

The Language Body

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

The North/South Language Body comprises of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

The North/South Language Body is committed to ensuring Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are up-to-date. An appointed Language Body Safeguarding Committee meets twice a year and undertakes an internal review on an annual basis, while an external review is carried out every three years in accordance with changes in legislation and practice guidelines. The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are approved by the Boards of Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency, as well as the North/South Language Body Board. In addition the safeguarding policy statement will be prominently displayed in offices and venues, as well as the relevant sections of the websites of each Agency.

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Abbreviations

Throughout this policy the following abbreviations have been used, which are explained in full here:

NI	Northern Ireland
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
HSCT	Health and Social Care Trust
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
ANI	Access NI
ROI	Republic of Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
NVB	National Vetting Bureau
Garda	An Garda Síochána
CFA	Child and Family Agency (Tusla)

Glossary

Throughout the policy the following terms and definitions are applied:

Abuse

The term “abuse” is generally used to describe behaviour by a person(s) to harm a child, young people and/or vulnerable adult. Abuse may be a single, one-off act or it may occur on multiple occasions over a period of time. Abuse of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults is categorised as physical, emotional, sexual and/or neglect, with additional categories of financial, institutional and discriminatory, relating specifically to vulnerable adults.

Age of consent

In NI the legal age of consent is 16 years of age (Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008). In ROI the legal age of consent is 17 years of age (Criminal Law Act 2007).

Allegation

A claim or accusation that someone (e.g. staff or volunteer) has abused, harmed, or placed children, young people and/or vulnerable adults at risk of abuse or harm.

Capacity

An individual’s ability to make an informed and timely decision about a particular matter that affects them. An individual has capacity if they are able to make their own decisions. Someone who lacks capacity cannot do one or more of the following;

- *Understand the information about the decision;*
- *Retain the information;*
- *Use or weigh up that information as part of the decision making process; and / or*
- *Communicate their decision.*

Child/children

In NI, a “child” means a person under the age of 18 (The Children (NI) Order 1995). In ROI, a “child” means a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married (Section 2 Child Care Act 1991; Children First Bill 2014; Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011).

Concern

There is a possibility of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults suffering harm or abuse, or being at risk of suffering harm or abuse.

Consent

A clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or accept a service. Consent may be given verbally, by gesture, by willing participation/attendance, or in writing (particularly in relation to a child).

Designated Officer

The person responsible for receiving and dealing with reports of children, young people and/or vulnerable adult abuse in the Language Body. In NI, Designated Officer is used in relation to reporting procedure for safeguarding children, whilst it is Designated Liaison Person in ROI. In relation to vulnerable adults, currently Nominated Manager is used in NI and Designated Person in ROI.

Deputy Designated Officer

The Deputy Designated Officer has a supportive role to the Designated Person. They are responsible for receiving and dealing with reports of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults abuse in the absence of the Designated Person.

Disclosure

Disclosure is when children, young people and/or vulnerable adults tell or conveys that they have been, or are being, harmed or abused in some way. An adult may also make a disclosure about historical abuse (i.e. abuse that happened in the past).

Parent/guardian

This term includes parents, legal guardians and/or carers of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Parental responsibility

Person(s) who have legal responsibility and/or guardianship of a child. In NI, the Children (NI) Order 1995 defines those with parental responsibility as “the natural mother always has parental responsibility” (except when an adoption order is made). The natural father has parental responsibility if he is married to the child’s mother at the time of the child’s birth. An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he is named, or becomes named, on the child’s birth certificate from 15 April 2002. If the natural father marries the mother after the child’s birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in NI at the time of the marriage.

In Republic of Ireland rights of parents to guardianship is covered by the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1964:

- (1) The father and mother of an infant shall be guardians of the infant jointly.
- (2) On the death of the father of an infant the mother, if surviving, shall be the guardian of the infant, either alone or jointly with any guardian appointed by the father or by the court.
- (3) On the death of the mother of an infant the father, if surviving, shall be guardian of the infant, either alone or jointly with any guardian appointed by the mother or by the court.
- (4) The mother of an illegitimate infant shall be the guardian of the infant.

Poor Practice

Behaviour that can place children, young people and/or vulnerable adults at risk of harm or abuse, or leave staff / volunteer vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

Statutory Authorities

Statutory Authorities promote the protection and welfare of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, and are responsible for investigating suspected or actual abuse. Statutory Authorities include An Garda Síochána, Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and HSE (ROI) and PSNI and HSCT (NI).

Safeguarding

Safeguarding describes the protection of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect, and the creation of a safe and inclusive environment where their welfare is actively promoted at all times. “Safeguarding” is used less frequently in ROI, with statutory bodies continuing to refer to “protection” of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. For the purposes of this policy, the term “safeguarding” will be used as opposed to “child protection”, as the document encompasses children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Vulnerability

Children, young people and/or adult’s vulnerability can increase as a result of individual circumstances, which may include being dependent on others for their care, having a disability, mental health issues, homelessness, living in foster care or a residential/nursing setting, situations of exploitation or violence (e.g. situations of domestic violence; human trafficking including forced labour and prostitution), addiction and substance misuse (including alcohol and drugs), honour based violence, forced marriage, social and emotional isolation, children who become parents, unborn children, and pregnancy. A person’s culture, religion, nationality or ethnicity may contribute to their vulnerability, as well as issues including a change in living circumstances, financial pressures, bereavement and being a carer. Additionally, a lack of robust and effective management, policy and procedures within an organisation can equally increase vulnerability.

Vulnerable Adult (NI)

“A vulnerable adult is any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may be because he or she has a mental health problem, a disability, a sensory impairment, is old and frail, or has some form of illness. Because of his or her vulnerability, the individual may be in receipt of a care service in his or her own home, in the community or be resident in a residential care home, nursing home or other institutional setting”. (*Adult Abuse – Guidance for Staff*, published by the Northern Ireland Office and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2009 www.nidirect.gov.uk)

This is a working definition which reflects that contained in page 10 of the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Regional Adult Protection & Policy Procedural Guidance* and is reflected in *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults - A Shared Responsibility, Volunteer Now*. Please note that we are currently in a period of transition and this definition is under review.

Vulnerable Adult (ROI)

“A vulnerable person means a person, other than a child, who -

- a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
- b) has an intellectual disability,
- c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age, or
- d) has a physical disability, which is of such a nature or degree -
 - i) as to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or

- ii) that results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing”.

National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012.

Also defined in the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 as:

“A vulnerable person (includes a child over 17 years of age) means a person who;

- Is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia
- Has an intellectual disability
- Is suffering from an enduring physical impairment or injury”.

In some instances, there are minor differences in wording and when considering 'vulnerable adult', it is also important to consider the factors that can increase a person's vulnerability (e.g. social and emotional isolation, substance misuse, violence, exploitation, changes in family/financial circumstances etc.)

Staff/Volunteer

Those who work in a paid capacity or have a volunteering role for the North/South Language Body.

Introduction

The Language Body is committed to the delivery of a quality service that promotes good practice and creates a safe environment to protect children, young people and/or vulnerable adults from harm. It will also ensure procedures are in place to safeguard staff / volunteers and the organisation from potential allegations.

This policy is applicable to all staff / volunteers in The Language Body that may have direct or indirect contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. Staff / volunteers must be aware of their role and responsibility for undertaking best safeguarding practice at all times. The Language Body will provide appropriate training to raise awareness of abuse issues and to familiarise staff / volunteers with its safeguarding policy, procedures and guidelines.

Aims of The Language Body's Safeguarding Policy

To demonstrate commitment to providing and maintaining an organisation that protects children, young people and/or vulnerable adults from harm, as well as protecting staff / volunteers and the organisation itself from potential allegations.

This policy has been developed against the minimum standards of practice as contained in:

- "Getting It Right" – Standards of good practice for child protection; and
- "Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – A Shared Responsibility" and in line with the legal and policy context of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Values expected from the staff/volunteers of a public body

The Board of The Language Body have agreed to the following values as part of the public service and expect the same values to be agreed by members of staff/volunteers.

They are:

- Impartiality - staff/volunteers should be continually aware of their role in stewarding public funds as independently as possible without favour
- Accountability - staff/volunteers should be aware of their role in stewarding public funds and be constantly aware of the extent to which key targets are being met both as individual staff/volunteers and of the organisation as a whole
- Integrity - staff/volunteers should not use their position to receive, agree, accept, or attempt to receive any outside payment or other recompense for a duty relating to their job. They should not receive any benefit which may in actuality or perceptively compromise their judgement or integrity

- Objectivity - in taking decisions and carrying out public business, including the awarding of contracts or making recommendations for reward and benefit, staff/volunteers should always make choices on merit
- Openness - staff/volunteers should be aware of the commitment of the Board to be as open as possible about all decisions and processes that lead to decisions, and actions that they take. Decisions should be explained and information only restricted if such a restriction is deemed to be in the wider public interest
- Responsiveness - The Language Body should ensure that it can demonstrate it is using resources to good effect and without reason for criticism that they are being used for private, partisan or political purposes. Staff/volunteers should bear these requirements in mind when managing their time and resources and not use time or resources within the employ of The Language Body for private, partisan or political purposes
- Honesty - staff/volunteers have a duty to declare private interests relating to their work and to take steps to resolve any potential conflicts that protects both themselves and the public interest. This includes individual and associated group interests;
- Leadership - staff/volunteers are expected to promote the code and these principles by example particularly relating to staff/volunteers supervised by them
- Value for Money - staff/volunteers should ensure that in-house services and those tendered for are delivered in the most economic, efficient and effective way, with appropriate evaluation of performance.

The Language Body is committed to the improvement of the organisation and each individual within the organisation. Given the need for the staff/volunteers to act in a team environment The Language Body expects openness to improvement and to team working by each member of staff/volunteer.

Legal and policy context

A number of key pieces of legislation impact on procedure and practice for safeguarding children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Northern Ireland

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989** is an international human rights treaty that sets minimum standards for children and young people's civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. The UK Government signed up to the UN Convention in 1991, thereby making a commitment to bring UK law, policy and practice relating to children within its standards.

The Children (NI) Order 1995 is the main legislative basis for the provision of childcare services in Northern Ireland and has five underlying principles, known as the five Ps. These principles have clear implications for all organisations working with children and young people.

- **Paramountcy** means putting a child's welfare first when making decisions about him/her.
- **Partnership** involves working with parents and relevant agencies to meet the child's needs.
- **Prevention** is about the state's obligation to provide support services to keep children safely within their families and promote their health and welfare.
- **Protection** places a "duty of care" on each of us to report concerns about a child to the appropriate agencies. It also places a duty on statutory services to investigate when there is a reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm.
- **Parental Responsibility** identifies that parents have responsibilities to their child (ren) rather than rights over them. It also defines who has parental responsibility, which is important when obtaining consent for a child's participation in activities.

