

NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

Guidelines for the Protection Of Children and Vulnerable Adults

August 2023

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose

These Guidelines are intended to provide some guidance about what policies and procedures are needed to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are protected from all harm. More detailed procedures consistent with these Guidelines need to be drawn up by the leaders of the organisations and approved by the Congregational Session and/or Committee. The Appendices are intended to provide assistance in this task.

1.2 Audience

These Guidelines are aimed primarily at the leaders of organisations that care for children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout the denomination. However they are applicable to all members of congregations who are jointly responsible for the care and protection of our children. Parents, who are not members of a congregation, should also be made aware of the content of these Guidelines.

1.3 Scope

These Guidelines are not meant to be taken as comprehensive and exhaustive. They should be read in conjunction with the other resources referred to at page 16. The Appendices are provided as further advice on how the Guidelines can be put into operation.

1.4 Training

It is recommended that these Guidelines form part of a training course so that all aspects of Child Protection can be covered and questions answered.

Policies

2.1 Mission Statement

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland acknowledges its duty under God to care for its children and to promote their full development while protecting them from harm.

2.2 Protecting Children

There is a moral obligation on anyone accepting responsibility for children and young people to provide adequate care or pass on information concerning suspected or actual abuse of a child. Any failure to do so may leave them legally liable. In all policies and procedures the principle must be that “the welfare of children is of paramount importance.”

2.3 Protecting Workers

The primary aim of the following policies and procedures is to protect children and vulnerable adults. However properly constructed and implemented policies and procedures also serve to prevent anyone who works with children to be in a position to abuse them. They can also be used to avoid improper claims of abuse being issued against workers. Therefore it is vital for any organisation to develop policies and procedures to protect itself and its workers as well as the children under its care.

2.4 Adhering to the Law

The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults is a legal requirement on everyone under the Law in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland, following its scriptural foundations, seeks to obey the civil law in all aspects and requires its members to follow the dictates of the following Orders and Laws (as well as other relevant legislation) in spirit as well as in letter.

2.41 The main relevant legislation relating to child protection in Northern Ireland includes:

- The Criminal Law Act 1967
- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Offenders Act 1997
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- The Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

2.42 The main relevant legislation relating to child protection in Ireland includes:

- The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- The Child Care Acts 1991
- The Domestic Violence Acts 1996

- The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- Children First Guidelines 1999
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children's Act 2001
- Children Trafficking and Prostitution/Sex Offender Act 2001
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Health Act 2004
- The Equal Status Act 2004
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2006
- Criminal Justice Act 2006

2.5 Insurance Requirements

In order to maintain the insurance cover needed by all our congregations it is required by most Insurance Companies that congregations fulfil both the legal requirements and also the best practice in the care and protection of children. Information and advice can be obtained from the congregation's Insurance Company.

2.6 Best Practice

Work with children is a very specialised activity that requires knowledge and commitment. There are many good training courses and books to provide leaders with the necessary skills to work with children. The information and advice in these Guidelines and in the Appendices, are intended to give guidance on the best practice. However, there is no substitute for training and experience in implementing this advice.

Definitions

3.1 Children

A child is anyone under the age of 18. Any reference to child in these Guidelines should be read as also referring to young people.

3.2 Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who cannot take care of themselves. Vulnerable adults may not be able to protect themselves against significant harm or unfair treatment. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, visual or hearing problems, are old and frail, or are ill. Because of this, these adults may receive a care service in their own home or in the community. They may live in a residential care home, nursing home or a similar setting.

3.3 Regulated position

A leader in a regulated position is an adult working, either as a volunteer or in a paid position, in a role which has direct contact with children or vulnerable adults.

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Recruitment

4.1 Principles

In order to prevent persons with a propensity for the abuse of children from gaining access to children it is important to have a well-ordered recruitment procedure. The following practices are considered necessary to avoid giving access to children to persons with convictions, police cautions or suspicions of child abuse against them. However these practices are no replacement for good codes of behaviour for leaders and children connected with organisations.

This section is expanded into a step by step best practice process in Appendix 2.

4.2 Application Forms

The properly approved application form (See Appendix 3) should be filled in by everyone seeking to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. An application form provided for and completed by the applicant should include declarations as to convictions, police cautions or suspicions of child abuse. It should also include a statement of willingness to undergo a criminal record check. The identity of applicants should be verified through appropriate ID as required by Access NI or National Vetting Bureau.

4.3 References

When considered appropriate, two references should be obtained from people who are not family members. These references should be taken up before the applicant is permitted substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults.

4.4 Interviews

It is recommended that all applicants for any post, paid or volunteer, be interviewed by at least two people. Interviews should be conducted according to a set of criteria drawn up before the interviews.

4.5 Vetting Procedures

All successful applicants will be required to complete a criminal record check.

4.6 Training in Child Protection and Youth Work

Congregations should make use of training programmes which help leaders/helpers to become aware of what constitutes abuse, how to avoid it, and the referral procedure in suspected cases of abuse. Where appropriate, all leaders/helpers should also undertake suitable training in children or youth work.

4.7 Smaller Congregations

Smaller congregations or those dealing with volunteers or helpers may find a streamlined recruitment process to be more suitable. While a formal recruitment process is not necessary it is imperative that all new applicants must be vetted. Further information on Recruitment is contained within Appendix 2.

4.8 Employment of ex-offenders

All applicants must be provided with a copy of the policy set out in Appendix 4. A criminal conviction record will not in itself prevent an applicant from taking up a post, this will depend on the post, and the nature and type of offence.

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Vetting

5.1 Background

All those involved taking up a regulated position to work with children and young people whether in a paid or volunteer capacity must be vetted.

The process of vetting leaders involves a criminal records check which will show if an applicant has any criminal convictions. A person who does have a criminal conviction will not necessarily be barred from working with children and young people. In line with statutory obligations, only convictions considered relevant will be taken into consideration.

5.2 Vetting Procedure in Northern Ireland

The NSPCI is not large enough to support registration as an umbrella body to carry out checks. Instead, all checks must be submitted to AccessNI through a third party umbrella body.

A list of umbrella bodies are available from [NI Direct](#).

The designated person should contact the umbrella organisation and initiate the vetting process. The umbrella body will provide details of their process.

The designated person will receive the disclosure certificate from the umbrella body and it will be for the them and leader in charge to decide on whether the applicant should be accepted.

5.3 Vetting Procedure in Ireland

Persons who are subject to Garda Vetting will receive a Vetting Application Form (including electronic form) from the National Vetting Bureau liaison.

The applicant completes the application form and signs it, providing authorisation for the Garda Vetting process.

The liaison person will send the form on to the National Vetting Bureau. Where a person applying for vetting is under 18 years of age, a declaration of consent must be made on his/her behalf by a parent or guardian of the person.

