



British Union Conference

Keeping Our Church Family Safe

Child and Adult Protection Procedures

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KEEPING OUR CHURCH FAMILY SAFE (Procedures – Ireland)

FOREWORD

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland is part of the British Union Conference (BUC) of churches and has adopted the Keeping Our Church Family Safe (KCFS) policy. These procedures reflect how the Church in Ireland will act to safeguard its children and adults at risk.

The Irish Mission is a family of 17 churches across the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These procedures fully accord with the law and guidance relating to the protection of children and adults across Ireland. They reflect the safeguarding legislation and policy for both Northern and Southern Ireland.

The Keeping Our Church Family Safe procedures set out the church's guidelines relating to safeguarding our church family and the procedures to be followed in order to reduce, to the minimum, the risk of abuse to the children and adults we have contact with through all our church activities.

Dan Serb
Mission President

Ian Sweeney
BUC President

[Electronic signatures to be inserted]

Protecting Children and Adults in Ireland

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ireland is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults (adults at risk¹). National guidance *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*² and Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland³ stated 'Organisations which provide services to children or young people must have policies and procedures in place which put child safeguarding at the heart of the organisation's ethos, governance and practice, and which reflect this policy. Policies and procedures must be owned at all levels within the organisation in line with good practice guidelines as set out in Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People and Safer Organisations: Safer Children'.³ The Church is guided by the country's law and guidance in its commitment to protecting children and vulnerable adults/adults at risk. See Appendix 14 for full details.

In Northern Ireland the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is the lead department on child protection and is responsible for policy. Responsibility for children's services and child protection in Ireland rests with the Health Service Executive (HSE) and An Garda Síochána. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) is the lead department in terms of policy development and implementation.

Protecting children means recognising when to be concerned about their safety and understanding when and how to share these concerns, how to assess such concerns and, fundamentally, what steps are required to ensure an individual's safety and well-being.

I. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS/ADULTS AT RISK – IRELAND

Adult at risk

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of community services due to age, illness or a mental or physical disability. They are someone who is, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

¹The term Adult at Risk has recently been adopted in Northern Ireland and will be used interchangeably with Vulnerable Adults

² <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>

'Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur ... All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives ... Faith sectors that come into contact with adults, including those who may be at risk of harm, must be alert to the individual's needs and any risks of harm to which they may be exposed.'⁴

Where it is known or suspected that an 'adult at risk' is being harmed, it must be decided whether or not further action is needed to protect the adult's well-being, property or financial affairs. Harm could occur at the hands of anyone: a relative, spouse or partner, friend, professional, neighbour, stranger or church member. It could happen anywhere – in the family home, in a care setting, at work or in public places.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015) provides the following definitions⁵:

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.

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is promoting their well-being, allowing them to make their own choices as far as they are able to without endangering themselves.

What are abuse and neglect?

What constitutes abuse or neglect can take many forms and circumstances but exploitation, in particular, is a common theme. The categories below are not an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sorts of behaviours which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one or more persons. Full definitions can be found under Appendix 16: Definitions of Abuse.

- physical abuse
- domestic violence
- sexual abuse
- psychological abuse
- financial and material abuse
- modern slavery
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational abuse
- neglect and acts of omission
- self-neglect

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⁴ Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership, DHSSPS, DoJ July 2015

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/safeguarding_vulnerable_adults/safeguarding_vulnerable_adults-resourcelibrary.htm

⁵ Ibid

It is most likely that the person responsible for abuse is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and power. Abuse can happen anywhere and be inflicted by anyone; sadly, it can take place in church. Abuse or neglect may be unintentional and may arise from an individual struggling to care for a loved one; or it may arise from a person's deliberate intent to cause harm or exploitation.

What can Health Boards do to protect an adult who is at risk of harm?

Health Boards can make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if they reasonably suspect an adult is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected. Authorised professionals can enter any place where it knows or suspects that an adult is at risk of harm in order to establish whether any further action is needed to protect the adult. They will work with other agencies to secure the well-being of that adult. This may include:

- ensuring access to suitable advice and support;
- providing practical care and support services for the adult at risk and/or their carer;
- an order or appointment of a proxy to help the person manage their affairs.

