

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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Boys & Girls Clubs

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & STATEMENT POLICY

Boys & Girls Clubs is committed to achieving the highest standards of best practice which protect children and young people from harm. These practices promote and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people who attend and engage in youth service activities organised by * Boys & Girls Clubs* (hereinafter referred to as “the charity”)

The Charity recognises that the children and young people in their charge have a fundamental right to be protected from any form of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and that the safety and welfare of these young people is paramount.

Staff and volunteers accept and recognise that it is their primary responsibility to provide a safe and enjoyable environment which prioritises and promotes the safety and welfare of each child or young person engaged in youth work organised by the Charity. The organisation will endeavour to be proactive and preventative in safeguarding member’s safety and well-being in accordance with the guidelines detailed in the Children’s Order (NI) 1995 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (NI) 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedom Act 2012.

The Charity will endeavour to-

- Create an open environment for children and young people
- Adopt child-centred and democratic styles of working with young people
- Adopt child protection guidelines through a Code of Behaviour
- Follow careful procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- Ensure all reporting and communicating responsibilities and procedures are rigorously followed
- Share information about an allegation, suspicion or concern with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision and support.
- Review policies and good practice procedures at regular intervals

Staff and Volunteers of The Charity must endeavour to:

- Develop an awareness of the circumstances and surrounding issues which are harmful to, or have the potential to endanger the safety and welfare of a child or young person
- Be familiar with the Charity Child Protection Policy, Guidelines and Codes of Conduct
- Share information about an allegation, suspicion or concern, only with others who need to know;
- Provide all information to the Designated Officer for Child Protection Procedures;
- Attend Child Protection Training made available through the Charity and other relevant Agencies

POLICY AIM

This policy aims to provide clear direction for the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers to ensure good standards of welfare towards children, young people and adults throughout the organisation.

The protection and well-being of children, young people and adults is both a national and international requirement. The Charity therefore accept and recognise their moral and legal responsibilities under the following legislation and policies;

The Children (NI) Order 1995

Significantly influenced by the UN Convention this is the main legislative base for childcare services in Northern Ireland and has five underlying principles. These include paramountcy, partnership, prevention, protection and parental responsibility. The Children's Order defines a child up until they have reached their 18th birthday.

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998 came into effect in March 1999 with the aim of consolidating the law on domestic violence and occupation of the family home. It offers protection from harm, vexing and harassing behaviour in family settings and ensures that a Court considers whether a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering any harm through seeing the ill-treatment of another person. It can give the Court the power to include an exclusion on an Interim Care Order if there is reasonable cause to believe that exclusion of the perpetrator would stop the likelihood of significant harm occurring.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 came into force in January 2000 and places a statutory obligation on public authorities to promote equal opportunity with regard to disability, gender, religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status and sexual orientation. In addition, good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group should be promoted.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 establishes certain safeguarding requirements when organisations are recruiting staff and volunteers to certain positions which involve close and/or regular contact with children and young people. Under the Order it is an offence for employers to knowingly recruit barred individuals into 'regulated activity' with children and young people. Organisations can ensure that they are complying by requesting an Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check from AccessNI, before confirming an appointment in regulated activity. There is also a requirement for organisations to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service, any individual who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children and young people, and who has been permanently removed (or would have been had they not left the organisation) from regulated activity.

The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

This Act sets out the law for the creation of the regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) and the establishment of five Safeguarding Panels to support the SBNI's work at a Health and Social Care Trust level. The SBNI has responsibility to coordinate, and ensure the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children and is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together to safeguard children and young people.

Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

This Act offers a clear path for a member of the public to apply at a police station for disclosure of relevant conviction information regarding a person with access to a particular child or children. The scheme builds on existing processes by the agencies involved in the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland to manage sexual and violent offenders. Information about relevant criminal convictions will only be provided to the person with primary care responsibility for the specific child(ren) and only if considered as necessary to protect that child.

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Department of Health, March 2016). A new regional safeguarding children and young people policy was launched in March 2016. "Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland" was developed and published by the Department of Health. The policy provides the overarching framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible. The policy highlights how early intervention and appropriate parental support can prevent problems escalating to a point where harm occurs. Where a greater level of support is required, targeted intervention will be provided to assist families to safeguard children and to meet the child's needs. Where a child is identified as being at risk of significant harm, statutory intervention to protect the child will be required. This may include the child being the subject of a child protection plan, the child's name being placed on the child protection register, or the child becoming 'Looked After' by a Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

Trustees, Paid Staff, Volunteers/Helpers and Officials

This Code of Conduct is Organisational Policy. It exists to safeguard all persons working with children and young people on behalf of Boys & Girls Clubs. It must be adhered to at all times. All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children and young people's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. Any queries regarding these procedures or related issues should be discussed, in the first instance, with the organisational Programme Officer. The Chief Executive is the Designated Officer for Child Protection and related procedures for the Charity.

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, eg a child is injured or distressed, the support should be provided openly, with consent from the young person and in the best interest of the child. All incidents should be recorded. In the case of provision of intimate care, young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Gender appropriate adults will have the responsibility for the supervision of young people at all programmes and events. Appropriate leader/participant ratio is observed.
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
- Maintaining safe and appropriate relationships with young people.

At youth events, competitions and general activities coaches/leaders and supervisors will endeavour to

- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Make activities fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Keep a written record of any injury or incident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Keep up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Ensure that Health and Medication checks have been completed.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.