On receipt of an application for vetting disclosure in respect of a person concerning relevant work or activities, the National Vetting Bureau will make such enquiries with An Garda Síochána or a Scheduled Organisation as it deems necessary to establish whether there is any criminal record or specified information relating to the person.

A Garda Vetting disclosure is issued directly to the liaison person in the relevant organisation. It will be for the designated person and the leader in charge to decide whether the applicant should be accepted.

Garda vetting will only be conducted on the written consent of an individual vetting subject.

An individual vetting subject may obtain a copy of their Garda Vetting disclosure from the liaison person to whom it was issued.

Codes of Practice for Organisations

6.1 Principles

In order to support and help children and their families, the organisation and its leaders/helpers need a set of practices which protects both children and the organisation. A good team procedure and a code of behaviour for both leaders/helpers and members provides a means of preventing misuse of discipline, avoids corporal punishment, counteracts bullying or scapegoating and lessens potential for abuse by adults or young people.

6.2 Guidelines and Codes of Practice

It is essential that the Session and/or Committee of each congregation and its organisations should formally accept these Child Protection Guidelines and ensure they have appropriate Codes of Practice in operation.

6.3 Leader-in Charge

Every organisation that works with children should have a properly appointed and trained leader-in-charge. This person is responsible for the smooth running of the organisation according to set Codes of Practice. He/she must be in control of all the planning, preparation, management and administration of the organisation. The Leader-in-charge must be fully aware of the Child Protection procedures in operation within the congregation. Further information on Leadership is contained in Appendix 5.

6.4 Membership Lists

Each organisation in a congregation that works with children or vulnerable adults is required to maintain a complete and up-to-date list of the leaders and members of the organisation. This should contain name, address, parent or guardian and contact number in case of emergency. Because these details are kept on file, either on computer or hard copy, the congregation should be registered with the Data Protection Agency.

6.5 Ratios of leaders to children

Recognising the legal requirements for the ratio of children/young people to leaders during youth activities, all leaders are required to abide, where possible, by the stated supervision ratios quoted in Appendix 5.

6.6 Appropriate Programmes

To ensure the safety of children it is vital that activities be chosen that are suitable to the age and ability of the children or vulnerable adults.

Care should be taken to ensure that, as far as possible, no member is excluded from activities because of disability or other factors. When using special equipment leaders must ensure there is adequate supervision by trained helpers. If technology is used or permitted in an organisation then the cautions suggested in Appendix 6 should be observed.

6.7 Health and Safety Practices

It is vital for the protection of children from physical harm that congregational committees and leaders of organisations should ensure that premises and practices conform to standard Health and Safety criteria. A Review of Premises, Fire Precautions and First Aid Equipment should be carried out on a regular basis to meet Insurance standards. More information on Health and Safety is contained in Appendix 7.

6.8 Relationships with Children

Prevention of abuse depends largely on good observation and knowledge of the child as an individual. Leaders and volunteers should know their children well enough to be able to tell if the child's attitudes or behaviour changes or s/he shows any of the symptoms of abuse described in Appendix 1.

6.9 Criteria for Contact with Children

All workers with children must be aware of the dangers of inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children. As far as possible no physical contact should be initiated with children or vulnerable adults. For further advice see Appendix 8.

6.10 Code of Behaviour for Children

All organisations must make it clear to the children, who form its membership, and to their parents what is expected of the children in terms of behaviour. Where such behaviour falls short of the standards it must be corrected using an agreed set of sanctions. Physical punishment should never be used as a sanction. Appendix 10 sets out an example of a Code of Behaviour for children.

6.11 Anti-Bullying Measures

It is important to recognise that bullying is a very common form of abuse, both physical and emotional and causes great distress. Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred; they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst bullying can result in a child attempting suicide. All organisations should develop an anti-bullying policy and ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of it and that it is included in training. More advice is included in Appendix 10.

Disclosure of Abuse

7.1 Responsibility for Disclosure

While the NSPCI recognises that the primary responsibility for the care of children rests with the parents or guardians, the denomination as a whole has a responsibility for the well-being of children and for protecting them. This means that everyone should remain alert to circumstances in which children may be harmed and, when they have knowledge or a suspicion that a child is being abused, they should report their concern.

7.2 Procedures for Handling Disclosures

Responding to incidents of alleged or suspected abuse must be based upon clearly defined procedures. Knowing what to do, whom to contact, and who needs to know, will ensure that people are prepared to share their knowledge of suspected abuse. Appendix 12 deals in more detail about how an adult should deal with disclosure of alleged abuse from a child.

7.3 Keeping Records

As explained in Appendix 12, it is vital that accurate records must be kept of any disclosures of alleged or suspected abuse. For this purpose a sample Report of Concern Form has been included as Appendix 13. A Form such as this or a written report is needed to form the basis of any agreed action to be taken over the incident(s). If referral to a statutory agency is made these records may be used as evidence so they must be retained in a secure place.

7.4 Data Registration

Where records of leaders, members or reports are kept, either on computer or on hard copy, the congregation needs to be registered with the Data Protection Registrar.

Referral Procedures

8.1 The System of Referral within organisations

The leader in charge of each organisation must be fully conversant with the referral procedure in a suspected case of abuse. Leaders/helpers in organisations should be clear about how to seek help if they are concerned that a child has come to their organisation having experienced some form of abuse. They should also know how to have their concerns dealt with.

8.2 The Designated Person and Deputy

A Designated Person in the congregation should be appointed by the Session. The purpose of this post is to provide consultation and advice to the Session and organisations on Child Protection and contacting Statutory Agencies when necessary. This person should receive appropriate training in child protection and in their duties as Designated Person. Where possible, e.g. in larger congregations, a Deputy Designated person should be appointed to cover for the Designated Person when he or she is not available.

It is recommended that the Designated Person should not be the Minister or involved directly in the Sunday School or similar groups.

In order to facilitate referrals the name and contact details of the Designated Officer should be displayed either in the Church or Hall.

Smaller congregations who share a Minister may find it practical to have an individual Designated Person for each congregation but a shared Child Protection Group. This should only be done on the understanding that this Group must be ready to meet as soon as there is a referral made regarding any of the Churches under its watch.

8.3 Child Protection Group

All reports of suspicions of abuse should be considered by a Child Protection Group within each congregation. This group may consist of the minister (or minister in charge), the Clerk of Session (or Chairperson of the Committee), the Designated Person (and/or Deputy D.P.) and another appropriate person. The leader in charge of the organisation involved in the complaint should also be involved in the Group discussion, unless he or she is the subject of the complaint. This Group should meet within one week of receiving a Report of Concern to decide on appropriate action to be taken. Such action may involve one or more of the following:

- Simply retaining the Report of Concern on file;
- Referring the matter back to the Leader-in-charge of the relevant organisation for appropriate action;
- Referring the matter to the Minister of the congregation for action;
- Referring the matter to an outside agency.

