

# Child Protection Best Practice Guidelines For Arts Sector Organisations

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## FOREWORD

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 vulnerable adult is paramount .
- All children , young person and vulnerable adult 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.

Organisations who develop procedures and guidelines in relation to the protection of children , young people and vulnerable adults will help to reduce the possibility of abuse .

The Arts Council would like to thank the Volunteer Development Agency and those members of the working group for giving their time and expertise to ensuring that the overarching child protection guidelines presented provides a relevant and informative resource for organisations to ensuring that their own guidelines and policy represent good practice in relation to working with children.

**Gavin O' Connor**  
**Arts Development Officer**

## INTRODUCTION

An organisation working with children should aim to provide fun activities that will encourage learning and developmental opportunities and assist them to develop new skills within a safe environment. By developing procedures and guidelines, organisations will help to minimise the potential for abuse and create a positive environment for everyone involved. A child protection policy is therefore designed to protect children from harm and abuse, protect workers against false allegations and protect the reputation of the organisation.

There is a moral obligation on anyone who is involved with children to provide them with the highest possible standard of care. Secondly, there is a legal responsibility, under the common law Duty of Care, for all organisations to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children in their care.

The fundamental principle in childcare law and practice is that the welfare of the child must always be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about them. This is set out in The Children (NI) Order 1995, which provides the legislative basis for child protection practice in Northern Ireland and which is underpinned by the standards of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Volunteer Development Agency has developed overarching child protection guidelines on behalf of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, for use by organisations within the arts sector in Northern Ireland. This resource document outlines legislative and good practice guidelines for working with children. Organisations should take these guidelines and adapt them to suit their specific activities and organisational structure.

A steering group was formed as part of the review and development process. We would like to acknowledge the following individuals and extend our gratitude for their valued input:

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Lee-Anne Thomas  
Our Duty To Care Team  
Volunteer Development Agency

## TERMS USED IN THE GUIDELINES

Throughout this document, the following applies when reference is made to:

**Child/children** – to promote best practice, the definition adopted is a person under 18 years of age, as defined under The Children (NI) Order 1995 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**Disability** - the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

**Parent/Guardian** - individuals who have parental responsibility for children, as defined by The Children (NI) Order 1995.

**Parental responsibility** (defined by The Children (NI) Order 1995) - the natural mother always has parental responsibility. The natural father gains parental responsibility:

- If married to mother at time of birth or subsequently marries her.
- Through an Agreement witnessed by solicitor or a Parental Responsibility Order.
- Post 15 April 2002 if they jointly register the child's birth.

**Regulated position** (defined by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003) - those who, in the course of their normal duties, care for, train, advise, counsel or supervise, or are in sole charge of children as well as the supervisors/managers of individuals in regulated positions. Management Boards and Governing Bodies of organisations involved with children are also included.

**Worker(s)** – anyone who is engaged in work or voluntary activity with children, whether as a paid employee or as a volunteer.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

A child protection policy statement should highlight an organisation's commitment to practice that promotes the welfare of children and protects them from harm.

A child protection policy and related procedures and practice should be reviewed at regular intervals, at least once every three years.

An organisation can endeavour to safeguard children by:

- following carefully the procedures laid down for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- reporting concerns to statutory agencies who need to know and involving parents/guardians and children appropriately;
- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour;
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers;
- ensuring general safety procedures are adhered to.

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (section 1)  
Getting It Right (page 5)

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Robust recruitment and selection procedures will help organisations to screen out unsuitable individuals and prevent them from working with children. Organisations should recruit and appoint all workers in accordance with relevant current legislation and actively seek to equally offer employment and volunteering opportunities according to their Equal Opportunities Policy. The following information outlines legislative requirements and good practice guidelines for safer recruitment and selection in relation to child protection, as well as issues pertaining to other fundamental organisational policies (e.g. Recruitment and Selection Policy).

Organisations should:

- provide a clearly defined job/volunteer role description for all staff and volunteer positions.
- identify if a job/volunteer role is 'regulated' as defined under the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 ([www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)).
- adhere to an open recruitment process and advertise all positions to ensure their availability to the whole community.
- use an application form to gather key information from an interested candidate in relation to the position. The job/volunteer role description should be sent to all candidates, along with information about the organisation and a copy of its child protection policy.
- require applicants working with children and young people to declare any past (including spent) criminal convictions, cautions and cases pending against them under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979. Applicants should be asked to sign a declaration form stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with children. This information must be dealt with in a confidential manner and not used to discriminate against applicants unfairly.
- short-list applicants according to their suitability for the position. Ultimately, the best person for each position should be appointed and all applicants fairly treated.
- interview all applicants for positions which will lead them into contact with children, whether voluntary or paid, before the position is offered. At least two representatives should interview the short listed applicants.
- ask applicants to provide two references.
- take up at least two references in writing for the preferred candidate, one of which should be from a previous employer or volunteer coordinator. An organisation should ask questions that relate directly to a person's suitability for working with children.

- following a conditional offer of employment/volunteering appointment, an AccessNI check should be requested on the preferred applicant. An Enhanced Disclosure Certificate is required for Regulated Positions ([www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk)).

- consider the results of the disclosure check and confirm or withdraw an offer of employment/volunteering role, based on the information received.

- issue an Employment Contract to staff or a Volunteer Agreement to volunteers.

- workers may be contracted for a project that requires regular input over a period of time (i.e. their input will be a couple of days per month or one week every couple of months, as opposed to consecutive days for a specified period). An organisation should consider the implications of these 'breaks in employment' (i.e. the period of time in between their input into the project). An organisation may consider developing a consultancy contract as a viable option to cover a specified period of time, where an individual will regularly undertake duties within a given role and project.

- decide how long a consultancy contract will be valid for, taking issues such as 'breaks in employment' into account and ensuring that safeguards for protecting children are maximised at all times. Standard good practice would be to request an AccessNI check every twelve months for workers who are contracted on a consultancy basis. Organisations should ensure that this is applied consistently to all workers (e.g. if an organisation contracts workers on a consultancy basis for a period of twelve months, it should check all contracted workers once a year and before contracts are renewed).

- in all instances, an AccessNI check must be carried out on the preferred candidate prior to confirming their offer of employment or volunteering position. A new check should be carried out prior to renewing a consultancy contract or in such instances where an individual is contracted, in a paid or voluntary capacity, in another role during their current contract.

- AccessNI checks for volunteers are mostly free of charge.

Organisations should bear in mind that while an AccessNI check is a crucial element for screening out unsuitable individuals, the results of a check are only valid for the day on which it is undertaken. Therefore, the importance of other procedures and guidelines should be implemented at all times (e.g. robust recruitment and selection procedures, effective management of workers, development and implementation of guidelines such as code of behaviour).

**Further guidance:** AccessNI ([www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk) )  
DHSSPS ([www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk))  
Our Duty to Care (section 2)  
Getting It Right (page 6)

**“What if an individual has been known to an organisation for a significant period of time, do they still need to be screened?”**

Never assume that an individual is safe to work with children, even if they have been known to an organisation for a number of years.

A robust recruitment and selection procedure will help to screen out unsuitable individuals and safeguard children against harm and abuse.

The recruitment and selection procedure should be applied consistently to all workers.

**“What if an organisation is going to use a facilitator from overseas?”**

‘AccessNI is unable to obtain overseas criminal records or other relevant information. If an organisation is recruiting from overseas and wishes to check an individual’s criminal record, AccessNI will only be able to provide details of offences committed in the UK.

An individual who has recently moved to the UK may not appear on any of the records searched by AccessNI. It is the responsibility of an organisation to consider and evaluate the risks involved in these circumstances.

Organisations that intend using workers from overseas may wish to contact the country’s representative in the UK. Contact details for those countries that have a representative in the UK can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website ([www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)).

Organisations may also consider examining the website of the Police Force of the country of origin.

Many countries allow their citizens to obtain certificates of good conduct or extracts from their criminal records, which could be provided to organisations. The level of information will vary from country to country and such certificates should be treated with caution as it is difficult to confirm authenticity or completeness.’

**Information source & further guidance:** [www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk)

Robust recruitment and selection procedures should be followed in all instances (e.g. taking references), as well as following supervision and support procedures, code of behaviour etc.

All workers should be made aware of, and understand, an organisation’s child protection policy, procedures and guidelines.

**“What impact will the forthcoming changes to legislation have on our organisation?”**

From 12 October 2009, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 will establish new safeguarding arrangements aimed at strengthening protection for children and vulnerable adults in workplace situations. This legislation will fully replace the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003.

A Vetting and Barring Scheme will be central to the new legislation, which will require individuals who are working (in a paid or unpaid capacity) in specified positions (i.e. Regulated or Controlled Activity) to register and pay a registration fee.

There will be a requirement for organisations to check whether an individual working in a specified position is registered with the Vetting and Barring Scheme prior to employing them in a paid or unpaid capacity.

Organisations must not employ an individual to carry out regulated activity if they are not registered with the Vetting and Barring Scheme.

Organisations will always need to check an individual's status before employing them (in a paid or unpaid capacity) and an AccessNI check will still have to be carried out on individuals depending on the post they are applying for.

The new scheme will allow registered individuals to be continuously monitored. An organisation will be able to register an interest in its workers, to receive notification if a worker is subsequently barred.

There will also be a requirement for organisations to refer relevant information to the Vetting and Barring Scheme. Offences will also apply for not meeting the requirements created by the legislation.

**Information source & further guidance:**

*[www.isa-gov.org](http://www.isa-gov.org)*

*[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/svg](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/svg)*

*[www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)*

## **EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Organisations should ensure that all workers are aware of organisational policies and procedures.

### **Induction**

Organisations should introduce all new workers to organisational policies, procedures, guidelines and activities. Workers should know and understand the boundaries within which they must operate and sign a contract to acknowledge that they have received, read and understood the relevant policies. All workers should receive a copy of the child protection policy and any queries should be identified and addressed.