- Ensure that if mixed groups are on residentials they should always be accompanied by male and female members of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter young people's rooms or invite young people into their rooms.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Secure parental consent in writing for participation in activities and consent to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Be an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people. Vulgar, disrespectful and inappropriate language is not permitted.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching /corporal punishment or physical force
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

E-Safety Guidelines

These guidelines support and underpin the use of social networking and online services within the organisation. It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of what is appropriate in terms of texting and email contact with the young people they are working with.

- The use of mobile phones for personal use during activities and events is actively discouraged. A blanket ban is not necessary as mobiles can be used in an emergency.
- Contacting young people by phone, text or email should never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent.
- Leaders should not be emailing young people directly as individuals but as part of a disclosed list, (having received prior permission to disclose in group email) when disseminating information in relation to events. Group emails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as 'If you wish to be removed from this email list please contact the administrator'.
- Leaders should not contact young people through chat rooms and social networking sites such as Bebo, MSN. Leaders should understand the safety aspects including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using digital technology.
- Review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that on-line safeguarding issues are fully integrated to enable reporting of any online concerns about possible abuse.
- Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place
- Management and moderation of website and social media should be carried out by a trained person with the full involvement of the organisation's designated safeguarding person.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at events and programmes

The Charity is aware about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of images (photographs and videos) on websites, social networks and other publications. It is advisable that all staff & volunteers be vigilant and that any concerns are reported to the Child Protection Officer. The following guidelines have been adopted by The Charity to ensure the appropriate use of photography and videoling.

- Think carefully about the images showing children and young people on our publications and website and how those images appropriately represent the organisation and activity.

- The interests and welfare of young people taking part is paramount
- Where possible do not include the name of the young person whose image is being used.
- If naming a young person or a group of young people in an image, only use their first names.
- Avoid the inclusion of other detailed information about individual young people.
- Only use images of young people in suitable dress. There are several activities such as swimming, gymnastics and athletics that present a higher risk for potential misuse. Photos of these activities should focus on the activity rather than a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots.
- Images should positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity and promote the best aspects of the event.

Always:

- Ensure all member organisations have signed the membership form to agree to images being used for promotional literature
- Ask the young person's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used.
- Ask for parental consent to use an image. This ensures that parents are aware of where and how the images will be used eg magazine, website, Facebook.
- Be clear about how and for long images will be securely stored.
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser/ The Charity's designated officer and a report written.
- Young people, parents and others should be informed that if they have any concerns they can report these to the event organiser.
- Unsupervised access to young people or one to one photo sessions is never allowed and photographs should never be taken outside the event or at the young person's home.
- If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at a Charity event, they should be made aware of what is permitted and what is not. Any person wishing to engage in a video or photography should register their details with staff before any event.
- Professional photographers or invited press should be made aware of what is expected of them in relation to child protection and inform the young people and their parents that a photographer will be in attendance. Accreditation should be obtained outlining the planned use of images.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.

Anti- Bullying Policy

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all children and young people. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our organisation. If bullying does occur, all young people should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform the leader in charge.

Bullying can be:

- **Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, threats etc
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing, put downs
- **Emotional:** tormenting, threatening ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups or activities
- **Racist, sexist or homophobic:** taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact, abusive comments
- **Cyberbullying:** Sending/posting/sharing (or threatening to share) hurtful, embarrassing or threatening material

Youth workers and those working with children, young people and adults should respond to complaints of harassment or bullying and deal with all complaints in a prompt and supportive manner. When an allegation is made the youth worker in charge of the programme has a duty to investigate.

The youth worker will also need to make a judgement on informing parents or guardians depending on the nature of the conduct

Procedures to be followed are –

- Report bullying incidents to person in authority
- The incidents will be recorded.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem
- Talk to the young person concerned and warning them of future conduct. Record the conversation.
- In serious cases, suspension or exclusion will be considered and if necessary and appropriate, the police and other specialist services will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped
- The person committing the bullying will be helped to change their behaviour, apologise and if possible the young people can be reconciled.
- After the incidents have been investigated and dealt with each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

- All records will be held according to the organisational handling guidelines
- Discuss and create a code of conduct with young people and agreeing a no-tolerance to bullying policy

Sanctions

Failure to adhere to The Charity's policies and procedures may result in sanctions being applied to the following:

- Staff members – disciplinary rules and procedures including areas of misconduct are included in Charity's handbook
- Persons employed on a freelance or sessional basis who fail to adhere to the Charity's policies and procedures may have their contracts terminated
- Volunteers who fail to adhere to the Charity's policies and procedures may have their volunteering opportunities withdrawn.
- Children, young people and adults who fail to comply with the programme contract may be asked to leave the programme especially in relation to putting other children, young people and adults at risk. This will only be as a last resort and all efforts will be made to support children, young people and adults to complete the programme. Information relating to sanctions is also included in the Parents Information Pack.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a young person
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the child protection officer.
- Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality for all concerned and disseminated accordingly on a need to know basis only.

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone in the in the organisation has concerns, a record should be made. Information recorded will include:

- Name of the young Person
- Age

- Any special factors
- Name of parent(s)
- Home address & phone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of somebody else.
- What has prompted these concerns. Include times and dates
- Any physical signs, behavioural signs, indirect signs
- Has the child been spoken too. What was said
- Have the parents been contacted
- Has anyone else been consulted.

