



Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

for

Children , Young People and Adults at Risk

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ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. We are the main support for artists and arts organisations offering a broad range of funding opportunities through our Exchequer and National Lottery funds.

The Arts Council is committed to providing a high level of service to all our clients whether individual artists or arts organisations.

As the lead development organisation for the arts in Northern Ireland, we believe that:

- The welfare of the child, young person and adult at risk is paramount.
- All children, young person and adult at risk whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and / or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and in an informed manner.
- Staff and volunteers should be clear on how to respond appropriately.

The Arts Council will take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are protected where:

- Our own staff are directly involved in the delivery of an arts project
- Our staff recruit or broker relationships between an artist or arts facilitator and a third party
- We fund an arts organisation for a programme of work, or for core work
- We seek to promote a positive ethos of collaborative work between the professional arts sector and children, young people and/or adults at risk.

If a complaint or criminal proceeding occurs between an artist and arts facilitator and a third party, as a result of the Arts Council's direct or indirect involvement, the Arts Council will treat the situation with the utmost urgency. All concerns, disclosures and allegations are dealt with by the Arts Council's Designated or Deputy Designated Officer for Safeguarding .

The Arts Council's Designated / Deputy Designated Officer is responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the Arts Council and for liaising with Health and Social Services Trusts and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child abuse. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland with the support of The Volunteer Development Agency has developed overarching Safeguarding guidelines for use by organisations within the arts sector in Northern Ireland. This resource document outlines legislative and good practice guidelines for working with children, young people and adults at risk.

Organisations should take these guidelines and adapt them to suit their specific activities and organizational structure.

It is a requirement of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland funding conditions that an organisation intending to work with children ,young people and adults at risk

**Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.**

commits to a Safeguarding Policy.

ARTS COUNCIL DESIGNATED OFFICERS

Everyone in the Arts Council should be aware of the Designated Officer for Safeguarding and their Deputy within the organisation who should always be informed of any concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk being abused. The following information should be referred to when making a report.

- 1. Designated officer/ Adult Safeguarding Champion** : Gavin O'Connor
- 2. Deputy Designated Officer:** Witney Williamson

Job/Role/Title:

1. Arts Development Officer-Designated Safeguarding Officer / Adult Safeguarding Champion .
2. Human Resources Officer- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer

Address:

Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 1 The Sidings, Antrim Road, Lisburn, BT283AJ.

Telephone Number:

1. 02892 623539
2. 02892 623524

Email:

1. goconnor@artscouncil-ni.org
2. wwilliamson@artscouncil-ni.org

These Officers are the first people staff, volunteers or members of the public should approach with concerns, the Officer will be responsible for appropriately recording an allegation or reported incident .They will be responsible for contacting the statutory agency such as the Local Health and Social Care Trust or the PSNI if necessary. They will also have a responsibility to ensure that the policy and procedures are implemented. Their role is to:

- Provide information and advice on training requirements in relation to safeguarding.
- Ensure that safeguarding policy and procedures are being followed.
- Contact local statutory organisations (Social Services Gateway Team, the PSNI and/or NSPCC) about concerns and make a formal referral, if applicable. The general procedure is that the Deputy/Designated Officer will contact a statutory organisation by phone and follow this up in writing.

Appointing a Designated Officer/Adult Safeguarding Champion and a Deputy Designated Officer means that if one Designated Officer is on holiday/off sick or if an allegation is made against them, this can be reported to the other Designated Officer.

AIMS

The purpose of the following Safeguarding procedure is to protect children young people and adults at risk by ensuring that everyone who works for The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has clear guidance on the necessary action required, where abuse or neglect of a child ,young person or adult at risk is suspected.

We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- Adopting Safeguarding guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff, artists and volunteers.
- Sharing information about safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and good practice with children, young people , adults at risk, parents, staff, artists volunteers and relevant agencies/community groups.
- Reporting concerns with statutory agencies which need to know, and involving parents / carers and children, young people and adults at risk appropriately.
- Following carefully the procedures for safe recruitment, selection and vetting of staff, artists and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff, artists and volunteers through supervision, support and training.
- Recognising that younger volunteers may themselves be vulnerable and therefore consideration should be given to their safeguarding needs.
- Ensuring that safety procedures are adhered to.

We wish to ensure that everyone participates in an enjoyable and safe environment in which they can have fun and feel valued.

The principles and philosophy which underpin our work with children are those set out in the UN Convention on the Right of the Child and enshrined in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, effective from November 1996. (Link: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents>) In particular, the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care given to their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being by those looking after them.

While no specific legislation exists for the protection of vulnerable adults, they are protected under general legislation. E.g. the Offences against the Person Act, Theft Act etc. (Link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relevant-offences-list-for-northern-ireland/relevant-offences-list-for-northern-ireland>)

A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and vulnerable adults and respecting the rights and needs of others, but where there is conflict, the vulnerable person's interests must always come first.

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Children and Adults at Risk have a right to be heard, to be listened to and taken seriously.

In any incident the child's or vulnerable person's welfare must always be paramount, this overrides all other considerations.

RECOGNITION

We use the following definitions for **Child Abuse**:

Neglect

- Persistent or significant failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to cause significant harm.
- It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to medical care or treatment and lack of stimulation or supervision.
- It also may include non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Abuse

- Deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocation, confinement to a room or cot or inappropriate giving of drugs to control behaviour.

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.
- 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 non-penetrative 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.
- They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

- 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.
- Emotional abuse 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.
- It may cause conveying to a child that he/she is worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may involve a child to feel frightened or in danger or the exploitation or corruption of a child.
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment, though it may occur alone.
- Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional harm. Domestic Abuse is defined as:
'threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional, inflicted on one person by another where they are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, irrespective of age, gender or sexual orientation.'

Exploitation

- 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. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and 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.

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While not a form of abuse, we understand the need to be vigilant in The Arts Council with regards to the potential risk to children, young people and adults at risk of self-harm and suicide.

We are also vigilant to the potential for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Forced Marriage.

We use the following definitions for **Abuse of Adults at Risk:**

Abuse is a 'single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights'.

Abuse is the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. It can involve direct and indirect contact and can include online abuse.

"Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership" (DOH and DOJ, July 2015) outlines the main forms of abuse:

Physical abuse is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing, rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is considered a form of physical AND sexual abuse.

