



Safeguarding People in Northern Ireland Policy & Procedures

Waterways Ireland is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of children and adults with whom we come in contact with through our work.

Waterways Ireland will not tolerate any form of abuse or harm wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. The organisation is committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness and welcomes feedback from the people who use our services, facilities and our staff with a view to how we may continuously improve our services and activities.

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Introduction

Waterways Ireland is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of everyone with whom we come in contact, through our business operations. We want children and adults to avail of and enjoy the facilities and services offered by the organisation, safely and free from the threat of harm.

Waterways Ireland is not directly responsible for the care or education of children or adults in the course of our routine business; however, the nature of our work makes it inevitable that our staff will come in contact with these groups from time to time.

It is essential that all staff have an understanding of the issues relating to safeguarding and an awareness of the legislative frameworks which addresses these. This policy is designed to support this and to provide guidance on best practice in dealing with these groups through our procedures.

The organisation's policy and associated procedures reflect our involvement with children and adults in a high level, caretaker, or 'guardian' role. Such groups using our facilities for school outings, sponsored walks, nature trails etc. will generally, be under the care of a dedicated 'responsible person', such as a teacher or youth worker. This 'responsible person' will have primary responsibility for the safeguarding of children and adults in their care.

Waterways Ireland expects that all contact between our staff and children and adults will be guided by the principles of best practice provided in the Waterways Ireland Safeguarding People Policy and Procedures for Northern Ireland.

Adherence to the policy and procedures will also serve to protect staff from potentially compromising situations.

Our Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the requirements of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and the Department of Health's Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People (2017) and the Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnerships' Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures (2016).

Our Safeguarding Policy contains:

- procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by staff against a child, young person, or adult availing of our services;
- procedures for the safe recruitment of staff who work with children, young people, or adults at risk;
- A training schedule that sets out access to safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm;
- Procedures for the report of safeguarding concerns to statutory authorities.

These policies and procedures will help us to work with our staff to establish and implement agreed, consistent, minimum safeguarding standards and outline our expectations when working with children, young people, or adults to effectively address safeguarding requirements.

Waterways Ireland believes that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person. Everyone who comes into contact with children, young people, their families, and/or adults at risk has a role to play. Those most vulnerable are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together.

Waterways Ireland has developed and will implement policies and procedures to ensure that everyone knows and accepts their responsibility in relation to their 'Duty of Care' for children, young people, and adults at risk. We will endeavour to ensure our services and activities take place in an environment where children, young people, and adults are safe from the possibility of any form of ill-treatment.

This policy is applicable to all staff in Waterways Ireland. Staff must be aware of their role and responsibility for undertaking best safeguarding practice. Waterways Ireland will provide appropriate training to raise awareness of abuse issues and to familiarise staff with its safeguarding policy, procedures, and guidelines.

This policy operates alongside other organisational policies and procedures, including:

- recruitment and selection;
- health and safety;
- equal opportunities;
- training;
- whistleblowing;
- disciplinary, grievance and appeals, etc.

All organisational policies will dovetail with this safeguarding policy. This holistic approach will ensure a safe and healthy organisation for staff and the children, young people and adults that use the facilities of Waterways Ireland.

Everyone involved with Waterways Ireland will be made aware of the safeguarding policy and the procedures that have been put in place to best protect children, young people, and adults. This will be achieved through dissemination of the policy, training, and awareness raising.

All incidents or concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer in accordance with the procedures laid out in this document.

The safeguarding policy statement will be prominently displayed in offices and venues, as well as relevant sections of our website. It is internally reviewed on an annual basis and an external review is carried out every three years. Amendments are made in accordance with changes in legislation and practice guidelines.

Waterways NI Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Francie Gallagher	francie.gallagher@waterwaysireland.org	028 66 346210 (NI) or 048 66 346210 (Ireland)
Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Jean Errity	jean.errity@waterwaysireland.org	044 93 74940 (Ireland) or 00353 44 93 74940 (NI)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer:	Cormac McCarthy	cormac.mccarthy@waterwaysireland.org	061 92 2149 (Ireland) or 00353 61 92 2149 (NI)

Aims of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Waterways Ireland is committed to practice that protects children, young people and/or adults at risk from harm and abuse and aims to provide an environment that promotes their safety. Waterways Ireland supports a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and harm of any kind, and will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and/or adults at risk.

The aim of these policies and procedures is to:

- demonstrate Waterways Ireland's commitment to providing and maintaining an organisation that protects children, young people and adult from harm, and protects staff and the organisation itself from potential allegations;
- ensure our staff are appropriately selected and vetted by setting out robust recruitment and selection procedures for all staff in line with legislative requirements;
- ensure our staff are aware of our safeguarding standards;
- to manage safeguarding risks associated with our activities;
- provide procedures for appropriate and relevant supervision, including the appointment of Designated Safeguarding Officers;
- provide guidelines on appropriate safeguarding training for staff so they know how to recognise and respond to abuse;
- set standards for managing records, confidentiality, and sharing information about safeguarding and best practice with staff, children, young people and/or adults at risk and parents/guardians/carers as appropriate;
- provide guidance on how staff should respond to disclosures;
- provide clear procedures and guidance on how staff must deal with any safeguarding incidents or concerns;
- provide clear reporting procedures in the event of suspected or actual abuse of a child/young person and/or adult;
- ensure appropriate action, in-line with best practice, is always taken in the event of a safeguarding incident;
- provide a clear code of behaviour which all staff must sign up to, in addition to codes of behaviour for children & young people, adult service users, and parents/guardians/carers;
- provide a procedure for dealing with comments and complaints;
- ensure the general safety and the effective management of Waterways Ireland's activities.

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITIONS

A **child** is a person under the age of 18, as defined by [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)

An **adult** is anyone aged 18 or over as defined by [Age of Majority Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1969](#)

Safeguarding and Child Protection Safeguarding is more than child protection. Safeguarding begins with promotion and preventative activity which enables children and young people to grow up safely and securely in circumstances where their development and wellbeing is not adversely affected. It includes support to families and early intervention to meet the needs of children and continues through to child protection. Child protection refers specifically to the activity that is undertaken to protect individual children or young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

[Co-operating to Safeguarding Children and Young People In Northern Ireland, 2017](#)

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 and promoting access to justice.

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership, 2016](#)

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** which 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.

AND/OR

- b) **Life circumstances** which may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.

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

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership, 2016](#)

In recent years there has been a marked shift away from using the term 'vulnerable' to describe adults potentially at risk from harm or abuse. An adult with **an impairment or a disability** may or may not identify themselves/be identified as an adult 'at risk' or vulnerable.

Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC) this is a requirement for targeted services – i.e. all organisations or groups that have staff who are required to be vetted at any level under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. If an organisation or group does not have staff who are required to be vetted, then it is not compulsory to have an ASC. However, having an ASC is identified as good practice for every group or organisation. The Designated Safeguarding Officer is The Waterways Ireland's Adult Safeguarding Champion.

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership, 2016](#)

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING & STAFF SUPERVISION

Waterways Ireland is committed to providing all staff with appropriate Safeguarding awareness sessions or the relevant level of training in accordance with the [SBNI Learning and Development Strategy \(safeguardingni.org\)](#) and the [Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership Training Strategy 2013](#).

In addition to safeguarding training, Waterways Ireland will also provide:

- induction training to familiarise staff with the working environment of Waterways Ireland, expectations and the requirements of the job including compliance with all current policies as detailed on the Intranet;
- particular skills training may be needed to enable staff to perform the necessary health and safety requirements, for example First Aid training, fire procedures.

All managers and HR will be responsible for ensuring that staff are made aware of and implement Waterways Ireland's Safeguarding policy and procedures as appropriate to the job roles using existing organisational system and guidelines.

