

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Policy Standards

A tool to help organisations working with both children and adults at risk to develop/review their policy and procedures against minimum standards of safeguarding practice



Safeguarding Children and Adults: Policy Checklist

Introduction

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering across Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now enhances recognition for the contribution volunteers make, provides access to opportunities and encourages people to volunteer. We provide training, information, guidance and support to volunteer-involving organisations on issues of good practice and policy regarding volunteering, volunteer management, volunteers and governance with The Our Duty to Care project (ODTC) providing training and information on the principles of good practice for safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk.

Through our promotion of standards of practice for safeguarding children and adults, we are conscious that there are similarities in good safeguarding practice within organisations, irrespective of the nature of the vulnerable group. However, we must remain mindful of the essential differences that exist between safeguarding children and safeguarding adults. There are many organisations that work with both children and adults at risk and the need for an all-encompassing safeguarding policy exists. This checklist has been devised with the aim of enabling these organisations to self-assess their safeguarding policy and procedures using one tool. It is intended that this document will be used in conjunction with the good practice guidance as outlined in both *Keeping Adults Safe: A Shared Responsibility* and *Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care*.

The checklist was developed by mapping the standards in *A Shared Responsibility* and *Our Duty to Care* and utilising the learning in both documents. This checklist contains nine safeguarding standards that are intended to be the minimum standards of practice in organisations that are working with all vulnerable groups and who wish to develop one overarching safeguarding policy.

Adherence to these standards will enable organisations to put mechanisms in place to prevent abuse from occurring and where it does occur, facilitate them to respond in an effective, appropriate and sensitive way.

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Standard 1 - The organisation has a safeguarding child and adults at risk policy supported by robust procedures and guidelines.

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/ Not met	Actions/Recommendations
1.1	There is a written policy statement of the organisation's intention to keep children and adults safe from harm.			
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.			
1.3	The safeguarding policy is supported by other organisational policies, procedures and guidelines aimed at promoting safe and healthy working practices.			
1.4	The policy is 'owned' at all levels within the organisation and the person(s) with responsibility for its approval, implementation and review is named.			
1.5	The policy, procedures and guidelines are subject to regular review; at least once every three years.			

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Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/ Not met	Actions/Recommendations
1.6 Everyone in the organisation is aware that the policy exists, what it aims to achieve and the steps that will be taken to achieve those aims.			

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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/ Not met	Actions/Recommendations
2.1	There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers and a personnel/volunteer specification outlining the key skills and abilities and qualifications, if any, required.			
2.2	There is an open recruitment process.			
2.3	There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering.			
2.4	There is a declaration form requesting information on previous convictions which are not protected, and investigations, if any.			
2.5	A consent form for an AccessNI disclosure check is completed, if required.			
2.6	There is an interview process appropriate to the post/role and task.			
2.7	Written references are sought (and followed up when necessary).			



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/ Not met	Actions/Recommendations
2.8	If a professional qualification is a requirement of the post, a registration check is made with the appropriate Professional Body.			
2.9	Where required, an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out.			
2.10	The post is approved by management.			

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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
3.1	There is an induction process for staff and volunteers.			
3.2	There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers.			
3.3	Relevant training is provided appropriate to the post/role.			
3.4	There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role.			
3.5	There is an annual appraisal for staff and annual review for volunteers.			
3.6	Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision; and annual appraisals.			

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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	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
4.1	The policy outlines what constitutes abuse of children and adults, where abuse can occur and who can abuse.			
4.2	There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to, record and report safeguarding children and adults concerns.			
4.3	There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff and volunteers to ensure they are familiar with it.			
4.4	There is a named Designated Officer and Adult Safeguarding Champion (or appointed person) who has responsibility for dealing with safeguarding concerns which come to light within the organisation.			
4.5	There is a procedure for the Designated Officer and Adult Safeguarding Champion (or appointed person) to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities.			



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
4.6	There is a written procedure outlining how staff and volunteers respond to and report allegations made against staff and volunteers.			
4.7	There is a whistleblowing policy and procedure.			

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Standard 5 – The organisation operates an effective procedure for assessing and managing risk with regard to safeguarding children and adults

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
5.1	A risk assessment is carried out to identify and evaluate risks to children and adults using services or participating in activities.			
5.2	The identified risks are managed by putting in place risk-reducing measures.			
5.3	All identified risks and risk-reducing measures are recorded and reviewed at least once a year.			
5.4	The organisation has a procedure in place for reporting, recording and reviewing accidents, incidents and near misses, which should in turn inform practice and the risk assessment and management procedures.			