### **Training**

In addition to induction training, all workers should receive training that is specific to their roles. Staff and volunteers (including Designated Officers and Management Committee members) should receive child protection training to include a basic awareness and understanding of issues to be able to recognise the symptoms of possible abuse. They should know how to react, respond and report in the correct manner and deal with issues such as confidentiality. Staff and volunteers should receive clear guidelines on appropriate behaviour with children.

### **Probationary/trial period**

All new appointments (paid and unpaid) should be conditional on a satisfactory period of work. Staff should have a probationary period and all volunteers should undergo a trial period. Positions should not be confirmed until an organisation is confident that the applicant is suitable for the position. This will be undertaken within an agreed period of time, at the end of which the post should be reviewed and confirmed or not.

### **Support and supervision**

Workers should meet their line manager/supervisor at regular intervals to assess their progress and identify any additional training needs. This provides support for workers and gives them an opportunity to talk, in confidence, about any uncertainties or problems they may have. Sessions can be used to look at relevant policies as required, such as the child protection policy.

Support and supervision sessions can be formal (e.g. a meeting) or informal (e.g. observation of workers) and conducted on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. An organisation should select the best method for its structure and workers and may decide to use a combination of methods that are time bound and role specific (e.g. a formal, one-to-one meeting with workers every three months with a group meeting every six months, supported by ongoing observation and informal chats).

If the person observing a worker has a concern, the process may become more formal, depending on the seriousness of the incident. For example, after witnessing something which has given them cause for concern, the line manager/supervisor may speak to the worker to resolve the issue, making a note of this in the worker's file. If necessary, the line manager/supervisor may then arrange to meet with the worker to discuss the issue in more detail and decide on an appropriate course of action (e.g. future training).

A written record of formal support and supervision sessions should be kept in a confidential file by the manager/supervisor.

### **Appraisal/review**

Staff should be appraised and volunteers reviewed no less than once every twelve months, with the aim of reviewing the achievements over the last year and identifying any difficulties or gaps. The session should also identify future support, training and development needs.

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (section 3)  
Getting It Right (page 6)

## REPORTING CONCERNS

Organisations should highlight its dedication to ensuring that staff and volunteers respond appropriately to concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse and harm, by:

- providing guidelines about what constitutes suspicion or a child protection concern;
- providing guidelines about how to respond to concerns and disclosures;
- developing a procedure for recording and reporting information in a confidential manner;
- appointing a Designated Officer to deal with child protection issues.

### **What may constitute a concern about a child?**

A concern relates to the possibility of a child suffering harm or abuse. Indicators of this may include:

- sudden, unexplained or worrying changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming withdrawn, displaying sudden outbursts of temper or displaying inappropriate sexual awareness for their age).
- physical signs or symptoms that may be indicative of abuse (e.g. unexplained or suspicious injuries or for which the explanation given seems inconsistent, or physical appearance such as weight loss for no apparent/guardian reason or a dirty or unkempt appearance).
- worrying remarks made by a child.
- a situation where a child has been exposed to potential risk of harm.

Due to the nature of expressivity involved with all arts forms, workers should be aware that children may express their emotions in different ways. Any concerns about a child should be reported in line with the reporting procedure.

The following may be applicable for working with children with a disability:

- the nature of the disability may appear to 'explain' signs and symptoms (e.g. bruising, inappropriate sexual behaviour).
- a child may often be more dependant on adults (e.g. physical contact & support needs, intimate care) and may be cared for by a number of adults.
- a child may be unable to recognise abusive behaviour and differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate touch.
- children with communication or language difficulties may be unable to convey an experience to others and it may be difficult to convey information to a child.
- workers may have a greater reluctance to accept that children with a disability can be abused.

## **What is a disclosure?**

A disclosure is when a child tells a worker that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may constitute physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect or bullying.

## **Dealing with disclosure**

If a child makes a disclosure, it is important that workers:

- stay calm - do not panic!
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling.
- listen to what the child is saying, do not rush them or ask leading questions.
- do not promise to keep secrets, as the child's welfare is paramount and they must pass this information on to their Deputy/Designated Officer.
- record in writing what was said and/or observed as soon as possible so that they do not forget any information and try to write exact words if possible.
- report without delay within the reporting procedure.
- record they made the report.

## **What is a concern or allegation about the behaviour of a worker?**

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence, or a breach in the code of behaviour may constitute a concern about the conduct of a worker.

An allegation about a worker occurs when a child, parent/guardian or another worker reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child has been harmed or abused in some way.

## **Responding to concerns, disclosures and allegations**

Workers should be aware that signs and symptoms are not a checklist or definite indicators that abuse or harm has occurred, as other areas of a child's life may affect their behaviour at a given moment (e.g. separation anxiety, homesickness or bereavement). In some instances, it may be appropriate for a worker to check out a concern with the child, parent/guardian, colleagues or supervisor.

Similarly, there will be times when it is inappropriate to do so, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to a disclosure or an allegation. It is not the worker's responsibility to investigate a concern or decide if abuse or harm has occurred. Workers simply need to ensure that all information is passed to the Deputy/Designated Officer without delay.

All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded and passed to the Deputy/Designated Officer as outlined in the reporting procedure, no matter how insignificant they may seem and regardless of whether they relate to situations internal or external to an organisation (i.e. any concerns connected to a family or school situation should be noted as well as concerns within an organisation).

Organisations should develop a pro forma to capture information and improve consistency (*Our Duty to Care, Appendix 19*).

If there is an emergency and the Deputy/Designated Officer cannot be contacted, workers should know to contact Social Services, the PSNI or the NSPCC directly. These contact numbers should be contained within an organisation's child protection policy and also be easily available in around the premises.

An organisation should also set up a confidential record, which should be kept separate from the ongoing records concerning a child's progress and development.

**“What happens if a child discloses something to a worker after a project/contract has ended?”**

Information which is disclosed to an individual after their contract or project has finished should be passed on to Social Services, the PSNI or the NSPCC.

### **Designated Officers**

Organisations should appoint a Designated Officer and, if resources and organisational structure allow for it, a Deputy Designated Officer. A Designated Officer should complete specialist training to deal with child protection concerns, disclosures and allegations. Their role is to:

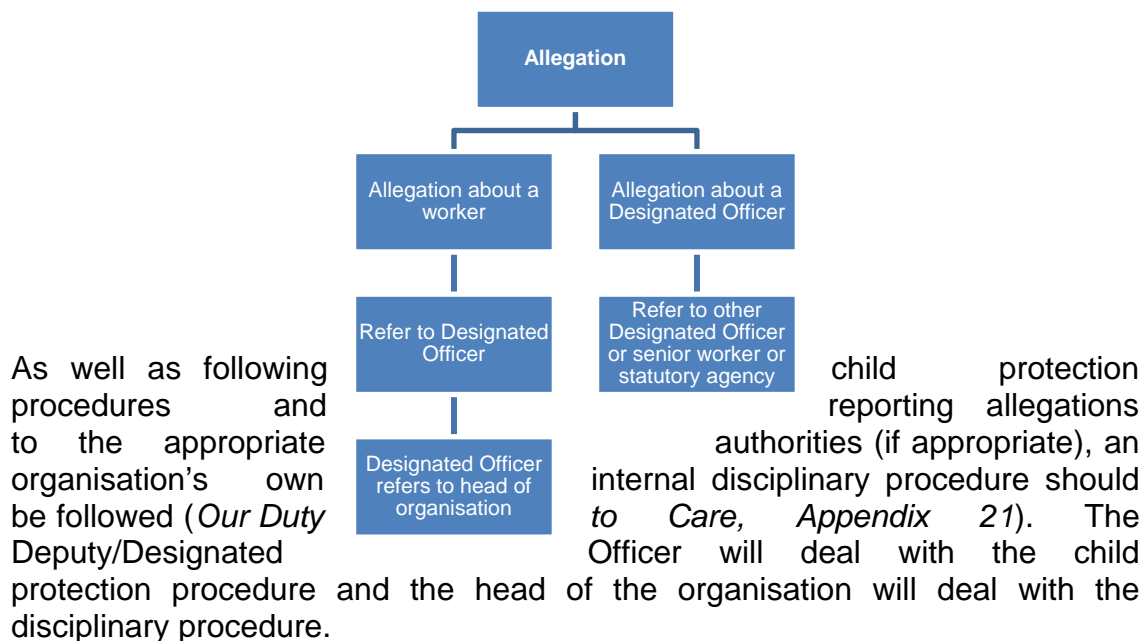
- provide information and advice on training requirements in relation to child protection.
- ensure that child protection policy and procedures are being followed.
- contact local statutory organisations (Social Services Gateway Team, the PSNI and/or NSPCC) about concerns and make a formal referral, 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 *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. If an organisation does not have the capacity to appoint two individuals to this role, it should clearly outline the reporting procedure in the instance that the Designated Officer cannot be contacted or an allegation is made against them.

## Allegations about a member of staff/volunteer

An allegation against a worker must be referred to the Deputy/Designated Officer, who should then pass it on to the head of the organisation.

Organisations should develop a reporting procedure to deal with an allegation against a Deputy/Designated Officer. In the case of an allegation against one of the Designated Officers, a referral should be made to the other Designated Officer, an identified individual in a senior position (e.g. the Chairperson) or directly to a statutory agency. For example:



The Deputy/Designated Officer should liaise closely with statutory agencies and seek advice with regards possible concerns. There may be instances when an allegation may not necessarily lead to a referral to a statutory agency. For example, a one-off incident may be considered to be a training matter (e.g. a worker shouting at a child that has misbehaved - the worker may have family issues at home and be under a considerable amount of stress as a result and/or may not be confident with behaviour management, in which case training should be sourced and code of behaviour re-visited with the worker). Serious incidents should be referred to the PSNI.

If a referral about a criminal offence is made to the PSNI and it instigates a criminal investigation, an organisation should not conduct an internal investigation or gather evidence that could prejudice a criminal investigation.