Sexual violence and abuse is 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability). Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.

Psychological/emotional abuse is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation, or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, controlling, intimidation and coercion.

Financial abuse is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.

Institutional abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in settings which adults who may be at risk reside in or use. This can happen in any organisation, within and outside Health and Social Care (HSC) provision. Institutional abuse may occur when the routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care, poor practice and behaviours, inflexible regimes and rigid routines which violate the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm. Institutional abuse may occur within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

Neglect occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It

may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others particularly where the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.

“Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” does not include self harm or self-neglect within the definition of an ‘adult in need of protection’.

Each case will require a professional HSC assessment to determine the appropriate response and consider if any underlying factors require a protection response.

For example self-harm may be the manifestation of harm which has been perpetrated by a third party and which the adult feels unable to disclose.

Exploitation is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain from using them as a commodity. It may manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and abuse, or human trafficking.

This list of types of harmful conduct is not exhaustive, nor listed here in any order of priority. There are other indicators which should not be ignored. It is also possible that if a person is being harmed in one way, s/he may very well be experiencing harm in other ways.

Related Definitions

There are related definitions which interface with Adult Safeguarding, each of which have their own associated adult protection processes in place.

Domestic violence and abuse is ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’. Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another. It is usually frequent and persistent. It can include violence by a son, daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, life partner or any other person who has a close relationship with the victim. It occurs right across society, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography. The response to any adult facing this situation will usually require a referral to specialist services such as Women’s Aid or the Men’s Advisory Project. In high risk cases a referral will also be made to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment (MARAC) process. Specialist services will then decide if the case needs to be referred to a HSC Trust for action under the safeguarding procedures.

If in doubt anyone with a concern can contact the Domestic and Sexual Violence helpline (0808 802 1414) to receive advice and guidance about how best to proceed.

Human trafficking/Modern Slavery involves the acquisition and movement of people by improper means, such as force, threat, or deception, for the purposes of exploiting them. It can take many forms, such as domestic servitude, forced criminality, forced labour, sexual exploitation and organ harvesting. Victims of human trafficking/modern slavery can come from all walks of life; they can be male or female, children or adults, and they may come from migrant or indigenous communities.

Hate crime is any incident which constitutes a criminal offence perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice, discrimination or hate towards a person's actual or perceived race, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion or gender identity. The response to adults at risk experiencing hate crime will usually be to report the incident to the Police Service.

Where might abuse occur?

Abuse can happen anywhere:

- In someone's own home;
- At a carer's home;
- Within day care, residential care, nursing care or other institutional settings;
- At work or in educational settings;
- In rented accommodation or commercial premises; or
- In public places.

Who can abuse?

Staff and volunteers should be aware that abusers come from all sections of society, all professions and all races and can be male or female.

Physical abuse

Including - hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.

Possible signs - fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.

Psychological abuse

Including - emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and the use of threats.

Possible signs - being withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, showing compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.

Financial or material abuse

Including - misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on

them about wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

Possible signs - having unusual difficulty with finances, not having enough money, being too protective of money and things they own, not paying bills, not having normal home comforts.

Sexual abuse

Including - direct or indirect sexual activity where the adult cannot or does not consent to it.

Possible signs - physical symptoms including genital itching or soreness or having a sexually transmitted disease, using bad language, not wanting to be touched, behaving in a sexually inappropriate way, changes in appearance.

Neglect or acts of omission

Including - withdrawing or not giving the help that an adult needs, so causing them to suffer.

Possible signs - having pain or discomfort, being very hungry, thirsty or untidy, failing health, changes in behaviour.

Discriminatory abuse

Including - the abuse of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

Possible signs - the person not receiving the care services they require, their carer being overly critical or making insulting remarks about the person, the person being made to dress differently from how they wish.

Institutional abuse

We are aware of the diversity within our society and will seek to support all people regardless of their ethnicity, religious or community background, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland recognise our five main responsibilities in the area of Safeguarding. These are:

- **Prevention;**
- **Recognition;**
- **Response;**
- **Referral;**
- **Record keeping and confidentiality**

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to initially inform and report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) any concerns they have in connection with Safeguarding issues.

All staff and volunteers should refrain from any action which could be construed as abuse.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED OFFICER (AND DEPUTY)

The Designated Safeguarding Officer / Adult Safeguarding Champion and Deputy Safeguarding Officer will receive training and assist in the annual review of the Safeguarding Policy. The policy should be disseminated to all staff and volunteers and measures put in place to ensure it is adhered to. Appropriate training and support will be given to staff and volunteers and the Designated Officers will act as a point of contact for staff. The Designated Safeguarding Officer in conjunction with the Deputy Safeguarding Officer/ Adult Safeguarding Champion will be responsible for making any referrals to Social Services.

- Establish contact with the senior member of Social Services staff responsible for safeguarding children in the organisation's catchment area.
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding within the organization.
- Ensure that the organisation's Safeguarding policy and procedures are followed and particularly to inform Social Services within the appropriate Trust of relevant concerns about individual children, young people and adults at risk.
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover.
- Liaise with Social Services and other agencies as appropriate.
- Keep relevant people in the organisation, particularly the CEO 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 needs

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

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The Designated Safeguarding Officer / Adult Safeguarding Champion and Deputy Safeguarding Officer will be responsible for making any referrals to Social Services.

WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing occurs when a member of staff or volunteer raises a concern about misconduct, illegal or underhand practices by individuals and/or an organisation, where such practices have or could 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/Adult Safeguarding Champion, appointed person, or Head of the organisation.

See Appendix 7 page 43 or ACNI Public Server Staff Matters / Staff Handbook.

PROCEDURES – RECORDING AND REPORTING

Staff should immediately refer their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer/ Adult Safeguarding Champion (**GAVIN O' CONNOR**) or to the Deputy Designated Officer (**WITNEY WILLIAMSON**). A written record of the concern must be completed on the proforma (Appendix 2) and given to the DSO/ASC or DDSO at the earliest possible opportunity. This written note must be signed and dated and the DSO/ASC or DDSO will file the notes in a locked cupboard. The DSO/ASC and/or DDSO will decide how to progress the issue at this point. It is important that the person who reported the incident treats the matter in confidence.

