



NEWBURY HOUSE FAMILY CENTRE CLG

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Version 2:

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1. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Commitment

Our Company is committed to safeguarding the vulnerable adults in our care and to providing a safe environment in which they can access and avail of our services and supports.

A vulnerable person is defined in the HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures document as:

'an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation.'

The Company recognises that vulnerable person's protection and welfare considerations permeate many aspects of work and volunteer activities and must be reflected in all of our Company policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in its policies, practices and activities, our Company will adhere to the following principles of best practice in the protection and welfare of vulnerable persons:

Our Company will:

- recognise that the protection of vulnerable persons is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to vulnerable persons and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to vulnerable persons and protect employees, volunteers, board members, interns and work placement participants from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents/guardians and encourage parental/guardian involvement in the volunteer activities undertaken by their children, relatives or charges; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with protection matters relating to vulnerable persons.

The Company will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult with a special vulnerability.

1.1 Overall Responsibility of all Employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Work Placement Participants and Interns

Although the Designated Liaison Person has a lead on issues relating to the protection and welfare of vulnerable persons, it is the responsibility of all company personnel to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of vulnerable persons in the care of the Company. All employees, management, board members, relief staff, interns, work placement participants and volunteers are required to read, understand and sign off on the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. It is expected that if

staff, board members, interns or volunteers have any questions about the policy or its implementation they speak with the Designated Liaison Person.

We will ensure that all personnel:

- Are aware of their responsibilities and their obligations under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012
- Are aware of their responsibilities for reporting concerns and/or incidents regarding the safety or well-being of vulnerable persons to the Designated Liaison Person
- Attend safety training as appropriate

This policy is applicable at all times when vulnerable adults are in the care of The Company, including on day trips and outings.

We will ensure this policy is observed by:

- Employees
- Board of Directors
- Volunteers
- Work Placement Participants
- Interns
- Visitors to The Company
- Children and Young Persons (depending on the age)

2. Role of the Designated Liaison Person

The DLP is responsible for dealing with vulnerable persons safety and welfare concerns in the Company.

The Deputy DLP will be appointed by the board of directors to undertake the below duties when the DLP is on leave or is unavailable for a long period of time.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for The Company is:

Rosella Sheehan Telephone: 0833328442.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for:

Family Centre is: Deirdre Shanahan Telephone: 0833335749

Arts Centre is: Deirdre Hunt Telephone: 021-4530434

The Role of the DLP is to:

- Provide information and advice on vulnerable persons protection and welfare concerns and issues to the employees of The Company
- Be accessible to all employees, volunteers, board members, interns and work placement participants
- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about vulnerable persons protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and procedures of The Company are followed
- Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of vulnerable adults to the HSE or to An Garda Síochána
- Ensure that appropriate information is included in the report to the HSE and that the reported is submitted in writing (under confidential cover)
- Liaise with the HSE, An Garda Síochána and other agencies as appropriate
- Keep relevant people within the organisation informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the Company, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome
- Advise the organisation of vulnerable adults safety and welfare training needs
- Maintain a central log or record of all vulnerable adults protection and welfare concerns in the Company

2.1 Appointing a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person

The DLP and Deputy DLP are appointed by the Board of Directors and in each case is a senior manager of The Company.

3. Barriers for Vulnerable Persons Disclosing Abuse

In its Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedures document, the HSE state that barriers to disclosure may occur due to some of the following:

- Fear on the part of the service user of having to leave their home or service as a result of disclosing abuse.
- A lack of awareness that what they are experiencing is abuse.
- A lack of clarity as to whom they should talk.
- Lack of capacity to understand and report the incident.
- Fear of an alleged abuser.
- Ambivalence regarding a person who may be abusive.
- Limited verbal and other communication skills.

- Fear of upsetting relationships.
- Shame and/or embarrassment.

The National Policy and Procedures document goes on to say that *“All staff employed in publicly funded services should be aware that safeguarding vulnerable persons is an essential part of their duty. Staff must be alert to the fact that abuse can occur in a range of settings and, therefore, must make themselves aware of the signs of abuse and the appropriate procedures to report such concerns or allegations of abuse.”*

4. Types of Abuse

Any person who has contact with a vulnerable person may be abusive, including a member of their family, community or a friend, informal carer, healthcare/ social care employee or volunteer.

4.1 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse

This type of abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse

This type of abuse includes rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent, or into which he or she was compelled to consent.

Psychological Abuse

This type of abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse

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

Neglect and Acts of Omission

This type of abuse includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse

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

Institutional Abuse

This type of abuse may occur within residential care and acute settings including nursing homes, acute hospitals and any other in-patient settings, and may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex needs.

5. Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Abuse of Vulnerable Persons

The Company recognises that a concern regarding concerns or allegations of abuse of a vulnerable person may come to light in one of a number of ways:

- Direct observation of an incident of abuse.
- Disclosure by a vulnerable person.
- Disclosure by a relative/friend of the vulnerable person.
- Observation of signs or symptoms of abuse.
- Reported anonymously.
- Come to the attention as a complaint through the HSE or agency/organisation complaints process.

5.1 Procedure

On the same day that the alert is raised or concern recognised by a Company employee, volunteer, board member, intern or work placement participant, the following steps must be taken:

Immediate Protection

Take any immediate actions to safeguard anyone at immediate risk of harm including seeking, for example, medical assistance or the assistance of An Garda Síochána, as appropriate.

Listen, Reassure and Support

If the Vulnerable Person has made a direct disclosure of abuse or is upset and distressed about an abusive incident, listen to what he/she says and ensure he/she is given the support needed.

Do not:

- Appear shocked or display negative emotions
- Press the individual for details
- Make judgments
- Promise to keep secrets
- Give sweeping reassurances

Detection and Prevention of Crime

Where there is a concern that a serious criminal offence may have taken place, or a crime may be about to be committed, contact An Garda Síochána immediately, in addition to the Chief Executive Officer of the Company.

Record and Preserve Evidence

Preserve evidence through recording and take steps to preserve any physical evidence (if this is appropriate).

As soon as possible on the same day, make a detailed written record of what you have seen, been told or have concerns about and who you reported it to. Try to make sure anyone else who saw or heard anything relating to the concern of abuse also makes a written report. The report will need to include:

- when the disclosure was made, or when you were told about/witnessed this incident/s;
- who was involved and any other witnesses, including service users and other staff;
- exactly what happened or what you were told, using the person's own words, keeping it factual and not interpreting what you saw or were told;
- any other relevant information, e.g. previous incidents that have caused you concern.

When compiling the written record, ensure that:

- as much detail as possible is included;
- the written report is legible and of a photocopiable quality;
- you have printed your name on the report and that it is signed and dated;
- you keep the report/s confidential, storing them in a safe and secure place until needed.

Report and Inform

Report to the Designated Liaison Person or in the absence of the DLP, the Deputy DLP as soon as possible. The report must be made on the same day as the concern is raised. The Line Manager must ensure the care, safety and protection of the victim and any other potential victims, where appropriate. He/she must check with the person reporting the concern as to what steps have been taken (as above) and instigate any other appropriate steps.

If the allegation of abuse of a vulnerable person is made against a Company employee, volunteer, board member, intern or work placement participant during the execution of that person's duties, the Chief Executive Officer will inform that person of the following:

- (i) the fact that an allegation has been made against him or her; and
- (ii) the nature of the allegation.

The person against whom the allegation has been made will be afforded an opportunity to respond. The Chief Executive Officer will record the response and include this information in a formal report if such a report is to be made to the relevant Safeguarding and Protection Team within the HSE. If it is not appropriate for the Chief Executive Officer to carry out this responsibility, the Chairperson of the Board will carry out this role.

The following actions must be carried out by Line Manager and/or Designated Liaison Person:

It will be necessary to decide whether a formal report should be made to the relevant Safeguarding and Protection Team within the HSE. If so, the Designated Liaison Person (or Deputy DLP or Line Manager in his/her absence) must report the concern to the HSE Safeguarding and Protection Team (Vulnerable Persons) within three working days after he/she has been informed of the concern.

If the concern relates to a designated centre, the Line Manager must notify HIQA in writing within three working days on the appropriate form.

The Designated Liaison Person must also notify Tusla immediately if there are concerns in relation to children.

Nothing should be done to compromise the statutory responsibilities of An Garda Síochána. If it is considered that a criminal act may have occurred, agreement on engagement with the person who is the subject of the complaint should be discussed with An Garda Síochána.

The Company will be notified of the outcome of any investigation or assessment. The outcome will assist the Company in reaching a decision about the action to be taken if the allegation of abuse was made against a Company employee, volunteer, board member, intern or work placement participant.

6. Confidentiality

All information regarding a concern or allegation of abuse against a vulnerable person should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the vulnerable person.

It should be noted that the provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a vulnerable person is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.

7. Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012

The Company understands that failure to record, disclose and share information about alleged abuse is a failure to discharge a duty of care and that it may be an offence under the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 to withhold information in such circumstances.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored for its effectiveness and will be reviewed every three years. The policy may be reviewed more frequently in response to changes in legislation and/or company needs.