The **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)** aims to prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering with children and/or vulnerable **adults**. It places a legal requirement on employers to ensure they do not involve a Barred person in regulated activity. Employers should request an Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check before offering a work/volunteering role in regulated activity with children

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

The Criminal Law (Northern Ireland) Act 1967

This Act creates an obligation on citizens to provide the PSNI with any information they may have about a suspected serious offence. Anyone who knows or believes that a 'relevant' offence has been committed, and has information which is likely to lead to arrest or prosecution or conviction of a suspect, is under a duty to give that information to the police.

In practice this means that an organisation, staff and volunteers are required to disclose to the PSNI any serious offence. This includes domestic violence or drug misuse/possession.

The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986

This Order covers the assessment, treatment and rights of people with a *mental disorder*, defined as 'mental illness, learning disability and any other disorder or disability of mind'. It sets out the conditions under which a person with a mental disorder can be compulsorily admitted to hospital and treated without his or her consent. It sets out offences in relation to the ill treatment or willful neglect of a patient by workers. In practice this means that patients covered by the definition can be kept in hospital for assessment if the failure to detain him or her would create a substantial likelihood of serious physical harm to him/herself or to other persons.

The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

This protects most staff / volunteers who whistleblow about wrongdoing in their workplace (such as a criminal offence or where there is a danger to the health and safety of individuals) from being treated unfavourably by their employer as a result, e.g. by not being allowed access to training or promotion. In practice this means if a staff / volunteer reports concerns about abuse within their organisational procedures and to a prescribed person (e.g. Northern Ireland Social Care Council or Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority) they are protected from unfavourable treatment.

The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998

Under this Order, a Non Molestation Order can be issued to prevent a perpetrator of abuse from threatening or using violence against a victim of abuse. A perpetrator can also be forced to leave and stay away from a property by an Occupation Order so as to protect a victim. In practice this means that an abusive partner can be forced to leave the family home and stay away from it.

The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007

This Act can help a victim if they are being forced to marry or are already in a forced marriage. Through this Act, an application can be made to the court by the victim or someone on their behalf for a Forced Marriage Civil Protection Order. The Order aims to change the behaviour of the person forcing marriage. This is done by implementing a wide range of restrictions and conditions. Each Order is unique to the individual's circumstances. Some examples of the restrictions would be to require person/persons to hand over their passport to prevent their victim from being taken abroad, reveal the whereabouts of a person and to stop intimidation and violence.

Our Duty to Care: Standards and Guidance for Keeping Children Safe

These are principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people. (Volunteer Now).

Getting it Right

These are standards of practice for the protection of children and young people. (Volunteer Now).

The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008

This covers offences against people with a mental disorder, as defined in The Mental Health (NI) Order 1986.

Articles 43 to 46 relate to offences against people who are unable to legally consent to sexual activity because of a mental disorder. Articles 47 to 50 provide added protection for those who have capacity to consent but might be vulnerable to exploitation through inducement, threats or deception. Articles 51 to 57 contain new offences for people who are providing care, assistance or services to vulnerable adults. Under the Order, any sexual activity between a care worker and a person with a mental disorder is prohibited whilst that relationship of care continues, whether or not the victim appears to consent and whether or not they have the legal capacity to consent. Friends or family members who provide care, assistance or services to the vulnerable adult also fall within the scope of the Order.

In practice this means that care workers are deemed as being in a position of trust and as such cannot enter into a sexual relationship with those they support.

Vulnerable Adults

There are a number of key pieces of legislation that are intended to help protect the rights of vulnerable adults. Staff and volunteers must have an awareness of the legislation relating to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable adults and understand their obligations under the legislation in NI.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults; A Shared Responsibility

These are Standards and Guidance for Good Practice in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults. (Volunteer Now).

Republic of Ireland

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989** is an international human rights treaty that sets minimum standards for children and young people's civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights. The UK Government signed up to the UN Convention in 1991, thereby making a commitment to bring UK law, policy and practice relating to children within its standards. In 1992, Ireland signed up to the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** thus obligating government to ensure that legislation and policy does not contravene any of the standards outlined in the Convention.

The **Child Care Act 1991** which was fully implemented in 1996 has updated and strengthened legislation for the welfare and protection of children. In particular it has provided the principle of Paramourncy which means that the welfare of the child should always come first when decisions are being made in relation to care and protection issues.

The Irish government took proactive steps to encourage individuals to report child protection concerns to their local Health Service Executive, by introducing the **Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998**.

Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children was produced in 1999 to assist people in identifying and reporting child abuse. In particular, it places a duty on voluntary and

community organisations to recognise the Paramountcy principle, when working with children and young people. A Children First Bill 2012 is in the process of being considered, which will place Children First on a statutory footing.

The **Our Duty to Care** guidelines published by Department of Health and Children in 2002 supports Children First by providing voluntary and community groups with the practical guidance to develop policy in line with Children First principles.

The **Child Protection and Welfare Handbook (2011)** complements and supports Children First Guidance and provides practice guidance for professionals on recognising, reporting and recording abuse and welfare concerns.

Health Act 2007

This legislation established the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA). It provides for a scheme of registration and inspection of residential services for older people, persons with disabilities and children in need of care and protection.

Domestic Violence Acts 1996 and 2002

This legislation provides for the protection of a spouse and any children or other dependent persons, and of persons in other domestic relationships, whose safety or welfare requires it because of the conduct of another person in the domestic relationship.

Disability Act 2005

The key elements of this Act are the provision of assessment of need and statement of need, as well as a statement of actual agreed service provision, relating to all needs. These rights cover all ages.

Mental Health Act 2001

This legislation provides safeguards for those involuntarily admitted and detained in approved centres, and puts in place mechanism for the regulation and inspection of mental health services.

National Vetting Bureau Act 2012

This Act provides that certain people working with children and vulnerable adults (as defined by the Act) require to be vetted prior to being employed or engaged in a voluntary capacity.

Criminal Justice (withholding information on offences against children and vulnerable adults) Act 2012

This Act creates an offence for not passing on information on certain offences against children and vulnerable adults (as defined by the Act) and the penalties associated with the offence.

Safeguarding policy statement

The Language Body is committed to practice that protects children, young people and/or vulnerable adults from harm and abuse, and aims to provide an environment that promotes their safety at all times. The Language Body supports a zero tolerance approach to abuse and harm of any kind, and will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and/or vulnerable adults at all times by implementing the following procedures and guidelines:

- carefully following robust recruitment and selection procedures for all staff / volunteers in line with legislative requirements
- managing staff / volunteers through training, support and supervision
- following clear reporting procedures in the event of suspected or actual abuse of a child/young person and/or vulnerable adult
- managing and assessing risk
- implementing a procedure for dealing with comments and complaints
- managing records, confidentiality and sharing information about safeguarding and best practice with staff / volunteers, children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and parents/guardians as appropriate
- adopting a clear code of conduct which all staff / volunteers must sign up to, in addition to codes of conduct for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and parents/ guardians
- ensure the general safety and the effective management of activities.

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 and all organisational policies will dovetail with this safeguarding policy. This holistic approach will ensure a safe and healthy organisation for staff, volunteers, and the children, young people and vulnerable adults that use our services.

Everyone involved with The Language Body will be made aware of the safeguarding policy and the procedures that have been put in place to best protect children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. This will be achieved through dissemination of the policy, training and awareness raising. In addition the safeguarding policy statement will be prominently displayed in offices and venues, as well as relevant sections of the website of each Agency. 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.

The Language Body's **Designated Officers** for safeguarding is responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation and for liaising with statutory authorities about suspected or actual cases of abuse of a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult. The Designated Officer must be knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and undertake any training, considered necessary, to remain updated on new developments. The Ulster-Scots Agency's designated officers are:

Designated Officer:	Trina Somerville	028 90 261 984 / 07702 831 343
Deputy Designated Officer:	Jane Wallace	028 90 891 786 / 07872 952 654

These named Designated Officers shall be made known to staff/volunteers, parents/guardians and children, young people and vulnerable adults and aware that any concerns raised will be addressed. If the concern is about the Designated Officer, please report to the Deputy Designated Officer. The Designated and Deputy Designated Officers will endeavour to be accessible and available at all times, but this should not prevent any actions being taken in an emergency situation.

The Deputy Designated Officer is responsible for receiving concerns about children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in the absence of the Designated Officer.

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are approved by the Boards of The Language Body, Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Current policy reviewed and approved ... July 2015

Internal review due... January 2016

External review due... July 2018

The Language Body consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

The majority of people who want to work or volunteer with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults within The Language Body are well motivated and without them, activities clubs and organisations could not operate. Unfortunately some individuals will try to use voluntary and community organisations to gain access to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults for inappropriate motives. Therefore it is essential that we have effective recruitment and selection procedures to help screen out and discourage those who are not suitable from representing our organisation.

The Language Body also expects that organisations it funds or supports ensure they follow the best practice in recruitment and selection recommended in the following guidelines. Effective recruitment and selection procedures benefit everyone. They ensure that staff/volunteers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which will have a positive impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Parents/guardians and carers will be assured that all possible reasonable measures are being taken to ensure that as far as possible only suitable people will be recruited to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The Language Body will ensure effective recruitment and selection procedures for posts/roles within The Language Body by:

- Providing a job/role description for each post that describes the range of duties the role will involve, and a person specification that describes the type of attributes we require the post-holder to have (e.g. their experience, qualifications and other requirements). At this stage it would be helpful to indicate if the job/role fits the definition of regulated activity. This helps staff/volunteers in the organisation to have clarity about their job/role.
- We will openly advertise jobs/roles in local and regional press or The Language Body website. This will include an indication that if applicable, a vetting check¹ will be undertaken.
- Ensuring that any person applying for a post within The Language Body completes our application form which will include a section asking the individual to consent to a vetting check if required.
- The application form will include a separate section to allow the applicant to self declare any convictions or relevant information. This will be sent out with the application form to ensure confidentiality and impartiality. The purpose of the declaration form is to ensure that the information provided concurs with relevant checks made.

Since April 2014 in Northern Ireland there have been changes made to the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation to introduce 'filtering' which impacts on self declaration and disclosure. Filtering is the term given to the non-disclosure of information on Standard and Enhanced Disclosure certificates which is considered to be old and/or minor. From 14 April 2014 old and minor offences (known as "protected" offences) are removed or 'filtered' and they won't appear on the disclosure certificate and the applicant does not have to self declare these offences. The Language Body will make every effort to ensure applicants are aware of the nature of information they should and should not self declare.

"Specified offences" will always be disclosed on an AccessNI certificate and applicants should always declare these matters.

The Garda Síochána Data Protection Access Request scheme is designed to give operational meaning to

¹A vetting check may be undertaken using any of the following organisations – AccessNI (Northern Ireland) or Garda Central Vetting Unit (Republic of Ireland). Note that the Garda Central Vetting Unit will currently only disclose conviction information.

the principles of data protection. This ensures that the rights of individuals are safeguarded in relation to their privacy and integrity in processing their personal data.