## Referral to Disqualification to Working with Children (NI) List

An organisation should refer a worker to the Child Care Policy Directorate in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (the Department) for consideration of inclusion on the Disqualification from Working with Children (DWC) (NI) List if a worker in a regulated position:

- has been dismissed on the grounds of misconduct which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm.
- has resigned, retired or been made redundant in circumstances such that an organisation would have dismissed them, or would have considered dismissing them on ground of misconduct if they had not resigned, retired or been made redundant.
- has been transferred, on the grounds of misconduct, to a position within the organisation which is not a regulated position.
- has been suspended or provisionally transferred to a non-regulated position on the grounds of misconduct, pending a decision by an organisation on whether or not to dismiss them or to confirm the transfer.

In some instances, information about a worker's misconduct may only come to light after the worker has left an organisation. An organisation should make a referral if it receives information about the misconduct of a worker who has since left and, if that information had been available at the time, the organisation would have or would have considered dismissing the worker on the grounds of misconduct. Organisations should not make a referral for circumstances when dismissal was not a serious option.

Organisations should be aware that the referral of a worker does not lead to automatic inclusion. Referrals should be made using the POCVA (NI) 7 form (Choosing To Protect) and sent to the Department with a full report (Section 6, Choosing To Protect). The worker should also be given a copy of the POCVA (NI) 7 form and the accompanying report.

The Department will make an initial assessment of the information submitted and, if the referral meets the criteria, will invite observations from the referred worker before deciding whether or not to provisionally include the worker on the DWC (NI) List. When the referred worker clearly poses an immediate risk to children, the Department will provisionally list the worker before seeking observations. The referred worker will be given 28 days in which to make a written representation, or indicate they will make a representation within a reasonable period.

Except in cases where criminal proceedings are ongoing, a worker who has been provisionally listed for more than nine months may seek to have their inclusion determined by an independent tribunal instead of the Department. The Department will confirm a provisional listing in writing with the referring organisation and the worker. The worker will have another opportunity to make written representations to the Department.

A full investigation will be undertaken by the Department and a Panel will review the case and make a decision to confirm the worker on the DWC (NI) List or remove them.

If the Department fully includes the worker on the DWC (NI) List, they will be prohibited from remaining in, applying for, offering to do or undertaking work in a regulated position. If a disqualified individual does any of this they will be committing a criminal offence, as will an organisation that retains a disqualified worker (who has harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm) in a regulated position.

For full information about the DWC (NI) List and the referral process, organisations should read the Departmental guide 'Choosing to Protect - A guide to using the Protection of Children Northern Ireland [POC (NI)] Service' ([www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/poc.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/poc.pdf)).

**Further guidance:** [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)  
Our Duty to Care (section 4)  
Getting It Right (page 8)

<b>Avoid</b>
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## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

Organisations should develop a code of behaviour for workers to ensure the safety and welfare of children. It should outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviours which all workers 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 should result in disciplinary action (staff) and sanctions (volunteers).

A code of behaviour should be explained to all new members, both children and adults (parents/guardians and workers). Workers must ensure it is applied consistently so that children know what to expect and to encourage acceptable behaviour. Workers should also ensure that they focus on their role and take their responsibilities seriously at all times.

### **Examples for a code of behaviour for workers**

<b>Do</b>
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- Be supportive, approachable and reassuring.
- Show respect, be patient and listen to children.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Treat and value children as individuals.
- Treat children with consistency, fairness and equality.
- Set a good example by using appropriate attitude, demeanour & 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 - always in an open and transparent/guardian manner and within context e.g. if child distressed.
- Ensure that any time spent with children takes place in as open a setting as possible.
- Provide clear instruction, clarify meaning and establish clear boundaries.
- Involve children in the decision making process as much as possible (e.g. activities).
- Focus on the child and 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 to do as much as possible for themselves and instil 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. Workers should ensure that such activities are appropriate to the age and stage of the children 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).

- Spending periods of time alone with children. An adult who needs to take a child aside (e.g. time out after misbehaviour) should stay within the sight of others. If it is necessary to enter a separate room, use a room with visual access (e.g. a window) and leave the door open. Another adult should know, be vigilant and within ear shot if possible. A written record should be made and kept on file.
- Physical contact that is out of the art form context. Any required physical contact should only take place with the child's consent, within context and any resistance should be respected.\*
- Taking children alone in a car on journeys, no matter how short. If this is necessary, try to take more than one child and ensure that they are seated in the back of the vehicle. It should also only take place with the full knowledge and consent of the leader/supervisor in charge and the child's parents/guardians. They should also know the route that will be taken and the estimated time of arrival.

\*Some art forms will require a greater amount of physical contact than others. Please see guidelines on Physical Contact (page 22) and Appendix One.

### **Never**

- Show favouritism towards a child.
- Promise to keep secrets.
- Belittle or demean children or other workers.
- Shout at/argue with children or other workers in a humiliating/patronising/threatening manner.
- Embarrass, ignore or single out a child.
- 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, even in jest.
- Abuse privileges/own position.
- Give your personal contact details to children; organisational details should be used instead.
- Text/telephone/e-mail children on a one-to-one basis unless with parental consent and for a specific purpose.
- Invite/accept invites from children for social networking websites.
- Let allegations a child 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 unsupervised.
- Allow children 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 to your home (or their own home if a parent/guardian/carer is not there to meet them).

Workers should be positive role models for children 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 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

A code of behaviour (or a group agreement) should be developed for children 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 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"> <li>● Wear clothing that is appropriate to the activity.</li> <li>● Include and encourage the participation of other group members.</li> <li>● Listen to others.</li> <li>● Ask questions if you are unsure about something.</li> <li>● Respect other children and adults at all times.</li> <li>● Use allocated toilet and changing facilities.</li> <li>● Tell a leader straight away if you (or another child) feel uncomfortable or frightened by the actions or words of another adult or child.</li> <li>● Say 'no' if you feel uncomfortable at any time (e.g. during an activity).</li> <li>● Follow safety guidelines and instructions for an activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shout.</li> <li>● Swear or use inappropriate language.</li> <li>● Make fun of others.</li> <li>● Exclude or make assumptions about others.</li> <li>● Fight/push/pull/hit/nip/bite – even in fun.</li> <li>● Tell jokes or stories that are rude or may offend or hurt others.</li> <li>● Run in corridor areas/backstage.</li> <li>● Keep bullying or inappropriate behaviour a secret.</li> <li>● Promise to keep secrets.</li> <li>● Use mobile telephones during activities (including breaks).</li> </ul>

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. Organisations should consider the most effective method for developing a code of behaviour and how best to encourage input from children. A variety of processes may be used to develop a code of behaviour; however, organisations should ensure the key elements are covered and that the needs and safety of the group participants are of paramount importance. Some organisations develop a code of behaviour at the first meeting, while other organisations wait until group members have met on a couple of occasions before developing guidelines.

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. Some organisations ask group members to sign a master copy to demonstrate their commitment to the code of behaviour. While the discussion should be led by a worker to ensure the key points are covered, it is useful to compile a code of behaviour using the words and phrases of the children within a group. In doing so, an organisation will encourage children to take ownership of their code of behaviour and minimise the necessity to impose sanctions.

If it is necessary to review and amend the content of the code of behaviour at any time, an organisation should do so with the knowledge of those to whom it applies. Organisations should also adapt a code of behaviour according to the context of an activity (e.g. a daytrip or residential).

Organisations should also consider how best to include a child who has been known to pose a risk to others. In such instances, an organisation should undertake an assessment and ensure it consults with the child as well as those who know the child well (e.g. parents/guardians, teachers, social workers).

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](http://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 is unavoidable. Organisations should provide guidance about what is considered acceptable and unacceptable physical contact. Some examples include:

<b>Appropriate</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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).</li><li>• Administration of first aid (with parental consent and only by a trained first-aider).</li><li>• Assistance to avoid embarrassment (e.g. offering to help a child to their feet if they fall).</li><li>• Support &amp; guidance for performing arts such as drama, dance, circus and musical theatre (e.g. lifting/positioning/spotting).</li><li>• Offering comfort to a distressed child, in response to the child's needs.</li><li>• Preventing injury (e.g. catching a falling child, appropriate restraint).</li><li>• Handshake and 'hi-fives'</li><li>• Group hug at the end of class/following a performance as a means of congratulations.</li><li>• Undertaking personal care (e.g. for very young or disabled children) 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.</li><li>• Fitting/checking/fixing microphones and sound equipment.</li><li>• Taking measurements/fittings for costume.</li><li>• Emergency costume repairs (e.g. while a child is wearing a costume during a performance).</li><li>• Fitting harnesses/checking safety equipment for 'flying'.</li><li>• Assisting children with planned costume changes in the wings/backstage.</li></ul>

<b>Inappropriate</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Touch which is unnecessary/unexplained/out of context/out of normal environment/in response to adult's needs/without consent.</li><li>• Sustained and prolonged 'appropriate' touch.</li><li>• Kissing and hugging.</li><li>• Touch in breast, groin or buttocks.</li><li>• Horseplay (adults – child; between peers).</li><li>• Sexual gestures.</li><li>• Slapping/hitting (even in jest).</li><li>• Holding hands (unless in context e.g. assisting very young children with crossing the road).</li></ul>

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.
- when the child's 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.
- in response to the particular needs of the child.
- 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 whenever possible.

A worker who feels something may have been misconstrued should address this without delay with the child/other workers and tell a leader/supervisor.

Workers should bear in mind that children are individuals and any resistance from a child should be respected. A worker should not pressurise a child to continue with a particular activity if the child communicates or displays anxiety or distress. Similarly, children will display their feelings in different manners and some may be more affectionate than others; in these instances, it is important that workers are familiar with the behaviour and needs of a particular child and that all contact takes place in an open and transparent/guardian setting to minimise the risk of a circumstance being misconstrued and to provide safeguards for that child.