ASSESSING & MANAGING SAFEGUARDING RISKS

Assessing and managing safeguarding risks to children, young people and/or adults is an integral part of Waterway Ireland's risk management strategy. In assessing and managing safeguarding risks, the aim is to minimise either the likelihood of risk or its potential impacts. This applies to all activities in the organisation. There is "zero-tolerance" of abuse whenever it occurs and whoever causes it.

The safeguarding risk assessment process involves:

- identifying of risks; and
- determining the level of risk by evaluating its potential impact and the likelihood of it happening.

Waterways Ireland will aim to reduce both the likelihood and impact of abuse by:

- instigating a safe recruitment policy to prevent unsuitable people from joining Waterways Ireland;
- training staff to be aware of the indicators of vulnerability and risk and the possible signs of abuse and equipping them to respond quickly to concerns about actual, alleged or suspected abuse;
- ensuring that staff are properly inducted, trained, supported and supervised throughout their work with Waterways Ireland;
- creating a code of behaviour for staff that sets out what constitutes acceptable behaviours and good practice;
- having a robust whistleblowing policy to promote a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness throughout the organisation and its services and activities;
- having clear procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns/incidents to support staff when they challenge poor practice or have concerns or receive disclosures;
- making staff aware of confidentiality and data protection and specifically how information about safeguarding incidents/concerns should be managed;
- having in place good overall organisational management and practice supported by a range of organisational policies and procedures.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

Waterways Ireland's Designated Safeguarding Officers are responsible for acting as a source of advice and support on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating safeguarding action within the organisation, and for liaising with statutory authorities about suspected or actual cases of abuse of a child, young person, or adult.

The named Designated Safeguarding Officers shall be made known to staff as the individuals to whom any safeguarding concerns raised will be addressed. Our Designated Officers are not responsible for investigating or validating safeguarding concerns and have no counselling role.

The names of the Designated Safeguarding Officers shall be displayed as part of the safeguarding statement in offices and venues, as well as relevant sections of the website of each agency to make parents/guardians/carers and children, young people, and/or adult service users aware of the people to whom staff will pass safeguarding issues in line with the reporting procedure.

Duties and responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy will:

- assess and manage safeguarding risks;
- provide information and advice on safeguarding issues for all staff;
- endeavour to ensure that Waterway Ireland's safeguarding policy and procedures are followed and kept up to date with current legislation and best practice;
- liaise with Human Resources to coordinate an ongoing training programme for staff
- undertake training to ensure they are knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and renew this training every three years to remain up-to-date on with current legislation and best practice;
- endeavour to be accessible and available at all times, but this should not prevent staff taking any actions in an emergency situation;
- receive and record any disclosures made by a child, young person, or adult to staff;
- receive and record any concerns and/or allegations of children, young people and/or adults;
- be able to direct individuals with any non-agency related safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities or services;
- build relationships with relevant external statutory agencies
- make reports to statutory services, ensuring that the appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, in a confidential manner;
- ensure that systems are in place for recording and retaining all relevant documentation in relation to safeguarding
- file any written records securely and confidentially;
- Inform Chief Executive /Director of Finance & Personnel of any safeguarding reports from staff.

**If there is a safeguarding concern about the Designated Safeguarding Officer -
Please report to the Head of HR.**

RECOGNISING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Recognising abuse is not easy. Abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm.

A **concern** is a feeling of worry about someone's behaviour or practice that could indicate underlying safeguarding issues.

A safeguarding **incident** is when an act of abuse, inappropriate behaviour, or poor practice occurs and is witnessed by someone.

An **allegation** is a claim or assertion that someone has committed an act or acts of abuse.

A **disclosure** is when a child, young person and/or adult tells of abuse. It may or may not contain an allegation against a 'named' abuser.

It is not our responsibility in Waterways Ireland to decide whether or not abuse has occurred or if a child or young person or adult is at significant risk of harm from someone.

We do, however, have both a responsibility and duty to **act**: Staff should report any safeguarding concerns or incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Officer so that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect the child, young person, or adult.

There are a variety of ways that you could be alerted that an individual is suffering harm:

- they may tell you;
- someone else may tell you of their concerns or something that causes you concern;
- they may show some signs of physical injury for which there does not appear to be a satisfactory or credible explanation;
- their demeanour/behaviour may lead you to suspect abuse or neglect;
- the behaviour of a person close to them makes you feel uncomfortable (this may include other staff, peers or family members);

All staff should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, indicators that an individual's welfare or safety may be at risk.

Who might the abuser be? **It can be anyone.**

Where might the abuse occur? **Abuse can happen anywhere.**

No individual should be considered 'above suspicion' of committing abuse.

If staff witness concerning behaviour or poor practice, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Staff may wish to respect autonomy/privacy and may not wish to be intrusive, but it is important to remember that abuse or harm occurs as much from omissions and lack of protection as from committing acts of abuse.

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Allegations against staff

If a safeguarding allegation is made against staff, this should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, in accordance with the reporting procedure. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the Chief Executive Officer and Human Resources.

If the allegation is about or involves the Designated Safeguarding Officer, a report should be made to the Head of HR.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will review the allegation and determine whether the allegation meets the threshold for external referral to HSCT Gateway teams or the PSNI. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is unsure if an allegation meets the threshold for external referral, they should seek advice from an appropriate agency. Human Resources will need to liaise as necessary with the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

Consideration may be given to temporary suspension of staff (or moving the individual to alternative duties) while statutory authorities carry out any investigation.

If the allegations constitute a possible act (or acts) of gross misconduct, disciplinary procedures will be initiated internally by the Human Resources department of Waterways Ireland.

Concerns about failures to adhere to Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

If staff at Waterways Ireland have concerns about a colleague not fulfilling the requirements of our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, in the first instance, the colleague should be reminded of the importance of adhering to our policies and procedures and best practice, by their line manager and/or and HR representative.

If staff continue to have concerns, these should be taken to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will liaise with the individual's line manager and may refer to Human Resources if necessary.

Dealing with Disclosures and Concerns

Children, young people, and adults will talk about their concerns and problems with people they feel they can trust; this will not necessarily be senior staff. However, we must stay vigilant and not expect survivors of abuse to talk about it. Sometimes they will display indicators/behaviours that suggest they are being abused. If so, it's important to note these, and explore if the child/young person or adult has something they wish to share with you. If you are approached by someone you think wants to tell you about abuse they have suffered, you should listen positively and follow the procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns but there are some extra considerations for you to take:

- **Ensure the immediate safety** of the person. If urgent medical/PSNI help is required, call the emergency services;
- **Stay calm and listen attentively:** Avoid expressing your own views on the matter. A reaction of shock or disbelief could cause the person to 'shut down', retract or stop talking so try to stay calm;
- **Express concern and acknowledge what is being said;** They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to believe them and help them;
- **Tell them it's not their fault.** Abuse is never the person's fault and they need to know this.
- **Tell the person that s/he/they did the right thing in telling you;** Reassurance can make a big impact to the person who may have been keeping the abuse secret.

It can be very hard for individuals to reveal abuse. Often, they fear there may be consequences. Some delay telling someone about abuse for a long time, while others never tell anyone, even if they want to. People value being believed and it is vital that you act on what you've been told.

- **Say you are taking them seriously.** An individual could keep abuse secret in fear they won't be believed. They've told you because they want help and trust you'll be the person to take them seriously and help them;
- **Don't talk to the alleged abuser.** Confronting the alleged abuser about what you've been told could make the situation a lot worse for the person;
- **Explain what you'll do next.** Explain to the person in an age-appropriate way that you'll need to report the abuse to someone who will be able to help.

When receiving a disclosure from an adult it is important to be open and transparent about what steps you need to take following the disclosure. Remember to consider the capacity of the adult.