- The Language Body will obtain the details of two referees in writing. These should preferably include their last employer/volunteer manager, depending on the duties of the post.
- An Enhanced AccessNI (NI) or Garda Central Vetting Unit (ROI) check will be requested on all new recruits in line with legal requirements. In ROI the National Vetting Bureau Act 2012 provides for sharing of relevant information with regard to pre employment/volunteering information for applicants. In NI checks will be requested from AccessNI for regulated activity.
- Ensuring staff/volunteers are interviewed by at least two representatives of The Language Body.
- Checking out any gaps in the application form, verifying qualifications and experience, clarifying any apparent gaps in employment/volunteering and ensuring the applicant has the ability and commitment to undertake the role.
- If they are the preferred candidate, following a conditional offer of the post, applicants should provide written consent to the AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure with (or without) Barred List check (NI) and/or Garda Vetting disclosure (ROI).
- This question is normally contained within our application forms. Once the disclosure information is obtained and cross referenced with the self declaration the organisation will consider all information in order to make an appointment to post. In general, a criminal history will not automatically prevent a person from working/volunteering with The Language Body however the Designated Officer shall assess information returned from any of the above sources and advise management, who will ultimately make the employment decision.
- Setting a probationary/trial period. Every new post/role should be reviewed within an agreed period of time. The length of time will vary depending on the nature of the post/role. It is good practice to have a review at conclusion of the probationary/trial period.

There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers.

The Language Body believes that its staff / volunteers are the most valuable asset the organisation has and will provide support opportunities for personal and professional development. The Language Body is committed to providing all staff / volunteers coming into contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults with appropriate training in safeguarding issues. The training schedule will involve the following:

- induction training involves familiarising each staff / volunteer with the working environment of The Language Body, expectations and the requirements of the job, which will include compliance with all current policies including safeguarding policies and procedures
- particular skills training may be needed to enable staff / volunteers to perform the necessary health and safety requirements, for example First Aid training, fire procedures
- safeguarding training, which involves raising awareness about what constitutes abuse, issues that should alert staff / volunteers to the possibility of abuse, reacting and responding to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who disclose they are being abused, who to tell and dealing with issues such as confidentiality and the reporting procedures.

A probationary/trial period will apply to all staff / volunteers and be reviewed within an agreed period of time. The length of time will vary depending on the nature of the job/role. There will be a review at the conclusion of the probationary/trial period and written confirmation of the job/role provided to the staff / volunteers.

The Language Body recognises the importance of setting up a system of support and supervision for all staff / volunteers. This will enable staff / volunteers to become more effective by identifying training needs and dealing quickly with difficulties. Staff / volunteers will be offered regular opportunities to review their experiences and to identify any training or further support needs. The overarching benefit of having a good system of support and supervision in place is that The Language Body can have confidence with the quality of service being provided and staff / volunteers can also have the opportunity to raise concerns, including safeguarding concerns.

Staff / volunteers have a right to:

- access ongoing training and information on all aspects of working with children/young people and/or vulnerable adults
- support when reporting abuse (including professional support services)
- fair and equitable treatment by The Language Body
- protection from abuse by other staff / volunteers, children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, other adult members and parents/guardians
- not be left vulnerable when working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults

An annual appraisal (staff) or annual review (volunteers), to assess and give feedback to individuals on their general performance, will take place so that they can be given recognition for the good work they are doing and helped to develop their skills further.

Written records of training completed by staff and volunteers, support and supervision and annual appraisal sessions will be kept in compliance with data protection requirements.

The organisation has clearly defined procedures for raising awareness of, responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse.

Everyone who or comes into contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults through their work should be able to recognise the possible indicators and signs of abuse and know how to act upon these.

Definitions of abuse

Abuse of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults may be categorised as physical, emotional, sexual and/or neglect. The additional categories of financial, institutional and/or discriminatory relate to vulnerable adults. Abuse can occur as a single, one-off act or it may occur on multiple occasions, over a period of time. *Co-operating to Safeguard Children* (NI) and *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (ROI) outline four categories of abuse in relation to children.

	NI	ROI
Physical abuse	...the deliberate physical injury to a child or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.	...any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child.
<i>e.g. hitting; shaking; burning; poisoning; suffocating; confinement to a room or cot; incorrectly giving drugs to control behaviour; Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy.</i>		
Emotional abuse	...the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.	...normally to be found in the relationship between a care-giver and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.
<i>e.g. Exploiting or corrupting a child; causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger; conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person; 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 and emotional unavailability by the parent/guardian; unresponsiveness; inconsistent, inappropriate or unrealistic expectations of a child (including their capacity to understand something or behave in a certain way); under/over protection.</i>		
Sexual abuse	...involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child/young person is aware of what is happening.	...occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others.
<i>e.g. physical contact activities, including assault and breach of a relationship of trust between an adult and a child. Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Inappropriate and sexually explicit conversations or remarks and behaviours, gestures or expressions that may be interpreted as being seductive or sexually demeaning.</i>		
Neglect	...the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm*.	...an omission, where the child suffers significant harm* or impairment of development.

	NI	ROI
<p>*Harm is the ill-treatment or impairment of a child's health or development. Significant harm is determined by a child's health and development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a child of similar age. It occurs when the child's needs are neglected to the extent that their well-being and/or development are severely affected.</p> <p><i>e.g. failure to provide adequate foods, clothing, warmth, hygiene, shelter and protection from physical harm or danger; failing to ensure adequate medical care in case of injury; lack of stimulation and supervision. Neglect generally becomes apparent over a period of time e.g. a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having adequate supervision or safety; a child whose ongoing failure to gain weight/height is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition; a child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.</i></p>		

The categories of abuse in relation to vulnerable adults include those above, with additional categories solely in respect of vulnerable adults. *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults A Shared Responsibility (NI). National Council on Ageing and Older People (NCAOP) (ROI).*

	NI	ROI
Physical abuse	...involves hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.	...any form of non-accidental injury or physical force that results in a bodily injury.
<i>e.g. fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.</i>		
Psychological abuse	...involves emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and the use of threats.	...may include the persistent use of threats, humiliation, bullying, intimidation, isolation, swearing and other verbal conduct that results in mental or physical distress.
<i>e.g. being withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, showing compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.</i>		
Financial abuse	...involves the use of a vulnerable adult's property, assets or income without their consent or making financial transactions they do not understand to the advantage of another person.	...financial or material abuse has been defined as the unauthorised and improper use of funds, property or any resources. This may include theft, coercion, fraud, misuse of power of attorney, and also not contributing to household costs where this was previously agreed.
<i>e.g. misusing or stealing money, possessions or benefits. Controlling or withholding access to money or possessions and putting pressure on an individual about their will/inheritance</i>		
Sexual abuse	...is direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not consent to it.	...refers to any sexual acts to which a vulnerable adult has not, or could not consent.
<i>e.g. physical symptoms including genital itching or soreness or having a sexually transmitted disease, using bad language, not wanting to be touched, behaving in a sexually inappropriate way, changes in appearance.</i>		

	NI	ROI
Neglect	...withdrawing or not giving the help that a vulnerable adult needs, so causing them to suffer.	...refers to the repeated deprivation of assistance needed by a vulnerable person for important activities of daily living.
<i>e.g. having pain or discomfort, being very hungry, thirsty or untidy, failing health, changes in behaviour.</i>		
Discriminatory	...is behaviour that makes a distinction between one person and another is a basis for prejudice or unfair treatment.	...may include racism, ageism, discrimination based on disability, other forms of harassment, slur or similar treatment.
<i>e.g. discrimination because of a person's ethnic origin, religion, language or age</i>		
Institutional	...is the failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to vulnerable adults	...may occur within residential care and acute settings including nursing homes, acute hospitals and any other in-patient settings, and may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex needs.
<i>e.g. it includes a failure to ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care.</i>		

Anyone with contact to a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult has the potential to abuse, including:

- parents/guardians/carers
- relatives within the wider family circle
- acquaintances and neighbours
- peers (i.e. other children, young people and/or vulnerable adults)
- adults in positions of trust and/or staff / volunteers
- strangers (including persons who have established contact with a child/vulnerable adult with an intention to abuse).

Anyone with knowledge about, or who suspects possible abuse or harm of a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult has a legal duty of care which should ensure a report is made to the Designated Officer. Omissions and failure to act and protect a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult can contribute to abuse just as much as actual acts of abuse. Therefore it is essential that staff / volunteers are confident about dealing with a concern about a child, young people and/or vulnerable adult or responding to a disclosure of abuse.

Dealing with concerns

A 'concern' is a feeling of worry which could indicate a safeguarding issue.

The Language Body has a robust written procedure for reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse. If a staff member/volunteer has a concern about a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult, they need to follow the reporting procedure.

The following is an outline of some possible signs and indicators that a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult who is being abused may display:

- changes in mood - sudden outbursts/temper
- demeanour – becomes quiet and withdrawn
- emotional distress or different patterns of behaviour
- fear of a particular adult – particularly of one with whom a close relationship would be expected
- inappropriate sexual awareness or language
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who are reluctant to go home
- sudden weight loss
- nervousness when touched.

It should be recognised that displaying one or more of these indicators does not prove that abuse has occurred or is occurring. Other factors, such as family changes, bereavement and uncertainty may also affect children, young people and/or vulnerable adults’ behaviour.

Dealing with disclosure

A disclosure is when a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult tells of abuse. When dealing with disclosure, it is important to:

Do	Do not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stay calm. ▪ Listen and hear. ▪ Give the children, young people and/or vulnerable adult time to say what they want. ▪ Express concern and empathy. ▪ Provide reassurance they have done the right thing and that they are not to blame. ▪ Record what was said ‘verbatim’ (i.e. in the children, young people and/or vulnerable adult’s own words) on the reporting form as soon as possible. ▪ Report to Designated Officer. ▪ Record your report. ▪ Act without delay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Panic. ▪ Stop a child, young people and/or vulnerable adult from disclosing to you. ▪ Promise or agree to keep secrets. ▪ Ask leading questions, speculate or inquire into details. ▪ Ask a child, young people and/or vulnerable adult to repeat the story. ▪ Contact or confront the alleged abuser. ▪ Attempt to investigate. ▪ Delay.

Reporting procedure

Once a staff / volunteer becomes aware of, or suspects harm or abuse they must immediately follow the reporting procedure (see flow chart on page 25) and report concerns to the Designated Officer (see Appendix 4). Under no circumstances should any staff / volunteer attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone.