To minimise the circumstance for physical contact, it may be appropriate for workers to demonstrate on another adult, with permission (e.g. positioning of arms), or to put children into pairs/small groups and provide advice and feedback on the process. Ultimately, this will be dictated by the nature of the activity.

Workers must remember that the safety of a child comes first. One example is a circus tutor who has been appointed to 'spot' a child to prevent injury if the child falls. If, when catching the child, the tutor accidentally touches the child in an inappropriate way/place, they should address any issues or embarrassment with the child once that child is safe and make a note of it in their end of session report. It is important to remember that the safety of children is paramount and that common sense must prevail in all instances.

### **Reasonable force**

Organisations should develop a policy on reasonable force to provide guidance to workers. Workers may encounter a circumstance when it is necessary to restrain a child to prevent injury to them (e.g. child who is about to walk in front of a moving vehicle) or others (e.g. child attacks another child or worker). In all instances, reasonable force should only be used in emergency situations when it is necessary to do so and only the minimum force should be used.

Workers should receive guidance and training regarding the use of reasonable force, if necessary (e.g. to safely break up a fight). Organisations should provide guidelines that include a definition of reasonable force, situations that may require reasonable force, types of reasonable force, acceptable and unacceptable force and reporting procedures for any incidents.

'Therapeutic Crisis Intervention' can also be used to diffuse a situation. Further guidance can be sought from the Department of Education (NI) ([www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)), Barnardos ([www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)) or PSNI ([www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)).

## Anti-bullying

Organisations working with children should be committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment. Bullying is unacceptable and children are encouraged to tell a leader about any incidents so these can be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Bullying is defined as the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person, resulting in pain and distress to the victim and which will negatively impact on their wellbeing. In many instances, there are three parties involved – the bully, the victim and the onlooker.

Bullying can be categorised as:

<b>Emotional</b>	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures).
<b>Physical</b>	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence against another person.
<b>Racist</b>	Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
<b>Disability</b>	Gestures, taunts and exclusion on the grounds of disability.
<b>Gender</b>	Unfriendliness and exclusion.
<b>Sexual</b>	Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
<b>Homophobic</b>	Because of, or focusing on, the issues of sexuality.
<b>Verbal</b>	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
<b>Cyber</b>	Internet, e-mail and internet chat room misuse; mobile phone threats by text messaging, Bluetooth and phone calls; misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities.

Every child has the right to be treated with respect - no one deserves to be a victim of bullying and children who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying of any kind should not be tolerated.

Organisations should decide on reporting procedures, for example:

- report incidents of bullying to a leader without delay.
- the leader should make a record of the report.
- an investigation into the bullying behaviour/threats should be undertaken and the bullying quickly stopped.
- an attempt should be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
- in serious cases, parents/guardians should be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.
- if necessary, the PSNI may be consulted.

Some possible outcomes are:

- to ask the bully/bullies to make a genuine apology.
- to reconcile the children, if possible.
- in serious cases, to consider suspension or exclusion.
- after the bullying has been investigated and dealt with, the situation should be monitored to ensure a repeat incident does not take place.

## **Disability and additional needs**

Organisations should equally welcome children with and without a disability to participate in activities. It should consult with parents/guardians, the child and workers to identify and assess additional needs on an individual basis to provide appropriate learning opportunities for all children.

Organisations should establish systems to observe and maintain records and, with parental input, monitor an individual child's needs and progress. If a child's needs cannot be met without the support of a one-to-one worker, it should source funding to employ one and/or make reasonable adjustments (e.g. an organisation may be able to approach a funding agent to request financial assistance to enable participation). To avoid delaying a child's participation, an organisation may identify potential funding agents in advance.

Organisations should try to maximise inclusion by:

- planning the inclusion of a child with additional needs in advance, with regards to accessibility and inclusion for the activity, venue, equipment, transport and sanitary/changing/catering facilities.
- involving the child, parents/guardians, workers and support organisations with regards gathering information, planning and reviewing.
- minimising fuss when including a child with additional needs and taking care to avoid singling them out.
- ensuring appropriate supervision ratios are maintained at all times.
- asking parents/guardians to provide detailed information about medical, dietary and intimate care needs to ensure the comfort, safety and privacy of their child.
- only giving out information on a need to know basis and with strictest confidentiality.

In all instances, it is important that organisations remember that a child with additional needs is a child first.

Further guidance can be sought from the Arts and Disability Forum ([www.artsanddisability.com](http://www.artsanddisability.com)), Disability Action ([www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)), Early Years ([www.nippa.org](http://www.nippa.org)) and NSPCC ([www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)).

## Sanctions

A breach of procedures and guidelines must be taken seriously and workers, children, parents/guardians and other service users should note the following:

- staff in breach of guidelines should be disciplined in line with the Disciplinary Procedure.
- an organisation should follow guidelines for dealing with difficult situations for volunteers who breach policy, as outlined in their Volunteer Agreement.
- sanctions should be developed for children who breach a group agreement, anti-bullying policy or instructions for an activity or task. These should be related to the seriousness of the incident and may include challenging difficult behaviour, taking time out from participating in an activity or temporary suspension from the organisation. Contacting the child's parents/guardians should also be considered in some instances and in the most extreme cases, it may be necessary to consider permanent suspension. Early intervention and dialogue with children should minimise the need to apply more serious sanctions.
- basic guidelines should be provided to other service users (including parents/guardians, spectators and user groups) to facilitate the safety of children. Service users should be asked to abide by these and a breach should be reported to a leader/supervisor without delay.

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (section 5)  
Getting It Right (page 10)

## SHARING INFORMATION

Good communication helps to foster an environment in which children will be protected from harm. Systems should be established to provide opportunities for sharing information with children, parents/guardians and workers. Furthermore, parental involvement should be welcomed and encouraged.

Organisational good practice would be to:

- ensure all parents/guardians, children, workers and other service users are aware of policies, procedures and guidelines relevant to them, including the child protection policy. Written information should be circulated and it may be useful to produce a leaflet containing key information (e.g. codes of behaviour, reporting procedure, important contact numbers). The Child Protection Policy Statement should also be displayed on the wall in a prominent place.
- keep parents/guardians and children fully informed about meetings, workshops, training, events and specific activities (including any particular requirements e.g. wear suitable/old clothing).
- regularly circulate updated information about activities and events through publicity leaflets/news sheets/letters etc.
- provide regular feedback to parents/guardians about their child's progress, verbally and in writing.
- hold meetings and events in accessible and appropriate venues.
- welcome and consider suggestions from parents/guardians and children (verbal/written) and undertake short surveys to assess services.
- explain the complaints procedures to parents/guardians, children and volunteers and the grievance procedure to staff.
- encourage parental assistance with special events.
- produce and circulate a flyer with key points in advance of events; highlight key points at the start of an event (e.g. policy on photographs and videos) and place posters around the venue to remind individuals about the organisation's commitment to good practice in relation to child protection.
- hold a pre-term meeting with workers, tutors and user groups to outline child protection responsibilities.
- inform children, parents/guardians and workers about sanctions that apply to breaching codes of behaviour.
- extract key information from the full child protection policy as a quick reference guide for workers (e.g. code of behaviour, dealing with disclosure, reporting procedure, emergency contact numbers).

Organisations that provide services and activities within another setting (e.g. art or drama sessions within a school) should establish a process for informing the host venue of their child protection procedures. Child protection policies should be exchanged so that both organisations can familiarise themselves with the procedures and guidelines of the other organisation, and any differences should be discussed in advance of a session and a definitive procedure agreed upon. For example, the agreed reporting procedure may be that any child protection concerns are reported through the host organisation's procedure but, if the visiting organisation is not satisfied that it has been appropriately dealt with, then it will deal with the concern via its own procedure.

Organisations should hold a preliminary meeting with the host venue to explain the activities that will be undertaken and the process for interacting with the children. Organisations should take time to explain the rationale behind the techniques that will be used within a given art form and emphasise the benefits to the children.

Particular attention should be given to how the workshop facilitators operate and how they deliver a session within the guidelines of the organisation's child protection policy (this is particularly important if the art form requires using techniques that would not be used by the host organisation's workers to interact with children). By improving a host organisation's understanding of how and why a particular approach is taken, organisations may reduce any conflict of interest between workshop facilitators and workers from the host organisation.

The responsibilities of the visiting and host organisations, the child protection procedures to be used and the specific details of the sessions should be negotiated and agreed upon in advance of a sessions, including:

- date(s).
- time(s).
- workshop facilitator(s) and contact details.
- name of supervising worker(s) who will be present at the session and contact details.
- workshop venue set-up and location.
- workshop activities.
- code of behaviour for workshop facilitators and workers from host organisation.
- code of behaviour for children.
- reporting procedures for concerns.
- supervision requirements (e.g. worker from the host organisation will greet and escort the facilitator to the workshop venue and must be present for the duration of the session and in the instance that a worker will be unavailable on the day, another worker will be present) and guidance on the required level of input from the host organisation's worker (e.g. the workshop facilitator will manage all aspects of the session and the host organisation's worker will observe, unless asked for input or assistance).
- procedure for communicating any changes to a session (e.g. different workers).

This information should be written into a formal agreement and sent to the head of the host organisation, who should then confirm that they agree to the workshop taking place and provide the names of workers from the host organisation who will be involved in organising the workshop (e.g. venue set-up, session supervision).

An organisation should then write to these workers and outline the key information to avoid confusion on the day of the workshop. The host organisation's worker(s) should be asked to speak to a workshop facilitator if they have a concern about the approach used during an activity.

## Parental consent

An organisation needs to gain information about children in its care and parental consent in relation to medical/dietary requirements, activities, day trips and emergency situations. Consent must be given by those with Parental Responsibility.