The sharing of information is important in ensuring that young people are safe and in assessing whether they are at risk. It is important that this 'significant' information is shared with personnel and appropriate agencies to prevent young people suffering harm. All staff and volunteers who make reports of suspected child abuse whether within or outside the organisation are fully supported by the organisation. While it may be difficult to share concerns about parents, colleagues or young people, it is essential that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm.

Significant information will only be shared with the appropriate personnel and agencies on a need-to-know basis.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Good safeguarding practice means that the Charity must ensure that all staff and volunteers understand how to recognise abuse, and how to pass any safeguarding concerns to the relevant people within the organisation. This does not mean that staff and volunteers are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but they do have the responsibility to be alert to physical signs, actions and/or behaviour by children, young people, staff or volunteers that suggests something may be wrong.

The Charity should seek to ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware that “child abuse” occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes significant harm. The broad categories of abuse are defined in “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (March 2016). Any action taken by statutory agencies in relation to safeguarding concerns will be based on these definitions.

Physical abuse – deliberately physically hurting a child.

Sexual abuse – when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others.

Emotional abuse – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. Neglect – the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development.

Exploitation – the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

Bullying – although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme forms it could be regarded as abuse. It can take many forms, including emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal and cyber. 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 or young person self-harming and even attempting suicide. All organisations should develop an antibullying policy and ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of it.

Some of specific forms of abuse which are identified in the policy include **female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour based violence and child sexual exploitation**. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. If any individual or organisation has any concerns that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation, this must be reported to the relevant HSCT and/or the PSNI.

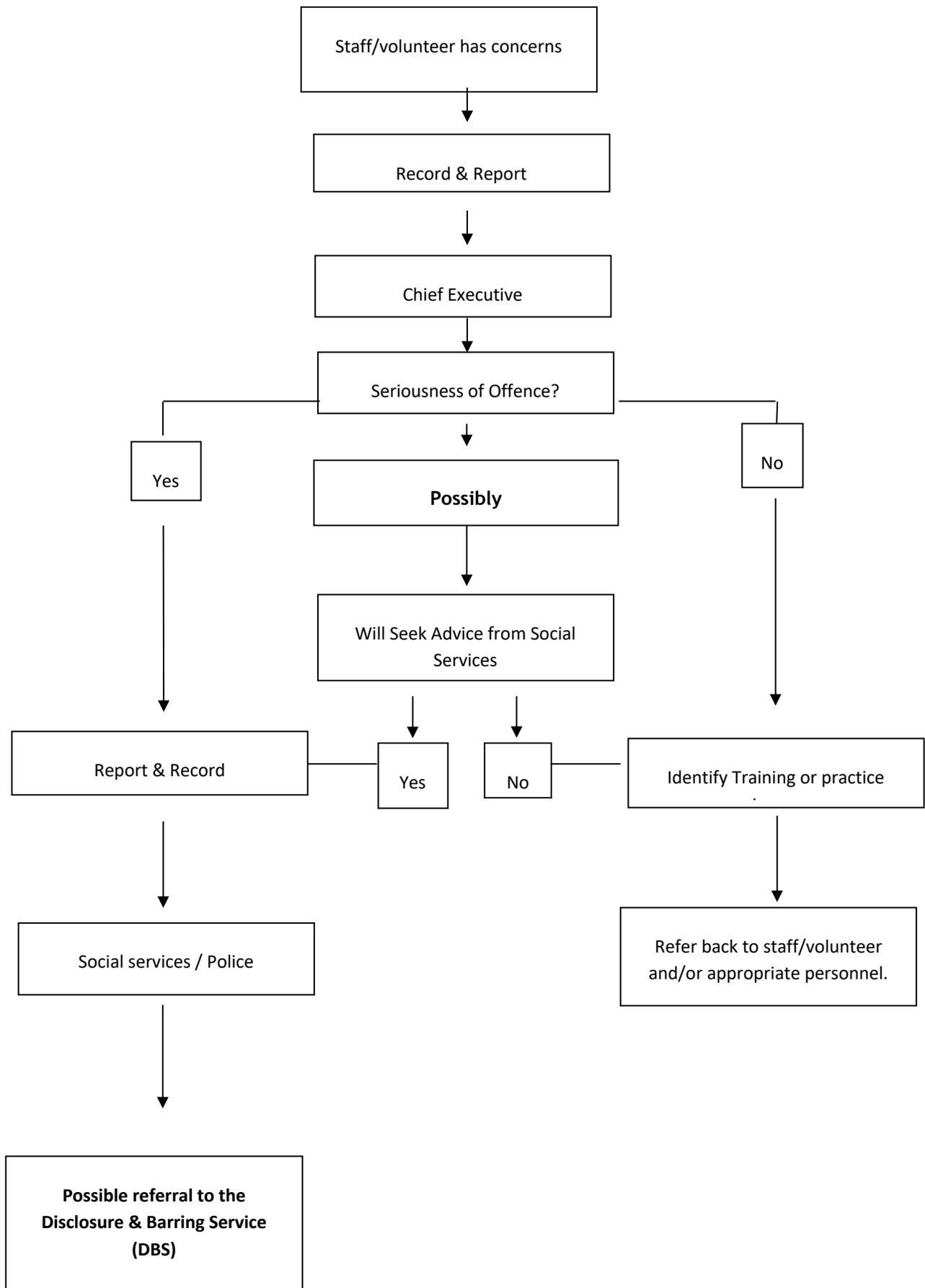
In addition to including the categories and indicators of abuse and potential risk factors in the safeguarding children and young people policy, good safeguarding practice means ensuring that staff and volunteers are also aware of who can abuse. Organisations have a responsibility to raise awareness among staff and volunteers that:

- abusers come from all sections of society, all professions and all races and can be male or female;
- abuse of children and young people can occur anywhere, at home or within organisations;

- abuse of children and young people may sometimes be carried out by strangers, but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child or young person and is in a position of trust and/or authority;
- it is not only adults who abuse children and young people. Children may suffer abuse from other children and young people.