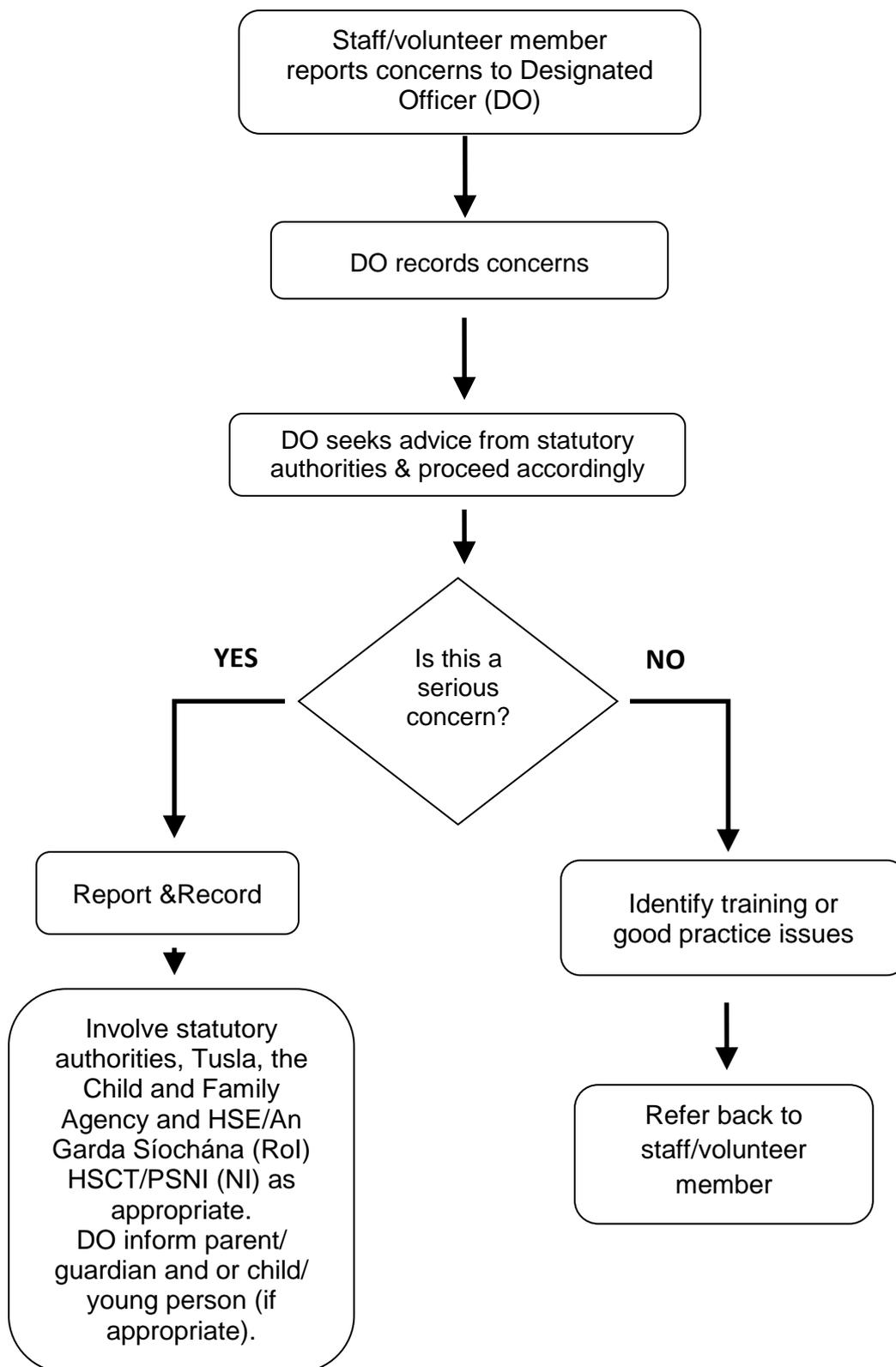
The staff / volunteer should ensure, in so far as possible, that the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult is protected from any potentially dangerous situation. If urgent medical/police help is required, contact the emergency services. Staff / volunteers are not responsible for investigating or deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. This is the responsibility of the relevant statutory authorities.

Information relating to abuse or harm of a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult will be communicated and shared on a 'need to know' basis to the Designated Officer only. Staff / volunteers shall not disclose confidential information or the detail of discussions conducted in The Language Body with any other party, without the prior and express permission of a senior member of staff, and then, only in certain situations.

Information of a sensitive nature will never be shared or discussed inappropriately, nor will it be the subject of gossip or speculation, staff / volunteers will never promise to keep secrets. The confidentiality policy is important in the organisation, but safeguarding concerns override confidentiality or data protection and the rights of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to be protected from harm.

The primary responsibility of staff / volunteers who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it and to ensure they are taken seriously.

The Language Body's reporting procedure



Designated Officer

The Language Body's Designated Officer and Deputy Designated Officer are responsible for providing advice about safeguarding matters, co-ordinating action within The Language Body and liaising with statutory authorities about safeguarding matters.

The Designated Officer and Deputy Designated Officer shall be known to staff / volunteers, parents/guardians/carers and children, young people and/or vulnerable adults as the people to whom safeguarding issues will be passed in line with the reporting procedure. They will endeavour to be knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and undertake training to remain up to date on new developments.

Duties and responsibilities

The Designated Officer and / or Deputy Designated Officer will:

- establish contact and liaise with relevant statutory authorities as appropriate
- provide information and advice on safeguarding issues for all staff / volunteers
- endeavour to ensure that The Language Body's safeguarding policy and procedures are followed and kept up to date with current legislation and best practice
- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, in a confidential manner
- receive and record any disclosure of abuse made by a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult to a staff / volunteer
- receive and record any concerns and/or allegations of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults being abused
- file any written records securely and confidentially
- make reports to statutory services and file records accordingly.

Designated Officer:	Trina Somerville	028 90 261 984 / 07702 831 343
Deputy Designated Officer:	Jane Wallace	028 90 891 786 / 07872 952 654

Dealing with allegations

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

An allegation of abuse could potentially be made about any staff / volunteer. It is critical that all staff / volunteers are aware of abuse issues and how to deal with allegations of abuse or poor practice.

In all circumstances, an allegation should be reported to the Designated Officer, in accordance with the reporting procedure. In the event that the allegation is about or involves the Designated Officer, a report should be made to the Deputy Designated Officer.

Where there is an allegation of abuse against a staff / volunteer there are three possible types of investigation (these may be undertaken simultaneously):

- Safeguarding
- Disciplinary/problem solving
- Criminal

An allegation *may* be the subject of a preliminary investigation (the matter should initially be referred to the statutory authorities, who will offer advice on the appropriateness of an initial investigation).

Following a possible preliminary investigation, consideration may be given to:

- the need to carry out a full investigation
- temporary suspension of the staff / volunteer (or moving the staff / volunteer to alternative duties) while a full investigation is carried out
- whether PSNI/An Garda Síochána should be informed.

Should there be no innocent explanation in respect of the allegation(s), and these constitute a possible act (or acts) of gross misconduct, disciplinary/ problem solving procedures may be initiated internally by The Language Body.

Referral to Disclosure and Barring Service

If an allegation against a staff member or volunteer is substantiated, that is, the individual has harmed or placed a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult at risk of harm and the organisation has permanently removed the individual from regulated activity, the organisation has a legal duty under the SVG (NI) Order (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) to refer the individual to the DBS if referral criteria is met. If the referral criteria has been met but the staff member resigns, retires or is made redundant or the volunteer leaves the organisation, a referral should still be made to the DBS.

Whistleblowing

The Language Body wants to ensure that the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults we work with, as well as our staff/volunteers, are aware that The Language Body will not tolerate any activities such as fraud or malpractice and that The Language Body will greatly benefit from rapid identification and elimination of any such practices.

The Language Body recognises that its staff/volunteers are often the first people to suspect or realise that something is wrong. We are fully committed to dealing responsibly and professionally with staff/volunteers' genuine concerns about fraud or other unlawful practices.

If a staff member or volunteer raises a child/vulnerable adult safeguarding concern, but the Designated Officer is reluctant to pass this on, the staff member or volunteer should contact a Director or the Chief Executive. Where this fails, the staff member or volunteer should contact the local HSC Trust's Designated Officer in NI or HSE/An Garda Síochána in ROI. The Language Body's whistleblowing policy makes it clear that the organisation takes poor and malpractice seriously.

The organisation operates an effective procedure for assessing and managing risk with regard to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Assessing and managing risk to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults is an integral part of The Language Body's risk management strategy. In assessing and managing risks, the aim is to minimise either the likelihood of risk or its potential impacts. This applies to all activities in the organisation. 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.

It is the responsibility of The Language Body to ensure that each identified risk is properly managed. This is managed by a senior manager who ensures that the organisational culture reflects that the rights of children/young person and/or vulnerable adults are respected. There is "zero tolerance" of abuse whenever it occurs and whoever causes it. The safeguarding policy has the potential to reduce both the likelihood and impact by:

- Preventing unsuitable people from joining the organisation through good recruitment and selection practice
- Making staff and volunteers 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/volunteers are properly inducted, trained, supported and supervised
- Ensuring staff/volunteers know what constitutes acceptable behaviours and good practice and they are supported when they challenge poor practice
- Promoting a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness throughout the organisation and its services and activities
- Making staff/volunteers aware of how information about children/young people and/or vulnerable adults should be handled
- Having in place good overall organisational management and practice supported by a range of organisational policies and procedures.

All identified risks and risk-reducing measures will be recorded and reviewed at least once a year. The Language Body has a procedure in place for reporting, recording and reviewing accidents, incidents and near misses. All reports should be made to the organisations **Health and Safety Officer**.

First aid

The Language Body is committed to ensuring the safety of all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults by completing a risk assessment for activities and endeavouring to provide first-aid treatment for injury, accidents, and cases of ill-health during its activities.

Accidents and Incidents

In the event of an incident or accident, involving a child/young person and/or vulnerable adult, each incident or accident is to be recorded in line with best practice and parents/guardians/carers are to be informed.

All staff / volunteers should be prepared with an action plan in the event of an emergency and be aware of our First-Aid procedures. This will include:

- access to First-Aid equipment
- telephone contact if the participant is a minor
- telephone contact to the Emergency Services.

Insurance and indemnity – the Chief Executive Officer shall ensure that The Language Body’s staff have suitable insurance cover for the conduct of their employment.

There are clear procedures for receiving comments and suggestions and for dealing with concerns and complaints about the organisation.

The Language Body has a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness which facilitates a free flow of information from the organisation to all staff/volunteers, children, young people and vulnerable adults in relation to our ethos, aims and what we wish to achieve.

This demonstrates that as an organisation we promote best practice and are open to feedback from children/young people, and/or vulnerable adults, parents, carers, advocates, staff and volunteers about how we might be able to improve how we carry out our activities and deliver our services.

As an organisation we treat everyone with dignity and respect and are committed to safeguarding from harm and we promote the active inclusion of children/young people and/or vulnerable adults, parents, advocates, staff and volunteers in planning and decision-making.

The Language Body requires that consent is obtained for all children undertaking activities from a parent/someone with parental responsibility and from vulnerable adults or the adult's carers, if applicable.