Records should be maintained and updated regularly for the following information:

- names, addresses and contact numbers for parents/guardians.
- information about health issues/medication/dietary requirements.
- parental consent for all activities/emergency situations (including emergency contact numbers).
  - A generic consent form can be used to gain parental consent for regular activities, which are outlined on the form for a given time period (e.g. a dance school gaining parental consent at the start of the school year for a child to participate in ballet and tap classes).
  - In addition, a new consent form should be issued to parents/guardians for any specialist activities over and above the normal ones (e.g. a residential weekend, a visit to another dance school or a theatre, chaperoning a child for an audition).

Organisations should make parents/guardians aware of their commitment to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children and the requirement to know of any medical, dietary or behavioural conditions in relation to a child. The need to provide an organisation with all information (even that which is not considered significant) should be clearly communicated, in order to minimise placing a child and/or others at risk of harm. Organisations should make every effort to communicate to all involved, regardless of language and communication needs.

An organisation should highlight its commitment to inclusiveness, pointing out that a condition is very unlikely to preclude a child from being involved and that efforts will be made to provide appropriate methods of support. It should work closely with the child, parents/guardians and support organisations (if appropriate) to maximise a child's participation.

Organisations should provide as much information about regular activities as possible (e.g. wearing make-up and dressing up) and specify any requirements that parents/guardians, and children, should be aware of (e.g. to wear old clothing to participate in painting and craft activities and loose clothing when engaging in dance or free movement activities, for example). Guidelines should also be given, for example, with regards to inappropriate and/or unacceptable clothing (e.g. football tops).

## **Equal Opportunities policy**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) states “it is the State’s obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.” An organisation should make activities and events accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community.

Good practice would be to:

- widely circulate information about activities and events in local communities and in more than one language, where appropriate.
- welcome individuals from all cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups, with and without disabilities.
- ensure that all literature is available in large print.
- monitor the gender and ethnic background of children to avoid exclusion and foster respect and awareness.
- be flexible to accommodate the needs of individual children and families e.g. regarding attendance patterns.
- promote and encompass cultural diversity within the local community.

## **Complaints procedure**

The complaints procedure applies to children, parents/guardians and other service users. Most complaints are made constructively and can be effectively resolved at an early stage. Organisations need to have a written complaints procedure in place to ensure all complaints are taken seriously and dealt with in a fair, consistent and confidential manner. An organisation should communicate its complaints procedure to everyone it is involved with and outline who a complaint can be made to (e.g. a leader, Designated Officer or Manager).

- Informal stage

This may be appropriate when the complainant simply wants to raise awareness and resolve a specific issue. This is generally undertaken through dialogue and a written record should be kept on file.

- Formal stage

All organisations should advise individuals who they can write to if they wish to make a formal complaint. Everyone has the right to appeal a decision made regarding a complaint and an organisation should consider how to facilitate this.

## **Grievance procedure for staff and volunteers**

Workers who have a complaint should follow the formal grievance procedures of an organisation. This should be shared with workers at their induction and they have the right to appeal a decision made regarding a grievance and an organisation should consider how to facilitate this.

Further guidance can be sought from the Labour Relations Agency ([www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)).

## Confidentiality

Information gathering and reporting procedures can bring an organisation and its workers into contact with confidential information. Organisations need to develop a confidentiality policy to ensure information about health, additional needs, family circumstances, a child's development and behaviour should be treated in the strictest of confidence. All individuals associated with an organisation (i.e. workers, service users, user groups, parents/guardians, children) should be advised of its confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

Organisations respect confidentiality by:

- only allowing parents/guardians access to any files and records held on their own children but not those of other children.
- not discussing individual children with anyone other than their parents/guardians, except for the purpose of curriculum planning. In some instances, this may be appropriate and necessary for sharing a concern, as outlined in the Reporting Concerns section.
- ensuring that information received from parents/guardians will not be used inappropriately and, even then, will only be communicated on a need to know basis. Workers should follow reporting procedures in relation to a child protection concern.
- recording any anxieties and evidence relating to a child's personal safety in a confidential file, accessible only to Deputy/Designated Officer.

The issue of confidentiality should be raised at the induction stage and reviewed regularly at team meetings and support and supervision meetings. Any breach of confidentiality may lead to sanctions being imposed.

In all instances, the welfare and safety of children is of paramount consideration and only in strict circumstances when the child's welfare is at risk should confidentiality be overridden.

## Record keeping

Organisations need to consider their responsibility in relation to the gathering, storage and sharing of information in light of the following eight Data Protection Principles (“the Principles”) in the Data Protection Act, sometimes referred to as the Principles of “good information handling”.

‘Personal data:

1. shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection of the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.’

An organisation should consider the following and ensure its confidentiality policy has written guidance on:

- what personal information is needed from parents/guardians;
- how that information is stored securely;
- who should have access to information;
- how long information should be kept;
- with whom information can be shared (on a need to know basis).

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (section 6)  
Getting It Right (page 11)

## GENERAL SAFETY AND MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Organisations should provide a healthy and safe environment for children, workers and other service users. This can be accomplished by effectively planning and managing activities so as to minimise opportunities for children to suffer harm while in the care of an organisation.

Good general management and administration practices will help to ensure the smooth and responsible running of your organisation. As a starting point, organisations should consider adopting health and safety guidelines in relation to:

- required standards for premises and equipment.
- heating and ventilation.
- sanitation facilities.
- fire precautions.
- emergency numbers and telephone access.
- ensuring adequate insurance cover.
- first aid.

### First Aid

Organisations need to consider having an accessible first aid kit available at all activities. The first aid kit should be regularly checked to ensure it is complete and in date. There should also be a named first aider who should be easily contactable.

In the absence of a first aider in an emergency situation, leaders would be expected to use their best endeavours to ensure the welfare of children in their care. The DfES Guidance on *First Aid for Schools* states that “in general, the consequences of taking no action are likely to be more serious than those of trying to assist in an emergency”.

Groups will also need to consider potential first aid issues in relation to disabled children or children who have particular illnesses or allergies, and make appropriate arrangements. If it is necessary for workers to administer medicine to children, this should be done with written parental consent.

A number of organisations provide advice and information to assist groups in formulating a policy on first aid (e.g. St John’s Ambulance).

## **Developing procedures for dealing with accidents, incidents and emergencies**

It is important that there are clearly defined procedures for reporting incidents or accidents and that all workers are made aware of these. It is important that everyone should know who to report to and the need to complete an accident/incident report form. Records should be kept up-to-date and signed by witnesses. It should be reported to those with parental consent.

Guidelines for emergency procedures should be developed, understood and communicated to workers and children. Regular fire drills should be held, with alternative routes explored and accurate records kept. A list of emergency telephone numbers should be widely displayed in key areas (e.g. beside telephones, in the front office and kitchen).

## **Transport**

Organisations should ensure that any transport used should be roadworthy, fit for purpose and covered by the appropriate insurance.

## **Insurance**

Organisations should ensure that insurance is up-to-date and adequate for transport, activities and public liability.

## **Management of Activities**

Activities should be planned so that they are safely managed and take into account participant numbers, age range, type of activity, venue/location and the particular needs of individual children (e.g. in relation to disability).

An important factor in ensuring the general safety of activities is to undertake a risk assessment, by identifying any hazards that could potentially cause harm and assessing the risks associated with each hazard. This should apply to planning a workshop or event as well as daytrips and residentials and may be undertaken using a pro-forma.

If there are doubts about the venue/equipment/health of child to participate, a worker should follow specified procedures before continuing (e.g. contact their supervisor without delay and before allowing the activity to commence). A contingency plan should be in place in the instance that an activity is postponed, for which parental consent should be gained in advance.

A risk assessment should take account of the following:

- **Competency and qualification of leaders**

Leaders should be competent to undertake the activities they are leading. Careful recruitment, selection, induction, training, code of behaviour and supervision will assist in ensuring this. Where an activity is led by a qualified leader (e.g. a specialist activity such as swimming instruction), qualifications should be up to date and verifiable.

- **Safety of equipment**

Equipment should be safe and only used for the purpose for which it was intended. It should also be appropriate for the age and ability of the participants. It should be checked regularly, for which the responsibility may be delegated to specific workers. Organisations should provide guidelines about what to do if a piece of equipment is faulty (e.g. it should be immediately removed from use and either repaired or replaced). Children should also be made aware of the safe use of equipment to minimise misuse and potential harm.

- **Supervision of children**

Making arrangements for the proper supervision of children is one of the most effective ways of minimising opportunities for children to suffer harm. There are a number of practical matters for organisations to consider, including the age of participants, gender, group size, activity type, venue, particular needs of individual participants and contingency plans (e.g. if leaders are diverted away from group activities to deal with an emergency).

Supervision ratios should be met and maintained at all times. Ratio requirements will vary according to a number of factors, including age, size of group, the venue and the particular activity. Early years ratios are legally prescribed while the ratios for the youth work sector are recommended guidelines (please see links below).

To ensure that ratios meet the minimum guidelines, suitable individuals may be identified in advance who can be contacted in extreme emergencies to ensure ratios are maintained (e.g. if a worker is removed from an activity). Organisations should be satisfied that these individuals are suitable to work with children before recruiting them onto a relief list. This should be undertaken in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection procedure.

Organisations should decide, in advance, a system for dropping off and collecting children, taking the age and stage of participants into account. This should be outlined and effectively communicated to individuals with parental responsibility.

Organisations should consider implementing a collection system and provide guidelines for workers (e.g. if the venue has a car park and some parents/guardians are waiting in their cars because they have young children with them, appointed workers could be made available to chaperone children to their cars).

In some instances, for example managing a particularly large group of participants, it may be useful to allocate an appointed worker as the point of contact for a small number of children. Parents/guardians could be introduced to the worker for their child and the worker made aware of any essential information (e.g. medical details, additional needs).

Organisations may decide that, in the event of a parent/guardian being unable to accompany a child to an audition, a worker should be appointed as a chaperone. This must only be undertaken with written parental consent and organisations should consider the impact on supervision ratios and ensure these are maintained.

It may be suitable to designate a mobile telephone for use by parents/guardians and children in an emergency situation. Parents/guardians should be given this telephone number, advised about times for use and asked to respect the fact that it is for all group members and only applies in an emergency.