Depending on the individual circumstances e.g. age of the adult, level of understanding, it may be necessary for an advocate to be present to enable the adult's voice to be heard more effectively. This might be the adult's group leader, carer or parent, unless she or he is the person of concern. If the supervising person is not available, other staff (preferably the Adult Safeguarding Champion/Designated Safeguarding Officer) can be availed of to assist in representing the voice of the adult if appropriate.

- **Let the person know that the information will be taken seriously** and provide details about what will happen next, including the limits and boundaries of confidentiality;
- **Explain to them that it is your duty to share your concern** with your Designated Safeguarding Officer unless to do so could increase their risk – i.e. the Designated Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the allegations. In this case the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer should be contacted;
- **Reassure the person that they will be kept involved at every stage;** explain that the Designated Safeguarding Officer will seek their consent before any referral is made to external agencies;
- **If you think a crime has occurred** be aware that medical and forensic evidence might be needed. Consider the need for a timely referral to the PSNI and make sure nothing you do will contaminate it;
- **Complete a Safeguarding Incident form** as soon as possible and report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Whether you receive a disclosure from a child, young person, or an adult **DO NOT:**

- Stop someone disclosing to you;
- Make promises about the future;
- Promise to keep secrets;
- Criticise the alleged perpetrator;
- Use leading questions or put words in the person's mouth;
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story unnecessarily;
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass on the information to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know;
- Contact the alleged person to have caused the harm;
- Attempt to investigate yourself;
- Leave details of your concerns on a voicemail or by email.

Don't delay reporting the abuse. The sooner the abuse is reported after a disclosure the better.

Do report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Complete a Safeguarding Incident Form and pass to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible. The Designated Safeguarding Officer

will take any immediate action required to ensure the child, young person, or adult at risk of harm is safe and make a decision as to when it is appropriate to speak with the individual about the concerns and any proposed actions.

How to Record a Disclosure

If someone discloses abuse to you, you must complete a Safeguarding Incident Form (see Appendix 3) and give it to your Designated Safeguarding Officer. If you have literacy or language difficulties, the Designated Safeguarding Officer may assist you to complete the form, but this must be acknowledged on the incident form.

The Safeguarding Incident Form will be retained securely and confidentially by the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Adult safeguarding records will be retained with “protected status” (as defined by Data Protection legislation) for 3 years after the incident/concern raised or if requested by PSNI or HSCT until they confirm that the information is no longer required. Safeguarding records relating to children and young people will be retained with protected status (as defined by Data Protection legislation) until the child/young person’s known or perceived 23rd birthday.

When recording the disclosure, you must:

- make a note, as soon as practical, of what the individual has said, using their own words;
- describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about. Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate; and,
- be mindful of the need to be confidential, this information must only be shared with your designated safeguarding officer and others only on a need-to-know basis.

Consent and Capacity for Adults at Risk

It is important to include the adult at risk throughout the process and seek consent for any referral to HSCT or the PSNI unless the adult in need of protection is in imminent danger of harm. Designated Safeguarding Officers are not in the position to determine the capacity of adults; if you are unsure if an adult is able to consent you should contact the HSCT Trust Adult Safeguarding Team for advice and guidance.

If an adult at risk does not want a referral made to the HSCT or PSNI, the Designated Safeguarding Officer must contact the Adult Safeguarding Team for advice and guidance about whether or not to make a referral. These factors will influence whether or not a referral without consent needs to be made:

- Do they have capacity to make this decision?
- Have they been given full and accurate information in a way which they understand?
- Are they experiencing undue influence or coercion?
- Is the person causing harm staff or someone who only has contact with the adult at risk because they both use the service?
- Is anyone else at risk from the person causing harm?
- Is a crime suspected or alleged?

The HSCT may determine that a referral without consent should be made, and you should follow their instructions for making the referral.

If it is determined that the concern(s) do not meet the definition of an adult at risk or an adult in need of protection and a referral cannot be made without consent, the concerns raised must be recorded; including any action taken; and the reasons for not referring to HSCT.

In situations where the adult in need of protection is in imminent danger it may not be possible to discuss with them their wishes and obtaining a valid consent may not be achievable. Under these circumstances,

staff should take whatever action they feel is appropriate to protect the adult in need of protection, including seeking medical and/or PSNI intervention.

RECORD KEEPING & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Record keeping and information management is a key part of effective inter-agency, inter-disciplinary working in relation to safeguarding. Failure to record information, understand its significance, share it in an appropriate, purposeful, and timely manner and then take appropriate action can hamper the work of those tasked with keeping children, young people, and adults safe.

Data Protection

Information obtained by organisations in the exercise of their safeguarding and child protection duties may be personal information about a particular child, young person, or adult, and therefore is governed by the common law duty of confidentiality and the [Data Protection Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

The Designated Safeguarding Officers have responsibility for keeping safeguarding records securely and for sharing information in an appropriate, purposeful and timely manner with HSCT Gateway Teams, PSNI, and reporting that an incident or disclosure has occurred to the CEO & Director of Finance & Personnel.

Waterways Ireland recognises the need to comply with the various laws regulating the processing of personal data relating to individuals and in accordance with Data Protection legislation. These can be found in our Data Protection Policy. The organisation recognises the importance of the correct and lawful treatment of personal data. All personal data, whether it is held on paper, on computer or other media, will be subject to the appropriate legal safeguards:

- Any basic data gathered e.g. through registration forms etc will be kept securely within folders or filing systems.
- Any personal or confidential data gathered must be kept within a secure environment and only authorised personnel should be allowed to access it.

Upon request, children, young people, adult service users, and parents/guardians/carers will be told how information will be used, stored, and shared (if relevant) before they provide it. They should also be able to see any information about them that is held.

Confidentiality & Sharing Information

It is important that all concerned are confident that the information they provide will only be disclosed where it is in the best interests of the child or young person or adult.

Waterways Ireland has Designated Safeguarding Officers, who have been specially trained in the area of safeguarding children, young people, and adults and who are committed to the principle of confidentiality.

However, where safeguarding concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child/young person/adult at risk with the relevant statutory authorities and, if appropriate, with parents/guardians/carers.

- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child/young person/adult at risk is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection;
- Parents/guardians/carers and children/young people/adults have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child, young person, or adult being harmed at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.

Information about the care and safety of a child, young person, or adult, or where a crime is suspected, must be reported by staff to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as per the reporting procedures and using the appropriate forms.

In the first instance access to the records will be restricted to Designated Officer/Assistant Designated Officer and where appropriate statutory agencies.

Where Disciplinary Procedures are initiated following a complaint being upheld, relevant records may be made available to the Disciplinary Panel.

Records held by the Designated Officer will include;

- allegations/concerns about abuse;
- incident report forms;
- referrals to statutory agencies;
- outcomes and reports from statutory agencies;
- reports of incidents of disruptive or challenging behaviour;
- reports arising from incidents concerning lost or injured children or adults at risk.

Waterways Ireland will share this information with external agencies as appropriate, including those statutory agencies with a responsibility for safeguarding.

Children, young people, and adult, and their parents/guardians/carers will have access to information about Waterways Ireland. They will be:

- informed of the safeguarding policy and be directed to where they can access a copy;
- made aware of the reporting procedures and the name of the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers;
- given a copy of the safeguarding policy statement upon request;
- informed of the procedures for providing feedback and for making a complaint.

REPORTING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

STAGE 1 – REPORTING

All staff

If as part of your role with Waterways Ireland you:

- (a) suspect that a child or young person or adult has been, or is at risk of being abused; or
- (b) have had a disclosure made to you; or
- (c) receive a complaint from a member of the public relating to a safeguarding issue; or
- (d) have a direct allegation made against you or other staff; or
- (e) observe concerning behaviours by a member of the public (adult or young person) relating to safeguarding children, young people, or adults
- (f) become aware that poor safeguarding practice is taking place, suspect poor safeguarding practice may be occurring, or you are told about something that may be poor safeguarding practice.