Although most individuals who work with children and young people are well motivated, there may be those in an organisation who are unable to provide consistent care. There are also some adults, including professionals, who manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they could exploit children and young people, physically, emotionally or sexually. There may also be those, who by consistently behaving inappropriately towards children and young people, cause them to suffer physical or emotional harm. Through exploring these issues in the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy, staff and volunteers are more alert to the possibility of abuse and able to recognise indicators that cause concern.

The charity has procedures in place for dealing with concerns raised by staff and volunteers and for reporting those concerns to local Social Services or police where appropriate. The reporting procedures must be followed directly and urgently. The flow chart outlines the procedures to be followed



Everyone in The Charity should be aware of the person within the organisation who should always be informed of any concerns about a child being abused...

➤ **Name**

Designated Child Protection Officer

➤ **Job Title**

Chief Executive

➤ **Address**

Ground Floor, 22 Stockman's Way
Musgrave Park Industrial Estate

Telephone

07711108404 (Mob) 028 90663321 (Work)

Chief Executive

Appropriate contacts outside the organisation...

➤ **Social Services Office**

Belfast Health & Social Trust (Gateway Team)

➤ **Address**

414, Ormeau Road , Belfast
BT7 3HY

➤ **Telephone**

(02(028) 9050 7000

➤ **Emergency No.**

(028) 9056 5444 / **0300 1234 333**

➤ **Police Station**

Lisburn Road

➤ **Address**

276 Lisburn Road
Belfast

➤ **Telephone**

(028) 90650222

➤ **NSPCC Help line**

0808 8005000

The Charity accepts their moral and legal responsibilities in dealing promptly and effectively to concerns and disclosures regarding children and young people and allegations against a staff member or volunteer. (Reporting form Appendix A)

A concern relates to;

- the possibility of a child or young person suffering harm.

A disclosure involves;

- a child or young person telling a worker or volunteer of abuse or harm taking

place.

An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer can involve;

- concerns about their behaviour towards children and young people.

Confidentiality

The legal principle that “the welfare of the child is paramount” means that consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm.

There is also a legal obligation to pass on information concerning suspected or actual abuse of a child or young person. Any failure to do so may leave the person involved legally liable.

Non-recent abuse

Non-recent abuse (Historical abuse) is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is 18 years or over, relating to an incident which took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old. Allegations can be made by an adult, making an allegation of abuse when they were under 18 years of age, that occurred at least one year before it was reported , a child making an allegation of abuse that occurred at least one year before it was reported or an individual who reports an allegation, on behalf of another child or adult, that occurred at least one year before it was reported.

Non-recent abuse allegations could be made against relatives, friends, carers, people in public prominence and/or a position of trust, or any other person who currently has, or previously had contact with children, young people or adults at risk. Disclosures normally, but not always, take place when the victim is no longer in circumstances where they consider themselves at risk from the perpetrator. When an allegation is received action must be taken because

- the alleged abuse may not have been an isolated incident. It might be current and be perpetrated by the same person or someone else
- it comes to light that the non-recent abuse is part of a wider setting of institutional or organised abuse
- there is a probable likelihood that a person who abused a child/ren in the past may still be doing so
- the perpetrator may still be working with or caring for child/ren
- criminal prosecutions may still take place even though the allegations are historic in nature and may have taken place many years ago.

The reporting procedures must be followed and a referral to other agencies will be necessary in the following circumstances: a) allegations of child abuse involving persons in public prominence and/or people in a position of trust b) allegations of child abuse which took place historically where there may have been a failure within an organisation to protect children c) allegations of child abuse involving persons who are likely to be active and other children may be at risk

When receiving information about non-recent abuse all staff should seek to obtain where possible the following:

- name and contact details of the person making the allegation. If a member of the public wishes to remain anonymous this should be respected,
- name of the individual who the allegation is about and any other identifying information, including location non-recent historic abuse.
- name of any children involved
- date and time of when the abuse occurred
- key information about the nature of the non-recent abuse allegation
- establish, where possible, if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or caring for children
- establish whether other agencies are involved.

Allegations against a member of staff

This should follow the reporting procedures regarding concerns of suspected or disclosed abuse as detailed above alongside the Charity's Disciplinary Rules and Procedures

This is detailed as follows;

1. Allegation against a staff member is documented on incident reporting form. Staff members who receive allegations concerning themselves are required to complete this form and forward to their Line Manager who should forward this to the Director. This needs to be completed as soon as possible after the allegation is received.
2. Staff member informed and investigatory meeting carried out with Line Manager, Director and Safeguarding Officer on Board of Directors.
3. Information forwarded to Social Services confirming conclusions of investigatory meeting and follow up actions, if required.
4. Possible suspension/disciplinary action.
5. Possible referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)
6. Possible referral to Charity Commission

Following the above procedure and whether the allegation is substantiated or not the Line Manager in conjunction with the Designated Officer should agree follow up actions with the Director.

