Date |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

(Please ensure when completing this section that you demonstrate that you meet the shortlisting criteria)

Experience

| |
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| |

Knowledge

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Section 2

| |
|----------------|
| Ability |
| |
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| |
| Qualifications |
| |
| |
| |
| |

REFERENCES Please give details of two referees; one must be your current or most recent Line Manager or school or college. References from family or friends are not acceptable.

| REFERENCE 1 | | REFERENCE 2 | |
|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| Name | | Name | |
| Job Title | | Job Title | |
| Organisation | | Organisation | |
| Address | | Address | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Postcode | | Postcode | |
| Tel No | | Tel No | |
| Email Address | | Email Address | |

DECLARATION OF CONVICTIONS

See attached - Declaration and Consent Form

DECLARATIONS Please ensure you sign and date this declaration before returning your application form.

DATA PROTECTION DECLARATION - The information on the application form will be held and processed in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

I understand that the information is being used to:

- Process my application for employment;
- Form the basis of a computerised record on the recruitment system for processing and monitoring purposes;
- Form the basis of a manual job file with other application forms and will be used for processing;
- If appointed, form the basis of a manual and computerised employment record.

I declare that the information provided on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any false or omitted information may result in dismissal or other disciplinary action if I am appointed.

Signature

Date

Please note:

All information received will be dealt with in confidence, consistent with our commitment to safeguard children and young people.

[Go back to Section 2.3](#)

Resource 2.3 Sample Volunteer Application Form

Volunteer Application Form

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Name of Organisation: | |
| Address: | |
| Town: | Postcode: |
| Tel No: | |

Please note that the information given below will be used to try to match potential volunteers to the most appropriate roles available at the time of application to volunteer with [name of organisation].

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| Postcode: | | | |
| Home Tel No: | | Work Tel No: | |
| May we contact you at work? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| Mobile No: | | | |
| Address: | | | |

Please tick the volunteer roles that you would be interested in:

Role Title 1 ☐ Role Title 2 ☐ Role Title 3 ☐ etc
(Or list Geographical area/sites available to volunteer in).

When would you be available to volunteer with us? (Please tick)

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|-----------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| Morning | | | | | | | |
| Afternoon | | | | | | | |
| Evening | | | | | | | |

What motivated you to apply for a volunteer role in (name of organisation)?

| |
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Section 2

What previous work experience, including voluntary work, do you have?

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| |

Do you have any hobbies or interests relevant to the post?

| |
|--|
| |
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| |

What skills, knowledge and experience do you feel you could bring to a voluntary role in our organisation?

| |
|--|
| |
| |
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| |

Are there reasonable adjustments that we could make as part of your recruitment process that would enable you to enjoy equality of opportunity in seeking a volunteer role with us?

Please specify:

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
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| |

Section 2

Please provide names and addresses of two people who we could contact for a reference.
(Someone who is not a relative but has known you for 2 years within the last 5 years.)

| | | | |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| 1 Name: | | 2 Name: | |
| Address: | | Address: | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Postcode: | | Postcode: | |
| Work Tel No: | | Work Tel No: | |
| Home Tel No: | | Home Tel No: | |

Signature:

Date:

Thank you for your interest, we will be in touch soon.

Please return completed form to:

Volunteer Organiser, (*name of organisation*)

Please note:

The information on the application form will be held and processed in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

All information received will be dealt with in confidence, consistent with our commitment to safeguard children and young people.

[Go back to Section 2.3](#)

Resource 2.4 Sample Declaration and Consent Form

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people and to ensuring equal opportunity for all applicants. Information about criminal convictions is requested to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered materially relevant to the position applied for.

You have applied for a position that is defined as Regulated Activity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. This post is not open to anyone who is included on the Children's Barred List.

OR

You have applied for a position that is eligible for an Enhanced Disclosure Check under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

(Select as appropriate)

It also falls within the position of an 'excepted' position under The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979. This means that you must tell us about all offences and convictions, including those considered 'spent', which are not subject to filtering. If you leave anything out it may affect your application.

This information **will** be verified through an AccessNI **Enhanced Disclosure Check (EDC)** if you are considered to be the preferred candidate and are being offered the position. The EDC will tell us about your criminal record history (and, if the post is regulated activity, if your name has been included on a Barred List). It is to make sure that individuals who are considered a risk to children and young people are not appointed.

The information received will be treated confidentially and will be assessed alongside normal selection criteria to determine suitability for the position. A separate meeting will be held with you if clarification is required to discuss any issues around your disclosure before a final decision is reached. After the decision has been made the information will be destroyed.

Please complete the attached form and return it with your application. The form also asks you to give your written consent to the AccessNI Check and to agree to further enquiries being made relevant to the declaration, which will only be obtained if you are the preferred candidate.

If you do not consent, we will not accept your application.

Applicants can also submit a separate statement of disclosure if they wish. This may include details such as the particular circumstances around the conviction(s); how circumstances may have changed; and what has been learnt from the experience. Applicants can contact the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NIACRO) for more information.

Guidance notes on filtering*

Filtering is the term given to the non-disclosure of information, which is considered to be old and minor, on disclosure certificates. You do not need to give us details of any criminal history information that may be subject to filtering. Filtering rules are summarized below. However, if you need additional guidance on what you should disclose, you should seek advice from NIACRO.

| Disposal | Aged 18 or over at time of issue/conviction | Aged under 18 at time of issue/conviction |
|---|--|--|
| Conviction for non-specified offences | Filtered after 11 years | Filtered after 5 ½ years |
| Cautions for non-specified offence | Filtered after 6 years | Filtered after 2 years |
| Informed warnings for non-specified offence | Filtered after 1 year | Filtered after 1 year |
| Diversionary Youth Conferences | n/a | Filtered after 2 years |

AccessNI does not filter the following:

- a conviction or caution, diversionary youth conference or informed warning for a specified offence
- a conviction resulting in a custodial sentence (including a suspended sentence)
- a conviction for trying to commit a specified offence
- a conviction for encouraging or helping someone else commit a specified offence

'Specified offences' include serious, sexual or violent offences or those relevant to safeguarding. A full list of 'specified offences' is available from the Department of Justice website: www.dojni.gov.uk

Declaration of Criminal Convictions, Cautions & Bind-Over Orders

In Confidence

| | | |
|--|------------|-----------|
| 1 Are you included in the Children's Barred List? (if yes please give details) | YES | NO |
| | | |
| | | |
| 2 Do you have any cases pending (if yes please give details) | YES | NO |
| | | |
| | | |
| 3 Do you have any convictions, cautions, warnings, diversionary conferences or bind-over orders that are not subject to 'filtering' (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979, as amended in 2014)? | | |
| YES NO | | |
| If yes, please provide details below, giving as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter. | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 4 Have you ever been the subject of an Child Abuse investigation which alleged that you were the perpetrator? | | |
| YES NO | | |
| If yes, please provide details below, giving as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter. | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Declaration and Consent

I declare that the information I have given is complete and accurate. I understand that I will be asked to complete an AccessNI Disclosure Certificate Application Form if I am considered to be the preferred candidate. I consent to the appropriate AccessNI check being made and I agree to enquiries relevant to this declaration.

Signature:

Date:

Print name:

Any surname previously known by:

Position applied for:

[Go back to Section 2.5](#)

Resource 2.5 AccessNI Information

AccessNI is the system for the disclosure of an individual's criminal history to help organisations make safer recruitment decisions. It was established in April 2008 by the Northern Ireland Office as a result of the introduction in Northern Ireland of Part V of the Police Act 1997. Since then, AccessNI has moved under Department of Justice. Registered bodies can process applications for standard and enhanced disclosure checks. Typically, a Registered Body will be an employer seeking disclosures as part of the recruitment process. Registered Bodies must submit over 20 applications a year to maintain their status. Organisations who are not Registered Bodies can use the services of an organisation which has already registered with AccessNI and can deliver all of the necessary services on their behalf - an Umbrella Body. Full details of Umbrella Bodies and any costs are available on the AccessNI website.

Age of applicants

AccessNI will not accept applications for Basic, Standard or Enhanced checks where the individual is not aged 16 or over on the day the application was submitted. The only exception to this is where the applicant is seeking an Enhanced check and they are a member of a family, where an adult in that family is a registered childminder or is seeking to foster or adopt a child; or is living or working at the same premises where the childminding, fostering or adoption is to take place. In such circumstances, applications will continue to be processed provided the applicant is over 10 years of age.

Types of AccessNI checks

There are different levels of disclosure certificates available through AccessNI, each returning different levels of information. Individuals can apply directly to AccessNI using the appropriate application form to obtain a Basic Disclosure. Standard and Enhanced Disclosures can only be accessed through Registered/Umbrella Bodies.

Further information on the process and associated costs can be found at

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/AccessNI-What-you-need-to-know.pdf>

[Go back to Section 2.5](#)

[Go back to Section 2.8](#)

Resource 2.6 Sample Employee Reference Request Form

Reference Request Form

In Confidence

| | | |
|---|------------|----------|
| Name of applicant | | |
| Position applied for | | |
| 1 In what capacity do you know the applicant, e.g. line manager, supervisor, professional colleague? | | |
| 2 How long have you known the applicant? | | |
| 3 Length of Service | Start Date | End Date |
| 4 Reason for leaving | | |
| 5 Most recent position held | | |
| 6 Summary of main duties | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 7 Please comment on the following areas as relevant to the post. Please be as specific as possible | | |
| • Applicant's main strengths | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| • Areas for improvement | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| • Applicant's ability to meet the competencies and skills of the post (see job description) | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| 8 Please detail any concerns about any aspects of their work, where relevant to the post | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Section 2

9 Please detail any particular supervision or support needs that the applicant may have had if different to above

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

10 Has the applicant been subject to any formal action in relation to discipline or competence at any time?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, please give details

| |
|--|
| |
| |

11 Has the applicant had a satisfactory attendance record?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If no, please give details

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

12 Do you have any concerns about the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If yes, please give details

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

Under Data Protection Legislation, I am aware that this reference may be made available to the applicant, if requested.

Signature

Date

Position Held

Organisation/Business

Tel No

Email Address

Note: We may contact you to clarify any of the information provided.

[Go back to Section 2.7](#)

Section 2

5 Do you have any concerns about the applicant's suitability to work with children and

YES NO

If YES, please give details:

Note: We may need to contact you to clarify any of the information provided. Please indicate a convenient time for us to do this:

Under Data Protection Legislation I am aware that this reference may be made available to the applicant, if requested.

Signature

Date

Tel No

Email Address

[Go back to Section 2.7](#)

Resource 2.8 Asking about Disability in the Recruitment Process

Disability

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Please note that it is the effect of the impairment without treatment which determines if an individual meets this definition of disability.

With regards disability, organisations should enquire if there are any reasonable adjustments which could be made as part of the recruitment process, which would enable the applicant to enjoy equality of opportunity in securing a post with the organisation. Applicants should be given the opportunity to provide a summary of any reasonable adjustments which may be required. For further information organisations may contact the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland www.equalityni.org

[Go back to Section 2.9](#)

Section

3

There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers.

Standard 3

There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers.

Criteria:

1. There is an induction process for staff and volunteers.
2. There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers.
3. Relevant training is provided, appropriate to the post/role.
4. There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role.
5. There is an annual appraisal for staff and review for volunteers.
6. Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision, and annual appraisals/reviews.

Introduction

Effective management of staff and volunteers will contribute to an organisation providing activities for children and young people in a safe way. Good management will also require making sure that everyone in the organisation is clear about roles, responsibilities and work plans, and ensuring they are adequately supported in carrying out their role.

Within two months of commencing employment, employees are entitled to a written statement of the main particulars of their employment. That should include, among other things, details of pay, hours, holidays, notice period and an additional note on disciplinary and grievance procedures. It is good practice to provide a similar document to volunteers, in the form of a volunteer agreement which will provide clarity for both the volunteer and the organisation. It may be helpful, especially for long term volunteers or those taking on a major task, to clarify the reasonable expectations for both parties, but for other volunteers such agreements may be seen as unduly formal or restrictive. If an agreement is to be provided, it should not be too formal and should not contain language or imply conditions that appear contractual.

See Resource 3.1 – Employees and Volunteers: Definitions

It is important to remember that the aim of implementing these systems is to ensure that all involved in the organisation are clear on roles and responsibilities, which is vital should concerns arise about the safety or welfare of children and young people.

3.1 There is an induction process for staff and volunteers.

A thorough induction process is integral to good organisational practice. It will ensure that staff and volunteers are properly prepared for their work and any anxieties associated with starting a new job or volunteering role can be addressed and/or diminished. Organisations working with children and young people should ensure they have an induction process in place for staff and volunteers.

An induction process should take place when a new staff member or volunteer starts with your organisation. It must be well planned in order to be effective and may include any or all of the following elements:

- Information on organisational procedures, guidelines, activities and ethos;
- What is expected and required of them and the boundaries or limits within which they should operate;
- Awareness raising and training on the recognition, recording and reporting of abuse;
- Meeting co-workers and relevant managers and senior staff;
- Information about key stakeholders and their roles;
- Practical information such as breaks, the location of the kitchen and toilets, etc.

Induction to the job/role will explain what is required of the staff member or volunteer to fulfill their role. It will involve offering an appropriate level of support which may, among other things, include assessment of the staff member's and volunteer's understanding of the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy.

Induction will ideally be done over a few days as new staff and volunteers can only take in a certain amount of information at a time. A timeframe should be set within which induction should be completed. Staff and volunteers should be asked to acknowledge in writing that they have been introduced to the organisation's policies, procedures and guidelines, and that they understand and agree to abide by them.

With the increasing number of people entering the workforce from outside Northern Ireland, organisations should take into account cultural sensitivities. Some cultural awareness raising may be required by organisations and existing staff and volunteers to minimise misunderstandings. Awareness raising for staff and volunteers from outside Northern Ireland may be required on what is considered acceptable and unacceptable practice within the established culture here. This should be part of the initial induction programme. These issues can be addressed through the organisation's induction procedure.

To ensure that everything necessary is covered at induction, it is good practice to have an Induction Checklist. It is also useful for organisations to put together a handbook of information covered at induction to give to staff and volunteers for reference.

[See Resource 3.2 – Sample Induction Checklist](#)

3.2 There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers.

All appointments of staff and volunteers should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work; this will be a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers. A minimum period should be established at the time of employment/involvement and this may be for example three to six months, depending on the nature of the work. During this time the organisation will want to pay particular attention to the work of the individual, attitude to and aptitude for working with others including children and young people. A record should be made of any matters arising during the probationary/trial period and any training needs identified.