Parents/guardians/carers will be aware of what we do and how we do it, and a staff / volunteer 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.

A regular review of The Language Body's policies will take place through meetings with staff / volunteers and feedback from children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and parents/guardians/carers.

Where children, young people and/or vulnerable adults or their carers or parents have a concern or complaint about some aspect of The Language Body they should in the first case access the organisation's complaints procedure. Disciplinary, grievance, and appeals procedures are agreed by the Board of The Language Body should be adhered to at all times. A copy of the complaints procedure is available in Appendix 5 with further copies available on request. The complaints procedure should be used by the public to raise an issue and members of staff/volunteers should use The Language Body grievance procedure.

Management of records, confidentiality and sharing information

Children, young people and vulnerable adults are often protected by good communication between staff, volunteers, children, vulnerable adults and their parents, carers etc. The Language Body is committed to providing an inclusive environment, where transparency and openness are central to how services/activities are provided.

The Language Body will request essential personal details about children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who engage in services and activities. This includes the name, address and contact numbers for the child, young person or vulnerable adult and their parents, carers etc... (as appropriate). Medical and health information will also be requested to ensure a safe service. This information as well as consent to take part in the activities of the organisation are requested on the organisation's registration form.

In addition a record of attendance will be kept for each service/activity.

The Language Body gathers, stores, uses, shares and disposes of personal information in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 in NI and 1988 in ROI. Personal information is stored securely and accessed only by those who have a legitimate need to access these records.

Upon request, children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents, guardians and 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.

While personal information about children, young people and vulnerable adults is confidential, information about the care and safety of the child or vulnerable adult or others or where a crime is suspected must be reported by staff/volunteers to the Designated Officer as per the reporting procedures and using the appropriate forms. The Language Body will share this information with external agencies as appropriate, including those statutory agencies with a responsibility for safeguarding.

Sharing Information

Children, young people and their parents, and vulnerable adults, and their carers where relevant, will have access to information about The Language Body. They will:

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

Code of behaviour

The code of conduct for staff/volunteers of The Language Body as outlined below is intended as a guideline for staff and a reference for Board Members and senior management. The code should be read in conjunction with the code of conducts for Board members, the Community Code, and the terms of the establishment of The Language Body.

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

The Language Body implements a robust Code of Behaviour across the organisation in order to minimise the opportunity for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to suffer harm. This Code of Behaviour also helps to protect staff/volunteers by ensuring they are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them and the boundaries within which they should operate.

Many aspects of the Code of Behaviour may appear to be common sense but the organisation has formalised these issues to ensure consistency of practice across all staff / volunteers and to encourage ownership of it.

Staff/volunteers are expected to:

- ensure the safety of all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults by careful supervision, proper pre-planning of all activities, and using safe methods at all times
- treat everyone equally and ensure they feel valued, and show no favouritism
- encourage an environment of non discrimination on the grounds of religious beliefs, race, gender, social classes or lack of ability
- appreciate and reward the efforts of all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the objectives of the work at all times
- report any concerns of abuse to the Designated Officer
- have access to telephone for immediate contact to emergency services if required
- foster team work to ensure the safety of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in their care
- ensure the rights and responsibilities of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are enforced
- maintain confidentiality about sensitive information
- respect and listen to the opinions of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- take time to explain instructions to ensure they are clearly understood
- be a role model (disciplined/committed/time-keeping), remember children, young people and/or vulnerable adults learn by example
- never smoke or consume alcohol during work related activities in the presence of young people
- never consume illegal drugs during work-related activity
- never use inappropriate language or inappropriate topics of discussion during work-related activity.

Protect themselves from false accusation by:

- not spending excessive amounts of time alone with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults away from others;
- never taking children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to their home;
- not administering First Aid involving the removing of children, young people's and/or vulnerable adult's clothing unless absolutely necessary and in the presence of others.

Staff/volunteers must not:

- allow, encourage or take part in any rough or dangerous play, bullying, or the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour
- let any allegations of abuse of any kind to go unchallenged or unrecorded if appropriate. Incidents and accidents are to be recorded in line with The Language Body's policy and procedures and parents/guardians/carers are to be informed
- engage in any act of abuse or harm to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults

Staff/volunteers have a right to:

- access ongoing training and information on all aspects of working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, particularly on safeguarding
- support with regard to reporting suspected abuse
- access to professional support services
- fair and equitable treatment by management
- be protected from abuse by children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, other adult members, and parents/guardians/carers
- not to be left vulnerable when working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- any misdemeanours and general misbehaviour will be dealt with immediately and reported verbally to the Designated Officer. Persistent breach of the code will result in the staff member/volunteer being asked to withdraw from the work, or suspended with pay, pending an investigation in line with policy and procedures
- dismissals can be appealed by staff with final decisions taken by senior management.

The Code of Behaviour also aims to minimise poor practice and behaviour to be avoided. These may include behaviours that staff/volunteers slip into through lack of experience or training. While not intentionally harmful, such behaviour might be misconstrued, which ultimately could lead to allegations of abuse being made. Examples may include:

- unnecessary lone working and/or in private or unobserved situations
- encouraging children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to keep secrets
- not treating children, young people and/or vulnerable adults with respect and dignity
- failure to follow agreed guidelines e.g. if physical contact or support is needed
- not seeking additional information, opinions and/or consent of a child, young people and/or vulnerable adult and parent/guardians/carers as relevant
- not having the required skills, qualifications and insurance for an activity
- failing to involve or banning parents/guardians/carers
- criticising children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and/or giving negative feedback.

Anti-Bullying Guidelines

Within The Language Body bullying will not be accepted or condoned. All forms of bullying will be addressed.

Bullying can include:

- physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc...
- name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals
- sectarian/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- sexual comments and/or suggestions
- unwanted physical contact.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults from ethnic minorities, disabled children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted. Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the children, young person and/or vulnerable adult, the parents/guardians/carers, the staff member/volunteer.

Appropriate forums may be established within the organisation, if deemed necessary, including children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, parents/guardians/carers and staff/volunteers, to address, monitor and stop bullying. The Language Body are explicit in our commitment to the early identification of bullying and prompt, collective action to deal with it. Our safeguarding policy and practice in relation to bullying should be agreed through consultation with The Language Body and staff/volunteers, children and young people and/or vulnerable adults are encouraged to take a role in stopping bullying.

The Language Body will review all policy and practice in respect of anti bullying regularly in the light of changing needs and changes adopted by other agencies (e.g. schools). In aiming to prevent bullying and to enable early identification The Language Body will ensure:

Individuals will:

- respect every child/young person and /or vulnerable adult's need for, and rights to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- respect for every individual's feelings and views
- recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special
- show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.

The Language Body have a support function to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults which will include:

- Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should know who will listen to and support them.
- Any advice and assistance should be given by an experienced member of staff or the Designated Officer.
- Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be told what is being recorded, in what context and why.

- Systems should be established to open the door to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them. Barriers to talking need to be broken down to enable children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to approach adults.
- Anyone who reports an alleged incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported, whether this is the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult being bullied or the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult who is bullying.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions involving long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, should be avoided.

In respect of parents/guardians/carers, The Language Body will ensure:

- Parents/guardians/carers should be advised of The Language Body's guidance about bullying.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult's parents/guardians/carers.
- Parental/carer advice on action will be sought and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be given.
- Support should be offered to the parents/guardians/carers including information on other agencies or support lines.

Guidelines relating to physical contact/intimate care

In order to keep children, young people and/or vulnerable adults safe, within The Language Body staff/volunteers should ensure that:

- Any physical contact is appropriate, minimal and necessary for the task required only.
- Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be encouraged to do as much for themselves as possible.
- An explanation for the need for physical contact should be given and consent should be given.
- If intimate care provision is an aspect of the role of the member of The Language Body staff/volunteer, it will be carried out by trained staff/volunteers, sensitively and with respect for the individual's dignity and privacy.
- If concerned about anything during intimate care, staff/volunteers must report it to their Line Manager or the Designated Officer at the earliest opportunity.

Guidelines relating to physical intervention/restraint

In general The Language Body take a view that staff/volunteers should not engage in physical intervention or restraint unless they have received the specific training to do so, and it is in a circumstance where it is absolutely necessary. Some general guidelines for staff/volunteers include:

- Seek to defuse the situation, thereby avoiding the need to use any form of restraint.
- Only use restraint where it is absolutely necessary to protect from harm.

- Ensure that any restraint used is proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Only use forms of restraint for which training has been received and which follows current best practice.
- Record and report any use of restraint.
- Review any situation that led to the need for restraint with a view to avoiding the need for restraint in the future.

Diversity and additional needs

The Language Body operate a policy of inclusion and equality. Staff and volunteers must be sensitive to diversity and any possible additional needs by following these guidelines:

Staff and volunteers should:

- Be open to and aware of diversity including diversity in the beliefs and practices of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and their families.
- Ask how children, young people and/ or vulnerable adults can be supported, having regard to the cultural needs of others.
- Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties.
- Not discriminate against children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and their families who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs from their own.
- Use the procedures outlined in this policy to report any discrimination.

Handling money

In general The Language Body takes a view that staff and volunteers should not handle money belonging to others but most notably children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. However the following best practice principles are noted for staff:

- A written record should be maintained when staff/volunteers have handled money belonging to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Staff/volunteers must never borrow money from, or lend money to, children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- Staff/volunteers must report any suspicions of financial abuse or improper handling of money.

Guidelines on photographs

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults through the use of photographs on websites and other publications. Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children, young people and/or vulnerable adults when they are accompanied with personal information – this is X who lives at Y is a member of the Z club and who likes a certain music group. This information can make a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult vulnerable to an individual who may wish to start to “groom” that child, young person and/or vulnerable adult for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

The Language Body has decided that we need to develop a policy in relation to the use of images of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults 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 vulnerable adults at increased risk. We have ensured that parents/guardians/carers support this policy. When assessing the potential risks in the use of images of The Language Body work, the most important factor is the potential of inappropriate use of images of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

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

The Language Body will:

- consider using models or illustrations if we are promoting an activity
- 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 The Language Body.

The following guidance should be applied:

- If the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult.
- Ask for the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the images are to be used to represent The Language Body. A child, young person and/or vulnerable adult's permission form is one way of achieving this.
- Only use images of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults 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 children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and should avoid full face and body shots. For example shots of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in a pool would be appropriate or if poolside, waist or shoulder up.
- Create a recognised procedure for reporting the use of inappropriate images to reduce the risks to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. Follow our Safeguarding policy and procedures, ensuring the Designated Officer and the statutory agencies are informed.

The Language Body has:

- established the type of images that appropriately represent the work of The Language Body 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 vulnerable adults in other publications, for example, the processes involved in choosing appropriate images in any newsletters or magazines. Apply an increased level of consideration to the images of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults used in the web site.

