



Inner City Helping Homeless

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Policy and Procedures for Volunteers

Foreword

This document sets out the requirements for working with children and vulnerable adults at Inner City Helping Homeless (hereafter referenced as ICHH) in accordance with Children First, the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse. It is distributed as part of the information pack for all volunteers, interns and staff. This document will also be made available to teachers, parents/guardians and other responsible adults working with children and vulnerable adults on ICHH projects and programmes.

This document makes reference to two other documents that are also available in either hard copy or electronic copy:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Volunteer Policy

It is hoped that this policy will prove a practical and useful addition to best practice in working with children and young people and to help the staff, volunteers who work with ICHH. ICHH welcomes feedback on this document – please send comments and suggestions to Clare O Connor, Director at finance@ichhdublin.com.

Anthony Flynn

CEO

Clare O Connor

Director

Section 1: POLICY

Introduction

We at ICHH are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children and vulnerable adults who we interact with in our Outreach and Advocacy programmes.

Our aim is to create a safe environment where children and vulnerable adults can attend for support and where their protection and welfare is paramount. To this end, we adhere to the recommendations of Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children, published by the Department of Health, as well as Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, published by the Health Service Executive.

Everyone working with children and vulnerable adults has a responsibility for their wellbeing and protection, including those volunteers at ICHH through the organisation's outreach, advocacy, community and fundraising programmes and activities. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the children and vulnerable adults we work with are encouraged and supported and that this should happen in a safe and protected environment.

This document contains the ICHH policy and guidelines for child and vulnerable adult protection and promotes codes of behaviour so that everyone is aware of the standards of behaviour of both children and adults. All volunteers are required to adhere to this code.

All volunteers at ICHH will be made aware of the policy and procedure and child/vulnerable adult protection will be covered in detail as part of the induction and training programme. As part of their terms of volunteering, all volunteers will be required to report any concerns over behaviour or other evidence that may potentially indicate the presence of child or vulnerable adult abuse.

Policy Statement

ICHH child and vulnerable adult protection policy stems from the following principles:

- The welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount. This is the guiding principle underpinning all our work with children and vulnerable adults.
- Per the Child Care Act 1991, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married. This definition includes young people.

- A vulnerable person is defined as an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. The restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment. Vulnerability to abuse is influenced by both context (e.g. social or personal circumstances) and individual circumstances.¹

- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, any disability they may have, gender, race², family status, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, membership of the Traveller community, geographical location, or socio-economic status³ have a right to protection from abuse.

- The need to comply with current statutory requirements and guidance on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

The primary functions of this policy are the promotion of a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults, the prevention of abuse and the protection of volunteers through the application of a Code of Behaviour.

Safe and protected: The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount. The most important function of this policy is to ensure all dealings with children and vulnerable adults are done in accordance with best practice guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults at all times.

Prevention and education: This policy also aims to prevent abuse from occurring and to educate volunteers on the subject and to build their capacity to pre-empt abuse.

Scope

This policy is applicable to volunteers of ICHH and also external ICHH-sponsored events and activities.

⁴It is the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator to ensure that every new staff member and volunteer:

1. Receives a copy of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
2. Understands and signs the Code of Behaviour
3. Receives training on the subject matter

: ¹ Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, FAQ, December 2014, p.1 ² While the term 'race' is used here as it appears in Ireland's equality legislation, ICHH recognises that it denotes a biological or scientific difference in human beings, a theory long discredited and to which the organisation does not subscribe. ³ These are the nine protected grounds outlined in line with the Equal Opportunities Act 1998 and 2008 and the Equal Status Act 2000-2004. ⁴ Copies of the policy will be sent out with the offer of volunteer information pack (as applicable), which must be signed and returned with the volunteer agreement.

All volunteers will:

1. Be provided with an adequate level of supervision, support and review of work practice
2. Be provided with child protection training at induction
3. be issued with an information pack and required to sign a copy of the child and vulnerable adult protection policy

4. All volunteers, will agree to abide by the ICHH Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

ICHH has implemented policies and procedures covering the following with regard to child and vulnerable adult protection:

2. Code of behaviour for all volunteers
3. Reporting of suspected or disclosed abuse
4. Confidentiality
5. Recruitment and selection of staff
6. Management and supervision of volunteers
7. Volunteer allegations
8. Complaints and comments
9. Accidents

Section 2: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR – STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

We expect everyone working with children and vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity for ICHH to take every possible precaution to avoid situations that could be misinterpreted and/or breach either the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy or Health and Safety Policy. By setting out appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, this code will not only help to protect children, but also staff, interns and volunteers at ICHH.

Do Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally

Do Listen and hear – and give time to the child or vulnerable adult to say what she/he wants to say. Thoughts and words are important and they deserve respect.

Do Promote the atmosphere of openness and acceptance.

Do Respect a child or vulnerable adult's right to personal privacy and personal space.