Where a criminal offence has been committed against the adult at risk, this should be reported immediately to the police. Any interview or medical examination can only be carried out with the agreement of the adult concerned.

Where necessary the local authority can apply to court for a protection order if specific consent is needed for permission to undertake further assessment on behalf of an individual; to remove them from a situation of potential serious harm; or to ban another person from contact.

J. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM – IRELAND

Children

The term 'children' herein relates to any persons under the age of 18 with whom the church has contact through any of its activities.

It should be noted that the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stipulates that in order for disabled children to be able to realise their rights, they need to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance.

Why are we concerned about taking action to protect children?

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their life. Abuse and neglect can happen over a period of time, but can also be a one-off event. They can have major long-term impacts on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. At any time that it is believed that a child may be in need of services to them or their family, or that a child is being harmed or is likely to be, we should refer immediately to the Health Board. Therefore, concerns should be immediately reported to your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Person. The Church is committed to taking prompt action to protect our young people.

What is safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children?

Safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children can be described as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child protection is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

What are abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm on, or by failing to act to prevent significant harm to, the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or another child. The abuse can be perpetrated through physical contact or via the internet. The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

Other forms of harm include domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation (FGM). Details of the definitions and possible indicators of abuse can be found under Appendix 15: Definitions of Abuse.

Disabled children may be especially vulnerable to abuse, in part because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, cognition and communication needs which may make it difficult for them to understand or to tell others what is happening.

K. PUBLIC PROTECTION – IRELAND

Public protection encompasses child protection and adult protection. Its aim is to reduce the harm to children and adults at risk within our communities. It is recognised that there are links between child protection and adult and public protection in terms of the joint and separate actions that need to be taken. We have a shared responsibility in recognising and responding to concerns of abuse and its impact on our church family.

Some adults abuse children deliberately, and most often, when abuse does happen, families need support, not punishment or the removal of their children⁶.

1. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Concerns about a child's or adult's safety may present themselves in a number of ways:

- hearing a child or adult saying that they are being abused or describing a situation you recognise as abusive;
- recognising signs or indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- observing behaviours in a child or adult that give cause for concern;
- being told by someone about the abuse of another person or their concerns for that person.

Full definitions and possible indicators can be found under Appendix 15 and Appendix 16 (Definitions of Abuse).

2. How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

Concerns should always be shared without delay with your Responsible Person and Designated Safeguarding Person. Where a child or adult is considered to be in immediate danger workers should report this directly to the police. Similarly, where a child is thought to require immediate medical assistance, this should be sought as a matter of urgency from the relevant health services. See Appendix 17: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse.

⁶The Safe Parenting Handbook http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sph_english.pdf

Always remember that the welfare of the child or adult must be your paramount concern. Adults may need support to take actions to protect themselves and others from abusive situations. Individuals should not make decisions about a vulnerable person's needs without feeling confident that they have the necessary information to do so. Additional guidance can be found in the document Our Duty of Care.⁷

In all situations:

- Do not delay.
- Contact your Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Person (in their absence contact your local pastor).
- A rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification of the situation must be undertaken with circumspection by the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- If this evaluation supports the concerns, immediately pass these onto the statutory services and follow their advice; this decision should be made within 48 hours of a concern being raised.
- Record all that has been said and done (see Appendix 13: Responding to Abuse – Recording Sheet).

A concern about a child or adult should be referred to your local Health and Social Care Trust/Health Board. Advice can also be taken from the CCPAS helpline 0303 003 111 and NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 500 help@nspcc.org.uk or The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ISPC on 01 6767 960. Where there is a concern about the immediate safety of a child or young person, or where a crime is suspected, a referral should be made directly to the PSNI or An Garda Síochána.

'NB: Disclosures of abuse are sometimes made a long time after the abuse occurred. Where this is over 12 months, it is considered non-recent abuse. However, they must be treated in the same manner as current concerns. The alleged perpetrator may still be in contact with children or adults at risk.'