The dual responsibility in respect of the young person and the staff member concerned is outlined as follows

Allegation

Reporting Procedures for concerns regarding suspected or disclosed abuse

Disciplinary rules & Procedures

Cause for Concern

Staff member/volunteer informed and Investigatory Meeting carried out

Line Manager reports to the Designated Officer

Consultation with statutory authorities

Designated Officer informs Director

Possible disciplinary action

Formal referral to Social Services

Referral to the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

Follow up actions

Follow up Actions

Whistleblowing Policy

The charity has a clear policy when a staff member or volunteer raises a concern about misconduct or abusive practices by individuals and/or an organisation, where such practices cause harm or risk of harm. This will include situations where a staff member or volunteer's concerns are not acted upon by the Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer.

- The organisation is committed to the highest possible standards of conduct, openness, honesty and accountability;
- The organisation takes poor practice or malpractice seriously, giving examples of the types of concerns to be raised, to ensure that a whistleblowing concern is different from a grievance;
- The circumstances where staff or volunteers have the option to raise concerns outside agreed reporting procedures and how this may be done;
- Staff or volunteers are enabled to access confidential advice from an independent source;
- The organisation will, where possible, respect the confidentiality of a member of staff raising a concern through the whistleblowing procedure;
- It is a disciplinary matter to both victimise a bona fide whistle blower and for someone to maliciously make a false allegation.

There may be situations in which concerns or allegations turn out to be unfounded. It is important that everyone in the organisation knows that if they raise a concern which, through the process of investigation, is not validated, they have not in any way been wrong in their initial action. Responsible action needs to be encouraged in the organisation and whistle blowers should be confident of support. The policy needs regularly reviewed to ensure the procedures work in practice. It is everyone's duty to be vigilant in preventing abusive practice.

SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS & STAFF

There are distinct differences between the terms 'volunteer' and 'employee' (or 'paid worker').

Volunteering is defined as 'the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family. It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.'

Policies and procedures in place to effectively manage volunteers will reflect the voluntary nature of the relationship between the volunteer and the organisation. The only payment received by volunteers will be reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.

Employees will have a contract of employment. This is not just a piece of paper but a relationship between an individual and an organisation where:

- The individual receives remuneration (payment) or consideration (something else of material value) in return for work or services;
- The employer has an obligation to provide work and the individual has an obligation to do the work;
- The work is controlled by the person who is paying;
- The relationship between the parties is consistent with a contract of employment i.e. documentation, management procedures etc.

It is important that these differences are maintained.

The Charity relies heavily on the time and commitment given by volunteers and without this, the opportunities for children and young people to participate in our activities would not exist. The procedures outlined below will be adopted by the Charity for its own purposes for the Safe Recruitment of its volunteers and staff.

The Charity will ensure good recruitment by

- Defining the role the individual is applying for (job/role specification)
- Insisting that a person applying for a post of responsibility within this organisation complete the relevant staff/ volunteer application form
- Asking if there is any reason why the applicant cannot work with children and young people and recording the response
- Ensuring that proof of identity is provided.
- Undertake an informal interview (volunteers) or formal interview(staff)
- Ensuring that the applicant agrees in writing to the terms and conditions in the Code of Conduct promoted by The Charity and receives a copy of the Child Protection policy.
- Obtaining two references in writing (Appendix B)
- Ensuring that the individual completes and signs the AccessNI Disclosure form which gives permission to enable The Charity to request an AccessNI check (proof of identity must be provided) The Charity complies with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 to ensure that all volunteers and staff in a regulated position applies for an Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.
- Ensuring that the Board of Trustees ratifies appointments

- Training and continual support to enable volunteers & staff to work safely & effectively with children and young people.
- Information from AccessNI will be scrutinised in the first instance by the Volunteer Appointments Panel of the Charity and they will decide whether a disclosure is relevant or contrary to the Charity standards. If the individual is named on the Children's Barred List, they are legally prohibited from working or volunteering in regulated activity, and the organisation would commit a criminal offence if they offered a barred individual a post constituting regulated activity. A Barred person commits an offence by applying for or offering to undertake regulated activity. (Appendix C)
- There is an induction process for staff and volunteers.
- There is a probationary period for staff and a trial period for volunteers.
- Relevant training is provided, appropriate to the post/role.
- There is a robust structure and process for support and supervision for all staff and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role.
- There is an annual appraisal for staff and review for volunteers.
- Comprehensive written records are kept of: training completed, support and supervision, and annual appraisals/reviews.

Guidelines for the General Safety and Management of Activities

Responsibility

Responsibility for children, young people and adults health and safety lies with the youth worker in charge of the programme. In relation to children and young people under 18 years the youth worker is acting in *locus parentis* i.e. acting as a careful parent would.

Health and safety issues also need to be discussed and agreed with children, young people and adults during contracting and in the overall planning and delivery of programmes. This will ensure that children, young people and adults take ownership and responsibility for ensuring their own health and safety.

If a programme is delivered in partnership with another organisation health and safety considerations need to be agreed as part of the initial contract.