Do Be aware of situations that present risks and manage these risks appropriately – always ask a member of staff if you are unsure.

Do Safeguard the best interests and welfare of vulnerable adults where it is recognised that they are unable to make their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets or their bodily integrity and ensure appropriate and accountable protection for them.

Do Use only appropriate language in working with children and vulnerable adults.

Do Ensure that an appropriate ratio of adults to children is in place. ICHH Volunteers should never have reason to be alone with children, a parent or carer should always be present.

Do Always treat children and vulnerable adults with respect - don't embarrass them. Do not ridicule, insult or make little of anyone during an activity.

Do Recognise that caution is required, particularly sensitive moments such as dealing with a child or vulnerable adult who becomes upset. Always seek support from staff or a teacher/carer if required.

Do Ensure, in so far as possible, that the building and/or facilities used for activities with children and vulnerable adults are safe and secure for the people in it. All occupied parts of the building should be monitored and parts not in use should be isolated or secured, e.g. the door to the office should be shut.

Do Plan activities so that they involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. A minimum of two adults should be present at all times.

Do Carry identification when attending a school or other location on behalf of ICHH.

Do Make sure that a responsible adult, e.g. a teacher, is always present for group programmes, both at the ICHH centre, when visiting a school or conducting programmes in outside venues on behalf of ICHH.

Avoid Doing things of a personal nature that children and vulnerable adults can do for themselves. Staff members and volunteers are not responsible for the personal hygiene needs of children and vulnerable adults.

Do not Physically punish or be in any way verbally abusive to a child or vulnerable adult.

Do not Give a child or vulnerable adult your personal contact details, e.g. telephone number, social media contact information or email address.

Do not Use alcohol, tobacco or drugs in the company of children or vulnerable adults.

Staff and volunteers must not attend any ICHH programmes under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Do not Arrange external meetings or contact children or vulnerable adults of ICHH outreach or advocacy services.

Do not take pictures of children or vulnerable adults unless you have prior school, carer or parental consent to do so.

Do not Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood. If you have to touch a child or vulnerable adult, ask their permission where possible.

Do not Allow unsupervised access to the ICHH wireless internet (wifi) At ICHH

Breaches of the Code of Practice

Any breaches of the Code of Practice will be raised with the individual concerned. In the case of volunteers, serious breaches of the code or policy will be dealt with under the complaints against volunteers procedure in the Volunteer Policy and could result in disciplinary action up to and including a termination of the volunteering relationship.

If you have a concern or complaint that is related to Code of Behaviour you can speak to the primary designated contact, the Designated Liaison Person

The Designated Liaison Person will liaise with the Executive Director and assess the situation and conduct an investigation if necessary. Any allegation will be investigated confidentially in order to safeguard the rights of the person against whom allegations have been made. Investigations will be carried out quickly to see whether a prima facie case is established. All investigations will be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice:

- The right to a fair hearing
- The rule against bias

If so, the issue will be handled according to the disciplinary procedure.

If not, the complainant will be told the outcome of the investigation and that the matter will not be taken any further. The individual will retain the right to pursue the matter under the complaints procedure, or grievance procedure as appropriate.

At ICHH, the Designated Liaison Person is the Anthony Flynn (Anthony@ichhdublin.com)

Following a complaint, the handling of the complaint will be subject to a review by an independent, external third party to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in line with best possible practice. During the course of such a review, all names and identifying details will be removed.

Section 3: REPORTING PROCEDURES - WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A CHILD MAY BE BEING ABUSED

THE ONE THING YOU MUST NOT DO IS NOTHING

Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect. This responsibility is particularly relevant for professionals such as teachers, child care workers, health professionals and those working with adults with serious parenting difficulties. It is also an important responsibility for staff and people involved in sports clubs, community activities, youth clubs, religious/faith sector and other organisations that may interact with vulnerable children such as ICHH.

Tusla, the Children and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has **reasonable grounds for concern** that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused and neglected. Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect. A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable, should also be communicated to Tusla.

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and wellbeing of the child must take priority
2. Reports should be made without delay to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency

There are four recognised forms of child abuse: **neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse**. It's not your responsibility to decide whether a child is being abused or neglected, but you must act on your concerns.

We do understand that it may be very difficult for you to take this step but ICHH will support anyone who raises a legitimate concern in good faith. The protection and welfare of the child must always be the paramount concern.

At all stages of this procedure, the matter will be dealt with confidentially as far as possible in relation to:

- a) The identity of the complainant
- b) The identity of the person(s) against whom the complaint is being made
- c) The nature of the complaint

This information will not be disclosed to anyone inside or outside ICHH who is not directly involved in the situation or does not have a legitimate interest in it, e.g. the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) if appropriate, ICHH management and/or Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána if relevant in order to investigate the allegation.

Please note that the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons to report child abuse "reasonably and in good faith."

