



Keeping Adults Safe

Safeguarding Adults at Risk from Harm and Adults in Need of Protection Policy

Updated Jan 19th 2022 – Peter McNiece

This document includes:

Belfast YMCA policy statement

Definition of Adults at Risk from Harm and Adults in Need of Protection

Belfast YMCA underpinning principles

Legal and Policy Context

Consent and Capacity consent

Belfast YMCA Procedures and Guidelines

1. Belfast YMCA Policy Statement on Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection

Our commitment to safeguard - Policy Statement

The staff and volunteers in Belfast YMCA are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of adults at risk and safeguards them from harm. Staff and volunteers in Belfast YMCA accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness and to raise consciousness of the issues that cause adults harm, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights; it can take many forms.

Belfast YMCA will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness.

Belfast YMCA are open to feedback from the people who use our services, carers, participants, members, advocates, our staff and our volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

Belfast YMCA will endeavour to safeguard the adults we work with and care for by:

- Adhering to our adult safeguarding policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving adults at risk and their carers appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to;
- Promoting full participation and having clear procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints;
- Managing personal information, confidentiality and information sharing; and
- Implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.

2. Introduction

The way we work with adults at risk, how we behave around them and our attitudes towards them, all contribute to the way they feel about themselves.

Induction, training and staff/volunteer development which raises awareness of adult rights, the concept of adult abuse and how to respond to it are essential to the delivery of our safeguarding policy aims and the creation of an environment where adults at risk are valued and their safety and wellbeing is paramount.

While such an environment will encourage adults to disclose issues that are worrying them, it will also enable staff and volunteers to observe the demeanour and behaviour of adults with whom they work or who are in their care, and to be alert to changes that may indicate abuse.

We know that abuse occurs in situations where another adult, sometimes a family member or friend or care worker, misuses a position of trust and power over an adult at risk. It is important, therefore, that adults at risk are made aware of their rights and sources of support and information which they can draw upon if they feel uncomfortable or threatened. This means sharing information with adults at risk; actively working towards raising their confidence; involving them in decision-making; taking their views and concerns seriously; and ensuring that those who have been abused receive support and protection from further abuse.

Review of Policy and Procedures

Belfast YMCA will review this policy regularly and at least every 3 years or upon advice from the Department of Health or the Health & Social Care Board.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

‘An ‘Adult at risk of harm’ is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

- a) **personal characteristics** AND/OR
- b) **life circumstances**

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.

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

Who is an adult in need of protection?

An 'adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) **personal characteristics** AND/OR

b) **life circumstances**

AND

c) who is **unable to protect** their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND

d) where the **action or inaction of another person or persons** is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c), and (d). The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult at risk' or an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. Belfast YMCA can contact an HSC professional, if the adult is known to the HSC Trust or the Adult Protection Gateway team for advice.

It is envisaged that this policy will be most relevant to our staff and volunteers in Youth Work and Health and Fitness.

3. Underpinning Principles

Belfast YMCA's Adult Safeguarding policy and practice is guided by five underpinning principles as outlined below. These principles are contained within the regional adult safeguarding policy "Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership", (DOH and DOJ, 2015).

(1) **A Rights-Based Approach:**

To promote and respect an adult's right to be safe and secure; to freedom from harm and coercion; to equality of treatment; to the protection of the law; to privacy; to confidentiality; and freedom from discrimination.

(2) **An Empowering Approach:**

To empower adults to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk.

(3) **A Person-Centred Approach:**

To promote and facilitate full participation of adults in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his or her safety and well-being.

(4) A Consent-Driven Approach:

To make a presumption that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent; to make informed choices; to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives; to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who lack the capacity to consent; and intervening in the life of an adult against his or her wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law.

(5) A Collaborative Approach:

To acknowledge that adult safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand-in-hand.

4. Legal and Policy Context

Adult Rights

The rights of adults at risk to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998 – their right to life is protected (under Article 2); their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment (under Article 3); and their right to liberty and security (under Article 5).

Legislation

Adults at risk are protected in the same way as any other person against criminal acts. If a person commits theft, rape or assault against an adult at risk s/he should be dealt with through the criminal justice system, in the same way as in cases involving any other victim.

Where there is a reasonable suspicion that a criminal offence may have occurred, it is the responsibility of the police to investigate and make a decision about any subsequent action. The police should always be consulted about criminal matters.