Supervision

- There should be adequate supervision at all times. This will vary depending on the needs of the group, age group of participants, vulnerability of children, young people and adults, gender breakdown and the overall nature of the activities involved.
- With regard to ratios of leaders and children, young people and adults it is preferable to have 2 leaders for groups of 12 or more. There should be one additional staff member for every ten extra children, young people and young adults.
- In relation to mixed gender groups it is preferable to have a leader of each gender. This is essential for residentials alongside having a qualified youth worker or equivalent.

Due consideration needs to be given to the following;

- Ensuring the children, young people and adults, both those in a leadership role and those they are working with are not left in a vulnerable position and at risk.
- High level of transparency to ensure relevant workers, the local community and youth organisations know their roles if relevant to the programme involved
- Levels of training, experience and support.

NOTE: Depending on the nature of activities eg. residentials, daytrips or outdoor pursuits, it is important to complete a risk assessment and consider if additional staff are needed.

Information – Young People

At the start of programmes youth workers are required to do the following;
Parent Information Pack to be given **to all participants under 18**. This includes;
Participant Information Form
Project Information Form
Safeguarding Policy Statement
Grievance Procedure

Adults over 18 should be given;
Participant Information Form
Project Information Form
Safeguarding Policy Statement
Grievance Procedure

All documents will be stored according to the Data Protection Policy

PLEASE NOTE – If a young person becomes a **VOLUNTEER** to work directly with children, young people and adults they should also complete a volunteer registration form and have a volunteer induction record.

Volunteers

All volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Registration Form and have a Volunteer Induction Record. This should be filled in and signed and stored in accordance with the Charity's GDPR policy.

Insurance

The Charity's Insurance Company need to be made aware of any high risk activities planned including residentials, as additional cover may be required. If in doubt, please check with the management.

All residential details should be given in advance to the management to forward to the Insurance Brokers. When venues are being hired or offered in kind, staff should clarify that these properties carry Public Liability insurance. Residential centres need to be carefully investigated with regard to insurance, particularly for organised activities.

First Aid

All staff working with children, young people and adults should hold a current First Aid certificate. The organisation will support staff to complete this.

Staff should also be aware of any medical needs of children, young people and adults. These should be detailed on Participant Information Forms. This should also include information concerning allergies and reaction to foods e.g. peanuts.

Fire Safety

All staff and others in a leadership role should be aware of the location of fire exits and fire extinguishers and ensure the fire exits are unlocked. Please ensure children, young people and adults know the fire drill of the premises. Fire drills should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that all children, young people and adults know the evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. A record should be kept of all fire drills taking place.

Safe Games

During games of icebreakers and energisers, it is necessary to be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these. It is also important to consider the physical environment and remove/avoid items that may cause injury during any activity.

Games should be facilitated in a non- threatening environment and account should be taken of physical and emotional abilities. Consideration must also be given to children, young people and adults who have particular medical needs.

Emergencies

Please do not hesitate to seek advice from the Line Manager involved or other senior members of staff in dealing with emergency situations.

Record details of accidents or injuries and send a copy to the line manager.

Transport

- Delivering youth work programmes can involve transporting children, young people and adults, whether this is during the day or evening or to and from a residential programme. Youth workers should observe the guidelines below to help ensure protection for them and the children, young people and adults involved.
- Before transporting children, young people and adults it is good practice to agree a code of behaviour within the contract especially if you are transporting large numbers on a bus or hired transport.
- You should avoid transporting a young person on your own if at all possible. If you are transporting someone on their own make sure someone else knows about it to ensure transparency at all times and they travel in the rear seat. A child or young person under the age of 12 is required by law to be transported in the rear seat.
- As stated by law seat belts must be worn. Drivers should be aware of the limitations of third party insurance for transporting children, young people and young adults'. It is also the staff members responsibility to check with their Insurance Company regarding the adequacy of passenger liability and ensure they are covered for using a car for business purposes.
- If applicable, any staff member driving **minibuses** must ensure that their licence permits them to drive the vehicle. A PSV licence is required for vehicles with sixteen seats or more. The law

- states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle is in a road-worthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must ensure the road worthiness of the vehicle. Please also make sure any minibus used is equipped with a First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher and familiarise yourself with them. **IF IN DOUBT, DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.**
- When hiring a taxi, minibus or larger bus, it is the responsibility of the user group to verify the legality and insurance cover of the operator prior to the use of the transport. If in doubt, ask to see a copy of the operator's insurance cover and operator's licence.
- All minibuses require seats with seat belts/restraints, and with the seats facing forward. The ratio is one child per seat belt. Seat belts must be worn for any journey and again it is the driver's/leader's responsibility to enforce this.
- Try and make sure that a leader is standing at the door when children, young people and adults are loading and unloading. Be aware of other vehicles nearby. Leaders must accompany children, young people and young adults' in minibuses and should, where possible, sit amongst the children, young people and young adults. Preferably a leader should also sit near the exit points of a vehicle.
- A written report of any accident should be made as soon as possible after the event. A copy of this should be made and sent to the line manager and kept in the Accident Book.