1. Designated Liaison Person - Responsibilities
 - a. • In accordance with Section 3.3 of Children First: National Guidance (2011), ICHH has a designated liaison person to act as a liaison with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns. The Designated Liaison Person is Anthony Flynn
 - b. • The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed so that suspected cases of child neglect or abuse are referred promptly to Tusla Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker. In the event of an emergency, where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with the Child and Family Agency Duty Social Worker, you should contact An Garda Síochána (the police). If a staff member or volunteer reports suspected child abuse, the Designated Liaison Person must:
 - c. • Establish, in consultation with the individual who has raised the concern, if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If the child has attended ICHH with her/his school, the Designated Liaison Person may consult the child's teacher and/or the Designated Liaison Person at the child's school.
 - d. • The information given should be forwarded to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency's Duty Social Worker if reasonable grounds for concern exist, regardless of whether the source wishes to be identified or not. The source should be made aware that the Designated Liaison Person will be reporting the information.
 - e. • If the Designated Liaison Person is unsure whether the concern constitutes reasonable grounds for concern, s/he may consult informally with the Duty Social Worker.
 - f. • Where the Designated Liaison Person decides not to pass on the concern brought to her/his attention, the Designated Liaison Person must inform the person of this and also tell them that they may report directly to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and that the provisions of the Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 pertain. ICHH Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Revised April 2017

2. What Constitutes Reasonable Grounds for a Child Protection or Welfare Concern?

- g. • An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse.
- h. • Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- i. • Admission or indication by someone of alleged abuse.
- j. • A specific indication from a child that he or she was abused.
- k. • An account from a person who saw the child being abused.
- l. • Evidence (e.g. and injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to have been caused in any other way.

3. Questions That May Help When Staff or Volunteers are Concerned About A Child's Welfare⁸

- m. • Is the child behaving normally for his or her age and stage of development? • Is what the child has written/drawn appropriate to his or her age?
- n. • Has something happened that could explain the child's behaviour?
- o. • Is the child showing signs of distress? If so, describe (e.g. behavioural, emotional, physical signs). • Does the behaviour happen everywhere or just in ICHH?
- p. • Is the child suffering? • Does the behaviour restrict the child socially?
- q. • Does the behaviour interfere with the child's development?
- r. • What effect, if any, does it have on others (e.g. other children)?
- s. • What are the child's parent(s)' views, if known?

4. If a child tells you that he or she is being abused. Remember, a child may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this.

- t. • Be as calm and natural as possible.
- u. • Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic.
- v. • Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child. • Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- w. • Listen to what the child has to say. Give them time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to tell.
- x. • Do not pressurise the child. Allow him or her to disclose at their own pace and in their own language.

Source: HSE Child Protection and Welfare Handbook, 2011

- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what was done to them. It is therefore important to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards, the alleged perpetrator while talking to the child.
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings toward him or her have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed.

When Asking Questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purposes of clarification only.
- Avoid asking leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse. Also, avoid asking about intimate details or suggesting that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions or suggestions could complicate the official investigation.

Confidentiality – Do Not Promise to Keep Secrets. At the earliest opportunity, tell the child that:

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you.
- You will be sharing this information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets which are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further ongoing hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or indeed, anything) there and then. It is better, however, to do this than to tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely that the child will return to you at another time.

Think Before You Promise Anything – Do not make promises that you cannot keep

At the earliest possible opportunity:

- Record in writing, in a factual manner, what the child has said, including as far as possible the exact words used by the child.
- Inform the supervisor/manager immediately and agree measures to protect the child, i.e. report the matter directly to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality

5. Ongoing Support

Following a disclosure by a child, it is important that the staff member or volunteer continues in a supportive relationship with the child. Disclosure is a huge step for a child. Staff members or volunteers should continue to offer support, particularly through:

- Maintaining a positive relationship with the child
- Keeping lines of communication open by listening carefully to the child
- Continuing to include the child in the usual activities. Any further disclosure should be treated as a first disclosure and responded to as indicated above. Where necessary, immediate action should be taken to ensure the child's safety.

6. If in doubt, check it out!

If you really are uncertain whether your concerns are well founded, or what to do for the best, you can get advice from a Tusla, the Child and Family Agency duty social worker. The Tusla Duty Social Work Team for the North Inner City area can be contacted on 01 856 6856, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD**

A CHILD BE LEFT IN A SITUATION THAT EXPOSES HER OR HIM TO HARM. In out-of-hours or emergency cases, if you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot reach a duty social worker, you should contact the Gardaí on 999/112.

7. Procedure For Making A Formal Referral to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency

If you identify a child as being at risk of harm – you must act. Paragraph 3.7.3 of Children First: National Guidance (2011) states that “it is the responsibility of all agencies working with children and for the public to recognise child protection concerns and share those with the agencies responsible for assessing or investigating them, not to determine whether the child protection concerns are evidenced or not.”

In the first instance, if possible, contact Anthony Flynn, Ann Birney the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of the ICHH management team on 01-8881804. If this is not possible, make telephone contact with the Duty Social Worker, or if out-of-hours or in an emergency, with the Gardaí.