You must complete a Safeguarding Incident Form and report to a Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Do not investigate yourself – Just Listen

Under no circumstances should any staff attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.

Notify your Designated Safeguarding Officer



Emergency Action

If the child is in need of immediate protection from harm you must contact the PSNI, Ambulance, or the HSCT Gateway team immediately.

Inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Write careful notes in the safeguarding incident form of what you witnessed, heard, or were told.

Sign and date the form and give it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer



Non-Emergency Action

If the child is not at risk of immediate harm, write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard, or were told on the Safeguarding Incident Form.

Sign and date the form and give it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will follow the procedure set out in Stage 2.

Children & Young People Safeguarding Contacts

Gateway team: Tel: (028) 82 835156. A duty social worker is available to take your call Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays)

Regional Emergency Social Work Service (RESWS) Tel: (028) 9504 9999 A duty social worker is available to take your call 5pm to 9am weekdays or 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays.

PSNI: Telephone: 101

NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Adult Safeguarding Contacts

PSNI: Telephone: 101

HSC Trust Adult Safeguarding Team A duty social worker is available to take your call Monday-Friday 9am-5pm (excluding bank holidays)

Emergency (Out of Hours) Social Work 028 9504 9999 A duty social worker is available to take your call 5pm to 9am weekdays or 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays.

Stage 2a – Reviewing & Referring Safeguarding Children Concerns Designated Safeguarding Officers

On receiving the report of a concern, the Designated Safeguarding Officer must review the concern, along with any other relevant information, and decide, often in liaison with others, what actions should be taken. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform both sponsor departments' Designated Safeguarding Officers/Designated Liaison Person of any external referrals.

The HSTC Gateway team or PSNI should always be informed when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child or young person may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

If the child/ young person is in imminent danger of harm you should refer to the PSNI or HSTC Gateway Team without delay.



Seek advice

If you are unsure what action you should take seek advice and support from HSTC Gateway Team or the NSPCC.



Safeguarding Issue

If there are suspicions or concerns with no immediate risk of harm

Refer to the relevant HSTC Gateway Team in writing using the Safeguarding Incident Form.

Protection Issue

If there is a clear and immediate risk of harm/alleged crime refer to HSTC Gateway Team/PSNI

Refer **immediately** by telephone to the HSTC Gateway team, PSNI, Ambulance.

When making an urgent referral by telephone you will be required to confirm your referral in writing within 24 hours.



No Safeguarding Issue

Record Decision on Safeguarding Incident Form
Identify training or good practice issues that require attention

Whatever your decision, you **MUST**:

- Record in writing all actions taken, the reasons for these, and by whom the actions were taken.
- Keep a full record of all actions and decisions.
- Ensure pastoral care is provided to staff/volunteer as appropriate.

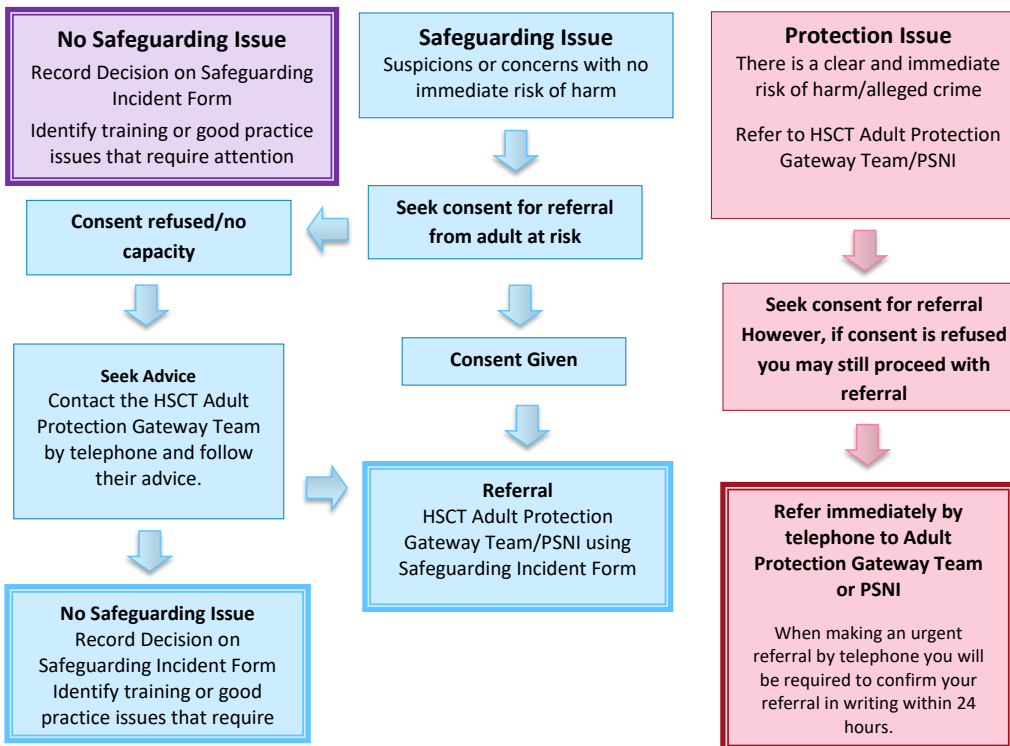
You will need to provide as much detail as possible (child's name, address, circumstances). Make sure you have this to hand when making a referral.

Stage 2b – Reviewing & Referring Adult Safeguarding Concerns Designated Safeguarding Officers

On receiving the report of a concern, the Designated Safeguarding Officer must review the concern along with any other relevant information and decide, often in liaison with others including the adult at risk, what actions should be taken. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will inform both sponsor departments' Designated Safeguarding Officers/Designated Liaison Person of any external referrals.

*If you are unsure what action you should take **seek advice** and support from the HCST Adult Protection Gateway Team or PSNI.*

If the adult at risk is in imminent danger of harm you should refer directly to the PSNI or HSCT.



Whatever your decision or outcome, you **MUST**:

- Record in writing all actions taken, the reasons for these, and by whom the actions were taken.
- Start a Safeguarding Case File (kept as per data protection guidelines)
- Keep a full record of all actions and decisions
- Ensure pastoral care is provided to staff/volunteer as appropriate

You will need to provide as much detail as possible (adult's name, address, circumstances). Make sure you have this to hand when making a referral.

Stage 3 - Assessments and Enquiries

For Designated Safeguarding Officers & Statutory Agencies

The Relevant HSCT Team should acknowledge reports that you make and may contact you for further information, if necessary.

The relevant HSCT team will commence an assessment and may decide to hold a strategy meeting. This is a meeting of professionals, such as PSNI, education professionals, HSCT, and any other organisations. This may include Waterways Ireland's Designated Safeguarding Officer(s).

As a result of the information shared at the strategy meeting the statutory agencies may make further enquiries or assessments of the matter and will keep other agencies updated if necessary.

Stage 4 - Conclusions

For Designated Safeguarding Officers & Authorities
Assessments and enquiries

The Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) should assist statutory authorities until any assessment and enquiries are concluded. While it is not always possible for the relevant statutory authorities to keep you informed on the progress or outcome of the case they may contact you to inform whether thresholds have been met and based on that whether they will be taking further action.

NO FURTHER ACTION BY STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

After assessing the concern, the HSCT may decide to take no further safeguarding action.

In these circumstances, the child/adult at risk may still receive support from Social Care Services or other agencies.

Even if statutory authorities decide to take no further action the issue raised may be cause for intervention by Waterways Ireland, who may wish to pursue case management procedures or review practices.

FURTHER ACTION TAKEN BY STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

If statutory authorities feel there are grounds to take further action regarding an allegation against staff, then internal disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Even if staff are not implicated the situation will be reviewed by DSOs and further safeguarding risk assessments of Waterways Ireland's activities or services may be recommended including case management procedures or practice review.