At the end of the probationary/trial period it is good practice to have a review of the staff member's/volunteer's performance in the job/role. In cases where there are concerns about the performance of staff member or volunteer, it may be necessary to extend their probationary/trial period, to offer additional or specific training, or to terminate their services altogether. In the case of a volunteer, they could be signposted to alternative volunteering opportunities that would better suit their needs.

Any decision made at this stage should not come as a surprise if regular support and supervision has been carried out with the member of staff/volunteer. The probationary/trial period is an ideal opportunity to identify future training needs additional to those provided at induction.

3.3 Relevant training is provided, appropriate to the post/role.

In addition to induction, all staff and volunteers should receive particular skills and safeguarding children and young people training, appropriate to their job or role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for staff members and volunteers in line with relevant developments in legislation, policy or practice. It is recommended that update training takes place at least every three years in order to keep skills and knowledge relevant. Update training will be determined by the post and the worker's skills. For example, it may be appropriate for some of the staff and volunteers to complete training in skills such as First Aid, if relevant to their job/role. All staff and volunteers (including Designated Officers and Management Committee members) should have safeguarding children and young people training relevant to their role and the nature of the contact they will have with children and young people. This should include an awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues, recognising the possibility of abuse, responding to and reporting concerns, disclosures or allegations, and dealing with issues such as confidentiality and code of behaviour. Training should also be provided on the

organisation's own safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and guidelines. Training needs to be carefully selected to make sure it is sufficient for the roles and responsibilities that staff and volunteers have and commensurate with the contact they have with children and young people.

It is important that the organisation provides safeguarding training for staff and volunteers because:

- Some staff and volunteers may find it difficult to accept that abuse could occur within the organisation. A good understanding of abuse issues is essential to help staff and volunteers become more aware of the potential indicators of abuse. Awareness of the issues will enhance their ability to safeguard and protect the children and young people in their care;
- Staff and volunteers may need training to support their understanding of what is appropriate behaviour with children and young people. It is important to indicate what physical contacts are appropriate/inappropriate through a Code of Behaviour, so that staff and volunteers can avoid actions which could be misinterpreted.

A training needs analysis is useful to determine the nature and level of training staff and volunteers should receive. It is best practice to keep a record of training needs, training provided and how useful staff and volunteers found it.

Organisations should ensure that all safeguarding children and young people training provided for their staff and volunteers meets the required learning outcomes identified in the SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy, available at www.safeguardingni.org

3.4 There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role.

Support and supervision is essential to ensure that staff and volunteers feel supported in the work they do, and that the organisation is confident that individuals are carrying out the work to the required standard.

Staff and volunteers should be facilitated to discuss their work, and support and supervision issues at regular intervals, whether in small groups or on a one to one basis with their line manager/volunteer coordinator. This will assist the organisation to identify and deal with any issues that may prevent the work being carried out effectively.

These could be resource issues, problematic working relationships between staff and volunteers or difficulties which could highlight the need for additional training. Support and supervision meetings should also ensure that staff and volunteers are given recognition for the good work they are doing.

The overarching benefit of having a good system of support and supervision in place is that the organisation can have confidence in the quality of the service being provided to children and young people.

There are various methods of providing support and supervision from regular one to one meetings with individual staff and volunteers, to meetings with a group of staff and volunteers who are engaged in the same type of work. There are advantages and disadvantages to each type of method used, for example, one to one meetings on a regular basis for each staff member/volunteer can put demands on time and in certain circumstances, ratios. On the other hand, group sessions which may appear more efficient, may inhibit staff and volunteers raising concerns they have in front of colleagues. This also may not be a suitable environment to address certain individual needs.

If using group sessions, it is important to have separate meetings with individual members of staff and volunteers, particularly if they have different roles or undertake different kinds of work.

Whatever the method used, it is useful for the benefit of all parties concerned to have an agenda or checklist of what is to be discussed and a brief written note of the discussion, including actions agreed, who will take them forward, and a timetable for completion.

3.5 There is an annual appraisal for staff and a review for volunteers.

An annual appraisal for staff or review for volunteers will help the organisation to assess performance or how the staff member or volunteer has been undertaking the job/role. This will allow organisations the opportunity to give feedback on an individual's general performance, competence and relationships with co-workers and children and young people, and where relevant parents. This meeting also gives an occasion to recognise the good work they are doing, identify future training needs to develop their skills further, and refresh expectations of the job or role.

[See Resource 3.3 – Support/Supervision/Appraisal Checklist](#)

3.6 Comprehensive, written records are kept of: training completed; support and supervision; and annual appraisals/reviews.

It is best practice for written records to be kept of all training completed by staff and volunteers, support and supervision meetings held and all annual appraisals/reviews. Both parties should agree the content of the records and each should have a copy. These records should be stored confidentially and in line with the organisations data protection policy.

While the above procedures should apply to both staff and volunteers, it is worth ensuring that everyone is clear about the different roles and responsibilities within the organisation.

Employers and volunteer managers need to be alert to signs of exceptional treatment of any child or young person, either favourable or unfavourable. The organisation will have procedures for dealing with inappropriate conduct by staff and volunteers, of which everyone should be aware.

Resource 3.1 Employees and Volunteers - Definitions

There are distinct differences between the terms 'volunteer' and 'employee' (or 'paid worker').

Volunteering is defined as 'the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.'

Policies and procedures in place to effectively manage volunteers will reflect the voluntary nature of the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation. The only payment received by volunteers will be reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.

Employees will have a contract of employment. This is not just a piece of paper but a relationship between an individual and an organisation where:

- The individual receives remuneration (payment) or consideration (something else of material value) in return for work or services;
- The employer has an obligation to provide work and the individual has an obligation to do the work;
- The work is controlled by the person who is paying;
- The relationship between the parties is consistent with a contract of employment i.e. documentation, management procedures etc.

It is important that these differences are maintained.

More information about the effective involvement of volunteers can be found in As Good As They Give (Volunteer Now) available from www.volunteernow.co.uk

[Go back to Section 3: Introduction](#)

Resource 3.2 Sample Induction Checklist

| What | Who | Date |
|--|-----|------|
| About the Organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims, philosophy and ethos • people we work/volunteer with • work/volunteering we do • limitations of the organisation • structure: departments/teams • management | | |
| The Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toilets, cloakrooms, parking, etc. • where to get tea/coffee/lunch • health and safety rules | | |
| The Job/Role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worker's/volunteer's area of responsibility • line management • days/hours of work/volunteering and breaks • relevant organisational policies and procedures, including the safeguarding children and young people policy • code of behaviour | | |
| The Support System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who will supervise worker/volunteer, where and when to find them • support available • supervision/support meetings • resources, facilities, equipment, • training • complaints procedure • reasonable adjustments, if required | | |
| Fellow Workers/Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who and what they do • team meetings • working/volunteering with others | | |
| Other Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • settling in – probationary/trial period • claiming expenses • key stakeholders and their roles | | |
| Employee/Volunteer: I confirm that I have completed all items in the induction checklist and, where indicated, read and understood policies and procedures. Signature _____ Date _____ Line Manager: I confirm that all items in the induction checklist have been completed by (name) either with me, or a member of (organisation) authorised by me. Signature _____ Date _____ | | |

[Go back to Section 3.1](#)

Resource 3.3 Support/Supervision/Appraisal Checklist

1 Generally:

How do you feel your work is going?

- What's going well?
- What's not been going so well? Why? What would help?
- Is there anything that has happened which you are unsure about? Are there particular situations that you would like to talk through?

2 Workload:

What is your workload like? e.g. is it too much, too little or about right?

3 Objectives/Actions:

Let's review the objectives we set last time which we need to review.

Last meeting you raised issues of... let's talk about...

4 Relationships:

How are you getting on with the rest of the team – staff/volunteers? The children and young people, their family?

5 Personal Development:

Are there things you would like to learn more about/undertake further training on?

6 Ideas for Improvement:

Do you have any ideas of how the organisation could improve how it provides its services and activities to children and young people or its conditions for staff/volunteers?

7 Developments to Job/Role:

Are there any particular projects/new areas of work you would like to explore?

8 Objectives/Actions:

Are there any actions that we should set ourselves between now and next time we meet? Is there any particular issue that you would like me to bring to the team/management?

9 Safeguarding Children and Young People

Are there any issues in relation to safeguarding children and young people that you would like to raise that we have not discussed?

[Go back to Section 3.5](#)

Section

4

The organisation has clearly defined procedures for raising awareness of, responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse.

Standard 4

The organisation has clearly defined procedures for raising awareness of, responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse.

Criteria:

1. The policy outlines what constitutes abuse of children and young people and who can abuse.
2. There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to, record and report safeguarding children and young people concerns.
3. There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff and volunteers to ensure they are familiar with it.
4. There is a named Designated Officer and Deputy Designated Officer who have responsibility for dealing with safeguarding children and young people concerns which come to light within the organisation.
5. There is a procedure for the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer to report safeguarding children and young people concerns to the appropriate authorities
6. There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to and report allegations made against staff and volunteers.
7. There is guidance on what is meant by confidentiality, and its limitations in relation to responding to safeguarding children and young people concerns.
8. There is a whistleblowing policy and procedure.

Introduction

Good safeguarding practice means that organisations must ensure that all staff and volunteers understand how to recognise abuse, and how to pass any safeguarding concerns to the relevant people within the organisation. This does not mean that staff and volunteers are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but they do have the responsibility to be alert to physical signs, actions and/or behaviour by children, young people, staff or volunteers that suggests something may be wrong.

4.1 The policy outlines what constitutes abuse of children and young people and who can abuse.

The organisation should seek to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware that “child abuse” occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes significant harm. The broad categories of abuse are defined in “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (August 2017). Any action taken by statutory agencies in relation to safeguarding concerns will be based on these definitions. These should be contained in the safeguarding children and young people policy of the organisation to ensure clear and consistent information for staff and volunteers.

Physical abuse – deliberately physically hurting a child.

Sexual abuse – when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others.

Emotional abuse – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child.

Neglect – the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development.

Exploitation – the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

Bullying – although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme forms it could be regarded as abuse. It can take many forms, including emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal and cyber. Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred, they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst, bullying can result in a child or young person self-harming and even attempting suicide. All organisations should develop an anti-bullying policy and ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of it.

[See Resource 4.1 – Definitions of Abuse](#)

Safeguarding in specific circumstances

“Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (August 2017) addresses safeguarding in specific circumstances, where the abuse of children and young people can manifest in a number of ways and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse defined in Resource 4.1. Some of the specific forms of abuse which are identified in the policy include female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour based violence and child sexual exploitation.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

FGM is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland. Where any individual or organisation has a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM they should report this to the PSNI without delay. Where any individual or organisation has a concern that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, they should make a referral to the relevant HSCT Gateway Service. Consideration should always be given to any female child of the family or female child resident in the same household. Further information can be found at

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/FGM-Handout.pdf>

Forced marriage is marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where any individual or organisation has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

'Honour based violence' (HBV) is the term used to refer to a range of violent practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to sustain or promote perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or another has shamed, or may shame, the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour code'. The punishment can include assault, abduction, restrictions of liberty, confinement, threats and murder.

Children, young people and adults can be victims of HBV. Where any individual or organisation suspects or believes that a child or young person is at immediate risk of HBV, an immediate report should be made to the PSNI. If the risk is not perceived to be immediate, the information should be passed to the local HSCT.

Where it is known to have taken place with children or adults, this information should be passed to the HSCT and/or the PSNI to ensure that other children within the community affected are appropriately safeguarded. Further information can be found at

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/HBV-Factsheet-.pdf>

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

If any individual or organisation has any concerns that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation, this must be reported to the relevant HSCT and/or the PSNI. Further information can be found at

<https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/CSE-Handout.pdf>

It is also important that staff and volunteers are aware that some children and young people are more vulnerable to abuse because of their life circumstances. The following children and young people may be at greater risk of harm:

- Looked After Children;
- Children and young people who go missing;
- Young people in supported accommodation;
- Young people who are homeless;
- Children and young people living in a violent or abusive domestic environment;
- Children of parents with additional support needs;
- Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people;
- Children and young people with disabilities;

- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender Young People;
- Unborn babies (pre-birth risk).

In addition to including the categories and indicators of abuse and potential risk factors in the safeguarding children and young people policy, good safeguarding practice means ensuring that staff and volunteers are also aware of who can abuse. Organisations have a responsibility to raise awareness among staff and volunteers that:

- abusers come from all sections of society, all professions and all races and can be any gender;
- abuse of children and young people can occur anywhere, at home or within organisations;
- abuse of children and young people may sometimes be carried out by strangers, but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child or young person and is in a position of trust and/or authority;
- it is not only adults who abuse children and young people. Children may suffer abuse from other children and young people.

Although most individuals who work with children and young people are well motivated, there may be those in an organisation who are unable to provide consistent care. There are also some adults, including professionals, who manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they could exploit children and young people, physically, emotionally or sexually. There may also be those, who by consistently behaving inappropriately towards children and young people, cause them to suffer physical or emotional harm. Through exploring these issues in the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy, staff and volunteers are more alert to the possibility of abuse and able to recognise indicators that cause concern.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child or affect the environment in which they live (Bellis et al 2016). ACEs can include abuse; neglect; domestic violence; mental ill health; alcohol or drug misuse, parental separation; a household member in prison; homelessness; adversities associated with living in care; chronic ill health or serious illness; the death of a parent or sibling; and the impact of the conflict in our region. This is not an exhaustive list, there are many other adversities which children and young people experience.

ACEs can create levels of stress that are dangerous to the child's brain development, behaviour, health, and learning. Individuals who have experienced multiple ACEs are more likely to have poor physical and mental health in adulthood. They are also more likely to engage in health harming behaviours. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that such behaviours can signify trauma and they should adopt a trauma sensitive approach in their work. However, there are many protective factors that can help mitigate the harmful effects of ACEs. Using a trauma sensitive **LENS** can help staff and volunteers to reflect and explore why an individual may be behaving in the way that they are, what their needs might be, and what support they may require.

Look - at their behaviour/language/environment

Explore - what may have happened and how you can help

Needs – consider what their needs are

Support – consider the support they may require

Further information can be found at <https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice>. Free e-learning programmes can be accessed at <https://www.ascert.biz/specialist-courses/>

4.2 There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to, record and report safeguarding children and young people concerns.