The following procedures should be followed:

- The Designated Liaison Person should make a referral to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency by using the Standard Report Form.
- The Standard Report Form can be accessed directly from Tusla, the Child and Family Agency at <http://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-andforms>. If you believe the concern is urgent and that there is imminent risk to a child, make the report by telephone and then follow it up with the completed form. The quality of the information you provide will influence the ability of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency to respond. The completed Standard Reporting Form must contain as much of the following as possible:
 - **Accurate identifying information** – including all known full names and surnames, addresses, date of birth, age, name of the child’s school, disability if applicable, ethnicity, first language (need for interpreter, if known) of the child(ren) and all the known members of his or her family and other adults living in the household. In cases of suspected abuse and neglect, family members should not be used as interpreters.

The report should also include:

- Names and addresses of the parents/carers of the child
 - The relationship to the child of the person making the report
 - The name, address and details of the person allegedly causing concern in relation to the child or children
 - The names and addresses of other personnel or agencies involved with the child or children, e.g. GP, social worker, public health nurse, Gardaí, etc.
- **Details of the concern, allegation or incident** – outline the exact nature of the concern: include dates, times and names of persons present. It is important to describe any observed injuries or behaviours that may be linked to the incident. In cases where neglect or abuse is indicated over time, the reporter should be encouraged to provide a chronology of the evidence or symptoms in the child that gave rise to the concern. The report should include the name and contact details of the person reporting the concerns

and whether that person is a professional, a person working with children or a member of the public.

- **Views of the parent/carer and views of the child (where age appropriate)** – the reporter must provide any accounts of the parents’ or child’s views about the concern that are known to them.

- Any other relevant information. A copy will be kept for ICHH records and the original sent to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

8. Cases Not Reported to Tusla or An Garda Síochána

In those cases where ICHH decides not to report concerns to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the individual staff member or volunteer who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the organisation is not taking such action. The staff member or volunteer will be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to, Tusla or An Garda Síochána. The provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 apply once they communicate “reasonably and in good faith.” (see Paragraph 3.10.1)

9. Allegations Against a Staff Member or Volunteer

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, there are two procedures that ICHH will put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child/young person
- The procedure for dealing with the staff member/volunteer

These procedures, according to Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children should be followed in the event of suspicion or disclosure of abuse against a staff member or volunteer. In this situation, ICHH must have due regard for the rights and interest of the child on one hand and those of the person against whom the allegation is made on the other hand.

The Executive Director of ICHH (currently Anthony Flynn) will deal with the staff member/volunteer in question, while the Designated Liaison Person will have the responsibility of dealing with reporting the issue and supporting the child. Staff members and volunteers may be subjected to erroneous or malicious allegations, therefore any allegation of abuse should be dealt with sensitively and support provided for staff as well as the child, including counselling where necessary. The primary goal, however, is to protect the child while taking care to treat the staff member/volunteer fairly.

When the Executive Director of ICHH becomes aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a staff member or volunteer, he will inform that person of the following:

- The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her
- The nature of the allegation

The volunteer will be afforded the opportunity to respond. The Executive Director will note the response and pass on the information if and when a formal report is made to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency. It is important to note that The Protection for

Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 applies equally to organisations provided they report the matter “reasonably and in good faith.” ICHH accepts the possibility that a number of factors may have a bearing on the organisation and will need to be considered:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff/volunteers, including anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, shock, guilt, anxiety and confusion.
- The effects on the alleged abuser of the internal disciplinary proceedings, the child protection investigation and the criminal investigation.
- The reactions of other staff/volunteers and other children/young people towards the child/young person who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated.
- The reaction of parents/carers and other family members of the child/young person.

NOTE: Should an allegation be made against the Executive Director of ICHH, the Chair of the Board will deal all aspects of the situation

If an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, the following steps will be taken:

- The Executive Director of ICHH will deal with all aspects of the case relating to the staff member/volunteer. It may be necessary for the Executive Director to seek legal advice for any action following an allegation against a staff member/volunteer. A meeting may need to be arranged with Tusla or the Gardaí to discuss the allegation.
- The allegation will be assessed by the Designated Liaison Person to establish if there are reasonable grounds for concern and whether a formal report will be made to the statutory authorities at that point. The Designated Liaison Person may wish to contact Tusla, the Child and Family Agency for advice on the issue.
- The safety of the child/young person is the first priority of ICHH and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child/young person is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.
- ICHH will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period and will inform other relevant agencies or parents/carers as appropriate.
- Pending the outcome of the investigation by Tusla, the Child and Family Agency and/or the Gardaí, the measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused (with pay in the case of a staff member), reassignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children/young people, working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- ICHH will notify the staff member/volunteer that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The staff member/volunteer has a right to respond to this and the response should be documented and retained.
- ICHH will ensure that the principle of ‘natural justice’ will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.