Further guidance can be sought from Early Years ([www.nippa.org](http://www.nippa.org)) and Our Duty to Care (*Appendix 27*).

## **Safely including disabled children**

Organisations should have an equal opportunities policy that will outline its commitment to including all children.

Attention should be given to access requirements and taking practical steps to include all children. On a practical level, organisations should strive to make venues and activities as accessible as possible to disabled children.

Workers may be reluctant about including disabled children because of a lack of knowledge and fear of 'doing the wrong thing'. Organisations can often allay these fears through contact with disabled children and by providing training on disability issues.

Organisations should contact support organisations specific to the disability for specialist guidance and information.

Further guidance can be sought from the Arts and Disability Forum ([www.artsanddisability.com](http://www.artsanddisability.com)), Disability Action ([www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)), Early Years ([www.nippa.org](http://www.nippa.org)) and NSPCC ([www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)).

## **Daytrips and Residentials**

Daytrips and residentials will encompass different activities than usually take place within an organisation. It is therefore essential that organisations undertake advance preparation and take a number of factors into consideration, including:

- **Clear roles and responsibilities**

The successful planning and implementation of a daytrip or residential requires contribution from a number of key people. Careful coordination and clarity of roles and responsibilities is essential (e.g. group leaders, workers, parents/guardians and children).

It is also good practice for organisations to assign responsibility for organising daytrips and residentials to one worker and, if possible, to appoint a central contact person who can access all details for the venue, activities and emergency contact details for parents/guardians in case of emergency (e.g. a worker who is not participating on the daytrip or residential but will remain at base).

Organisations should also outline who has authority for agreeing to daytrips and residentials, depending on the type of visit (e.g. permission for a short trip during normal hours may be approved by the leader in charge, whereas residentials need the authorisation of the management committee).

Attention should also be given to ratios for general supervision, specific activities and contingency plans to best meet the needs of individual children.

- **Schedule planning and information sharing**

A risk assessment should be undertaken for all elements of the visit, including the planned activities, accommodation, logistics and contingency plans.

Organisations should consult with children and parents/guardians about arrangements for the visit and endeavour to accommodate their views as much as possible. In addition, information should be circulated to parents/guardians, children and workers (e.g. timetables, schedules, activities, venue and transport) and any issues should be dealt with in advance of a visit. Organisations should also ensure that activities, transport arrangements and venues are adequate for children with a disability.

As daytrips and residentials are in addition to the 'normal' activities taking place, organisations must ensure that parental consent is obtained for all aspects of the visit (e.g. scheduled and contingency activities, emergency procedures) and health details for all participants are correct and up to date. Health forms need to be completed and include details about medications being taken etc.

Organisations should also obtain information from parents/guardians in relation to specific activities and practical issues (e.g. issues about a swimming activity may include the child is unable to swim and needs to use floats, the child has a fear of water or the child has a veruca).

- **Policies, procedures and guidelines**

Organisations may be visiting or staying at a venue which already has its own child protection policy and procedures in place (e.g. an Education and Library Board activity centre). If this is the case, a decision should be taken in advance of the visit as to which child protection policy to use (i.e. the organisation's own policy or that of the venue which they are visiting). A copy of the child protection policy and procedures from the venue/host organisation should be requested in advance of the visit and any changes to an organisation's own procedures for the purpose of the visit should be decided upon and clearly communicated to workers, children and parents/guardians. This is particularly important with regards the procedures for reporting concerns and code of behaviour.

Organisations should also develop additional emergency procedures in relation to the visit and associated activities (e.g. dealing with an accident/illness/lost child). Responsibility for welfare issues during the visit (e.g. access to first aid) should be designated to a leader. Procedures should be clearly communicated to all workers who will be present during the visit.

It is essential that organisations ensure equality of opportunity for all individuals involved in the visit. This will include ensuring that disabled children have access to all activities or, where this is not possible, that alternative activities will be available.

A code of behaviour for workers and a code of behaviour for children should be drawn up for the purpose of the visit and clearly communicated to parents/guardians, children and workers. This should involve input from workers and children to include procedures in relation to the planned activities. For example:

- workers must never enter children's bedroom facilities alone. They should knock the door, advise the children they will be entering and always have another member of staff with them.
- in the event that children are allocated to small groups and given free time, it is essential they return to the designated meeting point at the required time.

Sanctions and related procedures should be developed for dealing with breaches of a code of behaviour (e.g. if a child is to be sent home, this should involve being collected by a parent/guardian).

## **Photography and videos**

Organisations wanting to record an activity or event should firstly consider the associated issues and develop a policy on taking and using photographic and/or moving images. This should include the type of images that will appropriately represent an organisation, how the images will be used (e.g. in a quarterly newsletter, or a seasonal events programme) and the process for selecting an image. Consideration should also be given to the length of time an image may be used and how it may be used in the future (e.g. for a celebration event). Additional consideration should apply to the use of images on a website.

Parental consent should be requested in advance of an activity or event, as not all parents/guardians may want their child to appear in photographs and/or videos. Information regarding the purpose and use of the images should also be outlined.

Organisations should ask parents/guardians and other spectators to adhere to organisational policy and procedures in relation to taking photos and videos. Children and parents/guardians should be aware that they can report concerns to the leader.

Organisations that decide not to permit photography or recording by spectators may decide to appoint a photographer and/or a videographer to capture an event. Parental consent for children to appear in photographs and/or videos is required and the appointed individual should be briefed in advance about children for whom parental consent has not been given.

Organisations that do not permit photography or recording, either with specialist equipment or with a mobile phone, may decide to impose sanctions on spectators in breach of this request and these should be clearly communicated to all individuals.

The following guidelines apply to using photographic and video equipment:

- provide a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour.
- issue an I.D. pass to the photographer/videographer, to be worn at all times.
- inform parents/guardians/children that a photographer/videographer will be present.
- obtain written consent from parents/guardians and children in relation to taking and using photographs and/or moving images.
- do not permit unsupervised access to children or one-to-one sessions.
- do not allow sessions outside the remit of the event/brief or at a child's home.

- if the child is named, avoid using their photograph.
- if a photograph is used, avoid naming the child.
- only appropriate images of children in suitable dress should be used, to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Some activities have a greater risk of potential misuse than others (e.g. a dance activity where children are wearing leotards). In these instances, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity as opposed to a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots.
- a procedure should be developed for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to children. This should be in line with an organisation's child protection procedures, ensuring the Deputy/Designated Officer is informed as well as Social Services and/or the PSNI.

Guidelines outlining the conditions for using images should be developed for host organisations, if appropriate (e.g. a host organisation wanting to use a photograph of a group activity to demonstrate the range of venue facilities it has to offer, should use the photograph acknowledging the context within which it was taken and without altering the image).

Consideration should also be given to the storage and movement of images (e.g. all images are kept on a computer accessed only by an appointed worker and all requests to use an image must be made to this person).

Some organisations may decide to take photographs during an audition, to prompt visual recognition during the selection process at a later date. If so, this should be explicitly communicated in advance and should only take place with parental consent and the consent of the child.

Further guidance can be sought from the Northern Ireland Photographic Association ([www.niphoto.co.uk](http://www.niphoto.co.uk)) and the Professional Photographers Association of Northern Ireland ([www.ppani.co.uk](http://www.ppani.co.uk)).

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (section 7)  
Getting It Right (page 12)

## **APPENDIX A SECTOR SPECIFIC ISSUES**

The following issues have been identified in addition to those that already appear in the child protection policy. Please note that, while an issue has been categorised into a particular art form, it may also apply to others.

### **Art & Craft**

- Ensure that there are clear guidelines for workers (e.g. guidance relating to technique / hand positioning), written parental consent has been sought and the child's permission received before any physical contact occurs, following specific written procedures at all times.
- Attention should be given to the type of materials and tools used, the safe storage of materials, dealing with an emergency (e.g. spillage or medical – contact with skin / eyes or an allergic reaction).

### **Circus**

- Supply clear, written guidelines for workers (e.g. correct spotting techniques and positioning) and ensure the child's permission is received before any physical contact occurs. Organisations should also consider delivering practical training sessions with regards to physical contact (e.g. demonstrating good practice to workers in spotting, positioning and teaching techniques).
- Supply clear, written guidelines regarding worker-participant ratios for all groups involved (i.e. the workshop provider and the host organisation).
- It is essential to provide clear guidelines about who is responsible for checking the safety of the equipment in advance of a session (e.g. which worker and from which organisation, if applicable).
- Parents/guardians should be made aware of the need to fit/alter costumes and sound equipment, sometimes at very short notice during a performance and while being worn by the child. Provide guidelines to workers to whom this is applicable and ensure parental consent has been sought in advance.

### **Dance & Drama**

- Ensure that there are clear guidelines for workers (e.g. positioning, posture), written parental consent has been sought and the child's permission has been received before any physical contact occurs, following specific written procedures at all times.

### **Early Years**

- Arts activities within an early year's context will have different issues that should be considered (e.g. physical contact, communication).

- Guidelines should be developed for workers engaging with children in the pre-school sector (e.g. artists engaging in creative play).

## **Literature**

- In addition to ensuring the content and language is appropriate to the age and stage of the group, make sure it will not exclude, offend or degrade any participants.