8.4 Referral to Outside Agencies

A good system for handling complaints of child abuse should be instituted in each congregation. Appendix 14 sets out the procedure in more detail and with a supporting flowchart. When it is thought appropriate the Designated Person should approach a statutory agency for advice on how to proceed. If the Child Protection Group think it is necessary the Designated Person should refer a case to a statutory agency for further action.

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Monitoring Responsibilities

9.1 Leader-in-Charge

The Leader in charge of an organisation is responsible for the training and supervision of leaders and helpers so that they are not put into a vulnerable position in relation to children under their care.

He/she is also responsible for ensuring an appropriate programme is constructed for the children in the organisation.

The behaviour of children during organisational activities is the overall responsibility of the leader in charge.

The leader in charge is the primary contact person for any complaint of abuse made against a leader or child in the organisation.

He/she should also be willing to receive reports of suspected abuse of a child in the organisation by persons outside the organisation.

9.2 Designated Person

The Designated Person (or her/his Deputy) is responsible for advising organisations on the implementing of appropriate policies and procedures.

He/she is responsible for reviewing policies and procedures with the leader in charge of the organisation and presenting these to the Session/Committee for approval.

All complaints of child abuse should be referred to the Designated Person by leaders in charge of organisations or by leaders or helpers within the organisation or by parents or other adults.

The Designated Person is responsible for investigating reports of suspected breaches of policies or procedures in the first instance. He/she should then convene the Child Protection Group to consider the complaint and decide on appropriate action.

The Designated Person should consult with the relevant outside agency on appropriate action on complaints. He/she should follow up any referrals made to outside agencies by keeping in contact with the appropriate person to whom a referral was made.

9.3 Session/Committee

The Session or Committee has the duty to recruit and appoint everyone involved in work with children within the congregation using best practice in the recruitment process.

Policies and practices in operation in all organisations working with children should be approved and reviewed by the Session and Committee with the advice of the Designated Person.

The Session or Committee is responsible for appointing suitable people to serve as the Designated Person for Child Protection and the Deputy D.P. within the congregation.

Session/Committee should be informed in general terms about any complaints dealt with by the congregation's Child Protection Group.

Session/Committee is responsible for reporting to Presbytery about the implementation of Child Protection Guidelines in the congregation using the following proforma:

"The congregation of wishes to report that it has implemented the denominational Child Protection Guidelines as recommended through the Implementation Strategy. The necessary documentation is available for the inspection of Presbytery and will be updated regularly and can be viewed by the appropriate commissioners at Presbytery Visitations."

9.4 Presbytery

Presbytery is responsible for ensuring that Sessions/Committees fulfil the requirements of these Child Protection Guidelines and that all congregations within its jurisdiction conform to legal and insurance requirements with respect to Child Protection.

In cases where it is inappropriate for a complaint of suspected child abuse to be dealt with by the congregational Child Protection Group (e.g. where the abuse is against a minister or member of Session or Committee) the Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery should make the initial investigation and decide whatever action or referral to be taken.

As part of Congregational Visitations Presbytery appointed commissioners should report on the development and implementation of Child Protection policies and procedures.

In its annual report to Synod each Presbytery should make a general report on the state of Child Protection within its jurisdiction. ***The following proforma may be used:***

"Presbytery is pleased to inform Synod that (all) Congregations under its care have reported that they have implemented the denominational Child Protection Guidelines as recommended through the Implementation Strategy."

9.5 General Purposes Committee

Through its Child Protection Advisory Group, the General Purposes Committee is responsible for advising on Child Protection issues.

The G.P.C. is responsible for the provision of training on Child Protection to Presbyteries and congregations. GPC may make minor revisions to the wording of the policies and procedures as appropriate but substantial changes will be referred to Synod.

The Child Protection Advisory Group should make regular reports to the G.P.C. on the implementation and development of Child Protection policies and procedures throughout the denomination.

9.6 Synod

Synod is responsible for appointing the Child Protection Advisory Group to consist of the Moderator and Clerk of Synod and a suitable Child Protection Officer and any other appropriate person.

Synod should receive reports from Presbyteries as to the implementation of Child Protection within their bounds.

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Conclusion

These Guidelines provide an insight into the issues involved in working with children and vulnerable adults. The Guidelines are based on good practice in Christian duty, legal observance and insurance requirements. But above all they aim to give a structure to the positive care and protection of children so that they can develop fully and without hindrance. If they succeed in protecting both children and child workers and give them both a positive experience then they will have been worthwhile in their development and approval.

References

- Department of Education (2021) Children and Young People's Strategy 2020-2030
- Department of Health (2011) Understanding the needs of children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) guidance (PDF). [Belfast]: Northern Ireland Executive government
- Department of Health (2017) Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland. [Belfast]: Northern Ireland Executive government
- Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI) and NSPCC Northern Ireland (2018) Protocol for joint investigation by social workers and police officers of alleged and suspected cases of child abuse – Northern Ireland (PDF). [Belfast]: HSCB
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) (2018) Regional core child protection policies and procedures for Northern Ireland
- HSE Child Protection and Welfare Policy (2022)
- TUSLA (2019) Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice 2nd Edition
- Department for Children and Youth Affairs (2017) Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017
- Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook 2011
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse 2014
- National Consent Policy HSE 2014
- The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service website: www.ccpas.co.uk

Appendix 1

Abuse

The following list includes some of the signs and symptoms of different types of abuse:

Physical Abuse occurs when an individual is physically hurt. Symptoms may include:

- unexplained recurrent injuries;
- improbable excuses or refusal to explain such injuries;
- self-destructive tendencies;
- fear of physical contact.

Neglect occurs when an individual is left alone, is not given enough to eat or not taken to the doctor when they are ill. Symptoms may include:

- constant hunger;
- inadequate clothing;
- constant tiredness;
- poor personal hygiene.

Emotional Abuse occurs those with responsibility for caring for the child says nasty things to them and makes them feel unloved. Symptoms may include:

- delays in physical, mental and emotional development;
- continual belittling of oneself;
- over-reaction to mistakes;
- extreme fear of any new situation;
- inappropriate response to pain;
- neurotic behaviour.

Sexual Abuse occurs when an someone touches an individual's private parts in a way which makes the them feel worried or unhappy. Abusers may try to make a victim touch parts of their body or watch pornographic pictures or videos. Symptoms may include:

- in children, sexual knowledge or actions inappropriate for the child's age;
- regression to younger behaviour patterns;
- self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses;
- anorexia, sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating.

Financial abuse happens if someone tries to steal, steals or defrauds an individual of their your money, goods or property. This includes withholding pensions or benefits, putting pressure to gift property or inheritance. Signs may include:

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

Exploitation is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It includes forced labour, slavery and human trafficking.

Causes of Abuse

Abusers are often those who have power, authority or are in a position of trust.

There is a range of reasons why victims do not tell anyone they are being abused:

- they may have been bribed not to tell;
- they may be afraid of being blamed or punished for what has happened;
- they may not recognise it as abuse;
- they may have experienced actual or threatened violence from the abuser; and
- they may be afraid of what will happen to the abuser, who is most often someone they know and care about.