Organisations must ensure that there is a written procedure which tells all staff and volunteers how to record and report any concerns about suspected abuse, and the procedure for dealing with an allegation against them. This should be covered at induction and through ongoing safeguarding training, and contained in the safeguarding children and young people policy.

It is important that organisations have developed robust procedures for sharing concerns, in the first place internally with the Designated Officer and, if required, reporting incidents to the statutory authorities. Generally, a shorter referral route is simpler, clearer, quicker and more confidential, but it needs to be appropriate to the structure of the organisation.

When there are concerns raised about a child or young person, or where allegations are made, many people feel anxious about passing information on or contacting Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Teams or the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Often staff and volunteers can feel afraid their concerns may be wrong and because of this, they may delay in passing on vital information regarding a child or young person. Staff and volunteers who have concerns do not need evidence of wrongdoing, they simply need to pass on their concerns through the reporting procedures, as soon as possible. Concerns need to be reported quickly, as the consequences of not reporting could be very serious to a child or young person. Being alert to potential abuse plays a major role in ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded. **It is crucial that all concerns about possible abuse are reported.**

It is important to remember that it is not the responsibility of one person in an organisation to evaluate information regarding the child or young person and any safeguarding concerns. It is unlikely that one person will hold all the information relevant to the child as often important information may be held by several people and more than one organisation but each piece of information may add to the overall jigsaw, which can show a fuller picture of a child or young person's situation.

Concerns can never be dismissed outright – sharing information is one of the most important ways to prevent and detect abuse of children and young people.

In the case of a volunteer or staff member receiving information that abuse has occurred in the past, even when the alleged or suspected victims are now adults, this information should still be recorded and passed to the Designated Officer, as there could be a continued risk to children and young people.

In some situations, staff or volunteers in the organisation may receive information about adults who are involved with other organisations. It may be thought that these people present a risk to children and young people in those organisations therefore it is important to share all concerns. The statutory agencies will be able to give advice on how best this is done.

[See Resource 4.3 – Sharing Significant Information](#)

Section 4

There are a number of ways that you could be alerted that a child or young person is suffering harm:

- The child may disclose to you;.
- Someone else may tell you that the child has disclosed abuse, or they strongly believe the child has been abused;
- The child may show some signs of physical injury or a behavioural change for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation;
- Awareness of, or suspicion about, abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you as a third party (parent, friend, co-worker) who suspects or has been told of abuse;
- Something in the behaviour of one of the workers or in the way a worker relates to the child alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable.

The difficult issue of confidentiality is one which arises particularly when abuse is disclosed. However, the procedures which the organisation develops to deal with all allegations, concerns or disclosures about abuse must be based on the fundamental principle that the welfare of the child is paramount.

In all such cases, the organisation must ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the importance of:

Listening... accepting... reassuring... explaining... acting immediately... recording... getting support

There is not one set of rules to follow in responding to these situations. However, the actions of staff and volunteers who are told of abuse should be guided by the following key points:

| DO | DON'T |
|--|---|
| Stay calm. | Don't panic. |
| Listen and hear. Give time to the child/young person to say what they want. Accept what they are saying. | Don't ask leading questions. |
| Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling. | Don't promise to keep secrets. |
| Record in writing what was said as soon as possible in the child's own words. | Don't enquire into details of the abuse. |
| Report to someone else in the organisation. | Don't make the child/young person repeat the story unnecessarily. |
| Record your report. | Don't delay in reporting. |

Under no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer or the organisation itself attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone or investigate the situation. It is important that everyone in the organisation is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for professional agencies following a referral to them regarding a safeguarding concern. The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it in line with the organisation's reporting procedure and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously.

Recording and reporting

All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded on pro formas which should be provided by the organisation. An accurate note should be made of the date, time and nature of the concern, disclosure or allegation, the parties who were involved, any action taken within the organisation to clarify or get more information and any further action taken. The record should be clear and factual, since any information may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court. This kind of information should always be kept in a secure place (including electronic filing) and shared only with those who need to know about the concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse.

[See Resource 4.4 – Sample Form for Recording and Reporting Concerns, Disclosures and Allegations of Abuse.](#)

4.3 There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff and volunteers to ensure they are familiar with it.

All staff and volunteers should have a copy of the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy which will contain the recording and reporting procedure. Training should be provided by the organisation at induction and on an ongoing basis, on how the internal reporting procedure works.

In addition, staff and volunteers should have easy access to the organisation's reporting pro forma to be used in the event of a safeguarding concern arising with the understanding that information should be passed on to the Designated/Deputy Designated Officer without delay.

If a staff member or volunteer raises a safeguarding concern but the Designated Officer is reluctant to pass it on, the staff member or volunteer should in the first instance approach the Deputy Designated Officer, or the head of the organisation. Where this fails, the staff member or volunteer should contact the local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team. Contact details should be included in the safeguarding children and young people policy.

4.4 There is a named Designated Officer and Deputy Designated Officer who have responsibility for dealing with safeguarding children and young people concerns which come to light within the organisation.

All organisations, even small ones, should appoint at least one person as Designated Officer, with responsibility for dealing with safeguarding concerns, disclosures or allegations about actual or suspected abuse. It is also best practice to appoint a Deputy Designated Officer in case the Designated Officer is not available. Everyone in the organisation should know who the Designated Officers are and how to contact them. Their names and contact details should be contained in the policy, be widely available and "out of hours" contact included. Depending on the size of the organisation, it may be appropriate to have more than one Designated Officer and/or Deputy Designated Officer.

[See Resource 4.5 – Role and Responsibilities of a Designated Officer](#)

4.5 There is a procedure for the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer to report safeguarding children and young people concerns to the appropriate authorities.

The Designated Officer will be responsible for acting as a source of information and support for staff and volunteers and for dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse that arise. This person should be known to all staff and volunteers in the organisation.

This important role needs to be carried out by someone who, in addition to being in a senior position and having a good knowledge of the organisation, can communicate well internally with staff and volunteers and externally with the appropriate authorities.

When a Designated Officer is alerted to concerns about a child or young person, their role is to act promptly and in accordance with the agreed reporting procedure. The procedure should be clear about how the Designated Officer will respond which will include the following steps:

- Ensure that the child or young person is in no immediate danger and that any medical or police assistance required has been sought;
- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some 'checking out' of information provided, but being careful not to stray into the realm of investigation;
- Consult with a member of the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team. Where there is any doubt or uncertainty, a hypothetical situation can be explored with the social worker, who should advise on the best course of action to take;
- Make a formal referral if the social worker in the Gateway Team considers the concern to be a safeguarding issue. In cases of alleged or suspected criminal abuse, the social worker should discuss the case with the relevant Police Liaison Officer in the PSNI, who will help determine whether a crime may have been committed;
- Be available, as required, to the investigation undertaken by the Gateway Team and/or the PSNI;
- If it is not considered a safeguarding issue, and it is decided that there should be no referral made to a statutory authority, a record should be made of the concern and the details kept on file, including any action taken, the reasons for not referring, and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis.

If a referral is made, the minimum information required will include:

- The name and address of the child or young person and their current location or address;
- The nature of the harm;
- The need for medical attention (if any);
- The reasons for suspicions of abuse;
- Any action already taken;
- Any other information which may be useful to the Gateway Team.

Organisations must ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the reporting procedure and their responsibility to follow internal procedure. However, it is equally important that staff and volunteers are made aware of who they should report concerns to if they are unable to report the concern internally within the organisation.

[See Resource 4.6 – Reporting Procedures](#)

[See Resource 4.7 – HSC Trust and PSNI Contact Numbers](#)

4.6 There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to and report allegations made against staff and volunteers.

One of the most difficult situations for an organisation to deal with is an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer. In many cases the person may be a close colleague, friend or neighbour. Nevertheless, the response from the organisation to allegations of abuse must always be consistent, regardless of relationships as the primary interest must always be the safety and well-being of children and young people.

When responding to an allegation that has been made against a staff member or volunteer, it is important to remember that the organisation has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child or young person, and the staff member or volunteer. Organisations should develop parallel procedures for dealing with safeguarding children and young people concerns, and disciplinary actions or problem-solving procedures (for volunteers) and consider the implications of an allegation made against an employee or volunteer.

Organisations must carefully consider how to develop and implement a procedure for dealing with allegations and will want to consider the following steps:

- In the first instance the details of the allegation should be recorded fully in writing by the Designated Officer and passed on to the head of the organisation, who will direct the organisational procedure in respect of the staff member or volunteer. The Designated Officer will implement the procedure in respect of the child/young person. It is recommended that the Designated Officer is not the person carrying out the internal disciplinary/problem-solving procedure;
- In the case of an allegation against a staff member or volunteer, the head of the organisation should inform the staff member or volunteer that an allegation has been made against them. They should be provided with an opportunity to respond to the allegation and their response fully recorded. The organisation should not delay in any aspect of the process and should move to consultation with the statutory authorities as soon as possible. This will determine if a referral should be made;
- The organisation should, as a matter of urgency, take all protective measures which are necessary to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. This may involve transferring the worker to another post without contact with children and young people, or suspension 'without prejudice', as there should be no assumption of guilt during a period of investigation. These measures should not unreasonably penalise the staff member or volunteer unless to protect a child or young person. If it is necessary to suspend a staff member or volunteer, the allegation should be dealt with as quickly as possible;
- After consultation with the relevant statutory authorities, the head of the organisation should confirm what further action needs to be taken. In cases where a criminal investigation is instigated by the police, it is important that the organisation does not conduct its own internal investigation or gather further evidence that could prejudice the criminal investigation;
- It is essential that the organisation records all information at each stage regardless of whether or not a referral has been made to statutory services. If it is decided that no referral will be made at this point, the decision not to refer should be recorded and the reasons for this decision, including a record of any discussions with Health and Social Care Gateway Team staff. In all circumstances, the situation should be monitored so that a referral can be made if the situation deteriorates;

- The head of the organisation should progress the internal investigation through to completion. Following the completion of the internal investigation, if there is proven harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, and the worker has been permanently removed from regulated activity, the organisation will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS will consider individuals referred to it for possible inclusion in the Children's Barred List and/or Adult's Barred List.

See Resource 4.8 – Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers

As a result of the investigation there are 4 possible investigation outcomes which organisations should consider and plan for, and outline in the safeguarding children and young people policy.

- **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is removed from regulated activity.**

If the investigation finds that an allegation has been substantiated - that is, harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred and the individual is removed from regulated activity - the organisation will be under a statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) under the SVG (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. Referral to the DBS should be at the point that the organisation determines that harm/risk of harm has occurred and there has been a decision made to permanently remove the staff member or volunteer from regulated activity. This may happen at any stage during the disciplinary process and not necessarily when the process concludes. If the staff member or volunteer resigns or retires at any point during the investigation process, the investigation should still be concluded and a referral made to the DBS if it is found that harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred.

- **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is reinstated to regulated activity.**

It is possible that the investigation finds that the allegation is substantiated, but the circumstances of the case are such that the individual can be reinstated to their job/role subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, training and support and supervision arrangements being implemented. Despite the finding that harm/risk of harm has occurred, the decision to return the individual to the post/role means that referral to the DBS is not required.

- **Allegation of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – but there are ongoing concerns.**

In a situation where the investigation concludes that the allegation is unsubstantiated and that the individual has not harmed a child or young person or placed them at risk of harm, but the organisation has ongoing concerns about the conduct of the staff member or volunteer, the organisation may conclude that the individual can be reinstated with additional support, supervision and training/retraining.

- **Allegation of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – there are no ongoing concerns.**

In an instance where the internal investigation finds that the allegation is unsubstantiated, that is, that the individual has not harmed or placed at risk of harm a child or young person, the staff member or volunteer may be reinstated and provided with support to reintegrate back into the organisation. Training and supervision may be necessary depending on the nature of the allegation and findings of the investigation.

Regardless of the outcome of an investigation, dealing with allegations against members of staff or volunteers can be traumatic and unsettling for any organisation. It is therefore vital that all staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of how allegations will be handled and how the organisation's disciplinary procedure will be consistently implemented. If, for example, the organisation's policy is to suspend without prejudice when an allegation of abuse or harm is made, all members of staff and volunteers should be aware of the policy. There is an onus on organisations to ensure that the

investigation is handled sensitively from initiation to conclusion while ensuring that anxieties expressed or demonstrated by children, young people, parents or any other member of staff or volunteer are acknowledged and addressed.

Following the investigation and regardless of the outcome, there will be issues for everyone involved in the organisation, including staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents. Clearly this will be a sensitive issue for the whole organisation. Through training and staff discussion, organisations should explore strategies for addressing a range of issues such as:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff and volunteers within your organisation of anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety;
- The effects of internal proceedings, an official safeguarding investigation or criminal investigation on the individual against whom the allegation has been made;
- The reactions of staff, volunteers and other children towards a child who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated;
- The reactions of parents and other family members;
- The reputation of the organisation and reaction within the wider community.

It is extremely valuable to have an objective discussion with staff and volunteers about what could happen and how people might feel if an allegation of abuse is made or a suspicion is reported. Rehearsing the issues will give everyone concerned the confidence to face what will inevitably be a very difficult situation.

There may be situations in which suspicions or allegations turn out to be unfounded. Nevertheless, it is important that everyone in the organisation knows that if they raise a concern, it will be taken seriously.

4.7 There is guidance on what is meant by confidentiality, and its limitations in relation to responding to safeguarding children and young people concerns.

The legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount means that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm.

However, there should be an awareness throughout the organisation of the importance of confidentiality. When a staff member or volunteer has a concern, that concern needs to be recorded and reported on a “need to know” basis. A balance needs to be struck between protecting the child from abuse and also protecting their personal details. Therefore, information will only be passed on to the relevant people whose task it is to decide what action to take. It is important that everyone in the organisation knows that sensitive information about them is managed appropriately and have a clear understanding of confidentiality and its limits. The organisation should have a clear statement on confidentiality and how this is to be respected in the context of safeguarding children and young people.

4.8 There is a whistleblowing policy and procedure.

Whistleblowing occurs when a staff member or volunteer raises a concern about misconduct or abusive practices by individuals and/or an organisation, where such practices cause harm or risk of harm. This will include situations where a staff member or volunteer’s concerns are not acted upon by the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer.

The organisation should have a whistleblowing policy and procedure in place which makes it clear that:

- The organisation is committed to the highest possible standards of conduct, openness, honesty and accountability;
- The organisation takes poor practice or malpractice seriously, giving examples of the types of concerns to be raised, to ensure that a whistleblowing concern is different from a grievance;
- The circumstances where staff or volunteers have the option to raise concerns outside agreed reporting procedures and how this may be done;
- Staff or volunteers are enabled to access confidential advice from an independent source;
- The organisation will, where possible, respect the confidentiality of a member of staff raising a concern through the whistleblowing procedure;
- It is a disciplinary matter to both victimise a bona fide whistleblower and for someone to maliciously make a false allegation.