- ICHH will work in co-operation with An Garda Síochána and Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and any decisions taken on action in regard to the staff member/volunteer will be taken in consultation with these agencies.

- The person against whom the allegation is made will need support during this period and ICHH will provide advice on how to access the relevant support services.

Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

And lastly

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this child protection policy and procedures document or obtain further information, please contact Clare O Connor at finance@ichhdublin.com

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Section 4: CHILD PROTECTION AND ICHH ACTIVITIES

1. Visits to Outside Organisations

Most of ICHH's activities involving children take place outside the ICHH centre. We send volunteers to schools, cultural institutions and other education centres from time to time. If volunteers visit a school or other location, the organisation will be asked to send an accompanying letter on headed paper, signed by the principal or other member of the senior manager or member of staff, confirming the school's/organisation's own child protection policy, per the relevant legislation requiring them to do so. Outside organisations may also be required to provide proof of public liability insurance.

2. Events: Both at ICHH and External Venues

Volunteers organising events that include children and young people must abide by this policy to ensure the safe participation of children and young people in ICHH activities.

Event organisers for one-off events should contact the Designated Liaison Person when planning events and consider whether it is necessary to have a disclaimer saying ICHH expects parents/primary carers, guardians, teachers and/or carers to keep responsibility for their children while taking part in ICHH activities.

3. Guidelines for Young People in Photography and Film

It is important during fundraising and educational activities that when we use children and young people in photo shoots and/or take pictures of them in activities that we consider how the images are used.

When selecting a range of images for use in ICHH promotional material (either print-based or web-based) for each photograph consider the following:

- Is the image clear? Does the image convey a message that can be clearly understood by the child? Is the photograph of sufficient quality and clarity?
- Is the image dignified? Are the subjects of the image presented in a manner in which they would wish themselves to be portrayed? Are vulnerable people presented sensitively?

- Is the image authentic? Is the photograph authentic or do you think it has been cropped or edited in a way that distorts the actual facts?
- Is the image balanced? Do the images used present a balance of ethnicities and role models, as appropriate to the setting? Do the images show the diverse realities of everyday life and challenge prevailing expectations? Parental and School Consent Parental/primary carer and/or school consent for the use of images of children/young people in group shots will be required before photographs are used for promotional material and/or the website. Parental/primary carer consent will be required for the use of an image of an individual child or young person in which the child/young person is named.

General Guidelines

- Under-18s should be asked if they mind before pictures are taken or filming takes place. This is good practice for adults as well.
- A letter will be made available from the Manager to parents/teachers/other responsible adults advising what will happen to the pictures/film and what they/it will be used for during and after an event.
- If pictures are taken or filming takes place informally at ICHH or other event, then this needs to be covered in the general parental/primary carer permission letter issued (as above).
- If a parental/primary carer letter has not been issued for the event or it is informal, then any photographer taking photos likely to be made available to, or used by ICHH will need to issue a consent form.
- It is sometimes acceptable to obtain consent after pictures have been taken or filming has taken place, but this must be before their publication or use.

Please refer to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on the Use of Images for more information:
www.dochas.ie.

Section 5: Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Per the Health Service Executive's Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, a vulnerable person is defined as

“an adult who is restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. This may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment and risk of abuse may be influenced by both context and individual circumstances.”

Abuse of vulnerable adults can constitute the physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time and it may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.

Key Principles in Vulnerable Adult Protection and Welfare –

Citizenship confers a status on an individual whereby their fundamental right to dignity and respect and other basic human rights as well as their rights to participation in society are upheld and supported by the Constitution, by Ireland's human rights treaty commitments and by the laws of the State. –

Person-centredness is that principle which places the person as an individual at the heart and centre of any exchange requiring the provision or delivery of a service. Services are organised around what is important to the person from her/his perspective.

– **Empowerment** is that principle which recognises the right of the individual to lead as independent a life as possible and that supports the individual in every practical way to realise that right.

- **Self-directedness** recognises the right of the individual to self-determination to the greatest extent possible, including where this entails risk. Abiding by this principle means ensuring that risks are recognised, understood and minimised as far as possible, while supporting the person to pursue their goals and preferences.

- **In accordance** with the principles set out in this policy, it is recognised that adults have the right to self-determination and to make decisions, even if this means that they remain at risk. Where there are concerns regarding diminished capacity, consideration should be given to requesting a specialist assessment of the person's decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person.

- Equity should be applied in relation to transactions with and services to vulnerable adults. Resources and services should be provided to vulnerable people on the basis of need, using the principle of proportionality. –

Safeguarding best interest recognises the vulnerability of individuals where they are unable to make their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets or their bodily integrity and ensures appropriate and accountable protection for them.

Responding to and Reporting Vulnerable Adult Protection Concerns

If you are concerned about the protection or welfare of a vulnerable adult, contact the Designated Liaison Person.