Appendix 2

A Recommended Recruitment Process

This Appendix is a step by step outline of the best practice Recruitment Procedures recommended to congregations. This process should apply to part-time volunteers as well as full-time paid workers. Once the process is in operation it soon becomes an accepted part of recruitment and will deter only people who cannot stand the scrutiny contained in the process.

- Before recruiting new leaders/helpers an organisation should do a Skills Audit to set out what the organisation needs in terms of personality, skills, gender balance and general abilities in its leadership team.
- On the basis of the Skills Audit a short Job Description should be drawn up so that potential applicants can understand what is required of them.
- A further useful document for the benefit of the recruiters is a Person Specification, which outlines the type of person it is believed best suits the post. This can quite often be done orally in a meeting of the recruiters.
- All potential recruits to church organisations that deal with children or vulnerable adults must complete the approved Application Form included as Appendix 3.
- Where appropriate an Application Form must be accompanied by two written references from non-relatives.
- Where appropriate candidates should be short-listed according to a set list of criteria based on the Job Description and Person Specification. Where there is only one or a small number of candidates this process can be by-passed.
- Where appropriate the identity of all candidates to be interviewed should be checked using official photographic ID such as a Passport or Driving Licence.
- All short-listed or sole candidates should be interviewed by at least two people as to their suitability for the post. The interview should be based on the same criteria as any short-listing process.
- Before being allowed access to children, a successful candidate should be vetted using the AccessNI Scheme operated by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety or the National Vetting Bureau in Ireland.
- Every new worker in an organisation should be provided with an Induction that outlines the operation of the organisation and included an awareness programme on Child Protection.
- It is considered best practice that after appointment a new worker should be made aware of the Terms and Conditions of their employment that explain the regulations under which the worker will be operating.

- Every new worker should have a period of probation in which his or her work within the organisation is assessed. If that work or the behaviour of the worker is unacceptable the worker can be dismissed immediately.
- It is a good practice generally, but especially important for Child Protection, that every worker should be supervised during their interaction with children.
- At the end of each year the performance of each worker should be evaluated by a senior worker in consultation with the worker and improvement targets or further training agreed.
- Smaller congregations may wish to adopt a less formal procedure for volunteers or helpers. Rather than a formal interview it is suggested that the applicant should speak with their Minister or the Leader in Charge depending on the post. This does not need to be a prescribed conversation but it should include information on the duties they will be expected to carry out, what is expected from them and any questions they may have. If this is successful then they will need to complete the vetting procedure set out above.

Appendix 3

Application Form for Leaders/Helpers in Youth and Children's Work

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Congregation	A check will be required for this post.	
Organisation	In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), we will only ask about convictions which are defined as “not protected” for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.	
Date of Birth		
Current Address	We need to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned eg the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.	
Email Address	A criminal record will not necessarily prevent applicants from gaining a position.	
Role applied for	<i>It is a criminal offence to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure check if you are on one of the barred lists.</i>	
Applicant's Signature		
Does this role involve working with children or young people? If so, how frequently and in what capacity?		
e.g once a month volunteer with Sunday School helping with young children who may require toileting assistance		
Why are you interested in applying for this role?		
Do you have any previous experience of working with children, young people?		
Is there any reason why you cannot take up a regulated activity? A regulated activity is working regularly in an unsupervised capacity with children, young people or adults.	YES	NO
Do you have any convictions that are not ‘protected’ (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1979, as amended in 2014)?	YES	NO

Please provide the details of two referees
--

Referee 1	Name	
	Address	
	Phone/Email	
Referee 2	Name	
	Address	
	Phone/Email	

Date of interview	
Decision e.g approved, rejected	
Reason for decision	
Name	
Date	

<p align="center">Access NI Identity validation (To be completed by Leader in Charge/Designated Person)</p> <p>Three documents should be produced in the name of the applicant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three from Group 1; or • One from Group 1 and Two from 2a or 2b. <p>If this is not possible, then four documents from Group 2a and 2b should be produced, one of which must be a birth certificate issued after the time of birth. In all cases at least one document <u>must</u> show the applicant's current address.</p> <p align="center">Applicant details as they appear on the ID documentation provided:</p> <p>Full name: _____</p> <p>Date of Birth: _____</p> <p>Postcode: _____</p>
--

I confirm that I have seen the identification documentation as set out above, copies of which are attached to this form.

Name:

Date documents
viewed:

Signature:

Garda Vetting Identity validation (To be completed by Leader in Charge/Designated Person)

Documentation equalling at least 100 points on the Garda Vetting 100 point identification system.

In all cases at least one form of photographic ID must be submitted and one document must show the applicant's current address.

Applicant details as they appear on the ID documentation provided:

Full name:

Date of Birth:

Postcode:

I confirm that I have seen the identification documentation as set out above, copies of which are attached to this form.

Name:

Date documents
viewed:

Signature:

AccessNI - Identification Verification

Group 1 identity documents

current passport (any nationality)

Biometric Residence Permit (UK)

current driving licence photocard (full or provisional) (UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands or Ireland)

birth certificate issued within 12 months of birth (UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands)

original long form Irish birth certificate issued at time of registration of birth (Ireland)

adoption certificate (UK, Channel Islands or Ireland)

Group 2a identity documents

birth certificate (UK, ROI, Isle of Man or Channel Islands) issued after time of birth

marriage/civil partnership certificate (UK, Channel Islands or Ireland)

HM Forces ID card (UK)

firearms licence (UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man)

current driving licence photocard (full or provisional) (all countries outside the UK excluding Isle of Man and Channel Islands)

current driving licence, full or provisional paper version if issued before 1998 (UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands)

electoral ID card (NI only)

Immigration document, visa or work permit (UK)

Group 2b documents

issued in the last 12 months:

mortgage statement (UK or Ireland)

financial statement, for example ISA, pension or endowment (UK or Ireland)

P45 or P60 statement (UK, Channel Islands)

Land & Property Services rates demand (Northern Ireland only)

council tax statement (UK and Channel Islands)

issued in the last three months:

credit card statement (UK, Channel Islands or Ireland)

bank or building society statement (UK, Channel Islands or Ireland)

central or local government, government agency, or local council document giving entitlement, for example from the Department for Work and Pensions, The Employment Service, HMRC (UK, Channel Islands)

bank or building society account opening confirmation letter (UK or Ireland)

utility bill but not a mobile telephone bill (UK or Ireland)

benefit statement such as child benefit, pensions (UK)

must be valid when you apply for the check:

EEA National ID card

60+ or Senior (65+) Smartpass issued by Translink (NI)

yLink card issued by Translink (NI)

cards carrying the PASS accreditation logo (UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands)

letter from head teacher or further education college principal (UK for 16 to 19 year olds in full time education, this is used if other documents cannot be provided)

letter of sponsorship from future employment provider or voluntary organisation (valid only for applicants residing outside UK and Ireland at time of application)