There are a number of pieces of legislation relating to safeguarding adults at risk which can be accessed through www.opsi.gov.uk

Some of the relevant legislation is as follows:

- The Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Orders and the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

Policy Context

A regional adult safeguarding policy “Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” was launched in July 2015. The policy was jointly developed and published by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The aim of the policy is to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect. It sets out how the Northern Ireland Executive intends adult safeguarding to be taken forward across all Government Departments, their agencies and in partnership with the voluntary, community, independent and faith organisations. Key objectives are:

- To reduce the incidence of harm of adults who are at risk;
- To provide them with effective support and, where necessary, protective responses; and
- Access to justice for victims and their families.

“Adult safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” can be accessed at www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-prevention-and-protectionpartnership-key-documents

Consent and Capacity Consent

When providing activities and services for adults at risk, it is important to adhere to the Belfast YMCA underpinning principles outlined above. In so doing, you will seek always to work in the best interests of the adult and with his/her consent.

Staff and volunteers should always be mindful of the need for the adult to consent to, and to be comfortable with, any proposed activity or service. Consent is a process - it results from understanding through dialogue and the provision of information.

Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. It may be signalled verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. As a general rule, the method of obtaining consent is likely to be dictated by the seriousness of what is being proposed. For example, an adult may signal his/her consent to participate by turning up at the youth club voluntarily. However, an adult being asked to agree to transfer from a residential care home to a nursing home where his or her needs will be better served will require a more formal consideration of consent. Such decisions should involve health and social care professionals.

It does not matter so much how an adult gives consent, the important issue is to ensure the consent given is valid. Consent is only considered to be valid when:

- The adult has the capacity to consent, that is, s/he can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision; and
- The adult is appropriately informed, that is, s/he has been given sufficient information, in an appropriate way, on which to base the decision; and
- It has been given voluntarily, that is, free from coercion or negative influence.

If any of these factors is absent, consent cannot be considered to be valid. In cases where the adult lacks capacity, decisions will usually be made on behalf of the adult in accordance with current legal provisions. Staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special legal provision for particular purposes has been made for this. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden. This is generally when it is in the public interest to do so, for example, the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health or life.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Always presume that the adult at the centre of the decision or action is able to give or withhold consent unless it is established otherwise;
- Make every effort to encourage and support the adult to make the decision for themselves and communicate the decision. This includes giving them all the necessary information which is explained or presented in a way which the adult fully understands. If lack of capacity is established, it is still important

that you involve them as far as possible in making decisions.

- Be aware that an adult who has capacity has the right to make what others may regard as an unwise decision. Everyone has their own values, beliefs and preferences which may not be the same as those of other people, but sometimes a balance needs to be struck between the adult's human rights and the need to intervene to protect others;
Provide support to an adult where they have withheld consent and this has been overridden; and
- Understand that an adult can change their mind about any choice or decision they have made.

Where there are concerns about consent, for example, doubts about whether it is valid, the staff member or volunteer should bring this to the attention of their Line Manager, who should in turn seek professional advice where necessary.

Capacity

Mental capacity means the ability to make a decision and take actions. An adult will always be assumed to have capacity to make a decision unless it is suspected otherwise. This means staff and volunteers should always start by believing that the adult can make their own decisions unless they can prove otherwise. It does not matter what the adult looks like, how they behave, what age they are or if they have a disability or illness.

Staff and volunteers must be aware that capacity can fluctuate, and it is both issue and time specific, therefore it should be kept under regular review. If a member of staff or volunteer has any doubts about the capacity of an adult to make a decision or series of decisions, they should inform their Line Manager or Adult Safeguarding Champion, who should seek professional advice from the local HSC Trust.

It may be necessary for a HSC professional to conduct a capacity assessment. Any decisions made or actions taken on behalf of an adult who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests, after considering their preferences. The person/agencies making the decision must consider whether it is possible to do this in a way that would interfere less with the freedoms and rights of the adult. Where appropriate, relevant family members or carers will be consulted regarding what action to take.

Advocacy

An adult who lacks capacity to make a decision may have the potential to benefit from advocacy services. Advocacy helps people to:

- Access information and services;

- Be involved in decisions about their lives;
- Explore choice and options;
- Defend and promote their rights; and
- Speak out about issues that matter to them.

Advocacy helps to ensure that the adult at risk remains central to the decision-making process. An advocate should not make decisions on behalf of the adult, but always work in partnership with them.

5. Belfast YMCA Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection Procedures

In addition to our policy statement on Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Harm and Adults in Need of Protection, Belfast YMCA have a range of organisational policies in place. These are necessary to ensure that we are properly managed, that our organisation's resources, both human and financial, are being used effectively and that our practice will maintain public confidence.