DETERMINATION OF COMPLAINTS

Waterways Ireland has a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness, which facilitates a free flow of information from the organisation to all staff, children, young people and adult service users and their parents/guardians/carers in relation to our ethos, aims, and what we wish to achieve.

If you would like further information about Waterways Ireland's safeguarding policies and procedures or if you have any comments or suggestions regarding safeguarding within the organisation, please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Parents/guardians/carers need to be aware of what we do and how we do it, and staff will always be on hand during activities for consultation or advice. Further information relating to an event or activity will be provided via letters, emails, or telephone contact.

Waterways Ireland requires that providers ensure they obtain the relevant consent form before proceeding with their activities with our organisation.

Safeguarding Complaints

Safeguarding complaint made to the Designated Safeguarding Officer

If you have a complaint regarding safeguarding please contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will follow our safeguarding procedures.

If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is not available or the complaint is about the Designated Safeguarding Officer go to the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Once the Designated Safeguarding Officer has received the complaint they must **review** it within 24 hours. A record of the complaint and the review will be made and kept confidentially. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will **determine** whether the complaint constitutes:

- **Safeguarding Issue:** *there are suspicions or concerns with no immediate risk of harm*
- **Protection Issue:** *there is a clear and immediate risk of harm/alleged crime*

The Designated Officer will liaise, as necessary, with Social Services, the HSE and the PSNI. In the event that the allegations should be further investigated, the incident will be formally reported to Social Services or the HSE, without delay.

In an emergency, the Designated Officer will report the incident directly to and the PSNI.

Investigations into allegations of abuse will be carried out by the statutory agencies – Health Authorities and the PSNI.

Waterways Ireland will cooperate fully with these investigations and the Designated Officer will be the central contact point for these bodies.

Where the allegation, subject to a formal referral to the statutory agency, is against a member of staff, the Designated Officer will notify the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance & Personnel and the Head of HR.

A Risk Assessment will be carried out to determine the course of action pending the outcome of the investigation.

Waterways Ireland will be informed of the outcome of the investigation by the statutory agency where it concerns a member of staff.

Where allegations are found to be upheld against a member of staff, Waterways Ireland will initiate formal disciplinary proceedings as per the Waterways Ireland Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Where allegations are found not to be upheld the investigators will independently advise all parties to the investigation. The Designated Officer will ensure that this is communicated to the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance & Personnel and the Head of HR and that records are noted accordingly.

At any point in the process, you can report your concerns to HSCT, the PSNI, or the NSPCC.

SAFEGUARDING CODES OF BEHAVIOUR

Safeguarding Code of Behaviour for Staff

Waterways Ireland aims to provide a safe environment for children and adults by creating a culture of awareness and understanding of the risk to both these groups through a Code of Behaviour.

The safeguarding code of behaviour for staff should be read in conjunction with each employee's own specific terms and conditions of employment and job description.

This code outlines the behaviour expected of all involved with the organisation, including visitors and contractors, when dealing with children and adults in a work environment. Through this code of behaviour Waterways Ireland aims to minimise the risk of harm or abuse that children and adults could be subjected to. It will also help protect those involved with children and adults by providing a clear set of behaviours that is expected of them and the boundaries within which they should operate.

In particular when working with children or adults, staff should:

- Take all reasonable steps to protect individuals from harm or abuse.
- Take appropriate action should an incident occur.
- Take appropriate action if you become aware of anyone physically, emotionally or sexually abusing a child or vulnerable adult.
- Report an incident or suspicion of abuse to the Designated or Deputy Designated Officer.
- Be accessible for the child or vulnerable adult to talk to.
- Be friendly and approachable.

In receiving a disclosure or allegation staff should:

- Take all disclosures of alleged abuse seriously.
- Listen carefully and sensitively, stay calm and ensure a clear understanding of the allegation.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult that they are right to talk to them.
- Ask questions for clarification only.
- Record factually what has been disclosed.
- Explain what will happen next.
- Advise that you must pass the information to the appropriate authorities.
- Report incident to the Designated or Deputy Designated Officer at the earliest opportunity. A telephone call in the first instance should be followed up with the written report of the allegation on or attached to the Incident Report Form (Appendix 3).
- Treat all information gathered in these circumstances with the utmost confidentiality

Behaviours which should be avoided:

- Give a commitment to the child or adult that the disclosure will be kept secret.
- Express any personal opinion about the alleged abuser or the alleged incident.
- In cases where physical abuse is suspected, remove any clothing from the child or adult.
- Ask any leading questions.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child or vulnerable adult away from others.

- Taking a child or adult to his/her own home.
- Taking a child or adult alone on a car journey. If the journey is unavoidable or necessary, it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the parents (or guardians) and the consent of the relevant manager. An appropriate record of the journey should also be maintained.
- Holding meetings with individual children or adults should be avoided or only take place within sight of others. If privacy is required, the door to the room should remain open and other staff should be aware of the meeting.
- Making unnecessary physical contact which could be misinterpreted.
- Being overly familiar.

Some of the above situations may be unavoidable but should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant manager and the child or vulnerable adult's parent or guardian.

Staff must never:

- abuse, neglect or harm or place at risk of harm a child or adult whether by omission or commission;
- engage in rough physical games, including horseplay, other than structured sports activities;
- engage in any inappropriate touching of any form;
- engage in sexually provocative behaviour or games;
- make sexually suggestive comments to or about an adult or child;
- show a child or adult anything that might be construed as abusive images;
- trivialise or exaggerate abuse issues;
- do things of a personal or intimate nature for a child or adult;
- carry out any physical punishment, slap or hit a child or adult;
- cause distress by shouting at a child or adult or by calling him/her derogatory names;
- hold a child or adult in a way that causes pain or shaking them;
- drink or purchase alcohol or take drugs while children or adults are in your professional care;
- accept /make loans or gifts of money to/from a child or adult;
- photograph /video children or adults, even by mobile phone, without appropriate consent;
- take any photographs/videos that are inappropriate.

Staff must report any inappropriate use of images of children or adults in the work environment.

Staff must also report any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the internet that involves children or adults in the work environment.

Implications for staff

Upon any breach of the Safeguarding Codes of Behaviour, line managers will direct the staff to the Safeguarding Policy and if necessary, will report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will record this incident.

If an allegation of abuse against staff has occurred, an investigation will be carried out in line with Waterways Ireland's Disciplinary Procedure. The investigating officer will be required to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Officer to clarify if she/he has any relevant records of any other safeguarding children and young people information in relation to the individual.

If the investigation finds that staff have acted inappropriately or not acted in the best interests of the child or young person or adult service users, the disciplinary procedure will be invoked.

SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

Physical Contact Guidelines

To keep children, young people and/or adults at risk safe, within Waterways Ireland, staff should ensure that:

- any physical contact is appropriate, minimal and necessary for the task required only;
- children, young people and adult service users are encouraged to do as much for themselves as possible;
- an explanation for the need for physical contact should be given and consent should be sought from the child/young person/adult service user;

Physical Intervention Guidelines

Waterways Ireland take a view that staff should not physically intervene unless they have received the specific training to do so, and then only if it is in a circumstance where it is absolutely necessary. Staff should:

- Seek to defuse the situation, thereby avoiding the need to use any form of physical intervention;
- Only physically intervene where it is absolutely necessary to protect from harm;
- Ensure any intervention is proportionate to the risk of harm;
- Only use forms of physical intervention for which training has been received and which follows current best practice;
- Record and report any physical intervention;
- Review any situation that led to the need for physical intervention with a view to avoiding such need in the future.