## **Music & Choral**

- Ensure there are clear guidelines for workers and written parental consent has been gained for one-to-one tuition (e.g. singing lessons, music instruction). It may be necessary to make minor structural alterations to ensure visibility (e.g. to accommodate a drummer using a soundproofed room within a workspace, it may be necessary to install a window) and provide written guidelines to workers regarding physical contact (e.g. regarding breathing technique for singing, teaching a child to play the guitar).
- If a child is learning to play a musical instrument (e.g. guitar or cello), both the parents/guardians and the child should understand that it will involve an element of physical contact and be aware of the precise nature of the contact. This should be undertaken at the first lesson and any uncertainties addressed.
- Should physical contact be necessary as part of a vocal lesson or demonstration, ensure that the child is aware of the need for and is comfortable with the contact by informing them of any actions that need to be taken during the course of the lesson and respecting any resistance. As with musical instruments, necessary and appropriate physical contact should be discussed at the outset with parents/guardians and children.
- Consideration should be given to the content of lyrics and the appropriateness for the age groups, as well as the type of instruments being used (e.g. some instruments, such as the tin whistle and flute, may be viewed as culturally specific).
- Wherever possible, ensure there is more than one adult present during activities with children, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others. In the case of individual singing or instrumental lessons, all rooms should have a glass-paneled door.
- Types of appropriate touch include:
  - touching a musician's head/neck/torso to demonstrate correct breathing and singing technique.
  - holding hands in a circle.
  - clapping hands with a tutor.
  - in the case of instrumental teaching, demonstrating correct fingering/posture on an instrument.

## **Theatre/Performance**

- Ensure that productions with inappropriate content for under 18's are clearly marked as such and remind the audience of this prior to the commencement of a performance. A theatre may wish to reserve the right to request identification from individuals as required. If so, this should be clearly communicated.
- If you offer venue facilities to other user groups, you should 'vet' the content of the production as much as possible by providing clear, written guidelines via a contract with the user group and asking them to provide an outline of production details.
- It is inappropriate to involve child actors in 'sexualised' stage roles and/or to dress child actors in 'sexualised' outfits and/or use inappropriate language/content.
- It is essential to clearly highlight a user group's responsibility to ensure it does not breach child protection policy, procedures and guidelines and understands the sanctions related to a breach in contract. This also applies to visiting performers (e.g. if using a hypnotist, the venue must provide clear written guidelines regarding appropriate and inappropriate content if children - under 18's - will be in audience and if so, that it is the hypnotist's responsibility to ensure all participants selected from the audience are aged 18 and over and that the content is appropriate for children. It should be clearly stated that the responsibility for 'checking' a participant's age lies with the hypnotist and if they are in any doubt, that the participant should not be selected).
- It is essential to provide clear guidelines about who is responsible for checking the safety of equipment, props in advance of a production (e.g. the user group as opposed to the venue).
- To avoid confusion, written guidelines should appear in the contract for user groups with regards responsibility for maintaining supervision ratios lie (i.e. with the user group or with the venue) and the sanctions related for breaching this safety feature.
- To ensure the safety of children taking part in a production, colour coded ID passes may be used to outline area access, highlight who is meant to be there and what their responsibilities are (e.g. area - backstage, dressing room; role – sound technician, wardrobe department, chaperone/supervisor).
- It may be necessary to contract an external security company to manage large events. If so, the contract should clearly state that all workers of the security company are suitable to work in the vicinity and will be properly briefed on child protection procedures and guidelines. It should also outline who has responsibility for implementing this.

- Parents/guardians should be made aware of the need to fit/alter costumes and sound equipment, sometimes at very short notice during a production while being worn by the child. In these instances, it is necessary to provide guidelines to workers to whom this is applicable and ensure parental consent has been sought.
- Ensuring that performance exposure is a positive experience involves prior preparation, assessing the readiness and willingness of child, and creating a supportive environment (including the audience). One example of how this can be achieved is to ensure that an audience is aware of the background to a project or performance, if applicable (e.g. a youth group attending a performance by children with disabilities or a cross community project should understand the nature of the performance, which may be achieved by providing information to leaders and supervisors in advance so they can support the youth group's understanding and develop respect for the performers).
- Identifying supportive individuals within the audience (e.g. parents/guardians, family members, key workers) can have an immensely positive impact upon a child in terms of their sense of achievement, confidence and wellbeing.
- Restricting the use of and/or disallowing unauthorised cameras and videos in workshops or performances as outlined in the Photography and Videos section. However, the use of mobile phones during public performances is difficult to monitor and supervising workers should be properly briefed and sanctions, if applicable, effectively communicated to workers and the audience in advance.
- Appropriate supervision backstage and in dressing room areas is essential. It may be effective to establish additional systems (e.g. using walkie-talkie contact) to assist supervision, particularly for a large group or according to a venue (e.g. dark areas behind stage) or performance (e.g. long waits between scenes).

### **Visual/Film**

- It is essential that parental consent is explicitly sought prior involving children in photography or films. The exact nature of the activity should be highlighted in detail, as should information regarding how/where the material will be used.
- If the material is to be used on the internet, stringent guidelines should be established and adhered to.

**APPENDIX B  
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY CHECKLIST**

**• CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Do you state your intention to keep children safe from harm?				
2 Do you refer to a (minimum 3 year) review of your policy?				

**• RECRUITMENT & SELECTION**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Is there reference to job/role descriptions?				
2 Is there reference to open recruitment process?				
3 Is there reference to Application form?				
4 Is there reference to Declaration form?				
5 Is there reference to Interview?				
6 Is there reference to written references?				
7 Is there reference to regulated position?				
8 Is there reference to AccessNI checks?				

• **EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Is there reference to Induction? - to organisational policies - to their role - acknowledgement of induction				
2 Is there reference to Probationary (staff)/Trial (volunteers) period? - agreed timeframe - confirm post in writing				
3 Is there reference to Training? - Particular skills (as appropriate) - Child protection				
4 Is there reference to procedures for supervision and support?				
5 Is there reference to Annual Appraisal/Review?				

• **REPORTING CONCERNS**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Does your policy refer to Designated Officer(s)?				
2 Does your policy refer to the Designated Officer's role and responsibilities?				
3 Does your policy refer to/outline your recording systems for child protection: - concerns - disclosures - allegations against staff/volunteers?				
4 Does your policy refer to/outline your systems for reporting child protection concerns?				
5 Does your policy outline what you mean by confidentiality and its limits?				
6 Does your policy refer to referral to the DWC (NI) List?				

• **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Does your policy contain positive statements about how you expect workers to behave towards children?				
2 Does your policy outline behaviours to be avoided?				
3 Does your policy outline unacceptable behaviours?				
4 Does your policy refer to anti bullying guidelines?				
5 Does your policy refer to guidelines relating to physical contact?				
6 Does your policy refer to guidelines relating to additional needs?				
7 Does your policy outline sanctions? - For staff/volunteers - For children				
8 Is it tailored to your activities?				

• **SHARING INFORMATION**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Does your policy refer to information sought from parents/guardians?				
2 Does your policy refer to a complaints procedure for: Children? Staff/volunteers? Parents/guardians?				
3 Does your policy outline how information is shared with: Children? Parents/guardians? Staff/volunteers?				
4 Does your policy inform staff/volunteers what and how written records should be kept?				
5 Does your policy inform staff of the grievance procedure?				
6 Does your policy inform volunteers, parents/guardians & children of your complaints procedure?				

• **GENERAL SAFETY & MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**

	<b>MET</b>	<b>NOT MET</b>	<b>ACTION / When? What? Who?</b>	<b>ATTAINED Date</b>
1 Do you have a named or appointed first aid person?				
2 Do you have procedures for recording: - accidents - incidents?				
3 Do you ensure transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose?				
4 Do you have adequate and up to date insurance?				
5 Do you have written procedures for dealing with emergencies?				
6 Do you have regular fire drills?				
7 Do you have up to date list of emergency telephone numbers?				
8 Do you ensure that workers are qualified and competent in their role?				
9 Do you have someone responsible for ensuring safety of equipment?				
10 Do you have guidance for supervision of children?				
11 Do you carry out a risk assessment for daytrips and residentials?				
12 Do you have supervision ratios for daytrips and residentials?				
13 Do you use your child protection reporting procedures or those of where you are having the daytrip/residential?				
14 Do you have guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residentials?				

**Further guidance:** Getting It Right ([www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org))

## **APPENDIX C USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **PSNI Child Abuse Investigation Units**

From 31 March 2008, Child Abuse Investigation Units have replaced the CARE units.

A District (North and West Belfast) 028 9070 0604

B District (South and East Belfast) 028 9025 9832

C District (Castlereagh, Carryduff, Dundonald) 028 9056 1767

D District (Lisburn, Antrim, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus) 028 9448 2633

### **Health and Social Services Trusts – Gateway Teams**

#### **Belfast Trust**

North and West Belfast 028 9032 0840

South and East Belfast 028 9020 4550

From September 2008, all Belfast referrals will be made to 028 9020 4550

#### **Northern Trust**

Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush and Coleraine 028 7032 5462

Ballymena, Magherafelt and Cookstown 028 7965 1020

Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey and Larne 028 9334 0165

#### **Southern Trust**

Craigavon 028 3834 3011

Dungannon 028 8772 2821 ext 3429

Newry 028 3082 5152

#### **South-Eastern Trust**

Dunmurry and Greater Lisburn 028 90602705

Newcastle and Downpatrick 028 44613511

Bangor, Newtownards and Ards Peninsula 028 91818518

**Western Trust**

Enniskillen 028 6634 4037

Omagh 028 8283 5043

L'Derry 028 7131 4090

**Out of Hours Emergency Social Work Service**

**Belfast Trust** 028 9056 5444

**Northern Trust** 028 9446 8833

**Southern Trust** Craigavon & Dungannon 028 3833 4444 / Newry 028 3083 5000

**South Eastern Trust** 028 9056 5444

**Western Trust** Enniskillen 028 6638 2000 / Omagh 028 8283 3100 / L'Derry 028 7134 5171

## **Useful organisations**

### **AccessNI**

Brooklyn  
65 Knock Road  
Belfast  
BT5 6LE  
Tel: 028 9025 9100  
[www.accessni.gov.uk](http://www.accessni.gov.uk)

### **Child Care Policy Directorate**

DHSSPS  
Room D2.10, Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 9052 2131 / 028 9052 2644 / 028 9052 8288  
[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

### **Children's Law Centre**

Philips House  
York Street  
Belfast  
BT15 1AB  
Tel: 028 9024 5704  
[www.childrenslawcentre.org](http://www.childrenslawcentre.org)