Irish Passport Card (cannot be used with an Irish passport)

AGS Vetting - Identification Verification

Photographic Identification

Irish driving licence or learner permit (new credit card format) 80
Irish Public Services Card 80
Passport (from country of citizenship) 70
Irish certificate of naturalisation 50
Birth certificate 50
Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) card 50
National Identity Card for EU/EEA/Swiss citizens 50
Irish driving licence or learner permit (old paper format) 40

Employment Identification

ID card issued by employer (with name and address) 35
ID card issued by employer (name only) 25

Letters from employers (within last two years)

Confirming name and address 35
P60 or P45 or Payslip (with home address) 35

Membership Cards

Club, union or trade, professional bodies 25
Educational institution 25

Other Correspondence

Utility bill e.g. gas, electricity, television, broadband (must not be less than 6 months old.
Printed online bills are acceptable.
Mobile phone bills are not acceptable) 35
Public services card/social services card/medical card - no photograph 25
Public services card/social services card/medical card – which includes photograph 40
Bank/Building Society/Credit Union statement (Statements from Store cards/catalogue companies are not acceptable) 35
Credit/debit cards/passbooks (only one per institution) 25
National age card (issued by An Garda Síochána) 25
From an educational institution/SUSI/CAO 20
From an insurance company regarding an active policy 20
From a bank/credit union or government body or state agency 20

Appendix 4

Vetting Code of Practice

1. The NSPCI complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. The NSPCI are committed to equality of opportunity and will ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. The NSPCI actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
5. We will request vetting only where this is considered proportionate and relevant to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where a Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that the individual being offered the position will be required to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check
6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), the NSPCI will only ask about convictions which are defined as "not protected" for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
7. We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned eg the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.

8. The NSPCI may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate. We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate, and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police, with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
9. We undertake to make every subject of a Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.
- 10. HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING FOR THE NON SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE OR PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO US BY THE POLICE.**
11. We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the vetting body.

Appendix 5

Leadership in Youth Organisations

Good Team Work

The most important aspect of good teamwork is the sharing of information. Everyone should know the aims and objectives of the organisation and the path of accountability within the organisation. While there may be one leader-in-charge each leader could have responsibility for one item of the programme while still reporting back to the leader-in-charge. There should be frequent meetings of leaders to evaluate what has happened and to plan future programmes. Leaders and helpers need to develop a good working relationship between themselves.

Training

While work with children depends greatly on the personality and commitment of the individual, adequate training is necessary to improve their skills. This should include Induction and In-Service Training to update the knowledge and techniques required for youth work.

Leader/Child Ratios

The following leader/child ratios are offered as guidance to best practice. However it may not always be possible to meet these ratios exactly. The basic principle is that there should be enough leaders/helpers to ensure that children are adequately supervised in their activities. On no occasion should there be less than **two** adults with a small group of children.

0-2 years: 1 member of staff to 3 children

2-3 years: 1 member of staff to 4 children

3-7 years: 1 member of staff to 8 children

8 years +: 1 members of staff to 10 children

(There should be one additional member of staff for every 10 children, or part thereof)

On outings the above ratios should be increased.

Relationships with Children

All leader and helpers should endeavour to become aware of the particular needs and capabilities of each child under their care. In working with children it is important to develop a caring atmosphere so that feelings, fears and experiences can be shared openly. Getting to know each child as an individual enables a leader/helper to be more responsive to a child's reactions in situations where they may be suffering abuse but unable to tell anyone.

Code of Conduct

Children often learn more from the attitudes and behaviour of adults than they do from anything they learn. In promoting Christian values leaders in church youth organisations should strive to ensure that their words and their behaviour are not at odds. Good examples in words and actions should be the main aim of every leader. They should avoid any obscene or defamatory language and should treat their colleagues and the children with respect and courtesy. On all possible occasions the good of the child should be the main concern of a youth worker.

Discipline

On occasions it may be necessary to impose disciplinary measures on children to prevent them harming themselves, other children or property. The principles that should govern such discipline include

- Children must be told in advance what is unacceptable behaviour in the form of a Code of Behaviour;
- The Code of Behaviour with its accompanying sanctions must have the approval of Session/Committee and parents and be explained beforehand to the children;
- Children should always have an opportunity to reply to an accusation of breaking the Code of Behaviour;
- Sanctions must be imposed fairly and even-handedly;
- Sanctions must not be applied in anger but after a period of reflection;
- After sanctions have been served the child must be warned not to repeat the behaviour;
- A child who has served his/her punishment should always be welcomed back into the community of the group.

Review of Work

To encourage and support employees and volunteers is important and necessary to give regular and reasonable feedback. This can be done informally during supervision. However it is important that at the end of each year the work of each leader/helper is reviewed. This evaluation must be conducted by the leader-in-charge with each leader and preferably with another person present. At this meeting targets for improvement or advancement should be set and agreed. If a worker is perceived to have seriously underperformed it might be necessary at the Review to explain to that person that their services were no longer required.

Appendix 6

Safe Use of Technology

Those who work with children must be aware of the possibility of the abuse of children through technology including the internet, video, mobile phones or texts. The following suggestions are aimed to guide leaders in the proper use of this technology and to help them prevent their misuse.

Use of computers

If computers are necessary as part of youth work then there should be a clear and agreed reason for their use. This should be communicated clearly and safeguards should be in place to ensure that the computers are only used for this purpose. This should include supervision during use and removing or limiting internet access.

Appropriate virus software and parental controls should be in place and children should be provided with training on how to use the technology safely.

Use of mobile phones

Leaders should ensure that children are not using their personal devices to film or record any activity. In some cases, particularly with teenagers attending youth activities or who are volunteering, text messages or messaging apps can provide a quick and secure means of communication to provide updated information on times or venues for meetings. However messages should be limited to factual information and should not become a conversation. Children under 16 should not be contacted directly and leaders should instead contact parents or guardians.

Online social networks

As good practice we would not recommend that leaders become friends with children or young people on social media without seriously considering the risks. Any child will have access to all previous comments, likes and posts.

Photos of events or meetings of youth groups should never be posted on social media unless on an official church page and with pre recorded parental consent.

Any communication on a social network should be treated as if it were a public conversation. If any allegations of abuse or bullying are made these should be dealt with by following the usual procedures set out in these Guidelines.

Live Streaming or recording services

Following Covid a number of churches may continue to film or live stream their services. This may include the children's address or a service led by children. While wide shots which do not identify individual children may be used it is preferable to ensure parental consent in advance of any recording.

The guiding principle in the individual or group use of technology within an organisation should be that leaders know at all times what the children are doing and prevent any improper use of technology.

