



Safeguarding Policy

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Libraries NI

Safeguarding Policy

Libraries NI is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults participating in public library services. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse and exploitation. We will ensure that we have robust systems in place to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and to ensure that our staff are adequately supported.

Glossary

Abuse

The common denominator for all forms of abuse is that it makes a child or vulnerable adult feel bad or worthless. Guidance on the categories and recognition of abuse appears at Appendix One.

Child

A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 by the Children (NI) Order 1995. This includes young people undertaking work experience in Libraries as well as customers.

Designated Officer

Those members of library staff who have been designated as having responsibility for supporting staff in issues of child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Lead Designated Officer

The Lead Designated Officer supports the Designated Officers, ensures that training and procedures are adequate, reports to the Chief Executive on safeguarding issues and reports any issues to the Departmental Children's Champion.

Safeguarding

Until recently, the most commonly used phrases to describe this area of work were 'child protection' and 'adult protection'. However there has been a shift in the last few years to the term 'safeguarding'. Whereas child protection literally means protecting children and adults from abuse and neglect, safeguarding widens practice around their needs so that it is about creating an environment where the welfare of children, young people and adults are actively promoted. Promoting welfare is about helping children, young people and adults achieve their potential and ensuring they are safe and adequately cared for.

Staff

All Libraries NI employees, also agency staff, voluntary workers and those undertaking work experience in the public library. It also includes short and long-term contract workers such as writers in residence and storytellers.

Vulnerable Adult

A person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation (Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, DCAL 2013).

1. Introduction

1.1 Libraries NI is committed to providing a safe environment for all its customers and to fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities towards those who access library services, whether in a library, in their own home, online, or in another environment.

1.2 Libraries NI is committed to practice which actively promotes the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults and protects them from harm. We accept and recognise our responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and vulnerable adults harm.

1.3 Libraries NI's policy on safeguarding is based on the following principles:

- every child and young person has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and to have their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being promoted by those looking after them
- the welfare of the child or young person must always be the paramount consideration
- children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously.
- a proper balance will be struck between protecting children and young people and respecting the rights of other library users. Where there is a conflict, the protection of the child will always come first
- actions taken to protect the child or young person should not cause the child or young person unnecessary distress or further harm
- we will act in a way that supports the rights of individuals to lead an independent life based on self-determination and personal choice
- we will recognise people who are unable to take their own decisions and/or to protect themselves, their assets and bodily integrity;

1.4 Policy and practice is set in the context of the relevant legislation (an overview of this appears at Appendix Two) and Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults issued the Department.

1.5 This policy applies to all library staff and volunteers.

2. Purpose

2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults when using library services
- that staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- to ensure that staff are adequately supported in dealing with incidents of suspected or actual abuse and that structures and procedures are in place to protect them and the organisation from potential allegations of inappropriate behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults.

3. Policy

3.1 Libraries NI will establish and maintain a safe and enjoyable environment where children, young people and vulnerable adults can participate free from abuse, bullying and discrimination.

3.2 Libraries NI recognises that the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount.

3.3 Libraries NI recognises that all library users without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

3.4 Libraries NI is committed to safe recruitment, selection and appropriate vetting arrangements for employees and volunteers. These are reflected in the relevant Human Resources policies and procedures.

3.5 Libraries NI will provide effective management of staff and volunteers through appropriate levels of supervision, support and training.

3.6 Libraries NI will take seriously all concerns and allegations of abuse and respond to these appropriately.

3.7 Libraries NI will inform children and carers of its safeguarding policy and procedures as appropriate.

3.8 Libraries NI will work with other agencies to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

- 3.9 Libraries NI will implement a Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers. See Appendix Three.
- 3.10 Libraries NI will put in place structures, procedures and guidelines for the management of situations where abuse is suspected. This includes a network of Designated Officers, supported by a Lead Designated Officer.
- 3.11 Libraries NI will ensure that information of a confidential nature is communicated on a 'need to know' basis and held securely.

4. Authority

Policy Sponsor: The Chief Executive is the Policy Sponsor.

Policy Owner: The Director of Library Services is the Policy Owner.