There may be situations in which concerns or allegations turn out to be unfounded. It is important that everyone in the organisation knows that if they raise a concern which, through the process of investigation, is not validated, they have not in any way been wrong in their initial action. Responsible action needs to be encouraged in the organisation and whistleblowers should be confident of support. The policy needs regularly reviewed to ensure the procedures work in practice. It is everyone's duty to be vigilant in preventing abusive practice.

Resource 4.1 Definitions of abuse

The following definitions are derived from “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (August 2017) which provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people. For the purpose of this guidance a child is a person under the age of 18.

Physical abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It may take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child’s emotional development. It may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child’s peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation¹ is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

Bullying

Bullying is the repeated use of power by one or more persons to intentionally harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others (NI Anti Bullying Forum). Although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme form it would be regarded as a form of abuse. It can take many forms but the main types are:

Emotional – excluding, being unfriendly;

Physical – hitting, kicking, theft;

Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

¹ Although ‘exploitation’ is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register (CPR), professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

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Homophobic – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality;

Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;

Cyberbullying (e.g. text message, picture/video-clip and phone call bullying via mobile phones; email, website bullying).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm. In these circumstances bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

[Go back to Section 4.1](#)

Resource 4.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

What is child sexual exploitation (CSE)?

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI, 2017).

CSE can take a variety of forms and it can take place in person and online; or a combination of both. Like other cases of child sexual abuse, it can involve both contact and non-contact sexual activities.

Who does CSE affect?

Any child, from any walk of life can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. However, it primarily affects young people of a post-primary age with the average age at which concerns are first identified being 12 – 15 years of age.

Some factors which can increase the risk of CSE:

- Social isolation;
- Low self esteem;
- Poverty or financial hardship;
- Substance misuse;
- Having a disability;
- Prior experience of abuse, particularly sexual abuse;
- Family breakdown;
- Bereavement;
- Involvement in crime;
- Online vulnerability;
- Links with other young people who are sexually exploited.

Identifying CSE

Potential indicators of CSE include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained gifts – money, clothes, mobile phone;
- Leaving home/care without permission;
- Persistently going missing or returning late;
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving;
- Returning distraught/dishevelled and/or under the influence of substances;
- Truancy from school;
- Entering or leaving cars driven by unknown adults or by taxis;
- Significantly older 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend';
- Secretiveness around behaviours;
- Concerning use of the internet;

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- Physical symptoms or infections;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.

CSE can be difficult to identify. Many children and young people, and professionals, can misinterpret such experiences as consensual and fail to recognise the exploitation involved.

Adapted from “Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guidance” (SBNI 2014)

[Go back to Section 4.1](#)

Resource 4.3 Sharing Significant Information

What is Significant Information?

The sharing of information is important in ensuring that children and young people are safe and in assessing whether children and young people are at risk. Significant information is any information about behaviour which may put children or young people at risk of harm and it is vital that it is shared appropriately with those agencies whose role it is to protect them, such as police or Health and Social Care Trusts. While what constitutes significant information may vary from case to case, the following offers some guidance on information that may warrant sharing. The list is not intended to be definitive and each case should be considered carefully in line with advice from the organisation's Designated Officer and statutory services.

- Sexual offences including interference with children and young people, assault or exhibitionism.
- Organising prostitution or procuring.
- Attempting or planning to corrupt a child or young person.
- A history of physical violence, including domestic violence and assault occasioning risk to children or young people.
- Stealing from children and young people.
- Selling, using or possessing dangerous drugs illegally.
- Repeated drunkenness in work contexts or untreated alcoholism.
- Repeated inappropriate use of sexual language outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Repeated inappropriate touching outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Failure to provide the required level of care and attention to children and young people, including emotional abuse and neglect.
- Failure to comply with procedures where this puts the welfare of children and young people at risk.
- Any instance where a case is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Showing pornographic videos, internet images or publications to children or young people.
- Posting or accessing child pornography on the internet.

A decision as to whether there is cause for concern should be considered based on the balance of probabilities or opinions formed reasonably and in good faith. Organisations must be clear that there is no requirement for them to gather evidence or conclusive proof in order to share information that may be significant in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people.

It is important that staff and volunteers who make reports of suspected child abuse, whether within or outside the organisation, are fully supported by the organisation. Under the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998, which came into effect in 1999, staff are protected from suffering detrimental effect from their employers for discussing information (in good faith and in the reasonable belief that it is substantially true) about the conduct of private or public bodies or individual employees (protected disclosure).

While it may be difficult to share concerns about parents, colleagues, or indeed young people, which affect important working relationships, it is essential that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm. The prompt flow of accurate information can often be for the benefit and safety of all concerned.

Significant information should only be shared with appropriate personnel and agencies on a need-to-know basis.

[Go back to Section 4.2](#)

Resource 4.4 Sample Form for Recording and Reporting Concerns, Disclosures and Allegations of Abuse

Child/Young Person Abuse Report Form

Please answer all relevant questions as fully as you can and pass the form on as quickly as possible (even if you cannot complete all sections).

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Work Location | |
| Name of Child | |
| Age/Date of Birth | |
| Gender | |
| Name of Parent(s) (if known) | |
| Home Address (if known) | |
| | |

PLEASE COMPLETE THOSE SECTIONS BELOW THAT ARE RELEVANT

| |
|--|
| 1 DISCLOSURE BY A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON |
| When was the disclosure made (dates and times)? |
| Who did the child/young person make the disclosure to? |
| What did the child/young person actually say? |
| 2 INDICATORS |
| Describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates) |

Has the child/young person alleged that any particular person is the abuser (if so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the child/young person below)

3 CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY ANOTHER PERSON ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

Record the concerns that were passed to you (with dates and times) and if possible ask the person who expressed the concerns to confirm that the details as written are correct.

4 DETAILS OF ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN e.g. FIRST AID

5 DOES THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON HAVE ANY PARTICULAR NEEDS, E.G. COMMUNICATION, ETC?

To be signed by the person reporting the concern

Name:

Job title:

Signed:

Date:

Date received and actioned by Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Action taken by Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer

Signed:

Date:

[Go back to Section 4.2](#)

Resource 4.5 Role and Responsibilities of a Designated Officer

Every organisation should designate at least one person to be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the abuse or harm of children and young people. This is often called the Designated Officer. It is best practice to appoint at least one Deputy Designated Officer who can fulfill the role in the absence of the Designated Officer, or in the event that concerns or allegations are made against the Designated Officer.

The organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy and procedures should include the name of the Designated and Deputy Designated Officers, as well as an outline of this role and responsibilities and their contact details, including out of hours.

The Designated and Deputy Designated Officers should ensure that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding children and young people issues and have undertaken training relevant to the role.

Role:

The role of the Designated and Deputy Designated Officers is to:

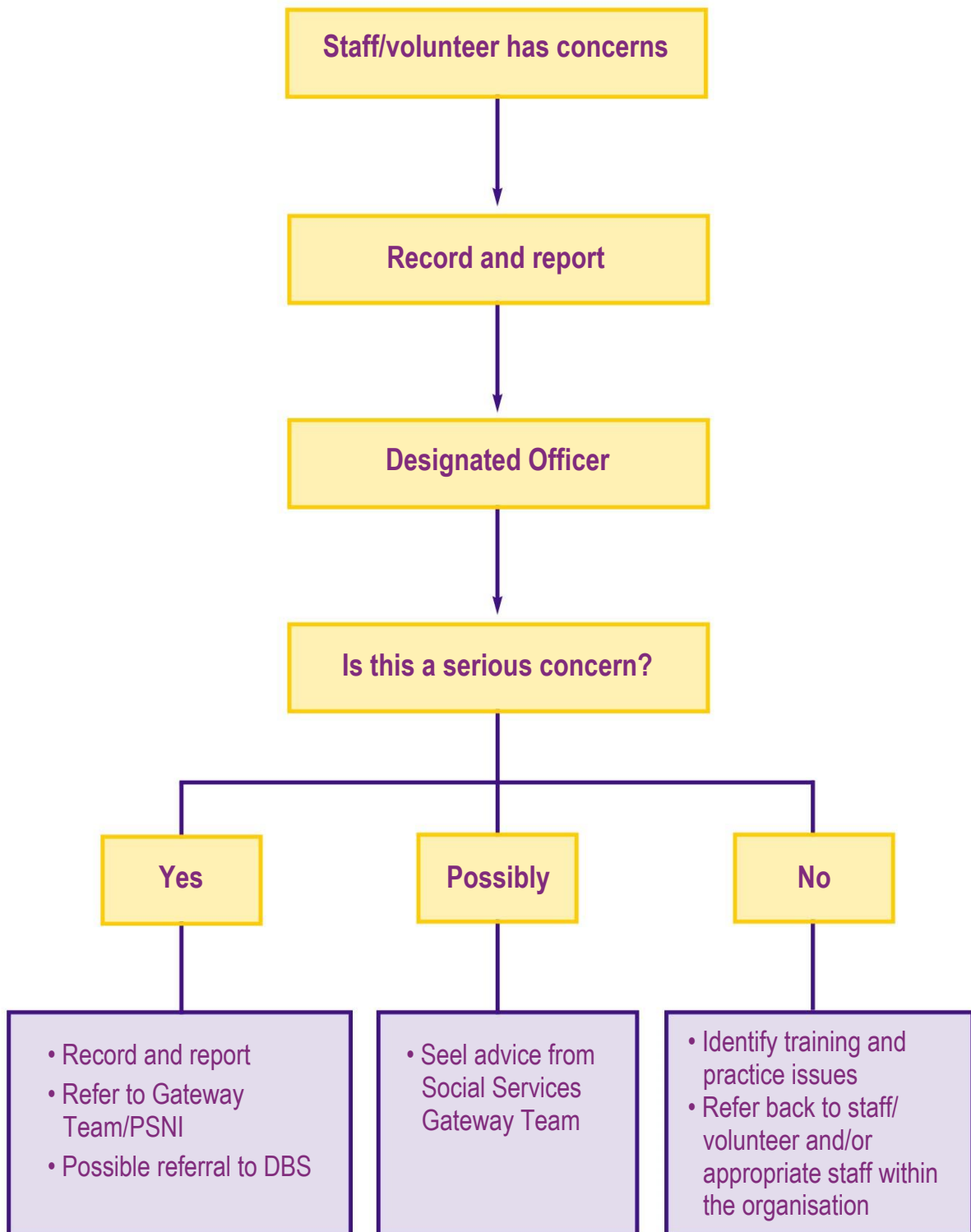
- establish contact with the senior member of Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Teams responsible for safeguarding children in the organisation's catchment area;
- provide information and advice on safeguarding children and young people issues within the organisation;
- ensure that the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy and procedures are followed and particularly to inform the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team within the appropriate Trust of relevant concerns about individual children;
- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover;
- liaise with Gateway Teams and other agencies, as appropriate;
- keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly the head or leader of the organisation, informed about any action taken and any further action required;
- ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome;
- advise the organisation of safeguarding children and young people training needs.

Responsibility:

The Designated and Deputy Designated Officer is responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation and for liaising with Health and Social Care Trusts and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse.

[Go back to Section 4.4](#)

Resource 4.6 Reporting Procedure



[Go back to Section 4.5](#)

Resource 4.7 HSC Trusts and PSNI Contact Numbers

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts - Gateway Teams

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Belfast HSC Trust | 028 9050 7000* |
| Northern HSC Trust | 0300 123 4333* |
| Northern Gateway Team (Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush and Coleraine) | 028 7032 5462 |
| Central Gateway Team (Ballymena, Magherafelt and Cookstown) | 028 7965 1020 |
| South Eastern Gateway Team (Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Larne) | 028 9334 0165 |
| Southern HSC Trust | 0800 783 7745* |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Gateway Team (Craigavon, Banbridge, Dromore, Lurgan, Portadown and Gilford) | 028 3834 3011 |
| Armagh and Dungannon Gateway Team (Armagh, Coalisland, Dungannon, Fivemiletown, Markethill, Moy, Tandragee and Ballygawley) | 028 8771 3506 |
| Newry and Mourne Gateway Team (Newry City, Bessbrook, Annalong, Rathfriland, Warrenpoint, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel and Newtownhamilton) | 028 3082 5000 option 1 |
| South Eastern HSC Trust | 0300 100 0300* |
| Greater Lisburn Gateway Team (Lisburn, Dunmurry, Moira and Hillsborough) | 028 9060 2705 |
| North Down and Ards Gateway Team (Bangor, Newtownards, Ards Peninsula and Comber) | 028 9181 8518 |
| Down Gateway Team (Downpatrick, Newcastle and Ballynahinch) | 028 4461 3511 |
| Western HSC Trust | 028 7131 4090* |
| Enniskillen Gateway Team | 028 6634 4103 |
| Omagh Gateway Team | 028 8283 5156 |
| L'Derry Gateway Team (L'Derry, Limavady and Strabane) | 028 7131 4090 |

Out of hours emergency service

There is a single, regional number for out of hours referrals:

This number came into effect on 29 May 2013

028 9504 9999

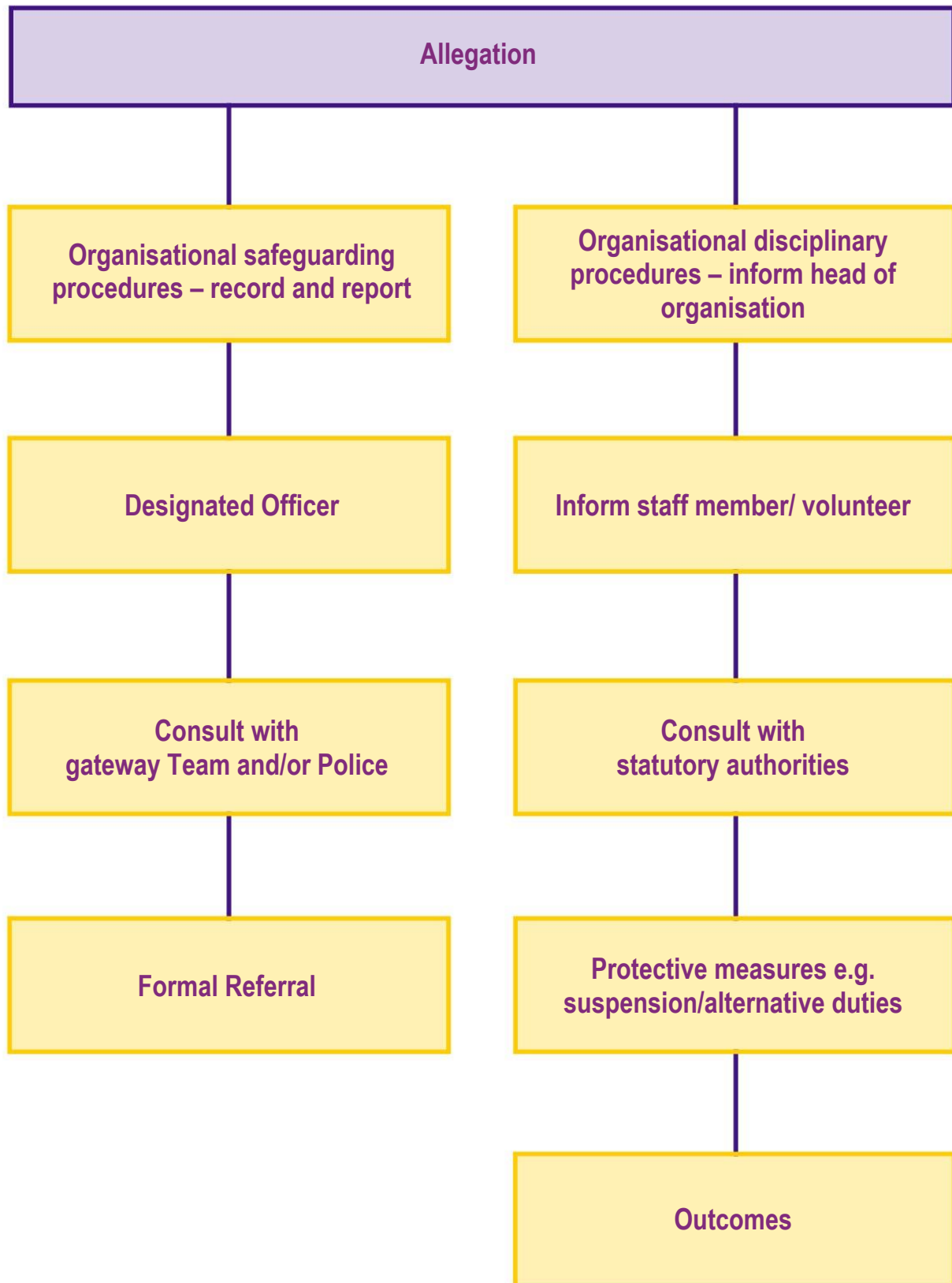
PSNI Public Protection Units (PPUs)

Use central number 0845 600 8000 and specify your location.

* This number is for referrals

[Go back to Section 4.5](#)

Resource 4.8 Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Volunteers



[Go back to Section 4.6](#)

Section

5

There is a written Code of Behaviour which outlines the behaviour expected of all involved in the organisation.

Standard 5

There is a written Code of Behaviour which outlines the behaviour expected of all involved in the organisation.

Criteria:

1. The Code of Behaviour contains positive statements about how staff and volunteers are expected to behave towards children and young people.
2. The Code outline behaviours to be avoided.
3. The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours.
4. The Code includes anti-bullying guidelines.
5. The Code includes guidelines relating to physical contact.
6. The Code includes guidelines relating to diversity and additional needs.
7. The Code of Behaviour includes guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.
8. The Code of Behaviour outlines sanctions in the case of staff and volunteers breaching the guidelines.
9. The Code of Behaviour is tailored to organisational activities or services.

Introduction

It is essential to establish a set of ground rules in terms of the behaviour expected of staff, volunteers, children and young people towards each other within an organisation. Having a code of behaviour for your organisation will minimise the opportunity for children and young people to suffer harm. It will also help protect staff and volunteers by ensuring they are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them and the boundaries within which they should operate. It is worth remembering that many aspects of a code of behaviour are common sense and staff and volunteers are probably already implementing them in the organisation. However, it is important to formalise these to ensure consistency of practice throughout the organisation. It is also important to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of what is expected of them and what behaviour is unacceptable.

Each organisation's code of behaviour will be different, reflecting the nature and activities of the organisation. It should provide clear guidance to staff and volunteers on how they should behave when working with children and young people. In terms of encouraging ownership, it is useful to involve staff and volunteers, children and young people in drafting and reviewing the code of behaviour for the organisation. It should be reviewed every three years or earlier if organisational, legislative or technological changes or practice make this necessary.

5.1 The Code of Behaviour contains positive statements about how staff and volunteers are expected to behave towards children and young people.

The code of behaviour should be a positive document highlighting positive behaviours and encouraging those behaviours in all staff, volunteers, children and young people. Positive behaviours may include respect, listening, patience, support, encouragement, providing clear instruction, equality and fairness, and being approachable.

5.2 The Code outlines behaviours to be avoided.

The code of behaviour should also highlight behaviours that should be avoided. These refer to behaviours that staff and volunteers may slip into through lack of experience or training. While not intentionally harmful, such behaviour might be misconstrued, which could ultimately lead to allegations of abuse being made. An example may be staff and volunteers should not spend excessive time alone with children or young people or take a child or young person alone on a car journey. While general good practice would suggest these activities should be avoided, in some cases it may be part of the staff member or volunteer's job. Organisations need to consider their activities when developing the code of behaviour and implement the relevant safeguards in any situation which could potentially compromise the safety of a child or young person, or lead a staff member or volunteer into a challenging situation.

5.3 The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours.

Unacceptable behaviours are those that should always be avoided in the interests of the safety of all those involved in the organisation. The code should outline exactly what behaviours are unacceptable and will never be tolerated, for example, staff and volunteers should never engage in rough physical games with children and young people, including horseplay. It should highlight that staff and volunteers who engage in unacceptable behaviour will face disciplinary action.

Children and young people should understand that their bodies belong to them and that no-one has the right to do anything to them which makes them feel uncomfortable. They should be given the knowledge to recognise unacceptable behaviour and be encouraged and supported to seek help if it should occur. Children and young people may have access to training on self-protection elsewhere, or it may be appropriate for the organisation to arrange some training for the children and young people in safeguarding themselves.

[See Resource 5.1 - Code of Behaviour – some guidelines](#)

[See Resource 5.2 - Self Protection – Keepsafe Code](#)

5.4 The Code includes anti-bullying guidelines.

The code of behaviour needs to include anti-bullying guidelines. Bullying can take a number of forms and its effects are extremely serious for children and young people. Bullying can cause considerable distress to the extent that it affects health and development and can cause children and young people significant harm. Organisations in exercising their responsibilities to keep children and young people safe, must develop comprehensive anti-bullying guidelines which are routinely implemented across the organisation. These guidelines should highlight how to identify bullying, how to report and respond to it, including appropriate sanctions.

[See Resource 5.3 - Developing an Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

5.5 The Code includes guidelines relating to physical contact.

Organisations should seek to clarify appropriate physical contact in the code of behaviour. This should include guidelines to ensure that physical contact is child centred and appropriate to the task/activity required. Gender, culture and ethnicity can often influence how we approach physical contact with children and young people, so a standardised approach is essential within the organisation and should be reflected in the code of behaviour. Staff and volunteers should be trained and understand the procedures for providing appropriate physical contact and be comfortable with its implementation.

Necessary physical contact, such as intimate care should be done sensitively and with respect for the individual's dignity and privacy. If a staff member or volunteer is concerned about any aspect of intimate care, this should be reported to their Line Manager or Designated Officer at the earliest opportunity. For staff and volunteers involved in sport and interactive activities (e.g. dance, music or drama) specific guidance should be given on physical contact relevant to the activity.

5.6 The Code includes guidelines relating to diversity and additional needs.

Everyone within the organisation needs to take into consideration diversity in the needs and practices of those who use its services. The code of behaviour should reflect cultural needs within the organisation and not discriminate against children and young people who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Organisations should ensure staff and volunteers are open to and aware of diversity in the beliefs and practices of children and young people and their families. They need to ask

about cultural needs and be aware of the difficulties posed by any language barriers or other communication difficulties. Anti-discriminatory practice should be at the core of the organisation's ethos and a zero tolerance towards discriminatory practice implemented. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure that any child or young person with additional needs is treated with equity and a policy of inclusion needs to be underlined with robust procedures which all staff and volunteers agree to and are aware of.

5.7 The Code includes guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.

Within the code of behaviour organisations should provide clear guidelines on the use of technology. Organisations need to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm. They also need to protect themselves from legal challenge and ensure that staff and volunteers work within specified boundaries.

As modes of communication have changed, it is important that staff and volunteers know how to appropriately communicate with children and young people (including online) to ensure their safety and minimise risks and misunderstandings. Organisations must implement guidelines on the appropriate use of the internet, mobile phones, cameras and other forms of information technology.

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs in publications and on websites. Photographs can be used to identify children and young people when they are accompanied by personal information. This information could make the child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" this child for abuse. Also the content of the photo could be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

Organisations should include guidelines on the use of images of children and young people on their websites and in printed publications and include these in the code of behaviour. It is vital that parents are aware of, and support this policy and that parental consent is gained for any images taken of children and young people, and how the images will be used and displayed. The organisation will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent the organisation's activity, without putting children at increased risk. An important factor when assessing the risks involved in the use of images of children is the potential for inappropriate use of the images. If organisations are aware of the potential risks and take appropriate steps, the potential for misuse of images can be reduced.

The development of technology and accessibility of the internet on mobile phones, tablets and features such as Apps, means that online safety for children and young people is increasingly important. It is commonplace for children and young people to communicate via texts, blogs, messaging and also play games consoles online. Parents and organisations should be aware of safeguarding issues and keep abreast of the vast changes and practical implications.

Some material on the internet is published for an adult audience and can include graphic violence and adult content, including pornography, information on weapons, crime and racism. With increased accessibility to the internet comes the need to educate children and young people about the benefits, risks and responsibilities of using information technology and how to keep themselves safe.

Safeguarding children and young people in the digital world emphasises the need to understand and use new technologies in a positive way. Internet safety is less about restriction and more about education about the risks as well as the benefits, so we can support children and young people to feel confident online. We can also support children and young people to develop safer online behaviours.

We know that technologies, such as social networking websites and mobile phones can be misused by those who are intent on harming children or young people. Children and young people can also place themselves at risk and be vulnerable to abuse. When communicating via the internet and mobile phones, young people tend to become less wary and talk about things more openly than they might when communicating with someone face to face. This can leave children and young people open to other areas of abuse such as cyberbullying.

What is cyberbullying?

'The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.' www.safenetwork.org.uk

Cyberbullying is a type of aggression such as sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices. Therefore it is important that all adults are aware of the potential dangers to children and young people and are able to prevent them from being harmed.

It is not only adults who may harm children and young people online. Some young people use technology to harm other children. This can be because they are able to create their own content via mobile phones and social networking sites. Some young people create their own illegal and inappropriate material, sometimes unwittingly, which puts themselves and others at risk.

[See Resource 5.4 - Guidelines on Using Mobile Phone, E-mail, Social Media and Apps](#)

[See Resource 5.5 - Guidelines on Taking Photographs](#)

5.8 The Code outlines sanctions in the case of staff and volunteers breaching the guidelines.

Staff and volunteers should understand that if they are unsure about their actions and feel they may have breached the code of behaviour, they should consult with their Line Manager. Also they should understand that a breach is a serious issue that will be investigated.

The code of behaviour should outline clear sanctions that would be applied in the event that the code of behaviour is breached. This may include additional training and supervision, disciplinary action, or the staff member being permanently removed, or the volunteer being asked to leave. If the breach constitutes harm/risk of harm, then referral to Social Services, police and the Disclosure and Barring Service could be appropriate.

5.9 The Code is tailored to organisational activities or services.

Organisations must ensure that in developing their code of behaviour for staff and volunteers, it is tailored to the specific activities and services of the organisation as well as the job or roles of staff and volunteers. Ideally everyone whom the code of behaviour applies to should be actively consulted about what should be contained within it and how it should be implemented. This would be a useful training tool at induction, where each element is explained and discussed with new staff and volunteers. It can also be used as a framework for discussion in support and supervision sessions, and ongoing training.

Resource 5.1 Code of Behaviour - some guidelines

Positive behaviours are encouraged and may include:

- being supportive, approachable and reassuring;
- showing respect, patience and treating children and young people as individuals;
- being respectful of a young person's right to privacy;
- treating and valuing children and young people as individuals;
- being consistent, fair and equitable with all children and young people;
- being supportive in a manner appropriate to age and stage of development.

It may sometimes be necessary for your staff and volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or are children with additional needs. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed, as soon as reasonably possible. In such situations, it is important that you ensure that all staff are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

Organisations can reduce abusive situations for children and young people, and help protect staff and volunteers from false accusations by ensuring everyone is aware of behaviours to be avoided which may include:

- spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child or young person away from others;
- taking children or young people alone in car journeys, however short;
- taking children or young people to your home;
- ensuring that any time spent with children and young people takes place in as open a setting as possible.

When it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge within the organisation and/or the child or young person's parent.

There are examples of behaviour which are unacceptable and will never be permitted. These unacceptable behaviours may include:

- engaging in rough physical games including horseplay - apart from structured sports activities;
- engaging in sexually provocative or inappropriate games;
- allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form;
- allowing children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun;
- letting allegations a child or young person makes go unchallenged or unrecorded;
- doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves;
- promising to keep secrets.

[Go back to Section 5.3](#)

Resource 5.2 Self Protection – Keepsafe Code

'Kidscape', the campaign for children's safety, was founded in 1984 to enable children and young people to learn about personal safety. With the help of parents, teachers, police and other adults, children and young people are taught ways to deal with bullies and approaches by strangers and even known adults who may try to abuse them. They have developed a Keepsafe Code.

1. Hugs

Hugs and kisses are nice, especially from people we like. Even hugs and kisses that feel good and that you like should never be kept secret.

2. Body

Your body belongs to you and not to anyone else. This means all of your body. If anyone harms you or tries to touch your body in a way which confuses or frightens you, say "No!", if possible, and tell someone.

3. No

If anyone other than you, even someone you know, tries to touch you in a way you don't like or that confuses you, or which they say is supposed to be a secret, say "No!" in a very loud voice.