If the allegation requires urgent or immediate action for the protection of a child, young person or adult at risk or to prevent the destruction of evidence of abuse, the DSO/ASC or DDSO may, in the interim, take whatever action they deem to be reasonable, necessary and required for such a purpose, without prior consultation with the other named bodies. This includes immediate referrals to Social Services and the Police Service. A meeting as described above will then be convened as soon as possible to discuss the allegation further.

In the unlikely event that the DSO/ASC or the DSO cannot be contacted and an immediate referral is required, any staff member can make a direct referral to Social Services. Designated Officers' and regional Gateway Team contact details (including Out of Hours numbers) are outlined at the end of this document. (Appendix 4)

A hard-backed book will be kept as a record of all abuse complaints against staff. It will be stored in a locked cupboard. This will be shared with the Board annually and signed by the Chair of ACNI.

ALLEGATIONS ABOUT A MEMBER OF THE ARTS COUNCIL'S STAFF

The person receiving the allegation should report it to the DSO/ ASC or DDSOs as soon as possible. An urgent meeting will then be convened to deal with the allegation. This meeting will be attended by the DSO/ASC and DDSOs and the Director of Operations

The appropriate action for dealing with concerns will be implemented, with the DSO/ ASC /DDSO having responsibility to report the matter to Social Services.

If the allegation requires urgent or immediate action for the protection of a child, young person or adult at risk or to prevent the destruction of evidence of abuse, the DSO/ASC or DDSO may, in the interim, take whatever action they deem to be reasonable, necessary and required for such a purpose, without prior consultation with the other named bodies. This includes immediate referrals to Social Services and the Police Service. A meeting as described above will then be convened as soon as possible to discuss the allegation further.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records will be kept by the DSO/ASC in a locked cupboard. These records are confidential and will only be accessed by the DSO/ASC and the DDSOs. It should be noted that not all information given to members of staff about possible child abuse can always be held in confidence. In the best interest of the child, staff may need to share certain information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

Sharing Information about Concerns and Suspicions

Even for those experienced in working with children, young people and adults at risk it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has taken place. It is important to remember that the responsibility for investigating and dealing with child abuse lies with experts in Social Services, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the NSPCC who all have legal powers and responsibilities.

All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. and responded to appropriately.

It is important to remember that one person is not in a position to evaluate the situation fully because it is unlikely s/he will know everything there is to know about the child, young person or adult at risk. The information s/he has may be only one piece of the jigsaw which, when added together with other pieces, may or may not show a picture of an individual who is suffering abuse.

When there are concerns, many people feel anxious about reporting them, but concerns cannot be dismissed outright – the sharing of information is one of the most important ways to prevent abuse .

What might constitute a concern?

A concern relates to the possibility of a child, young person or adult at risk suffering from harm. Signs and indicators of abuse include:

Physical - Bruising / Nervous Behaviour / Bite or Burn marks/ Self-Harm / Flinching / Sudden behaviour changes / Hinting at Secrets / Fear of specific Individual.

Emotional – Aggressive / Nervous Behaviour / Lack of Confidence / Fear of making mistakes / Flinching / Self Harm / Sudden behaviour changes / Lack of friends / Fear of specific individual.

Sexual - Sexualised language / Nervous Behaviour / Lack of Confidence / Fear of making mistakes / Flinching / Self Harm / Sudden behaviour changes / Lack of friends / Fear of specific individual / Hinting at secrets

Neglect - Nervous behaviour / Lack of Confidence / Stealing Food / Sudden Behaviour Changes / Frequent Absences / Lack of Friends / Fear of a Specific Individual

It is the responsibility of all staff, volunteers and anyone involved in Arts Council activity to record and report any concerns as soon as they arise.

What should I do if I have concerns?

In the event of alleged or actual abuse, or concerns about the general well being of a child or young person or adult at risk “The Arts Council of Northern Ireland’ Safeguarding Procedures should be followed:

- Record what has been said immediately or as soon as possible;
- Remain sensitive and calm;
- Reassure the child, young person , adult at risk that they
 - are safe
 - were right to tell
 - are not to blame
 - are being taken seriously;
- Let the individual talk - it is very important that you don’t interview the individual or ask intrusive questions. That is a matter for the specially trained police and social services staff;
- Listen and hear, give the person time to say what they want;
- Ensure a positive experience;
- Explain that you must report, but will maintain confidentiality;
- Tell the individual what will happen next, in a supportive manner;
- Involve and formally report to appropriate individuals immediately;
- Stay calm; and
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling and that it will be dealt with appropriately.

Never

- Question unless for clarification;
- Agree to keep secrets;
- Make promises you cannot keep;
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate;
- Make/pass a judgment on the person disclosing or on the alleged abuser;
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated officer so you can begin to protect the individual and gain support for yourself;

Any discussions or actions must be recorded within 24 hours.

APPENDIX 1: Staff Code of Conduct

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

At The Arts Council we want all children, young people and adults at risk and staff to feel happy, safe and secure so that they can benefit fully from their time and be enabled to contribute wholeheartedly to the “arts” experience that we resource and support.

We aim, at all times, to behave appropriately and warmly towards each other and to support one another personally and professionally.

As staff members with the Arts Council, we are mindful that our behaviour towards children, young people and adults at risk should always be above reproach and we acknowledge the need to exercise prudence in our dealings with the children, young people and adults at risk we have contact with.

We subscribe to the following good practice in this area:

- Except for the exceptional circumstances of a ‘disclosure’ where the child, young person , adult at risk will not speak to more than one person, we should never be alone with a child, young person , adult at risk. It is not appropriate, for example, to accompany a child alone to the toilet. If the need arises to speak to a child alone i.e. Disclosure, we let another member of staff know that the meeting is happening and where it will be taking place. The venue should, if at all possible, have a window and, if this is not possible, a door should be left ajar and another adult should have a view of the meeting.
- **Unnecessary** physical contact with children, young people ,adult at risk must be avoided. Contact should only take place where absolutely necessary, for example, administering first aid, however where a child indicates that he/ she is uncomfortable with such contact, it should never take place. Additionally, it is prudent to avoid any physical contact which might be open to misinterpretation by the child or by others.
- Where physical contact is required to maintain the safety of the child, young person , adult at risk or others around him/her, that safety must take precedence over all other considerations.
- If it is necessary to administer first-aid this should normally be done with another adult present. The welfare of the child,young person ,

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adult at risk is, however, paramount, and intervention in serious cases should **never** be delayed because there is no other adult present.