Policy Contact: The Lead Designated Officer is the Policy Contact

5. Related Documents

Policies

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Room Hire Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Other Documents

- Code of Conduct for Staff

Procedures

- Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- Individual Grievance Procedures
- Procedures for Children's Events
- Safeguarding Procedures

Guidelines

- Events Guidelines
- Library Computers – Conditions of Use
- Risk Assessment Guidance

GUIDANCE ON THE CATEGORIES AND RECOGNITION OF ABUSE

Recognition of Abuse – Children

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Abuse may be the result of a direct act or of a failure to act on the part of a parent/carer to provide proper care and may take a number of forms including:

Neglect: The persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical Abuse: The deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Categories of abuse are not mutually exclusive. Abuse seldom falls neatly into one category and it is rare for a child to demonstrate all signs simultaneously. Child abuse is a very complex phenomenon and, even for "experts," it is often very hard to decide if a child has been abused. If library staff notice injuries to children or young people, it is within their role to ask in an open, non-threatening way how the injury was received. However staff should never physically examine a child or ask them to remove any article of clothing. Only visible signs of possible abuse should be noted. Library staff do not have an investigative role and judgement about abuse must be left to the professionals.

Significant Harm

There are no absolute criteria for judging what constitutes significant harm. However, they may include the degree, extent, duration and frequency of harm. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, sexual assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a series of events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and/or psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse that causes impairment, sometimes to the extent of constituting significant harm. (Co-operating to Safeguard Children, 2003)

Categories of Abuse

The guidance given in DHSSPS guidance on 'Co-operating to safeguard children' May2003 includes indicators of child abuse. However this list is not intended to be comprehensive and the presence of one or more indicators does not prove that abuse is taking place. They are indicators that may arouse suspicion or concern. Staff should follow the appropriate procedures and report their concerns to the Designated Officer.

NEGLECT

Physical Indicators

Looks extra thin, poorly, and sad
Constant hunger, lack of energy
Exposed to danger, lack of supervision
Inadequate, inappropriate clothing
Poor hygiene – repeatedly unwashed, smelly

Behavioural Indicators

Untreated illnesses
Repeated accidents, especially burns
Tiredness, listlessness
Withdrawn
Lack of peer relationships
Reports that no carer is at home
Low self-esteem
Exposure to violence, including violent videos

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Scratches
Bite marks or welts
Bruising on both sides of the ear
any symmetrical bruising is suspicious)
Burns, especially cigarette burns
Untreated injuries

Behavioural Indicators

Self-destructive tendencies
Aggressive towards other children
Fear of returning home
Undue fear of adults
Fearful watchfulness
Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body
Behavioural extremes (withdrawn or aggressive)

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Bruises, scratches, bite marks
Itching in genital area
Recurrent chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
Difficulty in walking and sitting
Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks
Anorexic/bulimic

Behavioural Indicators

What the child tells you.
Withdrawn, chronic depression
Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group
Making sexual advances to adults or other children
Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence
Afraid of the dark
Wariness of being approached by anyone
Unusual or bizarre sexual themes in children's artwork or stories

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical Indicators

Sudden speech disorders
Wetting and soiling
Signs of mutilation
Attention seeking behaviour
Failing to thrive, poor hair and skin

Behavioural Indicators

Rocking, head banging, thumb sucking
Inappropriate emotional response to painful situation
Indifference to separation from family
Indiscriminate attachment
Poor peer relationships

Where might abuse occur?

Abuse can happen anywhere:

- in child's own home
- at the home of a relative
- within a school, youth club, church or other organisation
- in rented accommodation or commercial premises
- in public places.

Who Abuses Children?

- you can't tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser they don't appear different from the rest of society
- abusers come from all classes in society, all professions and all races
- abuse of children may sometimes be carried out by strangers but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the child and is in a position of trust and/or authority
- it is not only adults who abuse children. Children may suffer abuse from other children and young people.

Those with a Disability

Safeguards for those with disability should be the same as those for other children. Special input may be required if the child has severe or multiple disabilities as children who are disabled are at a higher risk of abuse.

Not every child with a disability is vulnerable in every situation. However it can be said that certain factors may mean that children with a disability are more vulnerable and could therefore be more open to abuse. The following list examines some of the reasons why children with a disability may be more vulnerable:

- Historically, children with a disability have been encouraged to comply with other people's wishes, for example, in residential homes and hospitals; this has meant they are more vulnerable to be bribed and manipulated.
- Limited life experiences and social contacts may mean that many young people with a disability have not had the same opportunities to acquire the social skills that non-disabled peers have had to assess the behaviour and attitudes of other people. This could also lead to them being unable to understand what is appropriate or inappropriate adult or peer behaviour.
- Individuals with dependency and support needs may have found that it is easier to be pleasing and compliant than challenge those caring for them because of the consequences. Any challenge or complaint could lead to more abusive practice or retribution.
- Continuing dependency on others may make some people feel powerless.
- Communication difficulties may make it hard to complain or be understood. This could be that the individual is unable to speak to tell anyone or does not have the vocabulary to describe what has happened to them.
- Individuals requiring intimate care could be in an increased vulnerable situation, especially if they have to rely on a number of different carers to support their needs.
- The general thought that a young person with a disability are not abused may make it difficult for them to be believed if they report an incident.
- Intrusion into body space for physical and medical care can lead to young people with a disability never developing ownership of their own bodies.
- Some disabilities may mean that the emotional and developmental age is less than their chronological age.