Contracting

- Good youth work practice acknowledges that children, young people and adults need to feel a sense of ownership in the programmes they are involved in. This can begin with a clear contract that encourages children, young people and young adults to take responsibility for their own actions and respect the rights of others. This does not need to be a list but a creative way of agreeing boundaries.
- It also helps to create a safe environment where children, young people and adults value one another and are treated with respect and dignity. **Contracting applies to things that are negotiable. It is also important to remind young people at this stage that you cannot promise confidentiality if you receive information that a child, young person has suffered or is likely to suffer abuse.**
- NOTE - In relation to adults the presumption should be made that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent.
- It is also important when working with partner organisations to agree clear roles and responsibilities and confirm that policies are in place.

Before you commence your work please ensure that you;

- Secure membership with Boys & Girls Clubs
- Confirm Safeguarding policies of members/partners
- Confirm Liability insurance is in place

Outreach work and working in the community.

Outreach work is a key feature of youth work practice within the community. This mainly takes place during the recruitment phase of a programme and its aim is to encourage children, young people and adults to come to a particular venue to participate in a programme. Outreach work for the purpose of this document is defined as any work undertaken with children, young people and adults outside of buildings i.e. on streets, around bus shelters, villages, etc.

The following are key areas of consideration for both outreach work and working in communities:

Risk Assessment

It is essential to carry out a risk assessment before any work is undertaken. All youth work activities carry elements of risk. Any assessment of the different risk areas need to judge whether it is a high or low risk activity and as a result ensure proper controls are in place to reduce the risk. The following controls need to be documented on all risk assessments;

- Comprehensive Insurance
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Workers should avoid the risk associated with carrying money or valuables when out making contact with children, young people and adults. With this in mind you should remember that all equipment is replaceable e.g. telephone, and no effort should be made to save them in any dangerous situations
- There may be heightened tension in local communities at different times of the year or as a result of political tensions. Any changes to a programme due to unrest should be discussed and agreed with the relevant Line Manager in advance.
- Identity – At all times workers should be carrying an identity card. Staff and volunteers should request this from the Insurance Co-ordinator as soon as possible after recruitment.
- Equipment and resources – At all times the workers should carry a mobile telephone. This will ensure that they can make contact in an emergency and can be contacted if needed. Also please make sure you are carrying a torch for safety purposes.
- Community contact – Please make yourself known to the local community through contact with a local community or youth organisation to ensure they know who you are and what you are doing. It is advisable to organise a meeting before any project starts so everyone is clear about the overall aims of the project and more specifically roles and responsibilities. Agreeing a contract will ensure these issues are taken into account.

Guidelines relating to residentials and international visits

There are undoubted benefits to be gained from residentials and visits especially through international work. Alongside taking account of the issues detailed above the following should also be considered;

Keeping contact

- If you are on residential a phone number should be left with parents or guardians. Also when you are on residential a contact phone number, address and names and contact number should be left with your Line Manager. Make sure that you are contactable at all times and that you can make phone calls in emergencies. The charity should always know where you are during agreed working hours.

Travel

- With regard to international travel appropriate travel insurance should be taken out. Passports should be current and advice from the Foreign Office sought if there is civil unrest.

Guidelines relating to physical contact

- As a general principle staff/ volunteers are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with children, young people and adults. It may of course be necessary and appropriate to offer comfort and reassurance at any given time.

Guidelines relating to special needs

It may sometimes be necessary for staff to do things of a personal nature for children, young people and adults particularly if they are very young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the young person and the parents/ guardians. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents/ guardians should be informed as soon as reasonably possible. In such situations it is important that staff ensure sensitivity towards the individual concerned and undertake personal care tasks with utmost discretion.

Sanctions

Failure to adhere to the charity's policies and procedures may result in sanctions being applied to the following:

Staff members – disciplinary rules and procedures including areas of misconduct are included in the staff handbook

Persons employed on a free-lance or sessional basis who fail to adhere to the charity's policies and procedures may have their contracts terminated

Volunteers who fail to adhere to the charity's policies and procedures may have their volunteering opportunities withdrawn.

Children, young people and adults who fail to comply with the programme contract may be asked to leave the programme especially in relation to putting the other children, young people and adults at risk. This will only be as a last resort and all efforts will be made to support children, young people and adults to complete the programme. Information relating to sanctions is included in the Parents Information Pack.

SHARING INFORMATION & CONFIDENTIALITY

The Charity is committed to sharing information about our programmes and activities and our safeguarding policy and procedures including good practice guidelines with staff, volunteers, children, young people and adults, parents/guardians and our membership. Confidential information is information which is not lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source. In this organisation it is our intention to respect the privacy of children and young people and their parents. We aim to ensure that all parents can share information with us in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their child.

The Charity works very closely with children, young people, their families and outside agencies and there is a possibility that we will come into contact with confidential or sensitive information. The Charity is committed to protecting and respecting all personal data collected under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). We are committed to upholding all our legal requirements under this law by only collecting what we need, keeping data up to date, secure and private and protecting the rights from whom we collect data which includes knowing what data we hold and having the right to get it removed at any time.

Children, young people and adults alongside parents and guardians receive information at the start of programmes through an Information Pack regarding an outline of the programme, expectations, the names of those responsible for running the programme and venue, duration and times of contact. A record is kept in project files of children, young people and adults and parent's signatures on receipt of receiving the charity's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Written consent is sought for all activities involving children, young people under 18 years of age from those with parental responsibility. Adults, those 18 and over, also sign consent forms. A record of these are kept in project files. The charity will ensure that they have essential personal details of all children and young people involved with the organisation and will follow the safe handling of personal information guidelines.