Guidelines for use of photographic filming equipment at events

The Language Body will:

- provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- request that the official photographer wears identification at all times
- inform the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and parents/guardians 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 vulnerable adults, or one-to-one photo sessions at events
- not approve/ allow photo sessions outside the events or at children, young people and/or vulnerable adult’s home
- ensure that if parents/carers or others are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of our expectations
- ask spectators to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment
- inform children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and parents/guardians that if they have concerns they should report these to a member of staff/volunteer
- 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.

Guidelines for safeguarding children, young people and/or vulnerable adults on social networks

Interactive social media technology has revolutionised the way that people connect and interact. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, instant messaging, and photo and video exchange sites are increasingly popular, and provide an opportunity to connect with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. However the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks.

With all emerging technologies there is also the potential for misuse. Risks associated with user interactive services include: cyber-bullying, grooming and potential abuse by online predators, identity theft, and exposure to inappropriate content including self-harm, racist, hate and adult pornography.

The Byron Review sets out the risks to children and young people posed by the internet and is illustrated by the following grid.² These principles can be applied to vulnerable adults.

	Commercial	Aggressive	Sexual	Values
Content (child as recipient)	Adverts Spam Sponsorship Personal Info	Violent/hateful content	Pornographic or unwelcome sexual content	Bias Racist Misleading info
Contact (child as participant)	Tracking Harvesting personal info	Being bullied, harassed or stalked	Meeting strangers Being groomed	Self-harm Unwelcome persuasions
Conduct (child as actor)	Illegal downloading Hacking Gambling Financial scams Terrorism	Bullying or harassing another	Creating and uploading inappropriate material	Providing misleading info/advice

²The risks children, young people and/or vulnerable adults face from the internet and video games were subject to an independent review during 2008 and the UK government has set up the UK Council to take forward the recommendations of the “Safer Children in a Digital World: the Report of the Byron Review”. See www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview/2007

Most children, young people and/or vulnerable adults use the internet positively but sometimes they behave in ways that may place themselves at risk. Some risks do not necessarily arise from the technology itself but result from offline behaviours that are extended into the online world, and vice versa.

Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- bullying by peers and people they consider 'friends'
- posting personal information that can identify and locate children, young person and/or vulnerable adults offline
- sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse contact with strangers
- exposure to inappropriate content
- involvement in making or distributing illegal or inappropriate content
- theft of personal information
- exposure to information and interaction with others who encourage self harm
- exposure to racist or hate material
- encouragement of violent behaviour, such as 'happy slapping'
- glorifying of activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- physical harm to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk taking activities
- leaving and running away from home as a result of contacts made online.

There is also a concern that the use of social networking services may increase the potential for sexual exploitation of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. Exploitation can include exposure to harmful content (including adult pornography and illegal child abuse images), and encouragement for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to post inappropriate content or images of themselves. There have also been a number of cases where adults have used social networking and user interactive services as a means of grooming children, young people and/or vulnerable adults for sexual abuse. In order to raise awareness of these risks The Language Body has included some potential indicators of online grooming and sexual exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults which can include, but are not limited to:

- gathering personal details, such as age, name, address, mobile number, name of school and photographs
- promising meetings with idols or celebrities or offers of merchandise
- offering cheap tickets to sporting or music events
- offering material gifts including electronic games, music or software
- paying or bribing children/vulnerable adults to appear naked and perform sexual acts
- bullying and intimidating behaviour, such as threatening to expose the child/vulnerable adult by contacting their parents/carers to inform them of their child, young person and/or vulnerable adult's communications or postings on a social networking site, and/ or saying they know where the child, young person and/or vulnerable adult lives, plays sport, or goes to school
- asking sexually themed questions, such as 'Do you have a boyfriend?' or 'Are you a virgin?'
- asking to meet children, young people and/or vulnerable adults offline
- sending sexually themed images to a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult, depicting adult content or the abuse of other children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- masquerading as a minor or assuming a false identity on a social networking site to deceive a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult
- using school or hobby sites to gather information about a child/young person's interests likes and dislikes. Most social networking sites set a child/young person's web page/ profile to private by default to reduce the risk of personal information being shared in a public area of the site.

Easy rules to remember

If someone has their own personal profile on a social media website, they should make sure that others cannot access any content, media or information from that profile that:

- a) they are not happy for others to have access to and/or
- b) which would undermine their position representing the organisation

As a basic rule, if you are not happy with others seeing particular comments, media or information, then simply **do not post these onto a public forum site.**

All staff/volunteers should be familiar with The Language Body's safeguarding reporting procedures. It is important to refer any concerns including those relating to the online environment to The Language Body's Designated Officer. **Where a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult may be in immediate danger, always dial 999 for police PSNI/An Garda Síochána assistance.**

It is important to review existing safeguarding policies to ensure that they address online safeguarding issues, including the potential risks to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults online, sexual exploitation, online grooming and cyber-bullying.

Guidelines on text and email messaging

Text messaging is one of the most direct forms of communication, most young people have a mobile phone with them at all times, however, for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults the safeguarding risks associated with text messaging 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 bullying by peers
- being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials
- grooming for sexual abuse
- direct contact and actual abuse.

For adults involved risks include:

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

The Language Body understands these risks exist and that effective safety measures should be in place to protect children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and minimise risk to the organisation.

The use of text messaging to communicate with individual children, young people and/or vulnerable adults increases the vulnerability of both the young person and the staff/volunteer. Therefore the decision to use text messages 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.

Basic Guidelines for text messaging are:

- organisations should take steps to identify where/when text messaging is required to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and develop relevant procedures to suit the tailored needs of each organisation
- text messaging from staff/volunteers in the organisation should not be made in isolation, there should be discussion and written agreement/ procedures
- 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/carer consent must be obtained prior to sending any children, young people and/or vulnerable adult text messages. Parents/carers must be given the option to be copied into any text messages the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults may be sent
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, parents/guardians and staff should be given information on how to report any concerns relating to inappropriate text messaging in line with the organisation's safeguarding policy
- all mobile phone numbers should be stored in either a locked secure cabinet or on a password protected electronic system with access only to the relevant staff/volunteers required to text the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- the content of texts should relate solely to the business/activity of the organisation
- the text 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
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should not be encouraged to text back; ideally it should be used as a one way communication channel. Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be made aware that if they choose or need to text 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 at all times
- all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be given the opportunity to withdraw from receiving any further text messages
- 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.

Many organisations are keen to utilise emails and help to improve the access to their organisation. For children, young people and/or vulnerable adults the safeguarding risks associated with emailing 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 bullying by peers
- being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials
- online bullying by peers
- grooming for sexual abuse
- direct contact and actual abuse.

For adults involved risks include:

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

Basic Guidelines for Emailing and communicating via Social Media are:

- organisations should take steps to identify where/when emailing is required to communicate with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and develop relevant procedures to suit the tailored needs of each organisation
- emailing from staff/volunteers in the organisation should not be made in isolation, there should be discussion and written agreement/ procedure
- all emails sent must make it clear to the child/vulnerable 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 emails should be sent to the Designated Officer within the organisation who can ensure that all emails are being used appropriately
- parental/carer consent must be obtained prior to sending any child/vulnerable adult email messages. Parents/carers must be given the option to be copied into any emailed messages their child/vulnerable adult may be sent
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, parents/carers and staff should be given information on how to report any concerns relating to inappropriate emails in line with the organisation's safeguarding policy
- all email addresses 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 child/vulnerable adult
- the content of emails should relate solely to the business/activity of the organisation
- the email 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
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should not be encouraged to email back, ideally it should be used as a one way communication channel. Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be made aware that if they choose to, or need to, email the organisation's representative then they should ensure that 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 at all times
- all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be given the opportunity to withdraw from receiving any further email messages
- 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.

Guidelines on transporting children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in your car

The issue of transporting children, young people and/or vulnerable adults can be very sensitive for staff and parents/carers. The Language Body encourages staff not to take children, young people and/or vulnerable adults on journeys alone in their car. This view has been taken as our knowledge has grown of how people can be harmed or exploited.

Unfortunately we must face the reality that a minority of others will join an organisation involving children, young people and/or vulnerable adults in order to gain access to them and create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with vulnerable groups.

Best practice is clearly to avoid the transporting children, young people and/or vulnerable adults alone.

If all alternatives have been exhausted and an adult has to transport children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, there are a number of safety measures that The Language Body recommend should be put in place to minimize the risk:

- the driver, like all staff who have access to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, should have agreed to an Access NI/Garda Vetting check being carried out on them. The Language Body should also have had sight of the driver's license to ensure there are no unreasonable endorsements
- parents/carers should be informed of the person who will transport the children, young people and/or vulnerable adult, the reasons why, and how long the journey will take
- a person other than the planned driver should talk to the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults about transport arrangements and to check if they are comfortable about the plans
- the driver (and The Language Body) must ensure that they have insurance to carry others, particularly if they are in a paid position or claiming expenses
- the driver should attempt to have more than one child, young person and/or vulnerable adult in the car at all times
- the person who leaves children, young people and/or vulnerable adults home should be alternated; this would reduce the risk of any one individual always being alone with the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- the driver should have a point of contact and mobile phone should they break down
- ensure that children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are aware of their rights and they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have. If a culture of safety is created within The Language Body then the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation
- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should wear seatbelts at all times. The driver is legally responsible to ensure that a child under 14 wears a seatbelt (i.e., adult would have to pay any fine) but morally responsible to ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.

Like all advice these procedures will only reduce the risk: the best advice is to avoid transporting children, young people and/or vulnerable adults alone in a car.

Guidelines on taking children, young people and/or vulnerable adults away on trips

Events and activities may involve residential workshops and time away from home. But even what may appear as the most straightforward of trips will require some level of planning. The following will outline a number of issues that need to be considered when travelling with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults:

Communication with:

- children, young people and/or vulnerable adults– they should be aware of the travel plans, venue and time for collection, time of return and any costs. Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should also have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected of them. Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults must know what they need to bring with them
- parents/carers– should be made aware of the above and must have completed a consent form detailing any medical issues that the manager/identified leader should be aware of. Parents/carers

should also have the name and contact details of the manager/identified leader in the case of an emergency

- other staff/volunteers– need to be made aware of what their responsibilities are in advance of the trip. If the trip is a long journey, it is important that all staff/volunteers have an itinerary.

Transport

The following are some basic points:

- ensure the driver has an appropriate and valid driving license
- allow an appropriate length of time to complete the journey
- consider the impact of traffic and weather conditions
- if using a mini-bus ensure that all seats are forward facing and they all have seat belts fitted if carrying children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.
- the bus or coach has valid PSV/safety checks
- ensure staff/volunteers and children, young people and/or vulnerable adults wear seat belts
- check there is appropriate insurance for the journey
- check the driver is experienced in the chosen mode of travel
- clarify supervision requirements with all staff/volunteers. The driver should not be considered as supervisor during the journey
- ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy.