Young People who Display Sexually Harmful Behaviour

It is estimated that children and young people are responsible for about 1/3 of all sexual abuse against children (Grubin 1998, The Research Team 1990) and this may be an under estimate due to low rates of reporting and even lower prosecution rates. Any effort to prevent child sexual abuse must address the problem of young people who display sexually harmful behaviour (SHB).

Poor Practice

Poor practice can be viewed as the behaviour that can place a child or young person in a risky situation or leave a leader vulnerable to allegations that they were acting inappropriately. The following are a list of some incidents of poor practice but is not exhaustive:

- working in a private or unobserved situations and encouraging an environment of secrets
- not treating young people with respect and dignity
- not following agreed guidelines if physical support is needed, or seeking the parents'/ carers' views
- not being up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance for the activity
- banning parents or carers
- constantly giving negative criticism.

Recognition of Abuse – Vulnerable Adults

The abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults is an issue that has become more prominent in recent years in terms of public awareness. The characteristics of adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress. Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed or reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure who to trust or approach with their worries. Some may feel able to trust members of library staff with their disclosure or staff may observe something which leads them to suspect abuse is taking place.

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It occurs in many forms and may consist of a single act or repeated acts. These would include:

- Physical abuse e.g. hitting, pushing, shaking, inappropriate restraint, force-feeding, forcible administration of medication, neglect or abandonment
- Sexual abuse e.g. involvement in any sexual activity against his/her will
- Emotional/psychological abuse e.g. intimidation or humiliation
- Financial abuse e.g. theft or exerting improper pressure to sign over money
- Neglect or acts of omission e.g. being left in wet or soiled clothing, or malnutrition
- Discriminatory abuse e.g. racial, sexual or religious harassment
- Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will
- Violation of rights e.g. preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions

- Institutional abuse e.g. failure to provide a choice of meals or failure to ensure privacy or dignity.

Abuse can be either deliberate or the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. Often if a person is being abused in one way, they are also being abused in other ways. Abuse can take many forms including the following:

Physical Abuse

Including - hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, giving a person medicine that may harm them, restraining or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.

Possible Indicators - fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched

Psychological Abuse

Including - emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and the use of threats.

Possible Indicators - 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.

Financial or Material Abuse

Including - misusing or stealing the person's property, possessions or benefits, cheating them, using them for financial gain, putting pressure on them about wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions.

Possible Indicators - having unusual difficulty with finances, not having enough money, being too protective of money and things they own, not paying bills, not having normal home comforts.

Sexual Abuse

Including - direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable adult cannot or does not consent to it.

Possible Indicators - 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.

Neglect or Acts of Omission

Including - withdrawing or not giving the help that a vulnerable adult needs, so causing them to suffer.

Possible Indicators - having pain or discomfort, being very hungry, thirsty or untidy, failing health, changes in behaviour.

Discriminatory Abuse

Including - the abuse of a person because of their ethnic origin, religion, language, age, sexuality, gender or disability.

Possible Indicators - the person not receiving the care services they require, their carer being overly critical or making insulting remarks about the person, the person being made to dress differently from how they wish.

Institutional Abuse

This can happen when an organisation where the person is living or receiving care from fails to ensure that the necessary processes and systems are in place to safeguard vulnerable adults and maintain good standards of care and service.

Including - lack of training of staff and volunteers, lack of or poor quality supervision and management, poor record keeping and liaison with other agencies, low staff morale and high staff turnover.

Possible Indicators - vulnerable adult has no personal clothing or possessions, there is no care plan for him/her, s/he is often admitted to hospital, or there are instances of staff/volunteers having treated him/her badly or unsatisfactorily or acting in a way that causes harm; poor staff morale, high staff turnover and lack of clear lines of accountability and consistency of management.

Sometimes there may be concerns about a vulnerable adult's well-being, which are not dealt with under vulnerable adult protection procedures. Where such concerns arise, they should be reported to the local HSC Trust, as the person concerned may benefit from assessment and intervention. A record of a referral of this nature to a HSC Trust should be maintained.