Photography/Filming Guidelines

Waterways Ireland recognises the need for a policy in relation to the use of images of children, young people, and/or adults at risk on our website and in other publications. We have considered the type of images that are suitable and that appropriately represent our work, without putting children, young people and/or adults at risk at increased risk of harm. We will ensure parents/guardians/carers are made aware of this policy. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of Waterways Ireland work, the most important factor is the potential of inappropriate use of images of children, young people and/or adults at risk.

By increasing the awareness of the potential risks and taking appropriate steps the potential for misuse of images can be reduced.

Waterways Ireland will:

- avoid the use of the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside Waterways Ireland.

The following guidance should be applied:

- If the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult is named, avoid using their photograph;
- Ask permission of the child, young person, adult service user or parents/guardian/carers (as appropriate) to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the images are to be used to represent Waterways Ireland. A child, young person and/or adult's permission form is one way of achieving this;
- Only use images of children, young people and/or adults at risk in suitable dress to reduce the risk

of inappropriate use. With regard to the actual content, it is difficult to specify exactly what is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities. However, there are clearly some activities, (i.e., swimming, gymnastics and outdoor events,) when the risk of potential misuse is much greater than for other events. With these activities, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child, young person, and/or adult and should avoid full face and body shots. For example, shots of children, young people, and/or adults at risk in a pool would be appropriate or if poolside, waist or shoulder up;

- the use of inappropriate images should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will follow our safeguarding procedures and may refer to statutory agencies.

Waterways Ireland has:

- established the type of images that appropriately represent the work of the organisation for the web and other media;
- thought about the level of consideration we give to the use of images of children, young people and/or adults at risk in other publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images in any newsletters or magazines;
- applied an increased level of consideration to the images of children, young people, and/or adults at risk used in the web site.

Photography/filming at events

To minimise safeguarding risks posed by photography/filming during our events and activities, Waterways Ireland will:

- provide a clear brief to official photographers about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;
- request that the official photographer wears identification at all times;
- inform the relevant parties (e.g schools/universities) that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs;
- not allow unsupervised access to children, young people and/or adults at risk, or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at the homes of children, young people, and/or adults at risk;
- ensure that if parents/guardians/carers or others are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of our expectations;
- inform children, young people and/or adults at risk and parents/guardians that if they have concerns they should report these to staff;
- encourage anyone with concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography to report these to the event manager and these will be recorded in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern.

Sexually Explicit Images/Messages

It is a crime to possess, take, make, distribute or show anyone an indecent or abuse image of a child or young person under 18 years of age.

If staff receive a sexually explicit image of a child/young person they must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will contact 101 for advice and guidance.

Do not delete the image but under no circumstances should you save the image or send it to another person (even the Designated Safeguarding Officer) or show it to anyone else as you will be committing an offence.

If staff receive a sexually explicit image or message from an adult at risk who they have met through their work at Waterways Ireland, they should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Do not save or share any images as you may be committing an offence.

If staff receive a sexually explicit message from a child/young person, they must report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

In all instances, you should maintain confidentiality and only inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer or relevant individuals.

Social Media, Text, and Email Guidelines

Waterways Ireland recognises that social media, text messaging, and emails are an important tool to communicate with our service users, especially young adults.

The use of social media, text messaging or email to communicate with service users increases the vulnerability of both the service user and staff.

The decision to use social media, text messages, or email to communicate with service users should not be made by an organisation without internal discussion and written agreement, this will ensure that organisation's safeguarding expectations and requirements can be clarified.

Waterways Ireland recognises the safeguarding risks to service users include:

- inappropriate access to, use of, or sharing of personal details (e.g. names, mobile phone numbers);
- unwanted contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults by adults with poor intent;
- text/cyber-bullying by peers;
- being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials;
- online bullying by peers;
- grooming for sexual abuse;
- direct contact and actual abuse.

For staff the safeguarding risks include:

- misinterpretation of their communication with children/young people/vulnerable adults;
- potential investigation (internal or by statutory authorities);
- potential disciplinary action.

Social Media

Staff's use of social media (Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, for example) for purely personal reasons does not need approval but please be aware that you are in a position of trust, that you may be perceived as an ambassador for Waterways Ireland and you are advised to exercise caution.

It is good practice to assume that everything you write is permanent and can be viewed by anyone at any time. Also, assume that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or Waterways Ireland.

Inappropriate use of social media such as cyber bullying or sexting must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. If the Designated Safeguarding Officer is targeted by such an incident they must notify the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Staff should ensure that their content or links to other content does not contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements;

- Breaches of copyright and data protection;
- Material of an illegal nature;
- Offensive sexual references;
- Inappropriate language.

Staff are encouraged to ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place to restrict access to photos, personal information, comments about others, friends, and followers to the appropriate audiences.

Staff should protect their privacy online. Staff should carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online.

All staff should ensure that there is a clear differentiation between any personal and professional profiles.

Contact with Children/Young People Online

Staff should not follow or befriend children or young people or adults at risk who they meet through their work at Waterways Ireland. If they receive such a friend request from a child/young person/vulnerable adult they should not accept the request and report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. In a personal context, Waterways Ireland would advise staff to only befriend or follow children or young people on social media with the knowledge and consent of their parents.

If staff have a public social media account where they cannot control their followers (i.e. twitter, Instagram) and become aware that a child/young person/vulnerable adult who they have met through Waterways Ireland has followed their social media account, then staff should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Staff should not:

- use social media private messages to communicate official information about Waterways Ireland activities;
- accept friend/follow requests out of social network terms (i.e. under 13 years of age for Facebook);
- instigate a private message conversation with a child or young person or vulnerable adult they have met through Waterways Ireland. If they received such a message from a child/young person/vulnerable adult they should not reply to the message and report this to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Text and Email messaging

To minimise the safeguarding risk associated with the use of text or email messages:

- organisations should take steps to identify where/when texting or emailing is required to communicate with children, young people and/or adults at risk and develop relevant procedures to suit the tailored needs of each organisation;
- texts or emails from staff in the organisation should not be sent in isolation, there should be discussion and written agreement/ procedures;
- all emails sent must make it clear to the child/young person/ adult receiving it which organisation has sent the message, rather than simply giving the issuing email address or name of an individual;
- copies of all messages should be sent to the Designated Officer within the organisation who can ensure that all messages are being used appropriately;
- parental consent must be obtained prior to sending children or young people text or email messages. Parents/guardians/carers must be given the option to be copied into any messages the service users may be sent;
- adult must consent to receiving text or emails. If the adult does not have the capacity to consent this should be obtained from a parent/carer. In such case Parents/guardians/carers must be given the option to be copied into any messages the service users may be sent;
- Any concerns relating to inappropriate texts or emails should be reported in line with the

organisation's safeguarding policy.

- all mobile phone numbers and/or email address should be stored in either a locked secure cabinet or on a password protected electronic system with access only to the relevant staff required to text the service users;
- the content of messages should relate solely to the business/activity of the organisation;
- the messages should never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language and care must be taken to avoid any over familiarity or language that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued;
- service users should not be encouraged to text back; ideally it should be used as a one-way communication channel;
- adults should be made aware that if they choose or need to text or email the organisation's representative that they should ensure the content of messages relates only to the matters relevant to the business/activity and that they are required to copy to their parents/guardians;
- all service users should be given the opportunity to withdraw from receiving any further texts or emails;
- consideration will be given to initiating the organisation's safeguarding policies and disciplinary procedures should any breaches of this guideline arise, including consultation with, or referral to, statutory organisations if indications of illegal activity (e.g. grooming for abuse) come to light.

Virtual Meetings

For many of us, our working lives have changed a great deal and rather than meeting face to face, most of our meetings are now conducted virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We must be mindful that even if we are working from home we still represent Waterways Ireland and conduct ourselves professionally, as we would if we are working from our offices. As such, please follow the following guidelines:

- Utilise cameras whenever possible
- Maintain professional courtesy and be respectful
- Be mindful of our general codes of conduct
- Remember we still have a duty to safeguard where relevant – use these policies and procedures to inform your actions if a concern is raised.