How should I respond if a child or adult starts to tell me about their abuse?

- Accept what the child or adult tells you. Remain calm and give them your undivided attention.
- Explain that you will need to tell someone else. Do not promise them confidentiality.
- Never blame them, even if they have broken a rule or gone against good judgement. Remember they might have been threatened or manipulated.
- Remember you are not conducting an investigation. Never push for more information. Go at their speed.
- Reassure the child or adult that they were right to tell you and that you take what they have said seriously.
- Explain what you are going to do next and what is going to happen.
- Record all you have heard and done (i.e. time, date, people involved; see Appendix 13).

NOTE: is the child or adult safe? Take immediate action and contact the police if the child or adult would be at immediate risk.

3. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Suspicious must not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

In the interim a plan of action must be put in place to protect children and adults at risk. This may involve removing the accused person from office, suspending them from duties, or placing employees on leave of absence pending the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agencies.

Even where criminal charges are not made, there remains an obligation on the church to review the pastoral consequences and action plan in such a situation. A person known to be a danger to children or young people should not continue to have access to them through holding a position in the church.

⁷Our Duty of Care http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_Full_Eng.pdf

NOTE: When the church is made aware of rumours, gossip or allegations concerning any person related to the church the accused person should not be approached at this stage by anyone with a view to discussing the allegation. These concerns should be forwarded immediately to the Safeguarding Person This is to safeguard the interests of all involved and enable the unimpeded course of any official processes.

Recording and information sharing

Recording and sharing relevant information are key tenets of protecting children and adults. Privacy and confidentiality is governed by legal provisions that aim to safeguard personal information, particularly the Data Protection Act 1998; and organisational codes of conduct. The same legal provisions also provide for sharing of information for purposes such as public protection, crime prevention and crime detection. Early sharing of information is the key to providing effective early help where there are emerging problems. Information should be held securely and only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

Record storage and retention

Records of matters relating to the protection of children or adults should be stored securely at all times. This should be in a locked metal cabinet within the local church vestry or with the Safeguarding Person should the church premises not belong to the congregation. Details of the outcome of all matters should be sent to the conference office. Records will be retained for ten (10) years and reviewed prior to destruction.

All interactions should be recorded, succinctly and accurately. The distinction should always be made between facts, hearsay and opinions. Records should include note of:

- dates of contact and with whom;
- the views and emotional well-being of the child or adult;
- actions and decisions taken and the rationale behind them;
- outcomes of actions taken.

Child/adult protection conferences

Included in the process may be a child/adult protection conference convened by the Health Board. Church workers/volunteers may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the child/adult at risk, parent or family. Before attending the conference it is important to clarify in what capacity one has been invited and how one wants to be seen by the family, i.e. as a church employee giving information which could very well be used later in any proceedings, or as a church member providing support to the child/adult at risk, parent or family.

Local procedures for protecting children and vulnerable adults/adults at risk

In every Health Area, there are procedures for investigating cases where a child or adult at risk has been abused or is 'at risk'. These can be obtained online via your local safeguarding board website. Statutory agencies hold the legal responsibility to investigate cases of abuse and exploitation.

4. Allegations Against Staff, Church Members or Volunteers

Allegations against staff, church members or volunteers relate to concerns about abusive or exploitative behaviour between a worker and a child or adult at risk. These allegations must be taken seriously, viewed objectively and dealt with immediately. Advice and guidance should be sought from your local statutory agencies on managing allegations about staff, volunteers or church members within a fair process. When an allegation is received it should be assessed promptly and carefully.⁸ An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;

⁸**Southern Ireland:** Any action following an allegation of abuse against an employee should be taken in consultation with the Health Board and An Garda Síochána.

- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The intention is to determine whether an individual is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. Concerns or a complaint about the quality of care or practice are separate and should be dealt with by the leadership.

Individuals should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves, offer confidentiality or alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents. They should:

- Report concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Person who will conduct a rapid preliminary evaluation and clarification.
- Notify their pastor or senior manager and report criminal offences to the police.
- Determine what support is to be provided for the alleged and the victim.
- Notify AccessNI/National Vetting Bureau as guided.