Relevant contact numbers for each of the HSC Trusts can be accessed through: www.hscni.net.

Domestic/Familial Abuse

The abuse of a vulnerable adult by a family member such as a partner, son, daughter, sibling.

Professional Abuse

The misuse of power and abuse of trust by professionals, the failure of professionals to act on suspected abuse/crimes, poor care practice or neglect in services, resource shortfalls or service pressures that lead to service failure and culpability as a result of poor management systems.

Possible Indicators - entering into inappropriate relationships with a vulnerable adult; failure to refer disclosure of abuse; poor, ill-informed or outmoded care practice; failure to support a vulnerable adult to access health care/treatment; denying a vulnerable adult access to professional support and services such as advocacy; inappropriate responses to challenging behaviours; failure to whistleblow on issues when internal procedures to highlight issues are exhausted.

Peer Abuse

The abuse of one vulnerable adult by another vulnerable adult within a care setting. It can occur in group or communal settings, such as day care centres, clubs, residential care homes, nursing homes or other institutional settings.

Stranger Abuse

A vulnerable adult may be abused by someone who they do not know, such as a stranger, a member of the public or a person who deliberately targets vulnerable people.

Where might abuse occur?

Abuse can happen anywhere:

- in someone's own home
- at a carer's home
- within day care, residential care, nursing care or other institutional settings
- at work or in educational settings
- in rented accommodation or commercial premises
- In public places.

Who can abuse?

An abuser can be anyone who has contact with the vulnerable person - it could be a partner, spouse, child, relative, friend, informal carer, a healthcare, social care or other worker, a peer or, less commonly, a stranger.

Bullying of Children or Vulnerable Adults

Bullying has been recognised and defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Staff should take steps to prevent all forms of bullying. If staff suspect that bullying is taking place they should contact a Designated Officer who will contact either the school Designated Safeguarding Officer or parent/carer or in the case of a vulnerable adult parent /carer or nominated care home manager.

LEGISLATION

The following is a summary of the current relevant legislation. It is not comprehensive.

Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967

Section 5 of the Act outlines the responsibility of any citizen to report to the police an arrestable offence. This includes reporting of child abuse.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1967/58/contents>

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC)

The Convention is a binding international treaty which the government signed, committing itself to give children the rights and protections written in the Convention. It defines a child as meaning anyone who is under 18 years of age. Article 3 provides that *“when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.”*

Article 19 provides that children have *“the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.”*

It further states that protective measures should, as appropriate include *“effective procedures for prevention, identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow up of instances of child maltreatment.”*

This underpins all the legislation in relation to children since then including the Children (NI) Order 1995.

This should translate into practice as:

- volunteers, children and parents knowing that your organisation is familiar with and promotes the rights of children
- UNCRC principles form the basis of your policies and procedures
- within your organisation children are:
 - kept safe from harm
 - listened to and heard
 - valued & respected
 - encouraged & praised
 - involved in decision making

<http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/uncrc.asp#Two>

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Children (NI) Order 1995 deals with the care, upbringing and protection of children. It aims to provide a comprehensive framework for the law relating to children in Northern Ireland. The central thrust of the Order is that *“the welfare of the child or young person must be the paramount consideration”* and it is this essential principle which guides the advice which follows.

This law had wide ranging impact on private law – the relationship of children to their families, and public law – the relationship of children to the state in terms of services and child protection.

The order redefined previous parental rights over children as parental responsibility. The order has widened the scope of being able to acquire parental responsibility to other carers such as grandparents, aunts, or local social services. The order sets the legal context for the state to intervene to protect children from significant harm.

These are the 5 cornerstone principles of good practice under the Children (NI) Order:

Paramourncy - The welfare of the child shall be the paramount consideration in any decision made.

Parental Responsibility - Parents have responsibilities towards their children rather than rights over them. A wider range of people can now have parental responsibility.

Prevention - Preventing children from being abused and supporting them to promote their health and welfare.

Partnership - The best way of meeting children’s needs is to work with parents and carers, and for agencies to work together.