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Standard 6 – There are clear procedures for receiving comments and suggestions and for dealing with concerns and complaints about the organisation

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
6.1	The organisation has an ethos of inclusion, transparency and openness which is communicated to all involved with the organisation, including children, adults at risk, parents and carers.			
6.2	There are appropriate procedures in place to share concerns or make complaints about the organisation.			
6.3	Complaints procedures are communicated appropriately to everyone involved in the organisation, including children, adults at risk, parents and carers.			

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Standard 7 – The organisation has a clear policy on the management of records, confidentiality, and the sharing of information

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
7.1	Consent forms are sought for all activities from the adult at risk, those with parental responsibility in the case of children, or carer where appropriate.			
7.2	There is a clear outline of what confidentiality means in relation to recording, use and management of personal information.			
7.3	The policy informs staff and volunteers what information needs to be recorded.			
7.4	The policy informs staff and volunteers how written records should be secured, stored and eventually disposed of.			
7.5	The policy outlines what and how information is shared with relevant people within and outside of the organisation.			
7.6	The policy informs staff of the grievance procedure.			

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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
7.7	There is a procedure in place that outlines how information is shared with children, adults at risk, parents and carers.			

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Standard 8 – There is a written code of behaviour that outlines the behaviour expected of all those involved with the organisation.

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
8.1	The Code of Behaviour contains positive statements about how staff and volunteers are expected to behave towards children and adults at risk.			
8.2	The Code of Behaviour outlines the behaviours to be avoided.			
8.3	The Code of Behaviour outlines unacceptable behaviours.			
8.4	The Code of Behaviour includes anti-bullying guidelines.			
8.5	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines relating to physical contact and intimate care.			
8.6	The Code contains guidelines relating to physical intervention and restraint.			
8.7	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines relating to diversity and additional care and support needs.			
8.8	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines on the handling of money.			



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
8.9	The Code contains guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.			
8.10	The Code of Behaviour outlines the sanctions in the case of staff and volunteers breaching the Code.			
8.11	The Code of Behaviour sets out an expectation that everyone in the organisation should relate to each other in a mutually respectful way.			
8.12	The Code of Behaviour is tailored to your organisational activities or services.			

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Standard 9 - The organisation has written guidelines to ensure the general safety and effective management of activities (where relevant to the setting and activities of the organisation)

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
9.1	All staff and volunteers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity.			
9.2	There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies.			
9.3	There are regular fire drills and these are recorded.			
9.4	Staff and volunteers have quick access to emergency telephone numbers.			
9.5	All staff and volunteers are qualified and competent in their role.			
9.6	There is a system for ensuring the safety of equipment.			
9.7	There are clear ratios for supervision of children and adults at various activities.			
9.8	Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose.			



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Met/Partly met/Not met	Actions/Recommendations
9.9	There is agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a residential activity.			
9.10	There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residential.			

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Glossary

1. **Child:** throughout the document, when reference is made to child/children/young people all children up to the age of 18 are included.
2. **Consent:** is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. An adult at risk may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal consideration of consent and appropriate steps should be taken to ensure consent is valid. No one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision for particular purposes has been made for this, usually in law.
3. **Guidelines:** Advice on how something should be done.
4. **Parent:** where reference is made to parents, carers are also included. It is assumed this is the person with parental responsibility for the child.
5. **Parental responsibility:** the natural mother always has parental responsibility, a natural father has parental responsibility:
 - a. If married to mother at time of birth
 - b. Or gains it through agreement witnessed by a solicitor
 - c. Through a Parental Responsibility Order
 - d. Post 15 April 2002 if they jointly register the baby's birth
 - e. Through re-registering the child's birth.
6. **Policy:** is a governing principle of an organisation that requires all those connected with the organisation to provide a consistent response to a given situation.
7. **Procedure:** is way of performing a task or conducting activities. Procedures are related to the implementation of a policy.



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8. *An 'Adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics
AND/OR
- b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain. Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

An 'Adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) personal characteristics
AND/OR
- b) life circumstances
AND
- c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests;
AND
- d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. This will take into account all the available evidence, concerns, the impact of harm, degree of risk and other matters relating to the individual and his or her circumstances. The seriousness and the degree of risk of harm are key to determining the most appropriate response and establishing whether the threshold for protective intervention has been met.



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