- Members of staff must not allow children, young person , adult at risk to have access to their personal mobile phone numbers or to their personal email addresses.

- If contact via mobile phone is necessary a mobile phone (or a SIM card) provided by the organisation should be used or staff members should withhold their number before allowing the phone to be used.

- Social Networking Sites present particular difficulties. No member of our staff should communicate with children via social networking sites.

APPENDIX 2: Concern for Vulnerable Person Report Form

Confidential When Completed

Work Location:	
Name of Vulnerable Person: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Age / Date of Birth:	Gender: M <input type="checkbox"/> F Other
Names of Carers (If Known)	
Home Address (If Known)	
Please complete those sections that are relevant	
1. Disclosure by Vulnerable Person	
<i>When was the disclosure made? (Dates & Times)</i>	
<i>To whom did the Vulnerable Person make the disclosure to?</i>	
<i>What did the Vulnerable Person actually say?</i>	
2. Own Observations	
<i>Describe any signs or indicators of abuse observed by you (with times and dates)</i>	

Appendix 3: Recruitment & Management

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

The Arts Council recruitment procedures for staff include:

1. The production of a detailed job description and person specification setting out clear criteria for selection.
2. Advertising widely to ensure equality of opportunity for prospective applicants.
3. The submission of a written application form including a declaration of criminal record.
4. Shortlisting according to criteria set.
5. Interviewing to select the best candidate.
6. Candidates to bring documentary evidence of their academic and professional qualifications required for the post to the interview.
7. All appointments are subject to the receipt of two satisfactory written references; and
8. Obtain forms of identification i.e. birth certificate.
9. If the job requires the appointee to have substantial access to children or vulnerable adults an Enhanced Disclosure ACCESS NI check is carried out and the appointment will be subject to a satisfactory outcome of this.

Volunteers

The Arts Council recruitment process for volunteers

1. A written application form.
2. The receipt of two references.
3. Interview procedure and placement consultation.
4. Discussion of tasks, role and skills and appropriate written information relating to these.
5. If the volunteer is to have substantial access to children or vulnerable adults an Enhanced Disclosure ACCESS NI check is carried out. The volunteer does not begin work with children or vulnerable adults until the outcome of the ACCESS NI check is known to be satisfactory.

Effective Management of Staff and Volunteers

The Arts Council is committed to ensuring that once recruited, all staff and volunteers should be well informed, trained, supervised and supported, so that they are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm or could be misunderstood. With particular reference to training, the Arts Council is committed to recognising and reviewing the work of staff, artists and volunteers.

Induction

1. New staff, artists and volunteers are given clear instructions on tasks and the limits that apply to them.
2. They will be made familiar with the Arts Council Safeguarding Policy and Code of Behaviour.

Probationary/Trial Period

1. The development and suitability of staff is reviewed within six months of appointment.
2. The review of volunteer positions are ongoing through supervision and support.

Supervision and Support

1. Staff members are supervised under a line management system.
2. Supervision is regarded as a two way process whereby staff, artists and volunteers have access to support and opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved and plan future actions.
3. Supervision provides an opportunity for staff and volunteers to share concerns, anxieties or worries about their work or the environment. These meetings may be formal or informal and include opportunities for staff and volunteers to discuss issues of importance and identify training needs.
4. Staff members undergo an annual appraisal.

Training

1. Line managers will identify both individual/ organisational training needs of staff and volunteers. This includes training in policies as appropriate.
2. Staff and volunteers will be encouraged to undertake relevant identified training to support their development and enhance skills.

Appendix 4: Safeguarding Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)/ Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC)

Gavin O' Connor

ACNI

1 The Sidings

Antrim Road

Lisburn

BT283AJ

goconnor@artscouncil-ni.org

Deputy Designated Safeguarding (DDSO) Officer

Witney Williamson

ACNI

1 The Sidings

Antrim Road

Lisburn

BT283AJ

wwilliamson@artscouncil-ni.org

In matters pertaining to Adults at Risk the DSO/ ASC will directly liaise with the Director of Operations who will convey required information to Council Members.

**If Arts Council Designated Safeguarding Officers are Unavailable in an Emergency:
Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts Gateway Services
for Children's Social Work**

Out of Hours Emergency Service (after 5pm/ weekends/ public & bank holidays):

02895 049999 – single, regional number came into effect 25/05/13

Belfast HSC Trust

Telephone (for referral) 028 90507000 Areas

Greater Belfast area

Website www.belfasttrust.hscni.net

**Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison) Greater Belfast
Gateway Team**

110 Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 6HD

South Eastern HSC Trust

Telephone (for referral): 03001000300

Areas: Lisburn, Dunmurry, Moira, Hillsborough, Bangor, Newtownards, Ards Peninsula,
Comber, Downpatrick, Newcastle and Ballynahinch

Website www.setrust.hscni.net

**Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison): Greater
Lisburn Gateway Team**

Stewartstown Road Health Centre, 212 Stewartstown Road, Dunmurry, Belfast
BT17 0FG Tel: 028 90602705/ Fax: 028 90629827

North Down Gateway Team

James Street, Newtownards, BT23 4EP Tel: 028
91818518/ Fax: 028 90564830

Down Gateway Team

Children's Services, 81 Market Street, Downpatrick, BT30 6LZ Tel: 028
44613511/ Fax: 028 44615734

Northern HSC Trust

Telephone (for referral) 03001234333

Areas: Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Larne, Ballymena, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush and Coleraine

Website www.northerntrust.hscni.net

Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison): Central

Gateway Team

Unit 5A, Toome Business Park, Hillhead Road, Toomebridge, BT41 3SF Tel: 028 7965 1020/ Fax: 028 7965 1036

South Eastern Gateway Team

The Beeches, 76 Avondale Drive, Ballyclare, BT39 9DB Tel: 028 93340165/ Fax: 028 9334 2531

Northern Gateway Team

Coleraine Child Care Team, 7A Castlerock Road, Coleraine, BT51 3HP Tel: 028 7032 5462/ Fax: 028 7035 7614