4. Run or get away

Don't talk to anyone you don't know when you are alone, or just with other children. You don't have to be rude, just pretend you didn't hear and keep going. If a stranger, or a bully, or even someone you know tries to harm you, get away and get help. Make sure you always go towards other people or to a shop if you can.

5. Yell

Wherever you are, it is alright to yell if someone is trying to hurt you. Practice yelling as loud as you can in a big, deep voice by taking a deep breath and letting the yell come from your stomach, not from your throat.

6. Tell

Tell a grown up you trust if you are worried or frightened. If the first grown up you tell doesn't believe or help you, keep telling until someone does. It might not be easy, but even if something has already happened that you have never told before, try to tell now. Who could you tell?

7. Secrets

Secrets such as a surprise birthday parties are fun. But some secrets are not good and should never be kept. No bully should make you keep the bullying a secret and no-one should ask you to keep a kiss, hug or touch secret. If anyone does, even if you know that person, tell a grown up you trust.

8. Bribes

Don't accept money or sweets or a gift from anyone without first checking with your parents. Most of the time it will be alright, like when you get a present for your birthday from your grandma. But some people try to trick children into doing something by giving them sweets or money. This is called a bribe – **don't ever take one!**

Remember, it is possible that you might have to do what a bully or older person tells you, so that you can keep yourself safe. Don't feel bad if that happens because the most important thing for you is to be safe.

9. Code

Have a code word or sign with your parents or guardians, which only they and you know. If they need to send someone to collect you, they can give that person the code. **Don't tell the code to anyone else.**

[Go back to Section 5.3](#)

Resource 5.3 Developing an Anti-Bullying Policy

Kidscape is committed to keeping children safe by working to prevent their abuse and exploitation, and offers unique and innovative anti-bullying programmes. Kidscape has produced a sample anti-bullying policy for schools. This provides a useful template for organisations to devise their own anti-bullying policy. It covers the following areas:

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our group. If bullying does occur, all children should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the leader.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures);
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- **Cyber/online** - all areas of internet, such as email and social media misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- Management committee, leaders children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Management committee and leaders should know what the policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All children and parents should know what the policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a group we take bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child, for example:

- is frightened of attending the group;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing".

Prevention

We will use Kidscape methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing and signing a group code of behaviour;
- making up role-plays (or using Kidscape role-plays);
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

© Kidscape

For a full copy of the Kidscape Sample Anti-Bullying Policy for Schools or for further support, links and advice, visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk

[Go back to Section 5.4](#)

Resource 5.4 Guidelines on Using Mobile Phone, E-mail, Social Media and Apps

Organisations should support staff and volunteers to recognise online safety risks for all internet users, and the need for them to protect their own privacy. It is vital that organisations develop guidelines on what is appropriate in terms of mobile phone and internet contact with the children and young people they are working with in order to ensure clarity and understanding. Guidelines will vary from organisation to organisation and depend on the nature of the activities, but consideration should be given to the following aspects of good practice:

- Staff and volunteers may be communicating online about their work and it is important to realise that this contact may include children and young people. Organisations must consider the most appropriate method of communication, and assess the risks involved. Measures must be put in place to reduce any risks identified.
- Organisations should include a definition of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour online when representing the organisation.
- Communication (via text, calls, email, social networking sites, apps) must be approved by the organisation itself; no staff member or volunteer should contact a child or young person without prior approval from their Line Manager/Volunteer Coordinator.
- All communication with children and young people, including online must only take place with prior written consent from their parents. Some organisations ask for consent from the young person themselves if they are 16 years+. It is recommended that parents should give consent alongside the child/young person in these circumstances.
- Parents should be fully informed of the method of communication, the purpose of the contact, who will be involved, and practical things such as when the communication will take place.
- Staff/volunteers should use their work account/number for any communication and not their personal ones. Work devices should also be used where possible.
- Organisations should be creative about how they communicate. Where possible, staff and volunteers should consider communicating with a group of children and young people, rather than one to one interaction.
- If using a video platform, organisations must familiarize themselves with the platform settings and put safety measures in places. For example, some platforms allow a meeting ID and passcode to be issued and allow a waiting room function to be enabled. Children and young people should only be allowed to join the session after the host has joined, and the host should only admit those invited. If cameras need to be switched on for the session, organisations should consider the use of virtual backgrounds so that all those involved can keep their environment private. Other settings which should be considered in advance are the audio, chat and screen share settings. For example, it may be necessary to mute participants on arrival in order that the ground rules are covered; participants should be clear on who has permission to share their screen and what they are permitted to share; and if necessary, the chat can be set to be viewed by the host only. If the children and young people are going to be assigned to smaller working groups during the online session, organisations need to ensure adequate supervision of the groups.
- Screenshots, photographs or recordings of video calls should not be taken unless prior written consent has been obtained from parents. When obtaining consent organisations need to be

clear with parents what the screenshot/photograph/recording will be used for, and where it will be shared.

- If using a video platform, staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with the function for removing participants. They should also report users through the platform if they have acted inappropriately.
- Staff and volunteers should not send/receive private calls or texts while supervising children and young people. Anything which compromises the ability of staff and volunteers to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision of children and young people should be avoided. A blanket ban is not necessary as mobiles may obviously be useful in emergency situations.
- Staff and volunteers should never give out their personal phone numbers to children and young people they are working with or befriend them on social networking sites.
- Most social networking sites have a minimum joining age. Organisations should be aware of this and if a child or young person under the minimum age attempts to contact the organisation or add the organisation as a 'friend' through this method, the child's parent should be notified.

Go back to Section 5.7

Resource 5.5 Guidelines on Taking Photographs

Planning

Establish the type of images that appropriately represent the organisation for the web and other media. Think about the level of consideration you give to the use of images of young people in other publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images for the newsletter or magazine. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children and young people used on the website.

Rules to Remember

- If the child/young person is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child/young person.
- Ask for the young person's permission to use their image (16+) e.g. Consent Form.
- Ask for parental consent to use an image of a child/young person e.g. Parental Consent Form.
- Only use images of children and young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. There are clearly some sports activities, for example, swimming, gymnastics and athletics when the risk of potential misuse is much greater than for other activities. With these, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. So, for example, shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or if poolside, waist or shoulder up.
- Create a recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to children and young people. Follow your safeguarding children and young people reporting procedures, ensuring both your Designated Officer and Social Services and/or police are informed.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times.
- Inform children, young people and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs.
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one to one photo sessions at events.
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child/young person's home.
- If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of your expectations.
- Adults should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment.
- Children, young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the leader.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser or leader and recorded in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern.

Sample Consent Form for the Use of Photographs or Video

(Name of organisation) _____

recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all children and young people. In accordance with our safeguarding children and young people policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

(Name of organisation) _____

will follow the guidance for the use of photographs, a copy of which is available from (insert name). (Name of organisation) will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately, you should inform (insert relevant contact name and number) immediately.

I (parent /carer) _____

consent to

(Name of organisation) _____

photographing or videoing

(Insert name of child) _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

I (insert name of child) _____

consent to

(Name of organisation) _____

photographing or videoing my involvement in

(Activity) _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Based on a briefing paper originally created by Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

[Go back to Section 5.7](#)

Section

6

The organisation has written guidelines that outline how relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, young people, staff, volunteers and other agencies.

Standard 6

The organisation has written guidelines that outline how relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, young people, staff, volunteers and other agencies.

Criteria:

1. Appropriate information is gathered about children and young people attending activities.
2. The policy outlines how information is shared with children, young people and parents.
3. Consent forms are sought for all activities from those with parental responsibility.
4. There is a procedure in place for children, young people and parents to share concerns.
5. There is a complaints/grievance procedure in place and this is communicated appropriately to children, young people, parents, volunteers and staff.
6. The policy informs staff and volunteers what written records are kept and how they should be stored, accessed and disposed of.
7. There is a clear policy on confidentiality and how information is shared.

Introduction

Having a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness in an organisation demonstrates that there is nothing to hide in terms of safeguarding practice. It is important that general written information about the organisation and the services/activities provided are shared with everyone connected with the organisation, including staff, volunteers, children, young people, and parents. Everyone should be made aware of the organisation's policies and procedures for safeguarding children and young people.

6.1 Appropriate information is gathered about children and young people attending activities.

When children and young people attend activities provided by an organisation, it is crucial that relevant information is gathered to ensure their health, safety and welfare. Some basic personal details which an organisation will seek to gather will include:

- the individuals with parental responsibility (as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995) for the child;
- the name, address and contact number of parents as well as an emergency contact number;
- information about any additional needs, health issues or medication that the child or young person is using, contact with other professionals/agencies if relevant.

It is useful to have a standard registration form for this information. This should be completed before the child or young person attends the organisation, so that reasonable adjustments can be made if appropriate. Careful consideration needs to be given to the storage and access to this information. In line with data protection legislation parents have the right to know why information is required and how it will be used.

6.2 The policy outlines how information is shared with children and parents.

Information should only be shared within the organisation on a "need to know" basis. Managers will have access to information to check that records are being made and maintained appropriately. Everyone involved in the organisation should understand how and why information is kept, and the reason for obtaining the information should be child centred.

Children and young people also need to know and understand information about the organisation and its activities. They need to be aware of who they can talk to if they have a concern, as well as their rights and responsibilities within and outside the organisation. This needs to be communicated in a way that can be clearly understood and take into account the age and developmental stage of the child or young person.

There are a number of ways to help children and young people develop their communication skills. Thought should be given as to how children and young people can play as full a role as possible, depending on their age and understanding, in planning and decision making within an organisation. This might include:

- a suggestion box to give everyone in the organisation an opportunity to make suggestions about how things could be improved;
- a "consultative committee" involving one or two of the leaders and organisers in the group, meeting on a formal basis with children and young people to discuss matters affecting their joint interests, or if appropriate, include them on the management committee.

Parents are best placed to understand their children's lives and their emotional, intellectual, physical and cultural needs. Generally, the most effective way of ensuring that the needs of children and young people are met is by working in partnership with parents. They should be encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the organisation. The different degrees and levels to which this can be developed may range from the representation of parents on management committees, to actual participation in day to day activities.

It is good practice to provide an information leaflet outlining the activities, services, policies and procedures of the organisation and give this to parents before their child first participates in the organisations activities. This leaflet could also contain information for parents on the online presence of the organisation and if/how children and young people and parents can access the organisation online. Parents need to have relevant information on the activities their children are taking part in and have practical details, such as times and location of any off-site activities. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the organisation with relevant information, such as medical details or dietary requirements in order to keep children and young people safe. The safeguarding children and young people policy should outline how and when this information is shared and how it is kept up to date.

6.3 Consent forms are sought for all activities from those with parental responsibility.

Consent from parents should be gained for children and young people to participate in the regular activities that take place within the organisation. This consent must be provided by someone with parental responsibility for the child/young person. Parents should also give their written consent for their child(ren) to attend and where relevant to be engaged with the organisation online. Further consent should be sought for any off site, one off or residential activities. It can also be helpful to outline what expectations the organisation has of parents and children and young people, for example, about behaviour. This leaflet should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it remains up to date. Some organisations hold information meetings with parents and children/young people to inform them of what they do and how parents can become more involved.

6.4 There is a procedure in place for children and parents to share concerns.

It is good practice for organisations to give written information to children and their parents about who to contact if they are unhappy or concerned about anything involving the organisation and highlight the organisation's complaints procedure. This should encourage every child, young person or parent to contact someone in the organisation about anything that concerns them. If they are not satisfied with the response, then it is important that they also know who they can approach outside the organisation for help and guidance. This could include signposting on to Social Services.

6.5 There is a complaints/grievance procedure in place and this is communicated appropriately to children, young people, parents, volunteers and staff.

Organisations should have procedures in place to ensure a speedy and effective response to complaints. A complaint may arise from parents, children, young people, volunteers or external agencies. The first stage in any procedure should aim to resolve the issue informally through dialogue

with the parties involved, if that is appropriate. If the issue cannot be dealt with and/or resolved in this way and at this stage, then it is important that the organisation has written procedures to follow.

In a complaints procedure the following issues should be addressed:

- Who is the first point of contact for the complaint? There should be a named alternative in case the first point of contact is unavailable or is the subject of the complaint;
- If the complaint cannot be resolved at the first stage, how will it be dealt with subsequently? It is usual, but not always necessary, to have a number of stages in a complaints procedure. The aim is to provide a clear and fair process;
- It should be clearly stated where the final decision lies, and whether there is an option to appeal against a final decision;
- Specify realistic time limits for each stage: complaints should be dealt with promptly and the time frame identified within the policy.

Everyone involved, the complainant and the subject(s) of the complaint, should be given the opportunity to represent their side of the case. This may be a child, young person, staff member, volunteer or parent. All concerned should be very clear about:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Any previous incidents in relation to this child, staff member or volunteer;
- Any remedial action to be taken, e.g. an apology;
- Any new behaviour expected;
- What will happen if the agreed arrangements are not adhered to.

Clear and accurate records of discussions and information shared at each stage of the complaints procedure should be made. All information relating to the complaint should be treated as confidential and stored in a secure location. If there is a complaint in relation to a particularly serious incident, where abuse is suspected, then the reporting procedure takes precedence over the complaints procedure and it may ultimately be necessary to make a referral to statutory agencies.

In the case of staff, there should be a grievance procedure in place which is shared with them at induction, outlining the steps to be taken if they feel their complaint is not taken seriously. A clear point of contact needs to be identified to whom staff could take their grievance. A second deputy/alternative point of contact would be good practice, in case the first is unavailable or the grievance is about them. All staff should feel confident and supported in bringing forward a grievance within the organisation. This should also link into the reporting and whistleblowing procedures.

6.6 The policy informs staff and volunteers what written records are kept and how they should be stored, accessed and disposed of.

All organisations need to ensure that they have essential personal details of all children and young people involved with the organisation. Staff and volunteers also need to be equally clear in the safe handling of personal information.

Under the regulation, businesses that store and process personal data must do so lawfully, transparently, for a specific purpose and for no longer than necessary.

The safeguarding children and young people policy should provide details for staff and volunteers on the following aspects of information handling:

- What personal information is needed about children and young people and the purpose for gathering this;
- How this information should be securely stored;
- Who can have access to the information and the procedure for gaining access to it;
- How long information should be kept;
- With whom information should be shared;
- How and when records will be disposed of.

All written records should be stored in a secure location and accessed by authorised personnel only. Electronic records held on computers should also be appropriately secured by way of password protection and restricted access.

