

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Policy Standards

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



Safeguarding Children and Adults: Policy Checklist

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
1.1	The organisation has a written safeguarding policy which acknowledges that all people have the right to live a life free from abuse and exploitation; outlines the organisation's commitment to uphold that right; and is explicit about the organisation's zero-tolerance of abuse wherever it occurs.						
1.2	The safeguarding policy is 'owned' at all levels within the organisation. The head of the organisation directs the development of policy, is responsible for its approval and ensures that it is fully implemented and reviewed.						
1.3	The safeguarding policy statement is clearly displayed and everyone involved with the organisation is aware that the policy exists, what it aims to achieve and the steps that will be taken to achieve those aims.						
1.4	The safeguarding policy is supported by robust procedures and guidelines.						



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
1.5	The safeguarding policy is supported by other organisational policies and procedures aimed at promoting safe and healthy work practices.						
1.6	The safeguarding policy, procedures, guidelines and Code of Behaviour are subject to regular review to ensure that they are fit for purpose; a review at least once every three years is referred to.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
2.1	There is a clear job description for staff and role description for volunteers and a personnel/volunteer specification outlining the key skills and abilities and qualifications, if any, required. This includes a reference to regulated activity where appropriate.						
2.2	There is an open recruitment process.						
2.3	There is an application form that covers past work/volunteering.						
2.4	There is a declaration and consent form requesting information on previous convictions and investigations, if any.						
2.5	There is an interview process appropriate to the post/role and task.						
2.6	Written references are sought and followed up orally when necessary.						
2.7	If a professional qualification is a requirement of the post, a registration check is made with the appropriate Professional Body.						



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
2.8	Where required, consent to conduct an AccessNI disclosure check is obtained from the staff member/volunteer. Once this is received an appropriate AccessNI disclosure check is carried out.						
2.9	The post is approved by management.						



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

Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
			What?	By whom?	By when?	
3.1 There is an induction process into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisational policies Their role 						
3.2 There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed timeframe Post is confirmed in writing 						
3.3 Relevant training is identified in induction and provided appropriate to the post/role.						
3.4 There is a procedure for support and supervision appropriate to the post/role.						
3.5 There is an annual appraisal for staff and annual review for volunteers.						
3.6 Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision; and annual appraisals.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
4.1	All staff/volunteers are aware of what is meant by abuse of a child and adult, factors which can increase vulnerability, where abuse can occur and who can abuse.						
4.2	There is a named Designated Officer/ Nominated Manager who has responsibility for dealing with concerns about actual or suspected abuse and disclosures, which come to light within the organisation. The role, responsibilities and contact details of the Designated Officer/Nominated Manager are clearly outlined.						
4.3	There is a written procedure for staff/volunteers for responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected abuse.						
4.4	There is a procedure for the Designated Officer/Nominated Manager to report concerns about actual or suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities.						



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
4.5	There is a procedure for reporting and recording allegations against staff and volunteers.						
4.6	There is a system to communicate the reporting procedure to staff/volunteers to ensure they are familiar with it.						
4.7	There is an outline of what is meant by confidentiality and its limitations.						
4.8	There is a whistleblowing policy and procedure.						
4.9	There is an outline of the procedure for referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and a Professional Regulatory Body, where appropriate.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
5.1	A risk assessment is carried out to identify and evaluate risks.						
5.2	Risk assessments are carried out for all activities including day trips/residentials.						
5.3	The identified risks are managed by putting in place risk-reducing measures.						
5.4	All identified risks and risk-reducing measures are recorded and reviewed at least once a year.						
5.5	The organisation has a procedure in place for reporting, recording and reviewing accidents, incidents and near misses.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
6.1	The organisation has an ethos of inclusion, transparency and openness which is communicated to children, adults at risk, parents, carers, advocates, family members, staff and volunteers.						
6.2	There are appropriate procedures in place for parents, carers, advocates, children/adults at risk to share concerns they may have or to make complains about the organisation.						
6.3	Complaints procedures are communicated appropriately to children, adults at risk, parents, carers, advocates, staff and volunteers.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
7.1	Consent forms are sought for all activities from the adult at risk, those with parental responsibility in the case of children, or carer where appropriate.						
7.2	There is a clear outline of what confidentiality means in relation to recording, use and management of personal information.						
7.3	The policy informs staff and volunteers what information needs to be recorded.						
7.4	The policy informs staff and volunteers how written records should be secured, stored and eventually disposed of.						
7.5	The policy outlines what and how information is shared with relevant people within and outside of the organisation.						
7.6	Children and adults at risk involved with the organisation should have access to information held about them.						

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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
7.7	The policy informs staff of the grievance procedure.						
7.8	There is a procedure in place that outlines how information is shared with children, adults at risk, parents and carers.						



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

Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
8.1	The Code of Behaviour contains positive statements about how staff and volunteers are expected to behave towards children and adults at risk.						
8.2	The Code of Behaviour outlines the behaviours to be avoided.						
8.3	The Code of Behaviour outlines unacceptable behaviours.						
8.4	The Code of Behaviour includes anti-bullying guidelines.						
8.5	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines relating to physical contact and intimate care.						
8.6	The Code contains guidelines relating to physical intervention and restraint.						
8.7	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines relating to diversity and additional care and support needs.						



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
8.8	The Code of Behaviour contains guidelines on the handling of service user money.						
8.9	The Code contains guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.						
8.10	The Code of Behaviour outlines the sanctions in the case of staff/volunteers breaching the Code.						
8.11	The Code of Behaviour sets out an expectation that everyone in the organisation and everyone who uses its services or participates in its activities or visits should relate to each other in a mutually respectful way.						
8.12	The Code of Behaviour is tailored to your services/activities.						



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

Checklist	Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
			What?	By whom?	By when?	
9.1	All workers have, or have access to, a named or appointed first aid person for each activity.					
9.2	Transport is roadworthy and adequate for purpose.					
9.3	There is adequate, appropriate and up to date insurance.					
9.4	There are written procedures for dealing with emergencies.					
9.5	There are regular fire drills and these are recorded.					
9.6	There is an up to date list of emergency telephone numbers clearly displayed.					
9.7	All workers are qualified and competent in their role.					
9.8	There is a system for ensuring safety of equipment.					
9.9	Attendance lists are kept for each activity.					



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Checklist		Supporting Evidence	Fully Met?	If not fully met: action needed			Attained Date
				What?	By whom?	By when?	
9.10	There are clear ratios for various activities.						
9.11	Risk assessments are carried out for all activities including day trips and/or residential activity.						
9.12	Agreement on which organisation's procedures will be followed on a residential activity.						
9.13	There are clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements for residential.						



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Glossary

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

*Definitions from 1st April 2016



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