Appendix 7

Health and Safety Practices

- The location of fire exits and fire extinguishers should be clear and a clear system of fire alarm be in place. All members of an organisation should be trained and practised in evacuating the premises when a fire alarm is sounded. An assembly station should be known to all members and the senior leader should check the presence of all members there. Where appropriate, the Fire and Rescue Service should be informed and the members should not return to the premises unless they are told by an authorised person to do so.
- It is recommended that as often as possible a fully qualified first-aider should be present. Every leader/helper should be fully acquainted with the location of the first-aid box, and how to administer basic first-aid. In the event of an accident/emergency, where possible, leaders/helpers should have regularly updated contact numbers for parents/guardians.
- It is important for every organisation to have an 'Accident Book' in which details of accidents /injuries/ witnesses/ dates and times should be recorded.
- A telephone should, where possible, be available on any premises used.
- If using church premises for accommodation, where possible, ground floor accommodation should be used. If meetings are held on an upper floor adequate provision must be made for good lighting and for supervising children on stairs. The meeting room or hall should be suitable for the purpose, should be free of any obstructions and should be maintained in a safe manner.
- On no occasion should children or vulnerable adults be allowed to be out of the supervision of a leader or helper.
- Drivers of private cars should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance for transporting young people. Drivers must check with their insurance company regarding the adequacy of passenger liability. ***The regulations regarding the use of booster seats for children under 12 and under 135 cm in height must be observed.***
- Where possible, no driver should be alone with a child or vulnerable adult in a car. When children or vulnerable adults are being left home it is advisable to arrange the route so that two or more children or vulnerable adults are being dropped off last.
- All drivers for minibuses must have the appropriate category on their driving licence if driving vehicles with sixteen seats or more.
- On all outings from the normal site of an organisation's activities it is important to increase the leader:child ratios in paragraph 5.4. above so that an extra leader is involved with each group of children. There must always be at least two adults and sufficient numbers to supervise children properly. Where required, extra helpers such as parents should be recruited for the event.

- Where the outing is for an extended period of hours or over a long distance care should be taken to ensure adequate refreshments for the children or vulnerable adults. Leaders must be sure to provide opportunities to visit toilets and take rest breaks. Any medicine required by any of the children or vulnerable adults must be readily available.
- Parental (or guardian's) written consent must be obtained when taking any young person away for a residential experience. A registration form should be signed by the parent/guardian and it should give any relevant medical information e.g., allergies, special diets etc. Parents/guardians should be made aware of the activities the young person will be expected to participate in, the name and phone number of the leader and any other relevant information.
- Extra care should be taken on residentials to ensure the safety of children or vulnerable adults. In particular no child or vulnerable adult should be unsupervised by a leader or helper. At night, while it is important that the privacy of children or vulnerable adults should be observed, suitable action should be taken to ensure that there must not be any opportunity for anyone to have inappropriate access to any child or vulnerable adult.
- At the start of the year a form can be handed to parents asking for an emergency contact number, relevant medical information and consent for any photographs that might be taken as part of any activities. By doing this once a year such information does not need to be sought for every individual outing or activity.

Appendix 8

Advice for Leaders on Contact with Children

- As explained in Section 6.9 of the Guidelines, it is advisable for all child workers to avoid any physical contact with children. This includes engaging in contact play with children, general physical contact and any action that could be misconstrued by a child or adult observer as overly affectionate.
- However, if it is deemed necessary to offer comfort to a distressed child or vulnerable adult then this should be done carefully and in the presence of others so that no question can be raised about inappropriate touching or comments. Children and vulnerable adults should be informed that no such contact is permitted unless another adult is present so they do not accept any hugging or kissing in private.
- Language is a very powerful influence on a child. Leaders and helpers should always be careful that their language in front of children must be positive and not derogatory of that child or anyone else. Leaders must never engage in any sexually explicit or suggestive language with children or allow such comments from another adult or child to pass without challenge.
- When taking children or vulnerable adults to the toilet there should, where possible, be two adults present with the children or vulnerable adults. In an unusual case where only one adult is present the adult should stand at the open external door of a toilet block or outside a single toilet where other people can see them.
- It is important that leaders do not develop too close a relationship with a child or children under his/her care. This does not preclude a genuine friendship and concern for children. However it does mean that leaders cannot be accused of favouritism towards one or more children. If a child wishes to engage with a leader on a confidential basis this should be encouraged but should be conducted with the knowledge and preferably under the observation of another leader. Under no circumstances should a leader be alone with a child in the leader's own home.
- Where possible a child or young person should never be left on their own with an adult. If there are a number of small groups of young people then, rather than all sitting in separate rooms, it would be more appropriate to move all the groups to a larger space such as a Hall. If this is not possible then those left on their own with a child should always ensure that the door is left open and that the child is given the seat nearest the door. Such good practice not only ensures the safety of the child but also the adult.

Appendix 9

Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding

Adult abuse can take a number of forms and victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may also be unaware that they are being abused.

At the time of writing, it is necessary for those who apply to work as a volunteer or in a paid post with vulnerable adults in a regulated position to undergo vetting.

Pastoral visits are important to help those receiving care whether at home or in a residential setting maintain their links with their Church and to help support them in their faith. This Appendix provides some additional points to consider when visiting at home or in residential care but should be read in conjunction with the rest of the Guidance.

- Those visiting vulnerable adults should be AccessNI checked.
- It is not always possible but a home visit should be carried out by two people.
- Telephone in advance to check that a visit is wanted and to arrange a suitable time. If the person is living alone you may wish to arrange for a time when a carer or family member is there to assist in opening the door.
- Bring identification with you and introduce yourself with your name and role.
- If visiting in a residential home or hospital then follow procedures for signing in. If the person asks to leave a public room to go to a separate room to speak in private then ensure that the door is left open.
- When visiting a person in their home let them lead the way into the room and indicate where you should sit. If they go to close the door, request that they leave it open.
- It is important to respect the person's privacy and if they are confined to bed then knock or announce your presence and wait for an invitation to enter. Do not sit on the bed and ensure that the door is not closed.
- Details of visits should be recorded. Dates, times and a record of those present should be kept.
- If carers or health care professionals arrive you should leave and offer to return at another opportunity in order to preserve their privacy and dignity. You should not become involved in the details of their medical care.
- Avoid touching or handling personal belongings.
- Do not bring food or chocolates with you as dietary restrictions may be in place for medical reasons.
- If you are in contact with other family members let them know you have visited.
- If you have concerns about the welfare or safety of the person you are visiting then these should be reported following the procedure set out in this Guidance. Concerns of abuse should be reported to PSNI or An Garda Síochána, or Social Services
- Visits should be tailored to the individual and avoid tiring the person.

- Let the person know when you will next visit or indicate when you will contact them to arrange another visit.