All involved should be kept informed on the progress of the matter.

Any paid worker or unpaid volunteer removed from their work (or one who would have been, had he/she not left first) because they pose a risk of harm to children or an adult at risk must be referred to the AccessNI/National Vetting Bureau.

Appendix 14: Legislation for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults/Adults at Risk – Northern Ireland

Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership – July 2015

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hss/safeguarding_vulnerable_adults/safeguarding_vulnerable_adults-resourcelibrary.htm

Adult safeguarding policy to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect, for the purpose of reducing the prevalence of harm.

Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967

In Northern Ireland, whilst there are clauses, under the Criminal Law Act (NI) 1967 Sec 5 it is an offence not to report an arrestable crime to the police, which by definition, includes most crimes against children and adults.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

These set out measures to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children.

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/northern-ireland/legislation-policy-guidance/>

Provides the legislative framework for Northern Ireland's child protection system. It sets out: parental responsibilities and rights, and duties and powers public authorities have to support children and intervene if there are concerns about a child.

Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI)

<http://www.safeguardingni.org/>

Provide coordination and guidance to organisations in their work to safeguard children.

SBNI Strategic plan for Keeping Children Safe 2013-2016

<http://www.safeguardingni.org/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/imce/Strategic%20Plan%20Children%27s%20Version.pdf> Children's version

A Short Guide to Regional Policy and Procedures

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/acpcregionalstrategyshortguide.pdf>

UNOCINI (Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland)

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/acpc_policy_procedures_amendments_-_pdf.pdf

Provides a framework and language to understand and express the needs of children and their families.

The Safe Parenting Handbook http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sph_english.pdf

Offers ideas and information around core parenting issues, listing some of the warning signs of particular difficulties and offering helpful tips.

Criminal records disclosure checks are carried out by **AccessNI** - www.nidirect.gov.uk/

Further details of safeguarding legislations, policy and publications can be found on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety site:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/child_protection_publications

Appendix 14: Legislation for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults/Adults at Risk– Republic of Ireland

Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy & Procedures

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/corporate/personsatriskofabuse.pdf>

Open Your Eyes to Elder Abuse

<http://www.hse.ie/elderabuse/>

There's no Excuse for Elder Abuse: provides answers to common questions about elder abuse and gives information on seeking help; and resources to view and listen to.

Childcare Act 1991⁹

Sets out the obligations and responsibilities for the care of children who have been assaulted, ill-treated, neglected or sexually abused or who are at risk in Ireland.

Children First Act 2015

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/bills/2014/3014/b30b14d.pdf>

Provides a statutory basis for the Children First Guidelines.

National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011)

<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/Publications/ChildrenFirst.pdf>

Children First: Provides the strategic direction of child protection policy in Ireland and stresses that the safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. It states what the general public should do if they are concerned about a child's safety and welfare.

Our Duty to Care

http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_Full_Eng.pdf

Guidance aimed at community and voluntary organisations that provide services for children. It offers guidance on the promotion of child welfare, the development of safe practices in work with children and how to recognise and respond to concerns of child abuse.

Our Duty to Care Factsheet:

http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/ODTC_FactSheets_Eng.pdf

The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998

Provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse 'reasonably and in good faith' to designated officers of health boards or any member of An Garda Síochána.

Domestic Violence Act 1996

Gives health boards power to intervene to protect individuals and their children from violence.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012

Provides a statutory framework for the vetting but not the barring of persons applying to work with children in Ireland. See Garda Vetting Unit: <http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=1535&Lang=1>

Further details of safeguarding legislations, policy and publications can be found at:

http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildren_First%2FChildrenFirstLegislation.htm&mn=chie&nID=1

⁹The Child Care (Amendment) Act 2007 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2007/en/act/pub/0026/index.html>

The Child Care (Amendment) Act 2011 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2011/en/act/pub/0019/index.html>

Appendix 15: Definitions of Abuse – Children – Ireland

Certain children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. These include children with disabilities and children who, for one reason or another, are separated from parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2004) provides the following definitions of abuse.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child. Examples of physical injury include the following: shaking, use of excessive force in handling, deliberate poisoning, suffocation, allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Examples of emotional abuse are:

- persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming;
- unresponsiveness;
- unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself in a certain way;
- under- or over-protection of the child;
- use of unreasonable or overly harsh disciplinary measures;
- exposure to domestic violence.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. Examples of child sexual abuse include the following:

- exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of the child;
- intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification;
- sexual intercourse with the child whether oral, vaginal, or anal.