Lost or Injured Children and Adults

From time to time, a member of staff may encounter lost or injured children or an adult in the course of their work. Where this happens the staff member (particularly lone workers) should, where possible, enlist the support of a colleague to deal with the situation and avoid a one-to-one situation with the child or vulnerable adult.

Where the child or vulnerable adult is lost or injured, it is likely that they will be upset and confused. Staff should address them professionally and calmly and gather details of;

- their name and age;
- their parent/carers name and last known location;
- a contact telephone number for the parent/carer;
- how the child or vulnerable adult came to be in the situation.

Both staff members should accompany the child or vulnerable adult on a quick search of the immediate area to locate the parent/carer.

Parents/carers should be asked to provide identification before the child or vulnerable adult is given back to their care.

Where no parent or carer can be readily found, staff should contact the Designated Officer for further advice, or alternatively, in circumstances where this is not practical, staff should contact the PSNI.

The staff members should make a written report of the incident and their action on the Incident Report Form (Appendix 2) which should be passed, via line management to the Designated Officer. Adherence to this procedure will provide some protection for staff in their dealings with children and vulnerable adults.

First Aid

First Aid should only be administered by a qualified First Aid Officer. In administering First Aid the Officer should be accompanied by another member of staff.

Where the injury is serious and/or where there is no First Aid Officer available, the staff member should call the emergency services.

All action taken in relation to dealing with an injured child or adult should be reported, via line management, within the Accident book and reported to the relevant First Aider.

Version Control

Version No	Approved/Agreed	Ratified	Amendments/Comments
1.0	7 th November 2022 – SMT	24.11.2022	Policies split by jurisdiction

Appendix 1: LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

Safeguarding Children & Young People

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults in Northern Ireland, including (and in no particular order):

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)
- [Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)
- [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(revised August 2017\)](#)
- [Criminal Law Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1967 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Sexual Offences \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Criminal Justice \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders \(Exceptions\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 1979 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [About AccessNI | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Safeguarding Adults

The Adult Safeguarding practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within UK legislation and Government Guidance and have been developed to complement the NI Safeguarding Adults Board's policies and procedures, and take the following into consideration:

- [Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership key documents \(rgia.org.uk\)](#)
- [Adult Safeguarding \(hscni.net\)](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- [The Family Homes and Domestic Violence \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [NI Adult Safeguarding Partnership](#)
- [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Safeguarding in Context

The term safeguarding is intended to be used in its widest sense, encompassing the full range of promotion, prevention and protection activity in Waterways Ireland. Effective safeguarding activity will:

- Promote the welfare for the child and young person or adult at risk;
- Prevent harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention; and
- Protect children and young people and adults at risk from harm when this is required.

All adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.

We will seek to ensure that Waterways Ireland is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring, and review.

The rights, dignity and worth of all adults will always be respected.

We recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.

Appendix 2: CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

To inform this safeguarding policy and procedure Waterways Ireland

have adopted the categories and definitions of abuse and neglect set out in [Responding to Abuse and Neglect \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://www.waterwaysireland.com/procduresonline.com)

It is important to note that abuse or neglect isn't confined to inflicting harm but also includes failing to prevent harm. In addition, the abuse of children can extend beyond personal contact to abuse via the internet, social media and networking sites such as 'chatrooms'. It is important to note that children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Children who are abused are experiencing significant harm.

Physical Abuse	is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.
Sexual Abuse	occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
Emotional Abuse	is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child/young person. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.
Neglect	is the failure to provide for a child/young person's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child/young person's health or development. Children/young people who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.
Exploitation	is 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. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial

	<p>fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.</p> <p><i>Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse</i></p>
	<p>(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.DOCX (live.com) 2017)</p>

Along with an understanding of the five main categories of abuse it is vital those who encounter children or young people through their work with Waterways Ireland are aware of other specific forms of abuse that may cause harm:

- Complex Child Abuse
- Abuse within Communities
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Violence (HBV)
- Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)
- Sexual Exploitation of Children and Young People
- Abusive Images of Children
- Risks of Misuse of Digital Technologies
- Abuse by a Person in a Position of Trust

Waterways Ireland will ensure staff who receive Level 2 Safeguarding training have an understanding of the above categories of abuse.

Children & Young People with Increased Vulnerabilities

Children & young people from all backgrounds and with all levels of abilities can suffer abuse. However, some children and young people have a greater vulnerability to abuse due to specific circumstances:

- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Children / Young People Who Go Missing
- Young people in Supported Accommodation
- Young People who are Homeless
- Children who are privately fostered
- Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Children within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities
- Children of Parents with Additional Support Needs
- Separated, Unaccompanied and Trafficked Children and Young People
- Children/Young People with Disabilities
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender Young People (LGBTQ+)

These children and young people face an increased risk of abuse because they can experience greater and created vulnerability. This is the result of negative societal values, attitudes, and assumptions and unequal access to services and resources. The nature of their vulnerability will be unique to each individual child/young person. They may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive, and/or communication impairments.

Adult Abuse

Abuse of adults may be defined as ‘a single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights.’

[Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership, 2016](#)

Physical abuse	the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury.
Sexual violence and abuse	any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability)
Psychological / Emotional Abuse	behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation or other verbal/non-verbal conduct.
Financial Abuse	actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, 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.
Institutional Abuse	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.
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.
Exploitation	the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain from using them as a commodity.
Domestic violence or abuse	is ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member’.
Human trafficking/modern slavery	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.
Hate crime	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.

Appendix 3: SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT REPORT

Waterways Ireland

Safeguarding Incident Report

(Please complete this form and pass to your Designated Safeguarding Officer within 24 Hours of the incident happening/concern arising)

If the person at risk is in imminent danger of harm you should refer directly to the police or social services without delay.

Section 1a: Your Details	
Name	
Role	
Designated Safeguarding Officer	

Section 1b: Person at Risk's Details (Complete to the best of your Knowledge)		
Child/Young Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Adult <input type="checkbox"/>	
Surname:	Known As:	
Forename:		
Address:	Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Postcode:		
Telephone No:	Mobile No:	
Date of Birth:	Language Spoken:	
Does the person have a Disability?	If Yes, What Disability: (& source of diagnosis)	Other Special Needs:

Section 1c: Parent/Guardian/Carer's Details	
Parent/Guardian/ Carer's Name	
Contact Information	

Commented [HI1]: This form meets the checklist requirements.

Section 2: Details of Incident/Concern	
CONCERN <input type="checkbox"/>	INCIDENT <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the Concern/Incident Involve: Staff <input type="checkbox"/> General Public <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/Group Leader <input type="checkbox"/>	
DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT OR CONCERNS: What are you worried about? Who are you worried about? Where did the incident happen/concern arise? When (date and time of incident)? Any witnesses? <i>(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</i>	
Individual's Account Of The Incident: <i>If recording a verbal disclosure by someone use their words.</i>	
<i>Please provide details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury:</i>	
Have You Reported The Incident To An External Agency? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Please provide details what agency and what was said/action agreed: Please provide rationale for not reporting and who was party to this discussion:	
Print Name	
Date	Signature

Section 3: To be Completed by Designated Safeguarding Officer

I confirm that I received this form on: _____

I confirm that I have reviewed the information on this form with 24 hours of receipt and have decided to take the following action:

- Refer immediately by telephone to Gateway Team/Regional Emergency Social Work Service/PSNI/Ambulance.
- Contact External Agencies for advice/information
- Refer to Gateway Team in writing. **REMEMBER** it is important to gain consent for any referrals to Adult Services if the person has capacity.
- Contact external agency to follow up referral made by staff/volunteer
- Take no Further Action