Southern HSC Trust

Telephone (for referral): 08007837745

Areas: Craigavon, Banbridge, Dromore, Lurgan, Portadown, Gilford, Armagh, Coalisland, Dungannon, Fivemiletown, Markethill, Moy, Tandragee, Ballygawley, Newry City, Bessbrook, Annalong, Rathfriland, Warrenpoint, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel and Newtownhamilton

Website www.southerntrust.hscni.net

Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison): Craigavon/Banbridge

Gateway Team

Brownlow H&SS Centre, 1 Legahory Centre, Craigavon , BT65 5BE Tel: 028 38343011/ Fax: 028 38324366

Newry/Mourne Gateway Team

Dromalane House, Dromalane Road, Newry, BT35 8AP Tel: 028 30825000 Option 1/ Fax: 028 30825016

Armagh /Dungannon Gateway Team

E Floor, South Tyrone Hospital, Carland Road, Dungannon, BT71 4AU Tel: 028 87713506/ Fax: 028 87713671

Central Gateway Team

Gosford Place, The Mall West, Armagh, BT61 9AR Tel: 028 37415285/ Fax: 028 37522544

Western HSC Trust



Telephone (for referral): 028 71314090

Areas Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh and Enniskillen

Website www.westerntrust.hscni.net

Further Contact Details (for ongoing professional liaison)

Derry Gateway Team

Whitehill, 106 Irish Street, Derry, BT47 2ND, Tel: 028 71314090/ Fax: 028 7131409

Omagh Gateway Team

Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, 1 Donaghane Road, Omagh, BT79 ONS Tel: 028 66344103/ Fax: n/a

Enniskillen Gateway Team

2 Coleshill Road, Enniskillen BT747HG, Tel: 028 66344103/ Fax: n/a

Updated August 2014 – see www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

Appendix 5: Other Useful Contacts

ACE (Advisory Centre for Education) Advice on bullying	www.ace-ed.org.uk Helpline 0808 800 5793
Anti-bullying Alliance	www.antibullyingalliance.org
Behaviour Management	www.parenting-ed.org
Bullying Good advice for children on bullying is outlined here - how to recognise it, and what to do if you are the victim or know of someone who is. For those unwilling to tell anybody, help is available on the site via email.	www.bullying.co.uk
Child Exploitation Online Protection	www.ceop.gov.uk
Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Newsletter email "subscribe" to cpsu@nspcc.org.uk	pstephenson@nspcc.org.uk www.thecpsu.org.uk 028 90351135
Childline Northern Ireland Got a problem? Childline has helped hundreds of thousands of children in trouble or danger. If you feel you can't face ringing them, check out their website. There are fact sheets on many subjects including bullying.	www.childline.org.uk Helpline 0800 11 11 1st Floor, Queens House , 14 Queen Street, Belfast BT1 6ED. Tel: 0870 336 2945
Children's Law Centre	www.childrenslawacentre.org Philips House, York St, Belfast, BT15 1AB CHALKY Helpline 0808 808 5678
Counselling for young people	www.contactyouth.org
Department Of Culture Arts and Leisure	www.dcalni.gov.uk
Domestic Violence	www.womensaid.org.uk

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Drugs and alcohol	www.contactyouth.org
Health	www.kidsallergies.co.uk
Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Teams	

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Belfast HSC Trust Gateway Team	028 90507000
Northern HSC Trust Gateway Team	0300 1234333
South-Eastern HSC Trust Gateway Team	0300 1000300
Southern HSC Trust Gateway Team	08007837745
Western HSC Trust Gateway Team	028 71314090
Internet Safety	www.iwf.org.uk
Kidscape (Bullying) Open Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm.	www.kidscape.org.uk 020 7730 3300
National Children's Bureau	www.ncb.org.uk
NI Anti-Bullying Forum	www.niabf.org.uk
NI Commissioner for Children & Young People	www.niccy.org
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	www.nspcc.org.uk Helplines Help for adults concerned about a child Call on 0808 800 5000 Help for children and young people Call Childline on 0800 1111 Helpline 0808 800 5000
Parentline Plus Advice for parents on supporting a child who is being bullied.	www.parentlineplus.org.uk Freephone 0808 800 2222
Parenting NI Parenting NI is a leading organisation for parent support in NI. Offering a freephone helpline service, counselling and parenting programmes.	www.parentingni.org/ Freephone 0808 8010 722
Parents Centre	www.parentscentre.gov.uk
Special Education Needs	www.throughtheroof.org
Suicide and self-harm	www.pipsproject.com

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	www.samaritans.org
There4Me NSPCC On line advice service for 11- 16 year olds	www.there4me.org.uk
Volunteer Now 028 90232020	For further information on developing Safeguarding policy and procedures.

Appendix 6: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ARTS COUNCIL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Arts Council have developed this code of behaviour for staff and volunteers to ensure the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults. It outlines acceptable and unacceptable behaviours which all staff and volunteers are expected to adhere to and they should be encouraged to highlight any issues or areas about which they are uncertain. Failure to comply with the code of behaviour will result in disciplinary action in respect of staff and sanctions in respect of volunteers.

The code of behaviour will be explained to all new staff members and volunteers and clients of the Arts Council. Arts Council staff and volunteers and client organisations must ensure it is applied consistently so that children know what to expect and to encourage acceptable behaviour.

3.1 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS AND CLIENT ORGANISATIONS

Do

- Be supportive, approachable and reassuring.
- Show respect, be patient and listen to children , young people and adults at risk.
- Respect a child's, young person's, adult at risk right to personal privacy.
- Treat and value children, young people and adults at risk as individuals.
- Treat children, young people and adults at risk with consistency, fairness and equality.
- Set a good example by using appropriate attitude, demeanour and language at all times.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate to the art form and artistic need.
- Offer support and empathy in a manner appropriate to age, stage and gender of a child ,young person and adults at risk - always in an open and transparent/guardian manner and within context e.g. if child distressed.
- Ensure that any time spent with children, young people and adults at risk takes place in as open a setting as possible.
- Provide clear instruction, clarify meaning and establish clear boundaries.
- Involve children young people and adults at risk in the decision making process as much as possible (e.g. activities).
- Focus on the child young people and adults at risk what they really want to do (i.e. it is more damaging to push a child who is not ready, for example, to take part in a performance).
- Encourage leadership, responsibility and participation in activities.
- Encourage children young people and adults at risk to do as much as

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possible for themselves and instill confidence - support them to make choices and to find acceptable ways to express their feelings. This will enable children to have the self-confidence and vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.