When the Designated Liaison Person receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, s/he will consider the wishes of the vulnerable adult and if there are reasonable grounds for reporting to the statutory authorities. This will mean:

- Clarifying or getting more information about the matter
- Consulting with the vulnerable adult to her/his wishes, etc.
- Where there is any doubt or uncertainty, consulting the statutory authorities to obtain their advice about the situation
- Where there are concerns about the diminished capacity of the vulnerable adult, considering assessment of decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person
- Making a formal referral to the statutory authorities

A suspicion that is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. These suspicions, however, will be recorded or noted internally by the Designated Liaison Person as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for the statutory authorities. A full written record of all decisions will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person.

In an emergency, where a person is at immediate risk, you should contact An Garda Síochána (the police) or the Emergency Services on 112 or 999.

Confidentiality

All information concerned with the identification and reporting of vulnerable adult abuse is subject to best practice guidance on confidentiality. Where a vulnerable adult has capacity, their consent should be sought prior to disclosing information to other parties or the statutory authorities.

Mandatory Reporting

All citizens should be aware that it is a legal requirement throughout Ireland for any person who knows or believes that a serious offence has been committed, including an offence relating to rape, sexual assault or false imprisonment, to report such information to An Garda Síochána and it is an offence not to do so where that failure cannot be reasonably excused.

Consent

The consent of the vulnerable adult should be sought prior to reporting any matter to the statutory authorities and on to family and care service providers. Sometimes adults do not want civil authorities to take action to investigate or protect them from harm. If upon receipt of the concern, where the vulnerable adult does not give consent to reporting, and it is not clear that a criminal act has taken place, and where the Designated Liaison Person believes that others may also be at risk of harm, consultation should take place with civil authorities as to the best course of action in the absence of consent.

In considering the capacity of the vulnerable adult to give consent, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The adult has capacity to understand what is being asked of him or her
- Sufficient information is given, in a way that the person understands, to enable him/her to make an informed decision
- Consent is not received through any form of coercion

If the vulnerable adult is unable to give informed consent, discussions should take place with their carer/guardian/close family member about reporting concerns/allegations and, where appropriate, discussions should also take place with any medical or social work personnel. There may need to be a determination as to who can give consent on behalf of the vulnerable adult. In some cases there may already be provision in place; consultation may be required with legal advisers and statutory authorities.

Please note that the Designated Liaison Person should not make determinations around capacity to give consent without consultation with appropriately trained and skilled personnel.

Section 6: RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

As part of this, ICHH will seek to check very thoroughly the background and suitability of all staff and volunteers. The procedure will involve a number of checks and safeguards, and no provisional offer will be confirmed, nor will volunteering commence, until all checks have been satisfied. No candidate who is deemed to be a risk to children or vulnerable adults will

be confirmed as a volunteer following the completion of the recruitment procedures. It is important therefore to ensure that this recruitment process is thorough and no stage is omitted without agreement of the Manager and/or Executive Director.

1. Recruitment Processes for Volunteers

Applicants will be informed, via the details sent out and/or advertised as part of the recruitment process (e.g. on the application form), that ICHH will require personal disclosure that nothing in an applicant's background may preclude her or him from working with children and vulnerable adults so that applicants can make an informed choice as to whether to apply for the post. The details will also cover what checks will take place if they choose to apply. These checks will include:

Application form

Applicants for positions will be asked to give a full account of their employment history alongside any voluntary experience on their application form, giving details of posts, names, addresses and contact numbers and reasons for leaving. The form must be signed and dated confirming that the information is true, that the candidate gives permission for ICHH to approach previous employers, and that there is nothing in the applicant's personal or professional background that would preclude her or him from working with children and vulnerable adults. While electronic applications are accepted by the organisation, candidates must be also produce signed copies.

Garda Vetting

All volunteers at ICHH are legally required to be Garda vetted as the organisation provides assistance to children and vulnerable persons. Newly appointed volunteers are subject to Garda vetting in line with ICHH policy. The volunteer must complete the requisite form for processing by the Garda Vetting Unit (Form NVB1) and supply two forms of identification, one confirming proof of address, to be held on file at ICHH. Once the volunteer/staff member's information has been submitted to the Garda Vetting Unit, s/he will receive an email with the online vetting form, which should be completed within 30 days of receipt. At time of writing, the processing time for vetting forms once the vetting subject has returned the form is approximately 2-10 working days.

A processed Garda Vetting Form application will indicate one or more of the following:

- No previous convictions against the applicant
- Convictions against the applicant
- Prosecutions pending involving the applicant

Every applicant will be treated with care, respect and ultimately confidentiality in line with the ICHH Data Protection Policy. ICHH may accept and/or employ applicants who return convictions or prosecutions that are not considered to be related to child protection or violence and abuse of adults, vulnerable or otherwise. Each disclosure shall be dealt with on its own merit(s).

Verification of Identity

References:

When a provisional offer of employment or volunteer position is made, references will be taken up, at least one of which must be the applicant's present or last employer.