Ratios

Dependant on the activity, the ratio of adult to child/young person may vary but whatever is considered appropriate would generally need to be increased when travelling away from home. Ratios can be accessed in Our Duty to Care, standards and guidelines for Keeping Children Safe
www.volunteernow.co.uk

Insurance

In addition to the mini-bus/car insurance, the manager needs to ensure that the organisation's general insurance covers travel to away events.

Emergencies

Ensure that the vehicle has breakdown and recovery cover. At least one of the staff/volunteers should be trained in first aid procedures and a first aid kit should be available. The staff/volunteers should have access to a mobile phone and contact details for all the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

The above are only basic points of advice and are not comprehensive guidelines.

Code of behaviour for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults who attend activities organised by The Language Body

The Language Body is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. The Language Body believes it is important that staff/volunteers and parents/carers associated with The Language Body should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are encouraged to be open at all times and to share any concerns or complaints that they may have about any aspect of The Language Body with the Designated Officer.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults attending activities organised by The Language Body should have a positive experience where they can learn new things in a safe and positive environment.

As a child, young person and/or vulnerable adult associated with The Language Body you are expected to abide by the following code of conduct.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are expected to:

- be loyal and give their friends a 2nd chance
- be friendly and particularly welcoming to new members
- be supportive and committed to other children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, offer comfort when required
- not get involved in inappropriate peer pressure and push others into something they do not want to do
- keep within the defined boundary of the designated activity area
- behave and listen to all instructions from the staff / volunteer leading the activity. Remain within the rules and respect the staff/volunteers and their decisions
- take care of equipment owned by others, including The Language Body
- all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background or religious beliefs or sexual identity
- must not engage in the use of bad language or racial/sectarian references. This includes bullying using new technologies like chat-rooms or texting
- must not engage in bullying or persistent use of rough and dangerous play
- keep to agreed timings for activities and inform staff/volunteers if they are going to be late
- wear suitable clothing to suit the activity as agreed with staff/volunteers
- pay any fees for activities promptly if required
- show respect to others
- keep themselves safe
- report inappropriate behaviour or risky situations for others
- be fair and be trustworthy
- respect staff/volunteers
- challenge and report the bullying of your peers
- respect those from other organisations
- do not cheat or be violent/aggressive
- help make your organisation a FUN place to be.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are not allowed to smoke or consume alcohol or drugs of any kind whilst attending events organised by The Language Body. They are also not allowed to smoke on

premises whilst representing by The Language Body. They may not consume alcohol or drugs of any kind on premises whilst representing The Language Body.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults have the right to:

- be safe and happy in their chosen activity
- be listened to
- be respected and treated fairly
- privacy
- enjoy your activity in a protective environment
- be referred to professional help if needed
- be protected from abuse by other member or outside sources
- participate on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability
- experience competition and the desire to win
- be believed
- ask for help.

Any misdemeanours and general misbehaviour will be addressed by staff/volunteers and reported to the Designated Officer. Persistent misbehaviour will result in dismissal from The Language Body activities. Parents/guardians will be informed at all stages. Dismissals can be appealed with final decisions taken by the organisation.

The Ulster-Scots Agency's designated officers are:

Designated Officer:	Trina Somerville	028 90 261 984 / 07702 831 343
Deputy Designated Officer:	Jane Wallace	028 90 891 786 / 07872 952 654

Code of behaviour for Parents/Carers/Guardians

The Language Body is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers and parents/guardians or carers. The Language Body believes it is important that staff/volunteers and parents/guardians/carers associated with The Language Body should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, parents/guardians/carers are encouraged to be open at all times and to share any concerns or complaints that they may have about any aspect of The Language Body with the Designated Officer.

Children, young people and/or vulnerable adults attending activities associated with The Language Body should have a positive experience where they can learn new things in a safe and positive environment. As a parent/guardian of a child/young person or the carer of a vulnerable adult who attends activities organised by The Language Body you are expected to abide by the following Code of Conduct.

Parents/ guardians/carers are expected to:

- positively reinforce their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults and show an interest in their chosen activity. Support your children, young people and/or vulnerable adult's involvement and help them to enjoy their activity
- do not place their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults under pressure or push them into activities they do not want to do
- complete and return the Health and Consent Form pertaining to their children, young people and/or vulnerable adult's participation with activities organised by The Language Body
- deliver and collect the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults punctually to and from activities
- inform staff if their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are being collected by someone else or left to walk home
- ensure their children, young person and/or vulnerable adults are properly and adequately attired for the weather conditions of the time
- detail any health concerns pertaining to the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults on the consent form. Any changes in the state of the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults should be reported to staff/volunteers prior to activities
- to inform staff/volunteers prior to departure from an activity if children, young person and/or vulnerable adults are to be collected early from an activity
- encourage their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to abide by the rules and teach them that they can only do their best
- set a good example by recognising fair play and applauding good performances of all
- behave responsibly; do not embarrass your children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- use correct and proper language at all time
- encourage and guide children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to accept responsibility for their own behaviour
- show appreciation and support staff/volunteers
- ensure their children, young person and/or vulnerable adults are punctual
- be realistic and supportive
- provide their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults with proper clothing and equipment to suit activities
- ensure their children, young people and/or vulnerable adult's hygiene and nutritional needs are met
- acknowledge the importance and role of The Language Body's staff/volunteers, who provide their time

to ensure children, young people and/or vulnerable adults' participation in the activities.

Parents/Guardians/Carers have the right to:

- know their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults is safe
- be informed of problems or concerns relating to their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
- be informed if their children, young people and/or vulnerable adults are injured
- have their consent sought for issues such as trips, photography, media, etc.
- contribute to decisions within The Language Body
- complain if they have concerns.

Any misdemeanours and breaches of this code of conduct will be dealt with immediately by The Language Body. The ultimate action should a parent/guardian/carer continue to breach the code of conduct may mean The Language Body will regrettably ask the children, young people and/or vulnerable adults to leave the activity organised by The Language Body.

The Ulster-Scots Agency's designated officers are:

Designated Officer:	Trina Somerville	028 90 261 984 / 07702 831 343
Deputy Designated Officer:	Jane Wallace	028 90 891 786 / 07872 952 654

General safety and management of activities

The Language Body is committed to providing a safe environment for children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. An important factor in ensuring the general safety of activities is risk assessment. Staff/volunteers must follow the procedures and guidelines for risk assessment and management contained in this policy.

Key safe management considerations undertaken by The Language Body will include;

- insurance (e.g. Public Liability) is up to date, adequate and appropriate
- written emergency procedures (which may also feature in risk assessment procedures) will be provided if necessary
- regular fire drills are undertaken, in addition to weekly testing of the fire alarm, fire extinguishers in place and fire wardens appointed
- a list of emergency phone numbers are displayed and kept updated
- staff /volunteers are competent in their given roles and additional support and training is provided as necessary
- staff / volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to ensuring the safe use of equipment and general safety of activities
- attendance lists are taken and kept for each activity
- ratios will be identified in advance and adhered to at all times, with emergency situations being accommodated in setting the appropriate ratios
- if an activity involves a trip or residential, appropriate risk assessment and planning will be undertaken in relation to the specific requirements of the individuals attending. This includes clear guidelines for sleeping arrangements and procedures to be used.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Organisational goals

The aims of the Ulster-Scots Agency are to:

- promote the study, conservation, development and use of Ulster-Scots as a living language;
- to encourage and develop the full range of its attendant culture; and
- to promote an understanding of the history of the Ulster-Scots.

Therefore, staff/volunteers must be aware that the organisation exists solely to achieve these overall aims and objectives and that any action by staff/volunteers, including those relating to personal development, must always be taken in order to better achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation.

Staff/volunteers should be aware that how they present themselves might reflect on the credibility and perception of The Language Body by members of the public.

Staff/volunteers should carry out their duties with maximum efficiency and the minimum of costs and expenses chargeable to The Language Body.

Staff/volunteers should be aware that from time to time they represent The Language Body with a variety of community and voluntary groups in Ireland, North and South, and beyond on some occasions. In carrying out their duties in public, staff/volunteers should be, and be seen to be, wholly impartial, adhering to rules and regulations including codes of conduct, and acting in the best interests of achieving the aims and objectives of The Language Body.

Staff/volunteers should be familiar with the corporate and operational plans of the organisation and adhere to these and the strategies of parent Departments, the Language Body, and the North-South Ministerial Council.

APPENDIX 2

Linking to Board codes and standing orders

The Board Code applies to Chief Executive Officers, and staff/volunteers should be aware of how the expectations on them will contribute to the Board successfully fulfilling their obligations to the North-South Ministerial Council.

Staff/volunteers should be thoroughly familiar with the staff code of conduct and agree to it as guidelines for their service in The Language Body, including the adherence to the principles and values of public life as identified above. Staff/volunteers should adhere to their duty of discharging their public functions reasonably and in accordance with the law, and recognise the ethical standards governing their role. They should thereby help the Board to ensure that The Language Body complies with statutory and administrative requirements for the use of public funds and fulfils legal responsibilities imposed upon it. They should deal with the public efficiently and with empathy, maintaining the highest possible standard of conduct and service.

Staff/volunteers should ensure that they meet the adopted best practice guidelines:

- adhere to public service requirements regarding statutory, financial and administrative duties – help to ensure that The Language Body operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority by the North South Ministerial Council, and according to conditions associated with the use of public funds
- maintain high standards of integrity – and meet guidance issued by the North South Ministerial Council in reaching decisions
- monitor performance and achievement of the corporate vision – do their best to help achieve the objectives set in the corporate and operational plans and the meeting of performance targets
- act within statutory authority and any other conditions applied by parent departments – comply at all times by the codes approved by the North South Ministerial Council, and with the rules relating to the use of public funds
- apply relevant standards and individual responsibility – both as individuals and relating to the highest standard of corporate governance.

And they should ensure that they abide by the following guidance:

- party political involvement – staff/volunteers may engage in political activity but should always be conscious of their public duties and exercise proper discretion. Staff/volunteers will not use their position in The Language Body, for party political gain or personal political gain and will not deliberately associate themselves or The Language Body, with any specific political party
- equality issues – staff/volunteers should abide by the equality legislation applicable in both jurisdictions.

Private interest/conflicts of interest

Staff/volunteers should be aware of the dangers associated with real or perceived conflict of interest while serving in The Language Body, and the following guidelines apply to themselves and include close family members and those living in the same household. Guidelines include:

- rules for early identification – staff/volunteers should declare as soon as practically possible any direct or indirect interest (pecuniary or otherwise) that they believe relates to any aspect of their role as a member of staff/volunteer that may be perceived to bias a judgement;
- declarations of interest – all staff/volunteers must declare any personal, community, or business interests that may conflict with their employment. This should be done at the start of their term of employment/volunteering and renewed on at least an annual basis thereafter;
- register of interests on an annual basis – a register of staff/volunteers interests will be kept which should include a list of direct or indirect pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests;
- gifts/hospitality – staff/volunteers should be cautious when accepting [any] hospitality or gifts, especially from organisations or individuals that have, or may have in the future, a pecuniary or other interest in the operation of The Language Body. Staff/volunteers should be of a view not to accept any such gift/hospitality. The Chief Executive or line manager should be approached for advice on gifts/hospitality if any staff member/volunteer has any direct or indirect concern regarding his or her own or others conduct.