Information should be disposed of within timescales that are in keeping with the requirements of The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

[See Resource 6.1 – Data Protection Principles](#)

6.7 There is a clear policy on confidentiality and how information is shared.

The organisation should have a clear statement about confidentiality and information sharing. This statement will cover much broader issues than safeguarding children and young people and it is important that staff and volunteers in the organisation know that personal and sensitive details about the lives of children and young people and their families should not be the subject of gossip. They should also know that information cannot be passed on to others without good cause or reason and we all have a fundamental right to privacy of information and confidentiality.

Information of a confidential nature should only be communicated on a need-to-know basis and consideration given as to the need to share it and any associated risks. It should therefore be ensured that the confidentiality policy has written guidance on the storage and sharing and disposal of information.

[See Resource 6.2 – Sample Confidentiality Statement](#)

Resource 6.1 Six Principles for Processing of Personal Data

Principles for Processing of Personal Data

Data protection principles underpin the new GDPR. These principles set out obligations for businesses and organisations that collect, process and store individuals' personal data. These principles relate to:

1. Lawfulness, fairness and transparency - you must process personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
2. Purpose limitation - you must only collect personal data for a specific, explicit and legitimate purpose. You must clearly state what this purpose is, and only collect data for as long as necessary to complete that purpose.
3. Data minimisation - you must ensure that personal data you process is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to your processing purpose.
4. Accuracy - you must take every reasonable step to update or remove data that is inaccurate or incomplete. Individuals have the right to request that you erase or rectify erroneous data that relates to them, and you must do so within a month.
5. Storage limitation - You must delete personal data when you no longer need it. The timescales in most cases aren't set. They will depend on your business' circumstances and the reasons why you collect this data.
6. Integrity and confidentiality - You must keep personal data safe and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

GDPR provides the following rights for individuals:

1. The right to be informed – fair processing information, transparency over how their data will be used, e.g. privacy statement.
2. The right of access – access to personal data and how it is being used and processed, e.g. subject access request.
3. The right to rectification – personal data can be rectified if inaccurate or incomplete. This should be rectified within one month of being advised and third parties may also need advised if data has been shared.
4. The right to erasure – the right to request personal data be deleted, except where there is a compelling reason for continued processing, e.g. legal obligation, public interest, statistical analysis.
5. The right to restrict processing – to permit the storage of personal data, but block or restrict processing, e.g. when accuracy of data is contested. Third parties may also need advised if data has been shared.
6. The right to data portability – individuals can obtain and reuse their personal data across different services without hindrance to usability.
7. The right to object – objection to direct marketing, processing for legitimate reasons, e.g. public interest, statistical research.
8. Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling – can only be carried out when: fulfilling a contract with the individual, authorised by law or the individual has given consent.

Many organisations hold information about their volunteers in paper and computer-based records i.e. personal details, equality monitoring data. Compliance with the legal obligations in respect of the handling of personal data is the responsibility of the 'data controller'. That is the title given to the person (individual, company or organisation) who decides why personal data is held and the way in which such data is dealt

with. A Privacy Policy outlining how you will hold volunteers' information is an important document to be shared with volunteers. An important concept to consider is consent.

[Go back to Section 6.6](#)

Resource 6.2 Sample Confidentiality Statement**Confidentiality Statement**

In (name of organisation) _____

we work very closely with children, young people, their families and outside agencies and there is a possibility that we will come into contact with confidential or sensitive information.

Confidential information is information which is not lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source. In this organisation it is our intention to respect the privacy of children and young people and their parents. We aim to ensure that all parents can share information with us in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their child.

This organisation will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents will have ready access to the records of their own child/children, but will not have access to information about any other child;
- Information given by parents to staff and volunteers will not be passed on to other adults without permission, except with regard to a safeguarding concern;
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep – for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or family, or any discussions with parents/carers on sensitive matters;
- We keep all records securely.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____

[Go back to Section 6.7](#)

Section

7

The organisation has written guidelines to ensure the general safety and effective management of activities.

Standard 7

The organisation has written guidelines to ensure the general safety and effective management of activities.

Criteria:

- 1.** All staff and volunteers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity.
- 2.** There are procedures for recording and reporting accidents, incidents and near misses.
- 3.** There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies.
- 4.** There are regular fire drills and these are recorded.
- 5.** Staff and volunteers have quick access to emergency telephone numbers.
- 6.** All staff and volunteers are qualified and competent in their role.
- 7.** There is a system for ensuring the safety of equipment.
- 8.** There are clear ratios for supervision of children and young people at various activities.
- 9.** Risk assessments are carried out for all activities, including day trips and/or residential.
- 10.** Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose.
- 11.** There is agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a residential activity.
- 12.** There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residential.

Introduction

Good general management and efficient and effective administration practices will help to ensure the smooth and responsible running of an organisation's activities. Activities should be planned so that they are safely managed and take into account the nature of the activity and the age range and ability or additional needs of the participants.

Children and young people can suffer harm in all sorts of ways. Therefore it is important that activities within the organisation are planned and managed so that opportunities for children and young people to suffer harm are minimised.

[See Resource 7.1 – Sample Health and Safety Checklist](#)

7.1 All staff and volunteers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity.

As part of the overall safe management of activities all staff and volunteers need to be aware who the appointed first aid person for each activity is. The appointed first aid person should have adequate recognised training which is updated when relevant.

7.2 There are procedures for recording and reporting accidents, incidents and near misses.

The organisation should have procedures for recording and reporting accidents, incidents and near misses. These usually take the form of an accident book where any accident involving children and young people when participating in activities is recorded. The record can then be shown to parents and signed by them to ensure they are fully aware of the nature of the accident and how it was dealt with. Incident forms can be used in the same way, to document and ensure that all relevant people are aware of and acknowledge an incident. An incident may be in relation to a disagreement between children or with staff and volunteers, or the need to deal with unacceptable behaviour. A near miss should also be recorded as an indication of potential risk.

Very often there can be valuable learning from reviewing any accidents, incidents or near misses within an organisation as they may indicate risks which need to be addressed or broader organisational management issues. Organisations should ensure they have a procedure to report these so any action can be taken.

All of these forms should be stored in compliance with Data Protection Principles and managed by a senior member of the organisation, in line with procedures for storing and sharing information.

[See Resource 7.2 – Sample Accident/Incident/Near Miss Record Form](#)

7.3 There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies.

When conducting any activity within the organisation, it is good practice to have written procedures for dealing with emergencies. Staff and volunteers need to be aware of emergency procedures, including knowledge of the location of emergency exits and provision for evacuating those who may have mobility difficulties or other additional needs. Emergency alerts should also have provision for those who have sensory impairments, such as flashing lights to alert those who have a hearing difficulty. Organisations should consider accessing training for relevant staff and volunteers in recognised safe moving and handling techniques, where required.

7.4 There are regular fire drills and these are recorded.

Regular fire drills should be carried out, recorded and kept on file by a relevant staff member or volunteer. The drills should reflect different locations of the potential outbreak of fire, so that staff, volunteers, children and young people are as prepared as they can be for the emergency and have rehearsed fire avoidance. This should minimise the potential for panic if a real emergency occurs.

7.5 Staff and volunteers have quick access to emergency telephone numbers.

An important factor in dealing effectively with an emergency is contacting the relevant emergency services quickly. Staff and volunteers should have quick and easy access to these telephone numbers, displayed clearly at a central location in the organisation where relevant or stored in the worker's mobile phone. An appointed staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility for updating these numbers on a regular basis to ensure accuracy.

7.6 All staff and volunteers are qualified and competent in their role.

Staff and volunteers should be competent to undertake the activities they are involved in. Careful recruitment, selection, induction, training, codes of behaviour and support and supervision will assist in ensuring this. Where activities have to be led by qualified leaders, such as specialist activities e.g. swimming instruction, qualifications should be up to date and verifiable.

7.7 There is a system for ensuring the safety of equipment.

Equipment should be safe and only used for the purpose it was intended. It should be checked regularly by someone with the relevant competency. Children and young people should be made aware of the safe use of equipment to minimise misuse where harm could occur.

7.8 There are clear ratios for the supervision of children and young people at various activities.

Having clearly defined supervision arrangements will not only minimise the occurrence of accidents but will also contribute to the protection of children and young people from intentional harm.

It is good practice for an organisation involving children and young people to have an equal opportunities policy. This will outline the commitment to inclusion of children and young people with additional needs. The policy will promote an equitable organisational approach to all children and young people.

For inclusion to be effective we need a fundamental belief that children and young people with additional needs have the same rights as anyone using the organisation's services and these rights are promoted rigorously.

On a practical level, organisations should strive to make their premises and activities as accessible as possible to all service users. Staff and volunteers should have appropriate and adequate training to engage safely and effectively with all children and young people.

[See Resource 7.3 – Supervision of Children and Young People on Day Trips](#)

[See Resource 7.4 – Including Children with Additional Needs](#)

7.9 Risk assessments are carried out for all activities including day trips and/or residentials.

An important factor in ensuring the general safety of activities is risk assessment. There are many recognised methods to risk assess, so it is important that the organisation chooses one that suits its needs and is understood by all. Risk assessment can be undertaken by:

- Identifying the hazards, which are anything that could potentially cause harm;
- Identifying those who may be at risk;
- Assessment of the risks associated with the hazards;
- Additional safety and/or control measures that can be put into place to minimise the risks.

There may be a need to complete a further specific risk assessment when involving children and young people with additional needs to ensure their safe inclusion. There may also be additional considerations relating to day trips or residentials. It would be likely that day trips and residentials will encompass different activities than those usually experienced within the organisation. It is important to be prepared for this and record an appropriate risk assessment.

[See Resource 7.5 – Sample Risk Register](#)

[See Resource 7.6 – Sample Day Trip/Residential Planning Checklist](#)

7.10 Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose.

When it is necessary to use transport in activities that involve children and young people, stringent checks must be put in place to ensure both vehicle and driver are safe, and the vehicle is adequate for purpose. The driver must have the appropriate license and the vehicle must be roadworthy and have appropriate safety seats/seat belts for all travellers. If sourcing a transport provider external to the organisation, it is important to use a reputable transport provider who has adequate and up to date insurance. If staff, volunteers or parents are providing transport on behalf of the organisation, the same conditions should apply, and appropriate and adequate insurance secured.

7.11 There is agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a day trip or residential activity.

Prior to a day trip or residential, it is necessary to agree the procedures that will be followed, that is, whether the organisation's procedures should be followed or the residential setting's procedures. This should be communicated to all involved. The establishment of an overall code of behaviour for all those participating in a day trip or residential should be drawn up in consultation with staff, volunteers, children and young people, in advance of the visit. Accompanying staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents should be made fully aware of the code, including possible sanctions.

Also, the policies, procedures and guidelines that relate to the general safety and management of activities apply to day trips and residentials with some additional considerations:

- **Equal opportunities** – the organisation will need to consider how equality of opportunity is ensured on day trips and residentials for all children and young people including those with additional needs;

- **Welfare** – a leader should be designated to be responsible for welfare issues while on the trip, including access to sufficient trained first aiders. Health forms need to be completed indicating any medications group members are taking and when they have to be taken, all of these should be documented on the trip;
- **Emergency procedures** – ensuring that adequate first aid provision is available, and staff and volunteers are aware of all emergency procedures;
- **Procedures for reporting concerns** – there should be procedures in place for staff and volunteers to report any concerns they might have about a child or young person. It would be good practice for a Designated Officer to accompany staff and volunteers on the trip. This would mean that there would be a pivotal person available to receive and deal with concerns appropriately;
- **Procedures for dealing with challenging behaviour** should be established and circulated to all relevant staff and volunteers. Boundaries should also be made clear to children and young people in advance and possible realistic sanctions determined;
- **Agreement should be reached, prior to the visit**, in relation to issues such as mobile phone and internet use by children, young people and staff and volunteers. A consistent approach should be applied for the duration of the day trip or residential.

7.12 There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residentials.

As children and young people will be sleeping over on a residential, careful advance planning is required in relation to what the sleeping arrangements are going to be. Consideration needs to be given to adult: child ratios and gender balanced supervision arrangements by staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers should also be made aware of the organisation's policies regarding codes of behaviour, alcohol and drugs policies.

Resource 7.1 Sample Health and Safety Checklist

Accidents

- Is first aid available during activities?
- Is there an up-to-date first aid kit available both on the premises and activities away from the premises?
- Do leaders know who the first aider is and where they can be contacted?
- Are all accidents/incidents/near misses recorded? How are they recorded?
- Do leaders know where the nearest available telephone is?

Fire safety

- Do regular fire drills take place?
- Are fire notices displayed informing people what to do in case of a fire?
- Are fire appliances suitable and serviced regularly?
- Has the local Fire Officer visited the premises?

Accessibility

- Is there suitable access/egress and provision made for disabled people?

Recording and Consent

- Is a register kept of all those in attendance?
- Has a parental consent form and health form been completed for each child/young person?

Suitability/Competency of Workers

- Have appropriate AccessNI disclosure checks been carried out on staff and volunteers, where required?
- Have staff and volunteers been properly introduced to their work/volunteering, adequately supported and offered training?
- Do staff and volunteers know what to do if they have a concern about a child or young person?

Ratios

- Are adult: child ratios appropriate for the group and for the activity?

[Go back to Section 7: Introduction](#)

Resource 7.2 Sample Accident/Incident/Near Miss Record Form

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT/NEAR MISS

Please circle one of the above

REPORT FORM Ref No:

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-------|
| Name: <i>(person involved/injured)</i> | | Date: | Time: |
| <i>If more than one person has been involved please use separate forms for each person.</i> | | | |
| Status: Service User Employee Volunteer Visitor Other | | | |
| If Other, please specify: | | | |
| Details of Accident/Incident/Near Miss: <i>(Please include what happened prior, event details and what was done immediately/by whom? Please include a drawing if helpful and use extra sheets if necessary).</i> | | | |
| Details of injuries or damages and any first aid/medical treatment given: | | | |
| Name of person Reporting: | | | |
| Job Title: | | Date: | |

Manager Section

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Long Term Action Plan: <i>(What action is to be carried out to prevent the Accident/Incident/Near Miss happening again).</i> | |
| | |
| Is a risk assessment (or support plan) review required as a result of this Accident/Incident/Near Miss? | YES NO |
| Action to be carried out by: <i>(Name)</i> | By Date: |
| Line Manager Section Reviewed by: <i>(Name)</i> | Date: |
| RIDDOR ² Report confirmed by: <i>(Name)</i> | Date: |

[Go back to Section 7.2](#)

²The reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), place a legal duty on employers, self-employed people, people in control of premises to report work-related deaths, major injuries or over-three-day injuries, work related diseases and dangerous occurrences (near miss accidents).