2. The primary responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person are:

- Ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed so that suspected cases of child neglect and abuse and vulnerable adult neglect and abuse are referred promptly to the designated person in Tusla, the Child and Family Agency or, in the event of an emergency and the unavailability of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to An Garda Síochána.
- Ensuring that they are knowledgeable about child protection and undertake any training considered necessary to keep themselves updated on new developments.

3. Role of the Designated Liaison Person:

- To be the first internal point of contact in the case of a report about the Code of Practice being breached. The Designated Liaison Person then has an obligation to report breaches to the Executive Director.
- To make arrangements for the conduct of inquiries when there has been a breach of the Code of Behaviour.
- Record keeping. Records should be kept in compliance with the Data Protection Act requirements. ICHH Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy Revised April 2017 Page 24 of 38
- Report suspicions and allegations of child abuse to the statutory authorities, e.g. Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, or An Garda Síochána.
- Liaise between ICHH staff, children and the statutory authorities where necessary.
- Create and maintain links with the statutory authorities and other relevant agencies and resources groups.
- Facilitate the provision of support to any victim, volunteer, or employee making a referral and provide support also to the person against whom the allegation has been made.
- Advise the organisation, members, or staff on individual cases as necessary and appropriate.
- Advise on good practice.
- Organise and/or facilitate training and workshops on guidelines in child protection.

- Keep up-to-date on current developments regarding provision, practice, support services, legal obligations/requirements and policy.

Section 6 – STAFF AND VOLUNTEER PROTECTION PROCEDURE

As part of the policy on child and vulnerable adult protection, ICHH has developed a Code of Behaviour. We believe that by following it, children and vulnerable adults will be protected from abuse. It will also protect staff, volunteers and those involved with ICHH from their actions being misinterpreted.

Alleged breaches of the Code of Behaviour regarding a staff member or volunteer should be made under the procedure outlined above. If a breach of Code of Behaviour is founded following an investigation, action will be taken under the organisation's disciplinary procedure or volunteer policy, as appropriate.

Members of staff and volunteers are protected in making allegations of breaches of the Code of Behaviour against another staff member provided the allegations are made reasonably and in good faith. If an allegation of a breach of the Code of Behaviour is found to be made unreasonably and not in good faith, the staff member or volunteer whom the allegation was made against may make a complaint under the ICHH grievance procedure. If such a complaint is upheld, action may be taken against the complainant under the organisation's disciplinary procedures or volunteer supervision policy, as appropriate.

In the case of staff members, the normal application of the rules of suspension as outlined under ICHH's discipline and grievance procedures will apply if required in order to carry out an investigation of a breach of the Code of Behaviour.

Provision of Support

If an alleged incident of abuse takes place in connection with ICHH activities, the organisation undertakes to provide support for the alleged victims and the person against whom the allegation has been made while any investigation, either by the statutory authorities or internally. ICHH will seek to ensure that any continuing support needed after a situation has been resolved is made available.

Training and Support

- ICHH will in the first instance ensure that all staff are aware of the Child Protection Policy.
- ICHH requires all staff and volunteers to follow the Code of Behaviour.
- All managers have the responsibility to ensure that the staff for which they are responsible have access to, are aware of and have signed the Code of Behaviour.
- All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that any events they have planned will include a provision of the need for consideration of child/vulnerable adult protection issues.
- Training will be provided for those in designated jobs on how to maintain exemplary standards in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults as required.

Section 7: CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

At ICHH we are committed to ensuring everyone's right to confidentiality. The effective protection of a child often depends on the willingness of staff in statutory and voluntary organisations involved with children to share and exchange relevant information. It is therefore critical that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information.

In relation to child protection and welfare, however, we undertake that:

- Information will only be given on a "need to know" basis in order to safeguard the child or vulnerable adult.
- Giving such information to others for the protection of a child or vulnerable adult is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- We cannot guarantee total confidentiality where the best interests of the child or vulnerable adult are at risk.
- Information gathered for one purpose will not be used for another purpose without consulting the person who provided that information.
- Parents/carers/responsible adults, as well as children and vulnerable adults, have a right to know if personal information is being shared and/or a report to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency (or other statutory authority) is being made, unless doing so could put the child or vulnerable adult at risk.
- Images of children will not be used for any reason without the consent of the parent/carer (we cannot, however, guarantee that cameras/videos will not be used at public sessions).
- Procedures are in place on the use of images of children.
- Procedures are in place for the safe and confidential storage of personal information and records in line with our confidentiality policy and Data Protection Act obligations.
- Personnel records for staff and volunteers are stored in a locked filing

Section 8: COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS PROCEDURE

For issues in relation to children, primary carers and staff:

- Written complaints and comments will be acknowledged as soon as possible and responded to in writing within three weeks of receipt.
- Verbal complaints will be logged and responded to in writing within three weeks of receipt.
- The Designated Liaison Person, i.e. the CEO, will have responsibility for directing complaints and comments to the appropriate person. The Designated Liaison Person is Anthony Flynn - 0860232171 or anthony@ichhdublin.com
- The Designated Liaison Person will investigate complaints as necessary and respond and respond within the timeframe outlined above.