Sexual exploitation of a child includes inciting, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition or posing (including digital recording or its manipulation) for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification.

Neglect

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For instance, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries is not having his or her needs met for supervision and safety.

Domestic abuse

Domestic violence is the abuse of one partner within an intimate or family relationship. It is the repeated, random and habitual use of intimidation to control a partner. The abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual. There is a definition by Refuge at: <http://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/what-is-domestic-violence/>

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is using God's word or His name to justify human behaviour that is sexual, emotional or physical abuse or neglect. Spiritual abuse is most destructive because it gives children a distorted image of God.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the act of partially or totally removing the external genitalia of girls and young women for non-medical reasons. It is illegal within the United Kingdom. See also <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

(A child may suffer more than one category of abuse).

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Physical: unexplained injuries and bruising, or injuries which have not received medical attention. Hidden injuries; bruising which is only discovered when clothes come off. Signs of neglect.
- Sexual: allegations made by the child or young person. Pre-occupation with sexual matters. Being sexually explicit in words, play or drawing. Reported sleep disturbances with fears and phobias. Being sexually provocative with adults.
- Emotional: nervousness, sudden underachievement, regression in behaviour. Inappropriate relations with adults/peers, attention seeking, running away, stealing, lying, looking uncared for.
- Neglect: looking uncared for and unhappy; being withdrawn or aggressive. Having lingering health problems or injuries.

It should be remembered that many symptoms of distress can point to abuse but there may be other explanations. It is important that the above signs are not taken as absolute indicators that abuse has taken place. They should cause employees/volunteers to stop and think rather than jump to conclusions. Therefore, it is always important to discuss any concerns with the appropriate Responsible Person or Designated Safeguarding Person.

Appendix 16: Definitions of Abuse – Vulnerable Adults/Adults at Risk – Ireland

A vulnerable person is an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. Restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment. Vulnerability to abuse is influenced by both context and individual circumstance.¹⁰

The risk of harm occurs in all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups, regardless of gender, age or sexual orientation. All adults at risk should be supported and empowered to minimise their own exposure to risk and to find their own balance between taking risks and making the most of the strengths in their own life circumstances.

The main forms of abuse are:

Physical abuse

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

Sexual violence and abuse

Sexual abuse is any behaviour perceived to be of a sexual nature which is unwanted or takes place without consent or understanding. Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, regardless of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.

Psychological/emotional abuse

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

Financial and material abuse

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

Institutional abuse

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

Discriminatory abuse

Discriminatory abuse includes ageism, racism, sexism, abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Neglect

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

This list of types of harmful conduct is not exhaustive and there are other indicators which should not be ignored. It is also important to note that if a person is being harmed in one way, he/she may very well be experiencing harm in other ways.

FURTHER AREAS OF ABUSE**Exploitation**

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

Domestic violence and abuse

Domestic violence and abuse is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on one person by another where they are or have been intimate partners or family members, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another. It is usually frequent and persistent. It can include violence by a son, daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, life partner or any other person who has a close relationship with the victim. It occurs right across society, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography.

Human trafficking

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

Hate crime

Hate crime is any incident which constitutes a criminal offence perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice, discrimination or hate towards a person's actual or perceived race, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion or gender identity.

Victims of domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and abuse, human trafficking and hate crime are regarded as adults in need of protection. There are specific strategies and mechanisms in place designed to meet the particular care and protection needs of these adults.

Appendix 17: How to Respond to Concerns of Possible Abuse

HOW TO RESPOND TO CONCERNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