Resource 7.3 Supervision of Children and Young People on Day Trips

Making arrangements to ensure the appropriate supervision of children and young people is one of the most effective ways to minimize any opportunities for children and young people to suffer harm of any kind whilst in your care. The following guidelines should be considered when an organisation plans any kind of 'away from home' activity including visits, trips and outings.

Planning Activities

- The organisers of any trips should plan and prepare a detailed programme of activities for the children and young people involved in the project, ensuring that the programme is suitable for the age and stage of development of those participating.
- Organisers are responsible for the welfare and safety of the children and young people for the whole time they are away from home.
- Children and young people should not be left to their own devices, for example, in a town for the evening or unaccompanied shopping expeditions.
- All children and young people should be adequately supervised and engaged in suitable activities at all times.
- In circumstances when planned activities are disrupted for example unforeseen bad weather requiring changes to the planned programme, organisers should have a number of alternative activities planned.
- Organisers should obtain, in writing, parental consent for each child and young person to join an organised trip.
- Parents should be given full information about the event, including details of the programme, the activities in which the children and young people will be engaged and the supervision ratios of staff and volunteers to children and young people.

Supervision of Children and Young People

- Leaders in charge must be satisfied that the staff and volunteers accompanying children and young people are fully competent to do so.
- Children and young people must be supervised at all times.
- Children and young people must not be left unsupervised at any time.
- Staff and volunteers should know at all times where the children and young people are and what they are doing.
- Any activity which could be considered risky or which involves the use of potentially dangerous equipment should have constant adult supervision.
- Children and young people will be safer if supervised by two or more adults.
- Dangerous behaviour by children and young people should not be tolerated.

Adult: Child Ratios

Levels of supervision must be adequate whether activities are taking place at the organisation's venue or away from home. When deciding how many adults are required to ensure robust and consistent supervision of children and young people, the organisation must consider a range practical matters and implement adult: child supervision ratios accordingly.

Matters to be considered will include:

- The number, gender and age of participants in the group;
- The nature of the venue;

- The abilities within the group and their behaviour;
- Any special medical needs the children and young people may have;
- Specialist equipment needed for the programme of activities;
- The nature of activities to be undertaken and their duration. If the activity is one of a hazardous nature, e.g. mountain climbing, then there are specific ratios of adults to children, which must be adhered to and which will require higher levels of adult to child supervision. This can be verified by contacting relevant sporting associations or the Education Youth Service;
- The competence and experience of the staff and volunteers involved;
- It is important that each individual supervisor knows and understands their role and responsibilities;
- It is recommended that no visit should be undertaken without a minimum of two adults in attendance, one of whom must be a staff member. Bus drivers should not be considered as supervisors;
- It is for the leader in charge to exercise professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision which is required, taking into account these guidelines;
- Where a party consists of children and young people from different genders, it is best practice to have gender balanced supervision.

There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. We recommend that at least two adults should be present when working with or supervising children and young people.

Standard recommended ratios are:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Age 0-2 years | 1 adult to 3 children |
| Age 2-3 years | 1 adult to 4 children |
| Age 4-8 years | 1 adult to 6 children |
| Age 9-12 years | 1 adult to 8 children |
| Age 13-18 years | 1 adult to 10 children |

- Where an activity involves swimming and the children are under eight years of age then the ratio must be one adult to one child;
- There should be one additional staff member for every 10 extra children and young people;
- The ratio of staff and volunteers to children and young people with additional needs is dependent on the needs of the individual child or young person.

When deciding on the number of adults required to provide appropriate supervision of children and young people, it is important that the organisation is aware that these ratios are guidelines only and minimum recommended ratios. In certain situations it will be necessary to increase the minimum ratios, for example if a risk assessment identifies behaviour as a potential issue for the group or event, the number of supervising adults will need to be higher. Every effort should be made to achieve the best level of supervision of children and young people at all times.

[Go back to Section 7.8](#)

Resource 7.4 Including Children with Additional Needs

The following points should be considered in order to successfully include children with disabilities in your organisation:

- Work in partnership with the child, parents and any professionals to establish how the child can be included;
- Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child or young person into the scheme;
- Make reasonable adjustments – e.g. if your group has a requirement for children to be toilet trained, can this be waived in the case of a child who is not?;
- Be interested in the child – build rapport;
- Gather some information about the child's impairment but remember you are working with a child/young person and not a condition;
- If the child/young person has a communication impairment, acquiring some key skills in the child/young person's communication method will be useful e.g. it is quite easy to learn some simple signs;
- Some disability specific training may be useful or required – e.g. on autism or epilepsy;
- Risk assessments may be necessary to ensure the safety of some children/young people with additional needs;
- Higher staff ratios may be required if the child/young person has additional needs or behavioural problems;
- Written consent will be required if the child needs intimate care – e.g. help with toileting;
- Be open in explaining your policy of inclusion to all children/young people;
- Use existing policies if bullying occurs;
- Help parents of non-disabled children and young people understand your organisation's commitment to inclusion.

Adapted from the Buskers Guide to Inclusion

[Go back to Section 7.8](#)

Resource 7.5 Sample Risk Register

| Identify MAIN RISKS to people, property and/or organisation's work and reputation | Evaluate the seriousness of these risks | | Assessed Level of Risk | Risk Owner | How can you manage these risks | | | | Action Completed (date) | By Whom | Review |
|--|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--|
| | Likelihood of it happening | Impact of it happening | Combination of likelihood and impact | | Stop the Activity | Reduce the Risk | Finance the Risk | Transfer the Liability | | | How and when will you review the risks in this area? |
| | Unlikely Possible Likely | Minor Moderate Major | Low Medium High | | Action Needed | Action Needed | Action Needed | Action Needed | | | |
| A) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B) | | | | | | | | | | | |

Resource 7.6 Sample Day Trip/Residential Planning Checklist

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Group/Organisation: | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Date of visit: | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| From: | To: | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Venue: | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Group Leader: | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| | Yes | No |
| The nature of the visit has been established | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The target group has been identified | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All the relevant information regarding the proposed visit has been resented to management e.g. destination, itinerary, timescales etc | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Management has approved the proposed visit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A risk assessment has been undertaken for all aspects of the visit and appropriate control measures have been put in place and recorded: | | |
| • hazards have been identified; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • people who may be at risk have been identified; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • evaluation of the risk has been undertaken; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • additional safety and/or control measures have been established; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • information has been disseminated to all relevant persons and appropriate records maintained. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Where residual risks (inherent in all visits) still prevail an appropriate contingency/emergency plan has been put in place and disseminated to all relevant persons | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The number of leaders in attendance has been agreed: | | |
| • a group leader has been identified; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • accompanying staff/volunteers have been identified; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Appropriate AccessNI checks have been undertaken. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Leaders are made fully aware of: | | |
| • their roles and responsibilities; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • the standard of conduct required of them during the visits. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Young people and parent/guardians have been informed/briefed and understand the implications of their participation in the visit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parents/guardians have given written consent for their child to participate in the visit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| All relevant information (medical, dietary and contact details) pertaining to the young people participating in the visit has been obtained, recorded and appropriate action taken where necessary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The transport arrangements for the group are appropriate for the nature/type of journey(s) planned | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Adequate insurance is in place to cover all aspects of the visit, including transport | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Where a residential visit is planned, the overnight accommodation has been assessed as appropriate in terms of: | | |
| • its suitability for the group; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • its compatibility with the objectives of the visit; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • safeguarding reporting procedures. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Where the visit involves outdoor or adventurous activities, management and the group leader are satisfied that: | | |
| • appropriate management structures and systems are in place in relation to safeguarding and health and safety; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • staff are competent to provide the activities; | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • all relevant checks have been undertaken to ensure the above are in place. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Management has approved the operational arrangements for the visit(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employing authority approval obtained (where appropriate) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Signed: | | |
| Group leader: | | |
| Head of the organisation: | | |
| Date: | | |

Adapted from the Educational Visits Policy, Practice and Procedures – Interboard Document

[Go back to Section 7.9](#)

Appendix 1

Useful Websites

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| NI Anti Bullying Forum (NIABF) | www.niabf.org.uk |
| Childnet International | www.childnet-int.org |
| Child Exploitation Online Protection | www.ceop.police.uk |
| NSPCC | www.nspcc.org.uk/ |
| Barnardos | www.barnardos.org.uk/ |
| The Equality Commission NI | www.equalityni.org |
| Disability Action | www.disabilityaction.org |
| UK Safer Internet Centre | www.saferinternet.org.uk |
| Safe Network | www.safenetwork.org.uk |
| Education Youth Service | www.eani.org.uk/about-us/youth-service/ |
| Safeguarding Board for NI | https://www.safeguardingni.org/ |
| Department of Health | http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/ |
| Ineqe Safeguarding Group | https://ineqe.com/ |

Appendix 2

Organisational Self Assessment Checklist

This Organisational Self Assessment Checklist is a tool designed to help your organisation assess where it is in relation to the criteria contained within each standard in **Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care**.

The Checklist will help you see which criteria your organisation is already meeting and which criteria are not currently being met and need attention i.e. where policies, procedures and guidelines need to be developed.

When each of the criteria are met, the standard is met.

Standard 1 – There is a written policy on the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. There is a written policy statement of the organisation’s intention to keep children and young people safe from harm. | | | | | | |
| 2. There is an outline of the procedures and guidelines that the organisation will implement to meet this commitment, in line with the minimum standards. | | | | | | |
| 3. The safeguarding children and young people policy is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and guidelines. | | | | | | |
| 4. The person(s) with responsibility for approval of the policy is named. | | | | | | |
| 5. The person(s) with responsibility for implementing and reviewing the policy is named. | | | | | | |
| 6. There is reference to a review of the policy, at least once every 3 years. | | | | | | |
| 7. The policy outlines how all involved in the organisation are informed about the policy, including children, young people, parents, staff/volunteers and management committee members. | | | | | | |

Standard 2 – The organisation consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|---|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers, and personnel / volunteer specification outlining key skills and abilities required. | | | | | | |
| 2. There is an open recruitment process. | | | | | | |
| 3. There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering. | | | | | | |
| 4. There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions which are not protected, and investigations, if any. | | | | | | |
| 5. A consent form for an AccessNI check is completed, if required. | | | | | | |
| 6. There is an interview process suitable to the post/role and task. | | | | | | |
| 7. Written references are sought (and followed up orally when necessary). | | | | | | |
| 8. Where required, an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out. | | | | | | |
| 9. The post is approved by management. | | | | | | |

Standard 3 – There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. There is an induction process for staff and volunteers. | | | | | | |
| 2. There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers. | | | | | | |
| 3. Relevant training is provided, appropriate to the post/role. | | | | | | |
| 4. There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role. | | | | | | |
| 5. There is an annual appraisal for staff and review for volunteers. | | | | | | |
| 6. Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision, and annual appraisals/reviews. | | | | | | |

Standard 4 – The organisation has clearly defined procedures for raising awareness of, responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|---|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. The policy outlines what constitutes abuse of children and young people and who can abuse. | | | | | | |
| 2. There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to, record and report safeguarding children and young people concerns. | | | | | | |
| 3. There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff and volunteers to ensure they are familiar with it. | | | | | | |
| 4. There is a named Designated Officer and Deputy Designated Officer who have responsibility for dealing with safeguarding children and young people concerns which come to light within the organisation. | | | | | | |
| 5. There is a procedure for the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer to report safeguarding children and young people concerns to the appropriate authorities. | | | | | | |
| 6. There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to and report allegations made against staff and volunteers. | | | | | | |
| 7. There is guidance on what is meant by confidentiality, and its limitations in relation to responding to safeguarding children and young people concerns, parents, staff/volunteers and management committee members. | | | | | | |
| 8. There is a whistleblowing policy and procedure. | | | | | | |

Standard 5 – There is a written Code of Behaviour which outlines the behaviour expected of all involved in the organisation.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. The Code of Behaviour contains positive statements about how staff and volunteers are expected to behave towards children and young people. | | | | | | |
| 2. The Code outlines behaviours to be avoided. | | | | | | |
| 3. The Code outlines unacceptable behaviours. | | | | | | |
| 4. The Code includes anti-bullying guidelines. | | | | | | |
| 5. The Code includes guidelines relating to physical contact. | | | | | | |
| 6. The Code includes guidelines relating to diversity and additional needs. | | | | | | |
| 7. The Code includes guidelines on the use of technology, including photography. | | | | | | |
| 8. The Code outlines sanctions in the case of staff and volunteers breaching the guidelines. | | | | | | |
| 9. The Code is tailored to organisational activities or services. | | | | | | |

Standard 6 – The organisation has written guidelines that outline how relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, young people, staff, volunteers and other agencies.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. Appropriate information is gathered about children and young people attending activities. | | | | | | |
| 2. The policy outlines how information is shared with children, young people and parents. | | | | | | |
| 3. Consent forms are sought for all activities from those with parental responsibility. | | | | | | |
| 4. There is a procedure in place for children, young people and parents to share concerns. | | | | | | |
| 5. There is a complaints/grievance procedure in place and this is communicated appropriately to children, young people, parents, volunteers and staff. | | | | | | |
| 6. The policy informs staff and volunteers what written records are kept and how they should be stored, accessed and disposed of. | | | | | | |
| 7. There is a clear policy on confidentiality and how information is shared. | | | | | | |

Standard 7 – The organisation has written guidelines to ensure the general safety and effective management of activities.

| Checklist | Supporting Evidence | Fully met? | If not fully met: action needed | | | Attained Date: |
|---|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | What? | By whom? | By when? | |
| 1. All staff and volunteers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity. | | | | | | |
| 2. There are procedures for recording and reporting accidents, incidents and near misses. | | | | | | |
| 3. There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies. | | | | | | |
| 4. There are regular fire drills and these are recorded. | | | | | | |
| 5. Staff and volunteers have quick access to emergency telephone numbers. | | | | | | |
| 6. All staff and volunteers are qualified and competent in their role. | | | | | | |
| 7. There is a system for ensuring the safety of equipment. | | | | | | |
| 8. There are clear ratios for supervision of children and young people at various activities. | | | | | | |
| 9. Risk assessments are carried out for all activities, including day trips and/or residentials. | | | | | | |
| 10. Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose. | | | | | | |
| 11. There is agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a residential activity. | | | | | | |
| 12. There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residentials. | | | | | | |

**KEEPING
SAFE**9



Volunteer Now

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