Section 9: ACCIDENTS PROCEDURE

- The First Aid box is available, clearly labelled and regularly re-stocked at the ICHH centre. It is located in the office at reception.
- Incident records are clearly labelled and easily available and all incidents recorded.
-
- Availability of first aid will be in accordance with health and safety legislation at the ICHH centre. Where volunteers and staff are involved in an ICHH programme or event offsite, e.g. at a school/library/other organisation, we endeavour to ensure that availability of first aid will be in accordance with health and safety legislation.
- ICHH has public liability insurance in place to cover accidents on the premises.
- Children and young people will be advised of risks of any dangerous materials.
- Details of risky equipment used will be recorded and steps taken to minimise risk.
- Outside organisations hosting ICHH events will be required to provide proof that they have public liability insurance.

Section 10 - POLICY REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually and/or as necessary. The next review is due in July 2018

APPENDIX A – Definitions of Child Abuse

What is child abuse? It is generally acknowledged that there are four types of abuse: Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

Physical abuse can involve:

- Severe physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair-pulling
- Terrorising with threats
- Observing violence
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness

- Allowing or creating a substantial risk of significant harm to a child

Emotional Abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical symptoms. Examples of emotional abuse can include:

- The imposition of negative attributes on a child, expressed by persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming
- Conditional parenting in which the level of care shown to a child is made contingent on his or her behaviours or actions
- Emotional unavailability of the child's parent/carer
- Unresponsiveness of the parent/carer and/or inconsistent or inappropriate expectations of the child
- Premature imposition of responsibility on the child
- Unrealistic or inappropriate expectations of the child's capacity to understand something or to behave and control himself or herself in a certain way

Under- or over-protection of the child

- Failure to show interest in, or provide age-appropriate opportunities for, the child's cognitive and emotional development. Use of unreasonable or over-harsh disciplinary measures
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Exposure to inappropriate or abusive material through new technology. For more information, see Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children.

Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning. Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental under-achievement and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carer.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his/her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others, for example:

- Exposure of the sexual organs or any sexual act intentionally performed in the presence of a child
- Intentional touching or molesting of the body of a child whether by a person or object for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification
- Masturbation in the presence of a child or involvement of the child in the act of masturbation
- Sexual intercourse with a child, whether oral, vaginal or anal

- Sexual exploitation of a child, which includes inciting, encouraging, propositioning, requiring or permitting a child to solicit for, or to engage in, prostitution or other sexual acts. Sexual exploitation also occurs when a child is involved in the exhibition, modelling or posing for the purpose of sexual arousal, gratification or sexual act, including its recording (on film, videotape or other media) or the manipulation, for those purposes, of the image by computer or other means. It may also include showing sexually explicit material to children, which is often a feature of the “grooming” process by perpetrators of abuse. Consensual sexual activity involving an adult and an underage person. In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that, for the purposes of the criminal law, the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. An Garda Síochána will deal with the criminal aspects of the case under the relevant legislation. It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse presented here is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

Neglect can normally be defined in terms of an omission, where a child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care. Harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child. Whether it is significant is determined by his/her health and development as compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of a similar age. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height and weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation. The threshold of significant harm is reached when the child’s needs are neglected to the extent that his or her well-being and/or development are several affected.

Recognising Child Neglect or Abuse Child neglect or abuse can be difficult to identify and may present in many forms. A list of indicators is contained in the Children First guidelines. No one indicator should be seen as conclusive in itself of abuse. It may indicate conditions other than child abuse. All signs and symptoms must be examined in the context of the child’s situation and family circumstances.

Guidelines for Recognition The ability to recognise child abuse can depend as much on a person’s unwillingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child neglect or abuse:

- Considering the possibility
- Looking out for signs of neglect or abuse
- Recording of information

It is not your responsibility to identify abuse, but it is your responsibility to report your concerns.

APPENDIX B – Definitions of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

For the purposes of this policy, vulnerable adult abuse is any mistreatment that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering. A vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time. Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, restraint, hair pulling. Sexual abuse such as rape, sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not have consented, or two which they were pressurised into consenting. Psychological or emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, being prevented from receiving services or support. Financial or material abuse such as theft, fraud, or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance, possessions or benefits. Neglect such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or education services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink and heating. Discriminatory abuse such as that based on race, sexuality, a person's ability and other forms of harassment or slurs. Domestic abuse refers to the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical harm, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. This includes violence perpetrated by a spouse, partner, son or daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim. The term "domestic violence" goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse, the destruction of property, isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support, threats to others including children, stalking, and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone. Elder abuse occurs with persons over the age of 65 years. Concerns in relation to elder abuse should be reported to the relevant Public Health Agency