### **Kidscape**

2 Grosvenor Gardens  
London  
SW1W 0DH  
Tel: 020 7730 3300  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Early Years**

6C Wildflower Way  
Apollo Road  
Boucher Road  
Belfast  
BT12 6AT  
Tel: 028 9066 2825  
[www.nippa.org](http://www.nippa.org)

### **NSPCC**

Northern Ireland Divisional Office  
Jennymount Court  
North Derby Street  
Belfast  
BT15 3HN  
Tel: 028 9035 1135  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Volunteer Development Agency**

129 Ormeau Road  
Belfast  
BT7 1SH  
Tel: 028 9023 6100  
[www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)

**YouthNet**

5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Premier Business Centre  
20 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GD  
Tel: 028 9033 1880  
[www.youthnetni.org.uk](http://www.youthnetni.org.uk)

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (appendix 31)

## **APPENDIX D SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **PUBLICATIONS**

An Introduction to the Children (NI) Order 1995  
Available from: The Stationery Office (028 9023 8451)

Buskers Guide to Inclusion  
Available from: [www.commonthreads.org.uk](http://www.commonthreads.org.uk)

Choosing To Protect – April 2008 Version  
A guide to using the Protection of Children, Northern Ireland [POC (NI)] Service  
Available from: [www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/poc.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/poc.pdf)

Cooperating to Safeguard Children  
Volume 6, Regulations and Guidelines of the Children (NI) Order 1995  
Available from: The Stationery Office (028 9023 8451)

Creative Youth Partnerships  
Child Protection Code of Practice  
Available from: [www.cypni.org.uk](http://www.cypni.org.uk)

Getting It Right  
Standards of Good Practice for Child Protection  
Available from: [www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)

Our Duty to Care  
Principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people  
Available from: [www.volunteering-ni.org](http://www.volunteering-ni.org)

## **WEBSITES**

### **Anti bullying**

- Bullying Online [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- Kidscape [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- Anti-bullying Alliance [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- ChildLine [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **First aid**

- British Red Cross [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)
- St John's Ambulance [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk)
- Department for Education & Skills (DfES) [www.dfes.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications)

### **Protecting children online**

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- Stop it Now! [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)
- Childnet International [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)
- Department for Education & Skills (DfES) [www.safety.ngfl.gov.uk/schools](http://www.safety.ngfl.gov.uk/schools)
- Get Safe Online [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)

**Further guidance:** Our Duty to Care (appendix 32)

# **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**

‘Any adult at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect should be able to access support to enable them to live a life free from violence and abuse.’

(Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: Regional Policy and Procedural Guidance, 2006)

## **Introduction**

The aim of this guidance is to outline the practice and procedures, for paid and voluntary staff , to contribute to the prevention of abuse of vulnerable adults through raising awareness and providing a clear framework for action when abuse is suspected.

In the course of our duties staff may become aware of situations where a vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse or is being abused. It is important that staff are alert to signs of abuse and take appropriate action to safeguard vulnerable adults.

## **Who is a vulnerable adult?**

A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because he or she has a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old and frail, or has some form of illness.

Because of his or her vulnerability the individual may be in receipt of a care service in his or her own home, in the community or be resident in a residential care home, nursing home or other institutional setting.

## **Why do we need to protect Vulnerable Adults?**

Vulnerable adults are entitled to have their civil and human rights upheld and to live a life free from abuse. They need to be treated with respect and dignity, be able to choose how to live their lives independently. They should be afforded the opportunity to participate in their local community as active citizens.

They should also be able to fulfil personal aspirations and realize potential in all aspects of their daily lives. This includes being able to get support services and someone to speak for them, and having their voice heard in decisions that affect their lives.

If abuse does occur, vulnerable adults also need to be assured that they will be protected by the law and have their civil and human rights upheld in the course of any investigation that takes place.

## **What makes an adult vulnerable?**

The definition of vulnerable adult is linked to the range of services targeted at people who by virtue of the need to access those services is more likely to render them vulnerable. This includes the services of a residential care home, a nursing home, domiciliary and health care services, prison and probation services, welfare services under the supporting people programme, direct payment services and services offered to adults who have particular needs generated by age, a disability or health impairment.

## **What is meant by work with a vulnerable adult?**

Under the new Vetting and Barring Scheme legislation, work with vulnerable adults is expressed in terms of 'regulated activity' or 'controlled activity'. Regulated activity includes activities like teaching, training, instructing, caring, supervising, offering advice and guidance and transport. It also includes any work which provides the opportunity for contact with a child or vulnerable adult in places like schools, children's hospitals, childcare facilities, young offenders' centres, children's homes, nursing homes or residential care homes. Certain positions of responsibility are also considered to be regulated activity, like the Commissioner for Children and Young People or a school governor.

Controlled activity includes ancillary support work in the health, further education and adult social care sectors. Controlled activity also includes those who have access to health, personal social services, educational and family proceedings records who work in places like a Health and Social Care Trust or an Education and Library Board.

From 12 November 2010 when someone new is recruited to work with vulnerable adults the individual must be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The organization must check that the person is registered before allowing them to commence employment. This will determine whether or not the organization can allow them to take up regulated activity.

For further information on safe recruitment process and vetting checks see page 7 Recruitment and Selection.

## What is adult abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse can take many forms:

### What are the forms of abuse?

#### **Physical abuse**

Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.

#### **Psychological abuse**

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

#### **Financial or material abuse**

Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not give his or her consent.

#### **Neglect or acts of omission**

Withdrawing or not giving the help that a vulnerable adult needs, so causing them to suffer.

#### **Discriminatory abuse**

Abusing a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

#### **Institutional abuse**

Abuse or mistreatment by a regime or by any individual within any building where care is provided.

### What are the signs?

**Physical** – fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.

**Psychological** – withdrawn, too eager to do every thing they are asked, compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used, not being able to concentrate or focus.

**Financial** – having unusual difficulty with finances, over protection of money and things they own, not paying bills, and lack of normal home comforts.

**Sexual** – genital irritation, sexually transmitted diseases, offensive language, recoiling contact, persistent sexually inappropriate behaviour.

**Neglect** – having pain or discomfort, overly hungry, thirsty or untidy, deterioration in health, changes in behaviour.

**Discriminatory** – the person is not receiving the care services they require, carer overly critical or makes insulting remarks about the person, person made to dress differently from how they wish.

**Institutional** – lack of personal clothing / possessions, no care plan, frequent hospital admissions, instances of unsatisfactory professional practice, ill treatment or gross misconduct.

<b>The above list is meant as a guide and is not intended to be exhaustive.</b>	

## **Who might the abuser be?**

### **It can be anyone:**

- ⇒ A partner, child, relative or friend.
- ⇒ A paid or volunteer carer.
- ⇒ A health, social care or other worker.
- ⇒ A person claiming to be an employer of one of the above
- ⇒ A stranger.

## **Where might the abuse occur?**

### **Abuse can happen anywhere:**

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

## **How can you be alert to signs of abuse?**

- ⇒ You may see or hear something happen.
- ⇒ A vulnerable adult may disclose an allegation to you.
- ⇒ A colleague, family member or somebody else may tell you something that causes you concern.
- ⇒ You may notice injuries or physical signs that cause you concern.
- ⇒ You may notice either the victim or perpetrator behaving in a certain way that alerts you something may be wrong.

## What should you do if you suspect abuse?

Remember your role is primarily supportive rather than investigative.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DO NOT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ Be open and honest about your concerns</li><li>⇒ Stay calm.</li><li>⇒ Listen very carefully.</li><li>⇒ Ensure that no one is in immediate danger.</li><li>⇒ Call for emergency services if urgent medical / police help required.</li><li>⇒ Be aware that medical and forensic evidence might be needed.</li><li>⇒ Encourage the person not to wash or bathe as this could disturb medical/forensic evidence.</li><li>⇒ Tell the person that they did the right thing in telling you.</li><li>⇒ Express concern and sympathy about what has happened.</li><li>⇒ Reassure that the information will be taken seriously and give information about what will happen next.</li><li>⇒ Let the person know that they will be kept involved at every stage; that they will be told the outcome and who will do this.</li><li>⇒ Give the person contact details so that they can report any further issues or ask any questions that may arise.</li><li>⇒ Explain that you must tell your line manager or designated officer.</li><li>⇒ Inform your line manager or designated officer immediately.</li><li>⇒ Explain what you have heard or seen that has given rise to your concerns.</li><li>⇒ Give as much information as possible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>⇒ Stop someone disclosing to you.</li><li>⇒ Be afraid to act on your concerns.</li><li>⇒ Press the person for more details.</li><li>⇒ Promise to keep secrets or make promises you cannot keep.</li><li>⇒ Gossip about the disclosure or pass on the information to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know.</li><li>⇒ Contact the alleged abuser.</li><li>⇒ Attempt to investigate yourself.</li><li>⇒ Tidy up, as this may disturb forensic evidence.</li><li>⇒ Be judgmental.</li><li>⇒ Leave details of your concerns on a voicemail or by e-mail.</li></ul>

## **Who do I contact if I suspect abuse?**

It is important to remember that if a vulnerable adult is in **immediate danger** you should contact the emergency services immediately by dialling **999**.

If you have any concerns discuss them with your line manager whose responsibility it will be to refer these concerns to the appropriate Health and Social Care Trust Adult Protection Co-ordinator. All the telephone numbers you will need can be found at the end of this leaflet.

If you have raised your concerns in the above way but either the vulnerable person or your line manager is reluctant to proceed with the referral, you should make a record and contact your HSC Trust's Adult Protection Co-ordinator or a Designated Officer with responsibility for Adult Protection.

If all mechanisms for reporting allegations of abuse have been exhausted without your concern being taken seriously, it should be noted that the Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 provides for the active safeguarding and protection of what are commonly known as 'whistle-blowers'.

### **Remember:**

**We are all responsible for the protection of vulnerable adults.**