Please give explanation of your decision, and if you have contacted an external agency for any reason, please provide details what agency and what was said/action agreed:

(continue you on a separate sheet as necessary)

Signature of DSO:

Date:

Whatever your decision, you MUST:

1. Record in writing all actions taken, the reasons for these, and by whom the actions were taken.
2. Start a Safeguarding Case File (kept as per data protection guidelines)
3. Keep a full record of all actions and decisions
4. Ensure pastoral care is provided to staff/volunteer as appropriate

Further Outcomes/Actions *(attach extra sheets as necessary)*

Appendix 4: HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Waterways Ireland embraces health, safety and welfare at work as a core value and is committed to the provision of a safe workplace and safer operating practices for all employees, waterway users and the general public.
- The organisation operates an effective procedure for assessing and managing risks with regard to safeguarding vulnerable groups with whom we have contact during the course of our activities and work. Risk assessments must be carried out and risks identified and evaluated prior to any work-related activity which involves a child or vulnerable adult. Guidance on carrying out appropriate risk assessments is attached at Appendix 5.
- All staff must ensure that emergency procedures and appropriate safety equipment are in place prior to a work activity which involves a child or vulnerable adult.

Appendix 5: GUIDANCE ON CARRYING OUT APPROPRIATE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Waterways Ireland operates an effective procedure for assessing and managing risks with regard to children and vulnerable adults.

Criteria:

- A risk assessment is carried out to identify and evaluate risks to children and vulnerable adults.
- The identified risks are managed by putting in place risk-reducing measures.
- All identified risks and risk-reducing measures are recorded and reviewed on a case-by-case basis dependent on the duration of the time when the child or vulnerable adult will be in position within Waterways Ireland.
- Waterways Ireland recognises that vulnerable adults in particular have the right to take risks and should provide help and support to enable them to identify and manage potential and actual risks to themselves and others.
- Waterways Ireland has a Health and Safety procedure in place for reporting, recording and reviewing accidents, incidents and near misses, which should in turn inform practice and the risk assessment and Standard Operating Procedures. The Health and Safety procedures and Standard Operating Procedures in place should assist and inform the risk assessment and overall management procedure for children and vulnerable adults in the workplace.

Principles of working with risk:

- The assessment and management of risk should promote the independence, real choices and social inclusion of children and vulnerable adults.
- Risks change as circumstances change.
- Risks can be minimised but not eliminated.
- Information relating to children and vulnerable adults activities and circumstances will sometimes be incomplete and possibly inaccurate.
- Identification of risk carries a duty to do something about it, i.e. risk management.
- Involvement of vulnerable adults and practitioners from a range of services and organisations helps to improve the quality of risk assessments and decision-making.
- 'Defensible' decisions are those based on clear reasoning.

- Risk-taking can involve everybody working together to achieve positive outcomes.
- Confidentiality is a right, but not an absolute right and may be breached in exceptional circumstances when people are deemed to be at serious risk of harm or it is in the public interest.
- Sensitivity should be shown to the experience of people affected by any risks that have been taken and where and event has occurred.

The Risk Assessment Process:

The risk assessment process involves:

- The identification of risks; and
- Determining the level of risk by evaluating its potential impact and the likelihood of it happening.

Risk Management Options:

For activity/service provision, an identified risk can be managed in a number of ways. It can be avoided, controlled, financed, transferred or accepted.

- **Avoid the risk**
If the level of risk cannot be satisfactorily reduced through other means, you may decide not to engage in a particular activity or provide a particular service.
- **Control the risk**
Controlling risk involves implementing measures to both reduce the likelihood of a harmful event occurring and to minimise the impact of such an occurrence. This is about identifying the good practice policies that need to be adhered to and the training required to reduce risk and harm.
- **Finance the risk**
It is important to provide the resources to meet the liabilities caused by the risks when they are identified.
- **Transfer the risk**
This typically happens when it is deemed more appropriate for the particular activity is carried out by a third party so that the risk is transferred to them.
- **Accept the risk**
Tolerate the risk; perhaps because no reasonable action can be taken to mitigate it or the likelihood of the risk occurring, and its impact are at an acceptable low level. All the while having regard to the positive outcomes for the vulnerable adult that may accrue from positive risk taking.

Appendix 6: SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

	Identified Risk	Classification <i>(High, /Medium, /Low)</i>	Procedure in place to manage risk
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Appendix 7: PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING CONSENT FORM

Name of organisation:	
<i>To be completed by the organisation</i>	

In accordance with our Safeguarding People in Northern Ireland Policy, we will not permit photographs, video or other images of young people to be taken without the consent of the child or the parent if the child is under 16.

The Waterways will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform Waterways immediately.

Consent information:	
<i>To be completed by child:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my photograph to be used for display purposes <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my photograph to be used within other printed publications <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my photograph to be used on Waterways website <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for videos of me to be used on Waterways website <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my photograph to be used on Waterways social media pages <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for videos of me to be used on Waterways social media pages	
Signature of child:	Print name child:
Date:	

If the child is under 16, consent must be obtained from parents.

If over 16, it's still good practice to inform parents that photographs/videos of their child may be used if the child has given consent.

<i>To be completed by parent:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child's photograph to be used for display purposes <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child's photograph to be used within other printed publications <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child's photograph to be used on Waterways website <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child to be videoed for use on Waterways website <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child's photograph to be used on Waterways social media pages <input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child to be videoed for use on Waterways social media pages <input type="checkbox"/> I can confirm that I have read, or been made aware of how these images or videos will be stored within the organisation.	
Signature of parent:	Print name of parent:
Date:	

It is good practice to also agree who is responsible for the retention of images/videos. Clarify:

- **Who is responsible,**
- **where will they be stored,**
- **For how long,**
- **Who is responsible for destroying the material after it has served its purpose?**

Appendix 8: USEFUL CONTACTS

Designated Officers	Name	Phone Number
	Jean Errity	044 93 74940 (Ireland) or 00353 44 93 74940 (NI)
Contact details	Waterways Ireland Thomastown Depot 18 th Lock Thomastown Co. Westmesth	jean.errity@waterwaysireland.org
	Francie Gallagher	028 66 346210 (NI) or 048 66 346210 (Ireland)
	Waterways Ireland 2 Sligo Road Enniskillen Co Fermanagh BT74 7JY	francie.gallagher@waterwaysireland.org
Assistant Designated Officer	Cormac McCarthy	061 92 2149 (Ireland) or 00353 61 92 2149 (NI)
	Waterways Ireland Dock Road, Drewsborough, Scarriff, Co. Clare	cormac.mccarthy@waterwaysireland.org

HSCT - Gateway Teams www.hscni.net

Belfast	028 9050 7000
Northern	0300 123 4333
Southern	0800 783 7745
South Eastern	0300 100 0300
Western	028 7131 4090
Out of hours Emergency Service	There is a single, regional number for out of hours referrals: 028 9504 9999

HSCT – Adult Safeguarding Service www.hscni.net

Belfast	(028) 9504 1744
Northern	(028) 9441 3125
South Eastern	(028) 9250 1277
Southern	(028) 37412015

Western	(028) 71611366
Out of hours Emergency Service	There is a single, regional number for out of hours referrals: 028 9504 9999

PSNI

Emergency	999
Non-Emergency/General Enquires	101

Volunteer Now 028 9023 2020 www.volunteernow.co.uk	Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre 0870 000 3344 www.ceop.police.uk	
Child Care Policy Directorate 028 9052 2698 www.dhsspsni.gov.uk	Access NI 0300 200 7888 www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni	The Rowan SARC 0800 389 4424 www.therowan.net
ChildLine 0800 1111 (Helpline) www.childline.org.uk	NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk	NSPCC NI 028 9035 1135 www.nspcc.org.uk