- If there is a need to change clothes, separate changing facilities should be used.

Some activities may involve discussion about sensitive topics, such as drugs, bullying or racism. Staff and volunteers should ensure that such activities are appropriate to the age and stage of the children young people and adults at risk in the group, within context and only allow this to take place with guidance and within a controlled environment (e.g. a role play activity).

*Some art forms will require a greater amount of physical contact than others.

Please see guidelines on Physical Contact (below) and Appendix 1 in the Best Practice Safeguarding Guidelines for Arts Sector Organisations.

Never

- Show favouritism towards a child, young people and adults at risk .
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Belittle or demean children young people and adults at risk or other workers.
- Shout at/argue with children young people and adults at risk or other workers in a humiliating / patronising / threatening manner.
- Embarrass, ignore or single out a child ,young person and adult at risk
- Give unnecessary orders or orders which humiliate/instigate fear in others.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching (hugging, kissing, hitting, smacking etc.)
- Engage in sexually provocative/inappropriate games (including horseplay). Any contact activities must be part of the planned activities for the group and clearly supervised.
- Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, young person and adult at risk even in jest.
- Abuse privileges/own position.
- Give your personal contact details to children, young people and adult at risk ; organisational details should be used instead.
- Text/telephone/e-mail children, young people and adults at risk on a one-to-one basis unless with parental / carer consent and for a specific purpose.
- Invite/accept invites from children, young people and adults at risk for social networking websites.
- Let allegations a child young people and adults at risk ,makes/a concern go unrecorded or leave issues unresolved.
- Teach or give instruction that is outside your remit.
- Be under the influence, or recovering from the effects of, alcohol/illegal substances.
- Leave children, young people and adults at risk unsupervised.
- Allow children, young people and adults at risk to use language that is deemed inappropriate or offensive to others within the group.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Take children, young people and adults at risk to your home (or their

own home if a parent/guardian/carer is not there to meet them).

Staff and volunteers should be positive role models for children, young people and adults at risk in areas such as friendliness, care, respect and courtesy. Workers should praise and endorse desirable behaviour, such as kindness and willingness to share, and avoid situations where a worker's attention is received only in return for undesirable behaviour.

Shouting at a child, young person and an adult at risk in a threatening, patronising or derogatory manner is unacceptable; however, appropriate shouting within the context of an activity (e.g. rehearsals or a theatre performance) may be required when children need to be alert and ready to respond. In many instances, workshops and technical rehearsals involve loud music, participants are excited and boisterous, the environment is often chaotic and the schedule may be running behind time. The importance of following direction and instruction given by the artistic team in these situations may make shouting appropriate and contextual as part of the learning process for participants.

EXAMPLES FOR A CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT AT RISK

A code of behaviour (or a group agreement) should be developed for children, young people and adults at risk which outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviours (including language), which should be valid for the duration of a group's involvement with an organisation (e.g. on an annual basis or for a one-off workshop). It is good practice to involve children, young people and adults at risk in developing a code of behaviour that is specific to their activity. The following key principles should apply:

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear clothing that is appropriate to the activity. • Include and encourage the participation of other group members. • Listen to others. • Ask questions if you are unsure about something. • Respect other children and adults at all times. • Use allocated toilet and changing facilities. • Tell a leader straight away if you (or another child, young person adults) feel uncomfortable or frightened by the actions or words of another adult or child. • Say 'no' if you feel uncomfortable at any time (e.g. during an activity). • Follow safety guidelines and instructions for an activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shout. • Swear or use inappropriate language. • Make fun of others. • Exclude or make assumptions about others. • Fight/push/pull/hit/nip/bite – even in fun. • Tell jokes or stories that are rude or may offend or hurt others. • Run in corridor areas/backstage. • Keep bullying or inappropriate behaviour a secret. • Promise to keep secrets. • Use mobile telephones during activities (including breaks).

A specific code of behaviour should be drawn up with a group and its importance explained, with regards ensuring their safety while participating in an activity.

Depending on the age and stage of the group, the content should be discussed with members to ensure they understand and agree with the boundaries and understand the sanctions for breaching it.

Organisations working with children and adults (aged 18 and over) should develop and implement procedures and provide guidance to protect all participants. Organisations should ensure that all participants are aware of, and adhere to, the code of behaviour. If supervisory responsibilities are to be given to a participant, they should be subject to an AccessNI check (www.accessni.gov.uk).

Participants aged 18 and over should be made aware of issues such as appropriate behaviour (including language and topics of conversation) and being a good role model to the younger participants within the group. Daytrips and residential activities should be carefully planned, with particular attention given to accommodation needs and supervision of group members.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

There will be instances when physical contact with a child, young person , adult at risk is unavoidable. Organisations should provide guidance about what is considered acceptable and unacceptable physical contact. Some examples include:

Appropriate

- Context dependent touch within a controlled and supervised environment (e.g. demonstrations for dance, music, drama, craft - or singing e.g. a teacher demonstrating a breathing technique).
- Administration of first aid (with parental consent and only by a trained first-aider).
- Assistance to avoid embarrassment (e.g. offering to help a child to their feet if they fall).
- Support & guidance for performing arts such as drama, dance, circus and musical theatre (e.g. lifting/positioning/spotting).
- Offering comfort to a distressed child, young person , adult at risk in response to their respective needs.
- Preventing injury (e.g. catching a falling child, appropriate restraint).
- Handshake and 'hi-fives'
- Group hug at the end of class/following a performance as a means of congratulations.
- Undertaking personal care (e.g. for very young or disabled children, young person , adult at risk) only with the full consent of parents/guardians and, if possible, by a worker of the same gender. In an emergency, personal care should only be undertaken with the full consent of a leader/supervisor and parents/guardians should be fully informed as soon as possible, if it was not possible to contact them beforehand.
- Fitting/checking/fixing microphones and sound equipment.
- Taking measurements/fittings for costume.
- Emergency costume repairs (e.g. while a child is wearing a costume during a performance).
- Fitting harnesses/checking safety equipment for 'flying'.
- Assisting children with planned costume changes in the wings/backstage.