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Appendix 10

A Code of Good Behaviour for Children

A primary goal of any voluntary organisation, such as the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland, working with children should be to contribute to the growth of each child's self-esteem by encouraging every child's contribution and work and through praise for effort as well as achievement. There is an equally important need to create an atmosphere in which children feel safe enough to share their fears and problems. The following Code of Behaviour is aimed at creating the right atmosphere of trust and respect within a children's organisation.

- It is important for children to listen to their leaders' advice and instructions so that they can do activities correctly without any risk to themselves or anyone else.
- Children should not display prejudice on the grounds of disability, sectarianism, sexism or racism against other children.
- When speaking to other children or adults, children should use positive language and should never be insolent, aggressive or obscene in what they say.
- Physical contact with other children should be restricted to normal play and should avoid aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Children should not go anywhere that a leader is not present and should never be alone with an adult they do not know.
- Children should never do anything to other children, or allow anything to be done to themselves, that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- When they join an organisation and at the beginning of each year, children should be told or reminded of what is and is not acceptable in terms of behaviour.
- Everyone, children, leaders and parents, should be aware of the steps which will be taken if any incident of bullying is observed or disclosed.

Appendix 11

Anti-Bullying Policy

Definitions of Bullying

It is a basic entitlement of all children that they can play free from humiliation, oppression and abuse from bullying.

Bullying is any malicious or hurtful unprovoked attack on another person who is not able to defend him/herself in the situation.

Bullying behaviour includes physical violence, name-calling, extortion and intimidation.

Victims of bullying can suffer physical and psychological abuse leading to isolation, insecurity and low self-esteem producing unhappiness and underachievement.

There is sometimes bullying in every organisation, and all children can be bullies, but bullying behaviour cannot be tolerated in a church youth organisation.

Possible Signs of Bullying

Parents and leaders are able to observe changes in a child's behaviour which may well indicate that they are being subjected to bullying. Here are some things to look out for:

Items of clothing, property, etc that are damaged or lost more often than you would consider to be normal.

Frequent injuries to the child (bruises, cuts etc).

The child who becomes withdrawn and is reluctant to say why.

Requests to be accompanied going to and from an organisation, or to go by a different route. If this is no longer than the previous one, it could well indicate that bullying had been occurring along the previous route.

Money in the house or church premises going missing.

Depression in the child. Reluctance to eat or play normally. Youngster appears generally unhappy, miserable, moody and/or irritable.

The child who threatens or attempts acts of self harm.

Taken individually, the above may not be due to bullying, but a combination of even some of these signs could be a good reason to suspect it. . If a child is showing signs of, or is experiencing ANY of the above, it can be an indication that all is not well, the child is not happy and therefore, whatever the cause, it should be investigated.

Action to be taken against Bullying

Promote an ethos, in which positive attitudes and achievements are recognised, valued, respected and rewarded.

Operate a high profile anti-bullying code which stresses the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and which is understood by all children.

Identify when and where bullying occurs within the organisation.

Ensure adequate supervision of areas frequented by children at leisure.

Provide appropriate training for all staff in recognising and combating bullying behaviour.

Develop clear guidelines for dealing with bullying incidents and communicate these guidelines to staff, children and parents to provide a consistency of approach.

Monitor and record all incidents of bullying in the Incident Book.

Offer appropriate support for victims of bullying.

Counsel bullies and help them to recognise their behaviour is unacceptable and assist them to effect change.

Enlist the aid of parents and external agencies when appropriate.



Appendix 12

Handling Disclosures

The most difficult thing a leader in a youth organisation may have to face is if a child or another adult, who trusts him/her, decides to confide about the possibility of a child being abused. Such a disclosure must be handled sensitively but positively if the trust between the leader and the person disclosing the information is to be maintained. Here are some suggestions about how to handle this difficult conversation:

- Stay calm, do not panic or appear shocked.
- Listen to exactly what the person says.
- Try not to respond except for clarification – comments or leading questions could affect the quality of your report. It is what the person says in their own words, especially if it is the child concerned disclosing, that is important.
- Reassure the person who is disclosing information that they are doing the right thing – especially if that person is the child affected.
- Do not promise to keep the information secret but reassure the person that only those who need to know will be told.
- As soon as possible after you receive such a disclosure you must write down what you actually heard as accurately as you can. A standard Report of Concern Form (see Appendix 13) may be used if it is readily available but a written report is essential.
- The information and written report should be shared with the appropriate person (see Appendix 14) as soon as possible afterwards.
- In all cases a copy of your report or Form should go to the Designated Person as soon as you are able.
- If you do not receive a written acknowledgement of your report within **two weeks** you should contact the Designated Person.
- You should ensure that the report is followed up and you are officially informed of any action taken.
- All information relating to the disclosure must be kept in a secure area where no one else can access the information. Once an outcome has been reached this information must be securely destroyed and should not be retained.
- It is important that you keep the person who made the disclosure informed that action is being taken on what he/she told you so that their confidence in you is sustained.

One thing you **must** not do is NOTHING

Appendix 13

Restricted Information

Report of Concern About a Child

Please use this form to record any concern you have about a child. Give the form to the Designated Person immediately. If you need help in completing this form please talk to the leader in charge of your organisation or the Designated Person.

CHILD'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ POSTCODE _____

State as clearly as possible why you are concerned, from whom you received the information and when. Continue overleaf if necessary.

SIGNED.....ORGANISATION.....DATE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ORGANISATION _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF YOUR REPORT IN RESPECT OF THE ABOVE NAMED CHILD

Name of Designated Person.....

Signature..... Date.....

Appendix 14

Referral Procedure

The following procedure should always be observed in dealing with complaints of alleged or suspected child abuse:

- Allegation/suspicion/concern noted on Report of Concern Form or separate written report.
- The concern should be reported immediately to the leader-in-charge of the organisation, unless the concern is about that person.
- The leader reports to the Designated Person.
- The Designated Person consults with the Child Protection Group in the congregation.
- In certain circumstances, e.g. the concern is about the minister of the congregation, concerns may be taken up with the Clerk and/or Moderator of Presbytery.
- A further investigation is instigated or action is decided on.
- If deemed necessary, the Designated Person consults with a statutory agency.
- The Child Protection Group then follow the advice given by the appropriate agency.
- The original complainant is informed of the action taken.
- The parents of the child should be informed of the suspicion, unless it concerns them.
- As soon as recommended by the outside agency, the alleged perpetrator should be informed of the complaints laid against her/him.
- Any action recommended by the outside agency should be followed.
- If deemed appropriate the Designated Person formally refers the case to Social Services/Health Board or to the Police or, in Northern Ireland, to the NSPCC.
- Everyone involved in the handling of the complaint should be kept informed as the case proceeds. In this way it can be made obvious to all parties that complaints are dealt with seriously and are followed up fully.
- However at all stages it is important that the details of a complaint are kept confidential to those who need to know. While general updates need to be made as appropriate the names of those involved must be kept confidential as far as possible.
- Employers or volunteer managers of people working in regulated activity in Northern Ireland and personnel suppliers have a legal duty to refer to DBS where:
 - you withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults. Or you move the person to another area of work that isn't regulated activity, and;
 - you think a person has either:
 - harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult
 - has satisfied the harm test; or
 - has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence and;
 - the person they're referring is, has or might in future be working in regulated activity and;
 - the DBS may consider it appropriate for the person to be added to a barred list

Northern Ireland

PSNI

There is one Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) in each policing district. They are specially trained to investigate alleged and suspected cases of child abuse. If a child is believed to be at risk contact the relevant CAIU via the central number 0845 600 8000 or in an emergency ring 999.