In general hospitality, gifts and entertainment should only be offered or accepted if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the organisation;

- openness – staff/volunteers must adhere to the Board’s strategy and direction for the adherence to any code of practice on access to government information;
- protection of official information – staff/volunteers are required to protect official information held or received in confidence during duties as members of staff/volunteers and abide by any legal requirement to do so;
- disclosure of official information – staff/volunteers will not use/misuse information gained during their employment for their own/others private interest or for political interest, and will not promote their private interest or connected people, firms, businesses or other organisations;
- confidentiality – staff/volunteers shall not disclose confidential information or the detail of discussions conducted in The Language Body;
- insurance and indemnity – the Chief Executive Officer shall ensure that The Language Body’s staff/volunteers have suitable insurance cover for the conduct of their employment/volunteering;
- outside employment – it is expected that staff will not undertake paid employment outside their role within The Language Body, and in those circumstances staff should bring their employment to the attention of the Chief Executive Officer, through their appropriate line manager, for approval. Any additional employment undertaken should not interfere with their duties with The Language Body.

Inclusiveness within the organisation

In relation to its duties as an employer, The Language Body will abide by the statutory obligations imposed on it by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998) and the Employment Equality Act 1998 in the Republic of Ireland, which came into operation in October 1999, it repealed and replaced the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act 1974 and the Employment Equality Act 1977.

Any issues relating to equality should be taken up with a staff/volunteers line manager and ultimately may be taken up with the Chief Executive Officer in writing.

Terms and conditions

The terms and conditions of employment as set out in employees' terms and conditions/volunteer agreement and job/role description will be adhered to at all times.

Employees and **where relevant**, volunteers will have from the Board and senior management, as a minimum:

- a clear understanding of the role of the Board
- a clear understanding of their own responsibilities
- a diagram showing staffing structure
- head of terms
- a person specification
- a pay and policy structure
- job description
- terms and conditions for staff in writing
- copy of the equal opportunities policy
- copy of the training policy
- copy of the appraisal system for staff
- copy of the disciplinary, grievance, and appeals rules and procedures
- copy of the health and safety policy
- copy of policy on harassment
- copy of whistle blowing policy
- copy of safeguarding policy & procedures;

- copy of code of conduct for staff
- copy of code of conduct for children & young people
- copy of code of conduct for parents/guardians
- copy of anti-bullying policy in relation to children & young people.

Disciplinary, grievance and appeals procedures

Disciplinary, grievance, appeals procedures/problem solving are agreed by the Board of The Language Body and should be adhered to at all times.

Health and safety issues

Staff/volunteers shall ensure that they adhere to the health and safety policies of The Language Body at all times.

Reviews of the staff/volunteers code

Staff/volunteers Code of Conduct will be reviewed on an annual basis with amendments agreed by the board where necessary.

APPENDIX 3

Duties of the Designated Officer

A Designated Officer is responsible for acting as a source of advice on safeguarding matters, for co-ordinating action within the organisation. They are also responsible for liaising with statutory authorities about suspected or actual cases of child, young person and/or vulnerable adult abuse.

They will:

- establish appropriate contact with the senior member of the statutory authorities responsible for safeguarding
- provide information and advice on safeguarding issues for all staff/volunteers
- ensure that the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures are followed and kept up to date with current legislation and best practice guidelines
- ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of any referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover
- liaise with the statutory authorities as appropriate
- record any disclosure of abuse made by a child/young person/vulnerable adult to any board member, staff or volunteer
- record any suspicions of a child/young person/vulnerable adult being abused, reported by a staff member/volunteer
- ensure that all written records in relation to safeguarding are securely and confidentially filed.

Duties of the Deputy Designated Officer

The Deputy Designated Officer has a supportive role to the Designated Officer. They are responsible for receiving and dealing with reports of children, young people and/or vulnerable adults abuse in the absence of the Designated Officer.

APPENDIX 4

Reporting concerns

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE LANGUAGE BODY'S STANDARD FORM FOR REPORTING SAFEGUARDING AND/OR WELFARE CONCERNS.

SUSPECTED SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS REPORT FORM

Questions should be answered fully.

This report should remain confidential and be kept in a secure place BY THE DESIGNATED OFFICER

In case of Emergency or out of hours, contact should be made with HSC/HSE or PSNI/An Garda Síochána.

Name of Person filing report:	
Organisation Name:	
Name of child/young person/vulnerable adult:	
Age:	
Parents /Carers Name:	
Home Address:	
Post Code	
Phone No	

CONCERN:

Please complete the box below if a child/young person/vulnerable adult has made a disclosure.

When was the disclosure/concern? (Include date / time)

Where was the disclosure/concern made?
What were the circumstances leading to the disclosure/concern?
Were there other people present at the time of the disclosure/concern? Yes No
If Yes, please state names / positions
What was the nature of the disclosure/concern?
Please give the exact words of a child/young person/vulnerable adult
Describe any signs of physical injury evident on the child/young person/vulnerable adult
Describe any observed emotional or behaviour signs/changes in the child/young person/vulnerable adult
Has anyone been named or implicated as part of the allegations (if so, please record details)?

What future course of action has been agreed / decided upon?

Signed:

Date:

Referred to:

Designated Officer

Date:

The Language Body has developed guidance in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 (NI or ROI or both): and has agreed that records of referrals to statutory bodies regarding a safeguarding issue about a child/young person/vulnerable adult should be kept for up to seven years. This information should be locked away in a secure cabinet and access to the keys strictly controlled.

APPENDIX 5

Complaints procedure regarding Safeguarding Issues

We want staff/volunteers experience to be a positive one for all in The Language Body, however it is recognised that there are times when difficulties can occur and that you may have a concern or issue.

It is hoped that most problems can be resolved informally. Concerns can be raised informally with Designated Officer. If your complaint is unresolved or if you feel the matter warrants a formal complaint please refer to formal procedures below.

NB: If your complaint is in relation to inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff/volunteer or service user towards children, young people and/or vulnerable adults please report these to the Designated Officer.

FORMAL

Stage 1

Complaint made to the Designated Officer.

The formal complaint should be directed to the Designated Officer (or if the Designated Officer is not available or the complaint is about the Designated Officer go to the Deputy Designated Officer.

At this stage the complaint is **investigated**. A record of the complaint and investigation will be made and kept confidentially. You will be informed of how long it will take to investigate the complaint and when a decision will be communicated. This is usually within 14 working days.

Once a **decision** has been made, this will be **communicated to you** and any actions required will be agreed and implemented as soon as possible

Stage 2:

Appeal of Decision to the Chief Executive Officer.

If you feel the complaint has not been satisfactorily dealt with at Stage 1, or the complaint is about the Designated Officer, then the formal complaint should be referred to the Deputy Designated Officer who will record, investigate the complaint, reach a decision and communicate this to you. If you still feel the complaint is still not satisfactorily dealt with, the formal complaint should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will record, investigate the complaint, reach a decision and communicate this to you.

Useful contacts and signposting

Northern Ireland

Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts - Gateway Teams

www.hscni.net

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

HSC Trusts – Adult Safeguarding Service

Belfast	(028) 9504 1744	(028) 9504 9999
Northern	(028) 9441 3125	(028) 9504 9999
South Eastern	(028) 9250 1277	(028) 9504 9999
Southern	(028) 37412015	(028) 9504 9999
Western	(028) 71611366	(028) 9504 9999

PSNI

Emergency	999
Non Emergency	101
General Enquiries	101

Other Useful Contacts

Volunteer Now

129 Ormeau Road
Belfast, BT7 1SH
Tel: 028 9023 2020
www.volunteernow.co.uk

AccessNI

PO Box 1085
Belfast, BT5 9BD
Tel: 0300 200 7888
www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Bryson Intercultural (formerly the Multi Cultural Resource Centre)

9 Lower Crescent
Belfast, BT7 1NR
Tel: 028 9024 4639
www.mcrc-ni.org

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

33 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London, SW1V 2WG
Tel: 0870 000 3344
www.ceop.police.uk

Child Care Policy Directorate

DHSSPS (NI)
Room D1.4, Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast, BT4 3SQ
Tel: 028 9052 2698
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

ChildLine

NSPCC Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London, EC2A 3NH
Tel: 0808 800 5000 (Help and advice), 0800 1111 (Helpline)
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC Belfast

Jennymount Business Park
Jennymount Industrial Estate
North Derby Street
Belfast
BT15 3HN
Tel: 028 9035 1135

You may also want to visit the advice on the Safer Network site
http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/help_and_advice/pages/using_social_media.aspx

Republic of Ireland

There are 2 statutory authorities in ROI with responsibility for protection of children and vulnerable adults: Tusla; and An Garda Síochána.

Tusla – Child and family Agency	Website: www.tusla.ie Phone: 01 7718500 Email: info@tusla.ie
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The Children & Family Services functions of the HSE are now part of the Child and Family Agency, Tusla. Tusla was established by law on 1 January 2014.

In an emergency, please contact An Garda Síochána as Tusla operates during normal office hours only:

An Garda Síochána	Phone: 999 / 112
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You should use this service if a crime or incident is happening now or if anyone is in immediate danger.

Other support agencies:

Barnardos	www.barnardo.ie
Department of Children and Youth Affairs	www.dcy.a.ie
Women’s Aid	www.womensaid.ie
Health Service Executive	www.hse.ie/go/childrenfirst
Irish Government	www.irlgov.ie
Oasis	www.oasis.gov.ie
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	www.ispcc.ie
Early Childhood Ireland	www.earlychildhoodireland.ie
Children’s Rights Alliance	www.childrensrights.ie
Samaritans	www.samaritans.org
Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs	www.omc.gov.ie

ChildLine 1 800 666 666
ISPCC www.childline.ie
20 Molesworth Street
DUBLIN 2

Adult Survivors of Abuse 1 800 234115
106 O’Connell Street Email: acs@mailh.hse.ie
LIMERICK

Women’s Aid Helpline 1 800 341900
PO Box 791 www.womensaid.ie
DUBLIN 7

Parentline 1 890 927277
Carmichael Centre www.parentline.ie
North Brunswick Street
DUBLIN 7

The Samaritans Area Helpline

20 Barrington Street
LIMERICK

1 850 609090

www.samaritans.org

If you are concerned about Elder Abuse or want to get help, you can contact the HSE Information Line on 1850 24 1850. The HSE information line is open Monday to Saturday, from 8.00 in the morning until 8.00 in the evening. You can also contact your local Senior Case Worker for the Protection of Older People with your concern. In an emergency, where a person is at immediate risk, you should contact the Garda Síochána or Emergency Services on 999 or 112.