Inappropriate

- Touch which is unnecessary/unexplained/out of context/out of normal environment/in response to adult's needs/without consent.
- Sustained and prolonged 'appropriate' touch.
- Kissing and hugging.
- Touch in breast, groin or buttocks.
- Horseplay (adults – child; between peers).
- Sexual gestures.
- Slapping/hitting (even in jest).
- Holding hands (unless in context e.g. assisting very young children with crossing the road).

In addition, physical touch should only occur:

- after the type of contact within an activity and reason for it has been explained to the child, young person , adult at risk.
- when the child's, young person , adult at risk consent has been gained.
- in an open and transparent/guardian manner, preferably in view of others.
- when it is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child, young person , adult at risk.
- in response to the particular needs of the child young person , adult at risk.
- when it is not in breach of appropriate physical contact guidelines.
- as lightly and sensitively as possible.
- care should also be taken to avoid standing behind the child, young person , adult at risk whenever possible.

More details on guidelines in respect of Safeguarding can be found in the Arts Council Safeguarding Best Practice Guidelines for Arts Organisations (available on the public server).



ARTS COUNCIL OF NI

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

OCTOBER 2015

Document History

Location

This document is stored in the following location:

**Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.**

Location	Public / Staff Matters / Staff Handbook
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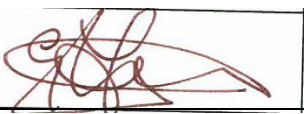
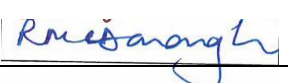
Revision History

This document has been through the following revisions:

Version No.	Revision Date	Brief Summary of Changes
1	28/10/14	Revised policy sent to TU
1	10/03/15	Changes received by TU
2	14/05/15	Changes sent to TU, in response to their comments, and in line with NIAO Office guidance 'Whistleblowing in the Public sector' November 14 & DCAL (DfC) letter 5 June 2015.

Authorisation

This document requires the following approvals:

AUTHORISATION	Name	Signature	Date
Director of Finance & Corp Services	Geoffrey Troughton		Dec 15
Chief Executive	Roisin McDonough		Dec 15

Related Documents

Summary of filenames and locations of related documents:

Document Type	Filename/Location stored:
Fraud Policy	Public / Staff Matters / Staff Handbook / Fraud Bribery Policy 10-07-2013
Risk Register Template	Public / Risk Register

Introduction

All of us at one time or another may have concerns about what is happening at work. However, when it is unlawful conduct, a possible fraud or a danger to the public or the environment, or other serious malpractice that affects others, it can be difficult to know what to do. (Further examples of malpractice, abuse or wrongdoing can be found in Annex A.)

You may be worried about raising such a concern and may think it best to keep it to yourself, perhaps feeling it is none of your business or that it is only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or to the Arts Council. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

The purpose of these arrangements is to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up. They also enable you to raise your concern about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. Rather than wait for proof, we would prefer you to raise the matter when it is still a concern.

If something is troubling you of which you think we should know about or look into, please let us know. The type of concerns to be raised in this way are those about risk, wrongdoing or malpractice in the workplace that have a public interest aspect to them. These are distinct from concerns or disputes about aspects of your personal employment or how you have been treated – as these are complaints or grievances the Arts Council Grievance Procedure should be followed.

We have implemented these whistleblowing arrangements for you to raise any concern where the interests of others or the organisation itself are at risk. If your concern is about possible fraud, you may also wish to refer to our Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy and Fraud Response Plan which can be found in the Staff Handbook folder at Public / Staff Matters.

More often than not it is members of staff who first become aware of areas of potential malpractice or wrongdoing by an organisation however this policy extends to trainees, agency workers, independent consultants, volunteers, contractors, suppliers, Board members and members of the public. We encourage anyone, internal or external to the Arts Council, who has a concern of this nature to raise it. The same principles will be applied in handling all whistleblowing cases.

Our Assurances to You

Our commitment

It is management's responsibility to:

1. ensure a supportive organisational culture where raising concerns are welcomed
2. ensure that any concerns are investigated appropriately and by someone suitably skilled, experienced and independent (that is they should not have any connection to the allegations)

Your Safety

We are committed to making whistleblowing work. You do not need to have firm evidence of malpractice before raising a concern. However we do ask that when you raise a concern you do so in good faith and in the belief that the information and any allegation in it are substantially true. If you raise a genuine concern under these arrangements, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. In all cases employees who raise concerns will be protected and supported and appropriate swift sanctions will be taken against employees who victimise individuals raising such concerns. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course, this assurance does not extend to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know to be untrue. The Arts **Council** will view very seriously any malicious allegations, which are made under this policy and may regard such allegations by any employee or Board Member of the **Arts Council** as subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Confidentiality

We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises a genuine concern and with these assurances, we hope you will raise your concern openly. However, we recognise that there may be circumstances when you would prefer to speak to someone in confidence first. If this is the case, please say so at the outset. Your confidentiality will be protected as far as possible. If you ask us not to disclose your identity, we will not do so without your consent unless required by law. You should understand that there may be times when we are unable to resolve a concern without revealing your identity, for example where your personal evidence is essential. In such cases, we will discuss with you whether and how the matter can best proceed and, if possible, obtain your informed consent.

Anonymity

Remember that if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter, to protect your position, or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, these arrangements are not as well suited to deal with concerns raised anonymously. It may be more difficult for ACNI to look in to the matter and give you feedback.

Nonetheless, anonymous concerns are preferred to silence about wrongdoing.

If you are aware of an issue which is causing you concern, but you are not sure whether it falls within the scope of whistleblowing, advice can be sought from the Public Concern at Work website www.pcaaw.co.uk.

How to Raise a Concern Internally

Step One

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager or with their immediate manager. This can be done orally or in writing. Applications in writing should be made in line with Annex B. Line Managers responsibilities are outlined under Annex C.

Step Two

If, for whatever reason, you feel that raising it with your line manager or their immediate manager is not appropriate or it has not worked, please raise the matter with your Head of Department / Departmental Director, or with the Chief Executive of the Arts Council.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence, please say so at the outset so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Step Three

If these channels have been followed and you believe there is an ongoing risk, or you feel the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, you can raise your concern directly with the Chairperson of the Board or the Audit and Risk Committee of the Arts Council.