This organisation will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents will have ready access to the records of their own child/children, but will not have access to information about any other child;
- Information given by parents to staff and volunteers will not be passed on to other adults without permission, except with regard to a safeguarding concern;
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep – for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or family, or any discussions with parents/carers on sensitive matters;
- We keep all records securely.
- All written records should be stored in a secure location and accessed by authorised personnel only. Electronic records held on computers should also be appropriately secured by way of password protection and restricted access.
- Information should be disposed of within timescales that are in keeping with the requirements of the Data Protection Act

Please answer all relevant questions as fully as you can and pass the form on as quickly as possible (even if you cannot complete all sections).

Work location	
Name of child	
Age/Date of Birth	
Gender	
Name of parent(s) (if known)	
Home Address (if known)	

PLEASE COMPLETE THOSE SECTIONS BELOW THAT ARE RELEVANT

1 DISCLOSURE BY A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON	
When was the disclosure made (dates and times)?	
Who did the child/young person make the disclosure to?	
What did the child/young person actually say?	
2 INDICATORS	
Describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates)	
Has the child/young person alleged that any particular person is the abuser (if so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the child/young person below)	
3 CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY ANOTHER PERSON ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON	
Record the concerns that were passed to you (with dates and times) and if possible ask the person who expressed the concerns to confirm that the details as written are correct.	
4 DETAILS OF ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN e.g. FIRST AID	
5 DOES THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON HAVE ANY PARTICULAR NEEDS, E.G. COMMUNICATION, ETC?	
TO BE SIGNED BY THE PERSON REPORTING THE CONCERN	
Name:	
Job title:	
Signed:	Date:
DATE RECEIVED AND ACTIONED BY DESIGNATED OFFICER/DEPUTY DESIGNATED OFFICER	
Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Action taken by Designated Officer/Deputy Designated Officer	
Signed:	Date:

REFEREE'S REPORT

Name of Applicant:

Maiden Name (if appropriate):

Address

Appointment:

Dear Sir/Madam

The above named has applied for employment/voluntary position with the the Charity and has given your name as referee.

The Charity should be grateful if you would complete the questionnaire overleaf and return it in the envelope provided as soon as possible. A job/role description is enclosed for your information.

This position will involve direct work with children and young people and therefore is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1979, as amended in 2014. Consequently, it is not contrary to the order to reveal any information you may have concerning convictions, which you consider relevant to the applicant's suitability.

I am to assure you that any information that you give will be treated in the strictest confidence, except in the event of a complaint being referred to a Statutory Body. In such cases Referees' Reports must be made available to them.

Yours faithfully

PAUL CURRAN

Chief Executive

Boys & Girls Clubs

IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity? _____

2. If the applicant was in your employment please state position held with date and reason for leaving.

3. Please complete below by ticking the required box and detailing comments.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
3.1 Ability to use initiative					
3.2 Co-operation with others					
3.3 Dependability					
3.4 Attitude towards work					
3.5 Quality of performance					
3.6 Sickness Record					
3.7 Timekeeping					
3.8 Ability to motivate others					

1. If the applicant has had custody of cash was their record satisfactory? YES NO (If no please state why below)

2. Do you have any reservations or concerns regarding his/her suitability for work with children and/or young people?
 Yes NO If Yes, please state why

3. Additional comments: _____

Signature: _____

Position: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Tele No: _____

Disclosure of Criminal Conviction

Please read this information carefully.

Name of Applicant: _____

Job Title: _____

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Boys & Girls Clubs is committed to equal opportunity for all job applicants, including those with criminal convictions. Information about criminal convictions is requested to assist the selection process and will be taken into account only when the conviction is considered relevant to the role. Any disclosure will be seen in the context of the criteria of the role, the nature of the offence and the responsibility for the care of children and young people, volunteers and employees. Applicants are required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings not protected by legislation.

ADVICE TO APPLICANTS

The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not debar you from registration or appointment unless Boys & Girls Clubs considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable. In making this decision Boys & Girls Clubs will consider the nature of the offence, how long ago it was committed, your age at that time and other factors which may be relevant. This information will be verified through an appropriate AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure check. If you have received a formal caution or are currently facing prosecution for a criminal offence you should also bring this to our attention given the "exempted" nature of the role.

Please complete and sign this Declaration Form (below) accurately and return this with your application form. An arrangement may be made with you to discuss any convictions if clarification is required.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

DECLARATION 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 If 'Yes', please state the nature, date(s) and sentence of the offence(s) and provide any other information you feel may be of relevance, such as: the circumstances of the offence/incident; any relevant developments in your situation since; and whether or not you feel the conviction has relevance to this post. (Please continue on an additional separate page if required.)

I declare that any and all answers provided herein are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and I have informed Boys & Girls Clubs' Monitoring Officer in writing of any pending future convictions. I understand that I have applied for a role which is a Regulated Activity Position as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedom Act 2012) and which also falls within the definition of an "exempted" position as provided for by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979 (as amended in 2014). I give my consent for an AccessNI* check to take place and for this information to be shared only with relevant persons nominated as part of Boys & Girls Clubs' risk assessment and appointment procedures.

Signature _____ Date __ / __ / ____

Job Title _____

Job Ref: _____

* Boys & Girls Clubs complies with the AccessNI Code of Practice. Further information is available at www.boysandgirlsclubs.net and www.accessni.gov.uk