This policy is linked to all other Belfast YMCA policies where appropriate, and cross referenced to ensure consistent practice in adult safeguarding.

5.1 Recruitment, Selection and Management of Staff and Volunteers

For the wellbeing and protection of programme participants all potential staff and volunteers must be vetted prior to their appointment or involvement in activities, in accordance with Access NI Vetting requirements.

In order to secure the suitability of staff, and volunteers/trainers the following process will be adhered to.

1. The role required of the person will be clearly defined and what is expected of the person established. Each potential worker (whether paid or unpaid) should be made fully aware of all duties pertaining to the appointment and their responsibilities to all participants, members and user groups;
2. Full appointment procedures should be carried out in accordance to recruitment policy and procedures;
3. Application/Registration - a form must be completed, and submitted, seeking detailed information on the individual including the names of two non-family referees, one of which should be from a previous employer;
4. Declaration - Staff who will have substantive access to children, adults at risk of harm or adults in need of protection or who will act as a line manager /or have a

supervisory role to other staff/volunteers who have substantive access to the groups above, must be vetted through the Access NI registers;

5. International Volunteers – When involving international volunteers, two references, as well as a police check from their town of origin, are required prior to service. If necessary, independent translations of these documents must be sought, as well as evidence confirming the volunteers' identity. International Volunteers are also required to complete an Access NI Check and any appropriate further checks as required by their role;
6. All appointments should be sanctioned by the General Secretary;
7. Notes should be taken and filed appropriately.

Vetting Procedures

For the purposes of recruitment within Belfast YMCA, a person deemed to hold a 'Regulated Position' will be vetted under the Access NI registers and online vetting procedures. Belfast YMCA follows all best practice policies and guidelines expected by Access NI including the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

Due to the nature of our work, youth workers and those working with young adults are vetted under enhanced disclosure procedures. In the case of an Access NI Certificate being returned with sensitive information with regard to criminal convictions, a risk assessment will be carried out by the appropriate personnel.

Belfast YMCA will follow any future guidelines issued by Access NI and the Disclosure and Barring Service with regarding to future registration of any staff and volunteers who have access to young people.

5.2 Effective Management of Staff and Volunteers

Induction Policy

Each appointee who will work with adults at risk of harm or adults in need of protection will receive a copy of this policy, confirming their having read and understood the document, with training being provided as part of the induction process.

Training

As part of its personnel policies, Belfast YMCA is committed to ensuring that each staff member receives adequate training around safeguarding. Bespoke training will be provided around specific adult safeguarding needs as they arise, either as a result of incidents or identified staff and/or volunteer needs.

Support, Supervision and Annual Review

All staff and volunteers will have appropriate support structures in place. This will include regular supervision either as an individual or as part of a team, as well as an annual review of duties known as a work review or job appraisal. As part of this process staff will be given an opportunity to voice any concerns they may have about safeguarding.

5.3 Reporting Procedures

This policy outlines what constitutes adult abuse, where abuse can occur and who causes abuse. Further to this, are procedures for responding to, recording and reporting concerns about actual or suspected incidents of abuse.

Good safeguarding practice means that organisations must ensure that all staff and volunteers understand how to recognise abuse, and how to pass any safeguarding concerns to the relevant people within the organisation. This does not mean that staff and volunteers are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but they do have a responsibility to be alert to the physical signs, actions and/or behaviour by adults at risk, staff or volunteers that suggests something may be wrong.

An adult may be at risk of harm because of their personal characteristics and/or life circumstances, which may increase exposure to harm either because a person may be unable to protect him/herself or their situation may provide opportunities for others to neglect, exploit or abuse them. It is not possible to definitively state when an adult is at risk of harm, as this will vary on a case by case basis. In most situations HSC Trusts will make decisions regarding the degree of risk and level of harm an adult may be facing and decide on the most appropriate action to take. If there is a clear and immediate risk of harm, or a crime is alleged or suspected, the matter should be referred directly to the PSNI or HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service.

What is abuse?

Abuse is a “single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another individual or violates their human or civil rights”.

Abuse is the misuse of power and control that one person has over another. It can involve direct and indirect contact and can include online abuse.

“Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” (DOH and DOJ, July

2015) outlines the main forms of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** is the use of physical force or mistreatment of one person by another which may or may not result in actual physical injury. This may include hitting, pushing, rough handling, exposure to heat or cold, force feeding, improper administration of medication, denial of treatment, misuse or illegal use of restraint and deprivation of liberty. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is considered a form of physical AND sexual abuse.
- **Sexual violence and abuse** is 'any behaviour (physical, psychological, verbal, virtual/online) perceived to be of a sexual nature which is controlling, coercive, exploitative, harmful, or unwanted that is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability). Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and may include non-contact sexual activities, such as indecent exposure, stalking, grooming, being made to look at or be involved in the production of sexually abusive material, or being made to watch sexual activities. It may involve physical contact, including but not limited to non-consensual penetrative sexual activities or non-penetrative sexual activities, such as intentional touching (known as groping). Sexual violence can be found across all sections of society, irrelevant of gender, age, ability, religion, race, ethnicity, personal circumstances, financial background or sexual orientation.
- **Psychological/emotional abuse** is behaviour that is psychologically harmful or inflicts mental distress by threat, humiliation, or other verbal/non-verbal conduct. This may include threats, humiliation or ridicule, provoking fear of violence, shouting, yelling and swearing, blaming, controlling, intimidation and coercion.
- **Financial abuse** is actual or attempted theft, fraud or burglary. It is the misappropriation or misuse of money, property, benefits, material goods or other asset transactions which the person did not or could not consent to, or which were invalidated by intimidation, coercion or deception. This may include exploitation, embezzlement, withholding pension or benefits or pressure exerted around wills, property or inheritance.
- **Institutional abuse** is the mistreatment or neglect of an adult by a regime or individuals in settings which adults who may be at risk reside in or use. This can happen in any organisation, within and outside Health and Social Care (HSC) provision. Institutional abuse may occur when the routines, systems and regimes result in poor standards of care, poor practice and behaviours, inflexible regimes and rigid routines which violate the dignity and human rights of the adults and place them at risk of harm. Institutional abuse may occur within a culture that denies, restricts or curtails privacy, dignity, choice and independence. It involves the collective failure of a service provider or an

organisation to provide safe and appropriate services, and includes a failure to ensure that the necessary preventative and/or protective measures are in place.

- **Neglect** occurs when a person deliberately withholds, or fails to provide, appropriate and adequate care and support which is required by another adult. It may be through a lack of knowledge or awareness, or through a failure to take reasonable action given the information and facts available to them at the time. It may include physical neglect to the extent that health or well-being is impaired, administering too much or too little medication, failure to provide access to appropriate health or social care, withholding the necessities of life, such as adequate nutrition, heating or clothing, or failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly where the person lacks the capacity to assess risk.
- **Exploitation** is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain from using them as a commodity. It may manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and abuse, or human trafficking.
- **“Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” does not include self-harm or self-neglect within the definition of an ‘adult in need of protection’.** Each case will require a professional HSC assessment to determine the appropriate response and consider if any underlying factors require a protection response. For example, self-harm may be the manifestation of harm which has been perpetrated by a third party and which the adult feels unable to disclose.

This list of types of harmful conduct is not exhaustive, nor listed here in any order of priority.

There are other indicators which should not be ignored. It is also possible that if a person is being harmed in one way, s/he may very well be experiencing harm in other ways.

Related Definitions

There are related definitions which interface with Adult Safeguarding, each of which have their own associated adult protection processes in place.

- **Domestic violence and abuse** is ‘threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, virtual, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity,

religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or any form of disability) by a current or former intimate partner or family member'. Domestic violence and abuse is essentially a pattern of behaviour which is characterised by the exercise of control and the misuse of power by one person over another. It is usually frequent and persistent. It can include violence by a son, daughter, mother, father, husband, wife, life partner or any other person who has a close relationship with the victim. It occurs right across society, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnic or religious group, sexual orientation, wealth, disability or geography. The response to any adult facing this situation will usually require a referral to specialist services such as Women's Aid or the Men's Advisory Project. In high risk cases a referral will also be made to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment (MARAC) process. Specialist services will then decide if the case needs to be referred to a HSC Trust for action under the safeguarding procedures. If in doubt anyone with a concern can contact the Domestic and Sexual Violence helpline (0808 802 1414) to receive advice and guidance about how best to proceed.

- **Human trafficking/Modern Slavery** involves the acquisition and movement of people by improper means, such as force, threat, or deception, for the purposes of exploiting them. It can take many forms, such as domestic servitude, forced criminality, forced labour, sexual exploitation and organ harvesting. Victims of human trafficking/modern slavery can come from all walks of life; they can be male or female, children or adults, and they may come from migrant or indigenous communities.
- **Hate crime** is any incident which constitutes a criminal offence perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice, discrimination or hate towards a person's actual or perceived race, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion or gender identity. The response to adults at risk experiencing hate crime will usually be to report the incident to the Police Service.

