

Designated Officer Child Protection Training – 2023

ROLE OF DESIGNATED OFFICER

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Receiving and acting as first point of contact for any reported concerns.
Ensuring all staff are familiar with, and adhere to the CP Policy.
Creating, implementing and promoting Policy.
Ensuring best safeguarding practice within your organisation.
Representing the organisation and linking with statutory agencies during and following formal investigations.
Acquiring current knowledge and understanding of child protection, including attending appropriate training and Conferences. Disseminate all relevant information around Child Protection and communicate to the Team.
Providing guidance on relevant matters to the staff
Securely storing records of any concerns.
Advocating the importance of Child Protection to staff and clients.
Ensuring that when absent from work that a deputy DCPO is available.
Maintaining and updating the policy.

Understanding of safeguarding for SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2020–2023 children in specific circumstances in line with SBNI strategic priorities.

POLICY ON DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AND BAD PRACTICE

Whistle blowing describes an action whereby a member staff makes a disclosure to a third party about some wrongdoing of the management or some other member of staff in the organisation such as malpractice, abuse, fraud, negligence or covered up. The Public Interest Disclosure (NI) Order 1998 introduced a policy to provide strong protection from dismissal or other sanctions for workers who report wrongdoings that they believe in good faith to be true.

You must Disclose a reasonable belief that one of the following events has occurred, or is likely to occur:

A criminal offence, a failure to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, a risk to someone's health or safety or Concealment of any of the above events. No employee should suffer detriment because of a disclosure, such as dismissal or withholding of a promotion. If they do feel they are being discriminated against on the basis of a disclosure, they may seek redress through an employment tribunal.

Always talk to senior management as soon as a problem occurs of this nature.

INTERNAL DISCLOSURE

Staff may disclose information to the • Supervisor • Manager • Human Resource

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Administrator • Regional Manager or Managing Directors

Employees may bypass their immediate superior if they feel it is necessary.

EXTERNAL DISCLOSURE

Report to the Local Social Services responsible for the Registration of the Centre, a Legal Advisor, A Prescribed Regulator such as the Northern Ireland Health and Safety Board, Environmental Health Department, etc. If the employee has reasonable belief that all these routes will lead to detrimental action or destruction of evidence by the employer or other bodies, then the employee can directly disclose to other professional bodies, the police or an MP/ MLA.

Protecting Staff and Organisation

- ❖ Training
- ❖ Knowing policies and Procedures
- ❖ Reporting and recording all concerns
- ❖ Meetings and discussions
- ❖ Awareness and Responsibility
- ❖ Whistle-blowing
- ❖ Codes of Conduct

Being prepared in the event of allegations against staff

One of the most difficult situations for an organisation to deal with is an allegation of abuse against a member of staff. In many cases, s/he may be a close colleague, friend or neighbour. When responding to an allegation made against a worker, it is important to remember that any organisation has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child and the worker. All organisations should have internal procedures for dealing with allegations. In the case of a child protection concern, this process should run parallel to the reporting process.

Allegations against staff

The organisation should, as a matter of urgency take all protective measures, which are necessary to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. These measures should not unreasonably penalize the worker unless to protect a child. If it is necessary to suspend a worker, the incident should be dealt with as quickly as possible. It may be possible to move the worker to alternative duties, which do not involve contact with or access to children during the period of investigation.

Employers have a responsibility to consider the implications of an allegation made against a worker. Initially, all details of the incident should be recorded fully by the Designated Officer and passed on to the head of the organisation. It is recommended that the Designated Officer is not the person carrying out the internal organisational procedure.

After consultation with the relevant statutory authorities, the head of the

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organisation should decide what further action needs to be taken.

The head of the organisation should inform the worker that an allegation has been made against them, but does not give any detail of the allegation unless advised by PSNI or Social Worker. The organisation should not delay in any aspect of the process and should move to consultation with the statutory authorities as soon as possible.

If a criminal investigation is instigated by the police, it is important that the organization **Does Not** conduct its own internal investigation or gather further evidence that could prejudice the criminal investigation.

It is extremely valuable to have thought through and discussed with staff and volunteers in as objective a way as possible what could happen and how people might feel if an allegation of abuse is made or a suspicion is reported.

Rehearsing the issues will give everyone concerned the confidence to face what will inevitably be a very difficult situation, particularly if an allegation is made against a staff member

There may be situations in which suspicions or allegations turn out to be unfounded. Even so encourage responsible action and make sure that whistleblowers are confident of support.

Clearly this will be a sensitive issue for the whole organisation.

Through training and staff discussion, organisations should explore strategies for addressing a range of issues such as: maintaining confidentiality, possible reactions of other members of staff within your organisation of anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety, confusion.

Consider the effects on the individual against whom the allegation has been made or the reactions of workers and other children towards a child who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated.

Prepare for reactions of parents/carers and other family members if confidentiality is breached and the reputation of the organisation.

Good Code of Conduct

1. Always be publicly open when working with children and young people.
2. Avoid situations where a member of staff and an individual child are alone unobserved.
3. Children or young people should never be left unattended.
4. Respect the child or young person and provide a safe and positive environment.
5. If any form of physical contact is required it should be provided openly.
6. If supervision in changing rooms or similar environments is required, ensure staff work in pairs.
7. Place the well-being and safety of the child above the organisation or staff performance or agenda.

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8. Staff must feel confident to report concerns or worries about other staff members to the appropriate authority.
9. Line Managers and parents must be informed of all incidents and accidents at the earliest opportunity.
10. If a child or young person is accidentally injured as the result of a staff member, seems distressed in any way, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, always report such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written report.
11. If a child or young person arrives at the activity or service showing any signs or symptoms that give you cause for concern you must act appropriately and follow the procedures of your setting.

Poor Practice

1. Never spend unreasonable amounts of time alone with children away from others.
2. Never take children or young people away alone, however short.
3. Never make sexually suggestive comments about or to child, even in fun.
4. Do not let any allegation a child or young person makes be ignored or go unrecorded.
5. Never do things of a personal nature for children and young people that they can do for themselves, e.g. assist with changing.
6. NB. It may sometimes be necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or young people, particularly if they are very young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parents. In an emergency situation that requires this type of help, you should endeavour to have someone present and fully inform the parents as soon as it is reasonably possible.
7. In such situations it is important that you ensure that all staff etc are sensitive to the child or young person and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.
8. Never use the Internet to access Child Abuse Imagery sites. Young people's contact details established through work should never be transferred to mobile phone, diaries, emails etc or used outside of work.

Local Helpline

- ❖ The Rowan (Sexual Assault Referral Centre for N I) **0800 389 4424**
- ❖ Lifeline Suicide Prevention 24/7 **0808 808 8000**
- ❖ The Samaritans **0845 790 9090**
- ❖ Childline **0800 1111**
- ❖ 24 Hour Domestic Violence Helpline **0808 802 1414**
- ❖ NSPCC Helpline **0808 800 5000** /help@nspcc.org.uk
- ❖ Nexus **028 9032 6803**