Protection - Duty to investigate where a child is at risk of significant harm because of a lack of care or actual abuse.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1995/756/contents/made>

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Part 2 of the Act applies to Northern Ireland and as amended sets out notification requirements for sex offenders. These are augmented by new public protection arrangements as set out in Secretary of State’s (now Minister of Justice) guidance under article 50 of the Criminal Justice Order. Public Protection Arrangements (NI) were established on 1st October 2008 and put in place structures to deal with sex offenders and other violent offenders. These arrangements are also supplemented by guidance published by the DHSSPS under HSC Circular 3/96 (revised) Sharing to Safeguard.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 - (SVGO)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (formally the Independent Safeguarding Authority) established as a single agency to make barring decisions on those not suitable to work closely with children or vulnerable adults. Organisations have a legal duty to refer information to the DBS in certain circumstances. In all cases there are two conditions, both of which must be met to trigger a referral to the DBS by a

regulated activity provider (organisation that arrange an activity for a vulnerable person). A referral must be made to the DBS when an organisation:

- (a) withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity; because
- (b) they think that the individual has:
 - engaged in relevant conduct
 - satisfied the Harm Test
 - received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

If both conditions have been met the information must be referred to the DBS.

The referral should be made to the DBS when the regulated activity provider has gathered sufficient evidence as part of their investigations to support their reasons for withdrawing permission to engage in regulated activity and in following good practice, consulted with their Health and Social Care Trust if appropriate.

Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

Brings NI in line with legislation in England and Wales and introduces some new offences and increased tariffs for those who harm children. This order also establishes the age of sexual consent for NI as 16 to bring us in to line with the rest of the UK.

http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/explanatory_guidance_to_the_sexual_offences_ni_order_2008.pdf

Safeguarding Board Act (2011)

DHSSPS established the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) in September 2012. The SBNI has replaced the Regional Child Protection Committee (RCPC) with an extended role to include the wider area of safeguarding as well as statutory child protection. Currently the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures (2005) have not been replaced but these are under review by the SBNI

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/7/contents>

However the current procedures detail the process that will be followed in instances where the statutory agencies intervene, without invitation, when it is necessary to safeguard a child from harm.

All voluntary and community sector organisations working with children and families must have clear Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place and staff should receive training in their use.

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/acpcregionalstrategy.pdf>

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

From September 2012, there have been changes to safeguarding arrangements in relation to vetting in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, arising from the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, which amends the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order. This includes a new and more limited definition of regulated activity. This new definition is intended to reduce the number and scope of positions which are eligible for a criminal record check with Barred List information. The DBS decides whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list and maintains the DBS children's barred list and the DBS adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

During 2014 a new portable disclosure service is due to be introduced in Northern Ireland to allow individuals to apply for a criminal record certificate once, and then use this certificate when applying for similar subsequent posts (paid or unpaid). In summary there are three significant changes that organisations need to start to understand and prepare management solutions for in relation to checking individuals that have contact with children and vulnerable adults in their environments. These changes are:

1. Change in the definition of Regulated Activity and which individuals must be checked legally against the barred list and who can still have an Enhanced Disclosure without a barred list check.
2. Single Disclosures being sent to individuals only.
3. Continuous Updating and Portability arrangements.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF WHEN DEALING WITH CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Code of Behaviour for Staff

Libraries NI is committed to practice which actively promotes the welfare and safety of children and vulnerable adults and protects them from harm. We wish to establish and maintain an enjoyable, safe environment where children and vulnerable adults can participate in library services free from abuse, bullying and discrimination. We accept and recognise our responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and vulnerable adults harm.

Staff will:

- act in a way which will promote, safeguard and protect the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom they come into contact
- ensure that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. They must at all times give careful thought to their attitudes, demeanour and language
- be committed to preventing any form of discrimination (direct or indirect) against any person on grounds of age, disability, race, gender, status, sexual orientation, religious belief or political opinion
- be committed to preventing any form of bullying against children and vulnerable adults
- listen to children and vulnerable adults and treat them with respect
- ensure their communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child or adult. Libraries NI recognises that this is especially important for children and vulnerable adults with disabilities and for children or vulnerable adults whose preferred language is not English.

Staff will never:

- use verbally abusive language to a child, young person or vulnerable adult including demeaning or sarcastic remarks
- let allegations that a child or adult makes go unchallenged or unrecorded
- spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child or vulnerable adult away from others
- make sexually suggestive comments to or within earshot of a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- do things of a personal nature for children, young people or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves or that their parent/carer can do for them
- engage in rough, physical games including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind. Touch should always be in response to the needs of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the individual
- physically restrain a child, young person or vulnerable adult unless the restraint is to:
 - prevent physical injury to them or yourself
 - prevent damage to any property
 - prevent or stop the commission of an offence.

In all circumstances physical restraint must be appropriate and reasonable.