Health and Social Service Trusts

Each Trust has a Social Service Gateway Team to deal with Child Protection issues. Contact details for are listed on the [nidirect website](#)

DBS Referrals

Further information on making a referral to DBS can be found on [gov.uk](#)

Ireland

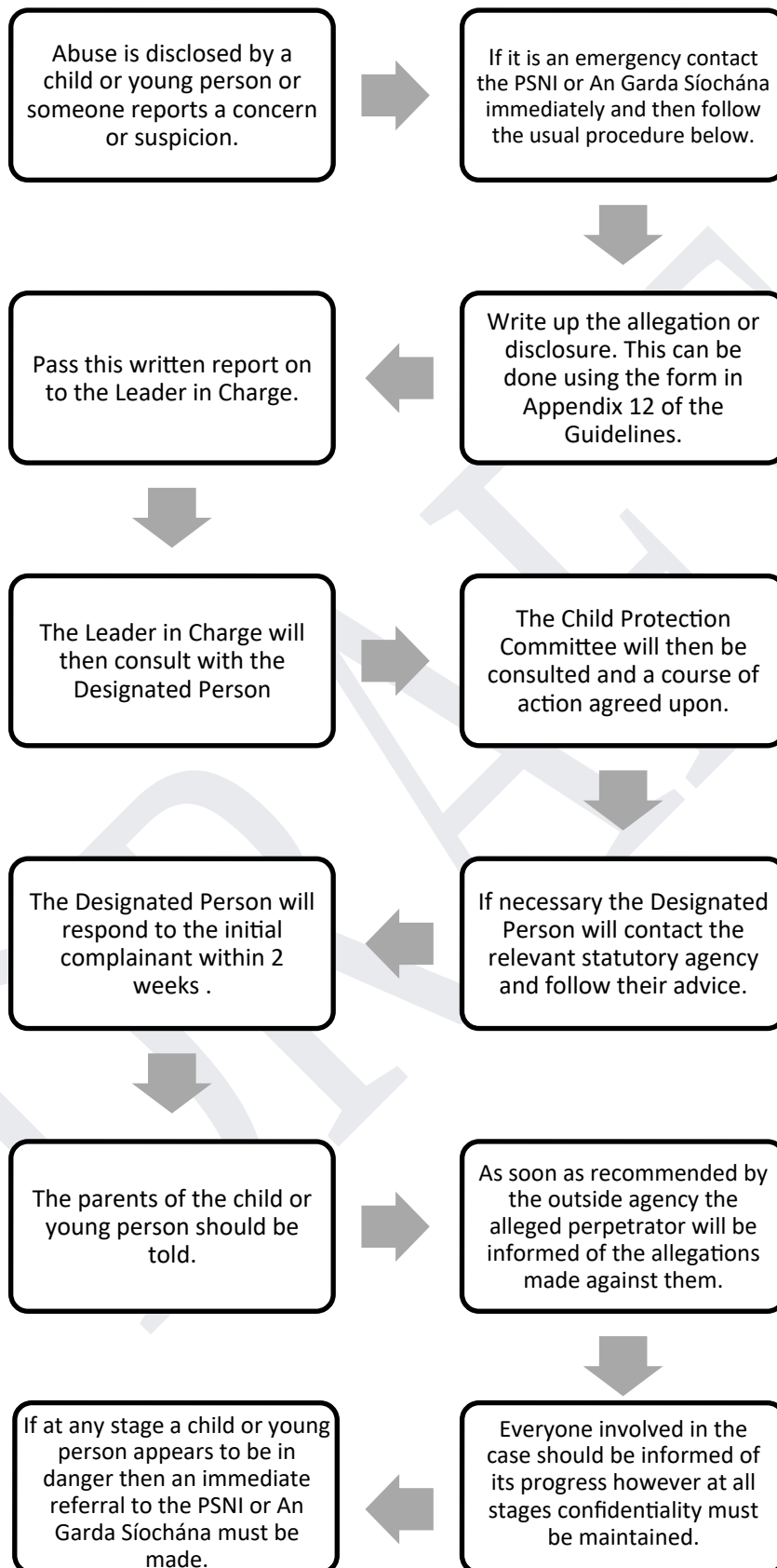
An Garda Síochána

If a child is believed to be at risk contact An Garda Síochána at the appropriate Garda station or in an emergency ring 999 or 112.

Health Service Executive

There is a Duty Social Worker at each HSE Child and Family Services Office. Contact details for local health offices can be found on the HSE website [www.hse.ie](#).

Outline of Referral Procedure



Appendix 15

Information management

The General Data Protection Regulation sets out six key principles for the treatment of personal data. This data must be:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner collected for specific, explicit, legitimate and limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept in an identifiable form for no longer than is necessary
- processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security

Forms with information on children or leaders such as medical information or consent forms should be kept in a secure, confidential location such as a locked filing cabinet on Church premises.

Relevant data such as contact details or medical information should be readily accessible to the relevant leader when the group is meeting. While contact information should be shared on a need to know basis, medical information, including information on allergies or any underlying conditions, should be shared with all leaders and volunteers who are acting in a supervisory capacity.

Consent forms (basic information such as name, date of birth and address) and contact information for leaders should be kept for up to six years after the child has left the organisation. Thereafter, it should either be destroyed (by shredding or burning) or returned to the child or parent.

Disclosure information will be kept securely in a lockable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Disclosure information will only be passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. Disclosure information will only be used for the specific purpose for which it is requested and for which the applicant's full consent has been given.

Once a recruitment decision has been made disclosure information will not be kept for any longer than 2 months. Information will not be retained after this date and disclosure information will be destroyed by secure means i.e. by shredding or burning. Whilst awaiting destruction, disclosure information will not be kept in any unsecured receptacle (e.g. waste-bin or confidential sack).

Appendix 16

Example Consent Form

Name of Child	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Emergency contact	Name: Relationship to child: Address: Phone:
Alternative emergency contact	Name: Relationship to child: Address: Phone:
Do you give permission for photographs or video to be taken during Sunday School activities? These may be posted to the Church's social media pages or publications, or used in entering Sunday School examinations. They will not be made public or shared in any other forum.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> Yes No </div>
Are there any medical conditions which we should be aware of? If yes please provide details. Please include any	

details of medications.	
Are there any allergies? If yes please provide details.	

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