You may also raise the matter directly with the Permanent Secretary of the Department that funds the Arts Council (see paragraph 'External Disclosures'). The Department has a dedicated inbox for individuals wishing to raise a concern with them: raising.concerns@communities-ni.gov.uk

How We Will Handle the Concern

Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an informal review, an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation.

The Arts Council will take stock of the situation and take a thoughtful and measured response. Individuals cited in allegations should therefore not be confronted in the first instance.

Whistleblowing cases that involve the Chief Executive or Board members of the Arts Council must be immediately brought to the attention of the sponsoring Department before any action is taken by the Arts Council. The sponsoring Department will retain ownership of the investigation.

Where it is decided that a formal investigation is necessary the overall responsibility for the investigation will lie with a nominated "investigation officer." In any event, we will tell you who is dealing with the matter, how you can contact him or her, and whether your further assistance may be needed. We will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it. If appropriate, you will be offered a meeting to fully discuss the issue. The Arts Council will ensure that the concern is promptly and properly investigated.

The Arts Council will ensure that anyone undertaking an investigation is independent i.e. they should not have any connection to the allegations.

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When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure we will tell you.

We will give you as much feedback as we properly can in writing. However, we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else. Sufficiently frequent contact will be maintained with you throughout the course of the investigation. Clear timescales will be given to you for reporting back on how your concern is being dealt with / progressing. As far as possible the outcome of the investigation, and where appropriate any actions being taken as a result of it, will be reported back to you.

Any internal investigation should be undertaken without undue delay with the aim of completion, where possible, within 4 weeks. Where this timeframe is not possible, an alternative timetable will be agreed.

In the event that someone victimises or harasses you for raising a concern under this procedure, we will take appropriate and timely action against this person.

Trade Union advice

Some employees may prefer to raise their concerns initially with their Trade Union side representative for advice. The Trade Union side representative will advise the employee how to use the Whistleblowing policy or any of the other policies of the ACNI which may be more appropriate.

Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether or how to raise a concern or you want confidential advice at any stage, you may contact your union. You may also contact the independent charity **Public Concern at Work** on **020 7404 6609** or by email at helpline@pcaw.co.uk. Their lawyers can talk you through your options and help you raise a concern about malpractice at work. For more information, you can visit their website at www.pcaw.co.uk.

StaffCare

At any stage during this process the employee(s) concerned may access the Arts Council's confidential staff counseling service StaffCare (Tel 0800 731 3674).

External Disclosures

While we hope we have given you the reassurance you need to raise your concern internally with us, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report a concern to an outside body. In fact, we would rather you raise a matter with the appropriate regulator – such as the Northern Ireland Audit Office or the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland, or with the Department for Communities - than not at all. Public Concern at Work (or your union) will be able to advise you on such an option and on the circumstances in which you may be able to contact an outside body safely.

Department for Communities

Permanent Secretary
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT1 7FB

Tel: +44 (028) 9025 8825

DfC has a dedicated inbox for individuals wishing to raise a concern with them:

Email: raising.concerns@communities-ni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Comptroller and Auditor General
106 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1EU

Tel: +44 (028) 9025 1100

Health and Safety Executive

83 Ladas Drive
Belfast
BT6 9FR

Tel: +44 (028) 9024 3249

Conclusion

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using these whistleblowing arrangements you will help us to achieve this.

Please note, this document has been developed to meet best practice and comply with the Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 (PIDO) which provides employment protection for whistleblowing. For more information on the law, go to www.pcaw.co.uk for guidance and/or NI Direct Government Services at: <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/protection-of-whistleblowers>

ANNEX A

What is Malpractice, Abuse or Wrongdoing?

Malpractice, abuse and wrongdoing can include a whole variety of issues and some are listed as follows:

- Any unlawful act, whether criminal (e.g. theft) or a breach of the civil law (e.g. slander or libel);
- Misadministration (e.g. unjustified delay, incompetence, negligent advice);
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees (e.g. faulty electrical equipment);
- Abuse of children and vulnerable adults (e.g. through physical, sexual, psychological or financial abuse, exploitation or neglect);
- Damage to the environment (e.g. pollution);
- The unauthorized use of public funds (e.g. expenditure for improper purpose);
- Fraud and corruption (e.g. to solicit or receive any gift/reward as a bribe);
- Breach of the Board Member of the Arts Council or Employee Code of Conduct;
- Abuse of power e.g. bullying / harassment. (Where any member of staff is allegedly being bullied, harassed, discriminated against or victimised however, the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure should be implemented).
- Other unethical conduct; and
- Deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above.

This is not a comprehensive list but is intended to illustrate the sort of issues that may be raised under this policy.

Annex B

Whistleblowing policy – Details of concern(s)

What has occurred (or thought to have occurred)?

When did it occur?

Where did it occur?

Who was involved?

Have staff/the public been put at risk as a result? YES/NO

Has it happened before? YES/NO
If yes, please give details.

Are there any other witnesses? YES/NO
Please provide details.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

Is there any supporting information?
Please provide details.

How did the matter come to light?

Has it been raised with anyone else?
If so, please provide details of when/whom

YES/NO

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Grade: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

Contact Tel no: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX C

As a Line Manager, what are your responsibilities towards staff who raise a concern?

It is essential that you, as a line manager, fulfil your responsibilities in a way that supports the person raising a concern.

Managers who receive disclosures from workers should:

- have a positive and supportive attitude towards workers raising a concern;
- record as much detail as possible about the concern being raised and agree this record with the worker;
- be aware of the process following the raising of a concern and explain this to the worker;
- make sure the worker knows what to expect, for example in relation to feedback on their concern;
- assure the worker that their confidentiality will be protected as far as possible, if they request this;
- make no promises and manage the expectations of the worker;
- make clear that your organisation will not tolerate harassment of anyone raising a genuine concern and ask the worker to let you know if this happens;
- refer the worker to available sources of support, for example PCaW or a union; and
- pass the information as quickly as possible to those within your organisation responsible for dealing with concerns (usually someone within senior management), so that the appropriate procedures for consideration and investigation of the concern can be initiated.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Policy on Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk.

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