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; or
- In public places.

Who can abuse?

Staff and volunteers should be aware that abusers come from all sections of society, all professions and all races and can be male or female. An abuser can be anyone who has contact with the adult, including someone who is physically and/or emotionally close to the adult at risk, and on whom they may depend and trust. It could be a:

- Partner;
- Spouse;
- Child;
- Relative;
- Friend;
- Informal carer;
- Healthcare, social care or other worker;
- Peer; or less commonly a
- Stranger.

Professional abuse

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

Peer abuse

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

Stranger abuse

The abuse of an adult by someone they don't know such as a stranger, a member of the public or a person who deliberately targets adults at risk.

How can you be alerted to signs of abuse or neglect?

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

- They may disclose to you;
- Someone else may tell you of their concerns or something that causes you concern;
- They may show some signs of physical injury for which there does not appear to be a satisfactory or credible explanation;

- Their demeanour/behaviour may lead you to suspect abuse or neglect;
- The behaviour of a person close to them makes you feel uncomfortable (this may include another staff member, volunteer, peer or family member); or
- Through general good neighbourliness and social guardianship.

Being alert to abuse plays a major role in ensuring that adults are safeguarded and it is important that all concerns about possible abuse are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken.

What if an adult at risk discloses abuse?

In cases where an adult discloses abuse to a staff member or volunteer, it is important that staff/volunteers know how to react appropriately, according to the following guidelines:

Do

- Stay calm;
- Listen attentively;
- Express concern and sympathy and acknowledge what is being said;
- Reassure the person – tell the person that s/he did the right thing in telling you;
- Let the person know that the information will be taken seriously and provide details about what will happen next, including the limits and boundaries of confidentiality;
- If urgent medical/police help is required, call the emergency services;
- Ensure the immediate safety of the person;
- If you think a crime has occurred be aware that medical and forensic evidence might be needed. Consider the need for a timely referral to the police service and make sure nothing you do will contaminate it;
- Let the person know that they will be kept involved at every stage;
- Record in writing (date and sign your report) and report as per procedures at the earliest possible time;
- Act without delay.

Do not

- Stop someone disclosing to you;
- Promise to keep secrets;
- Press the person for more details or make them repeat the story;
- Gossip about the disclosure or pass on the information to anyone who does not have a legitimate need to know;
- Contact the alleged person to have caused the harm;

- Attempt to investigate yourself;
- Leave details of your concerns on a voicemail or by email;
- Delay.

It is important for everyone to be aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for statutory authorities.

The primary responsibility for the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it in line with reporting procedures and to ensure that their concerns are taken seriously. The Line Manager or person in charge will take any immediate action required to ensure the adult at risk of harm is safe and make a decision as to when it is appropriate to speak with the adult at risk of harm about the concerns and any proposed actions. They must then report the concerns and any action taken to the appointed person or Adult Safeguarding Officer. Under no circumstances should any individual member of staff or volunteer or the organisation itself attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone or investigate the situation.

They should not ask questions that relate to the detail, or circumstances of the alleged abuse, beyond initial listening, expressing concern and checking out. Reporting and recording. All concerns, disclosures and allegations should be recorded on the Belfast YMCA Safeguarding Adults reporting template enclosed at the end of this policy.

An accurate record should be made of the date and time that the member of staff/volunteer became aware of the concerns, the parties who were involved, and any action taken. If there is a disclosure it is important to record what was said as soon as possible in the adult's own words. The record should be clear and factual, since any information may be valuable to professionals investigating the incident and may at some time in the future be used as evidence in court. This kind of information should always be kept in a secure place (including electronic filing) and shared only with those who need to know about the concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse.

It is also good practice for staff and volunteers to record the fact that they made a report, on what date and to whom the report was made.

Confidentiality

When a staff member or volunteer has a concern about an adult they are working with, that concern needs to be recorded and reported on a 'need to know' basis. Staff and volunteers should be clear that information relating to a concern, disclosure, allegation or suspicion should only be passed on to the relevant people

whose task it is to decide what action to take. It is essential that all staff follow Belfast YMCA Data Protection procedures for the maintenance of all records, including records of alleged or suspected abuse.

5.4 Code of Behaviour/Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been drawn up in order to support Belfast YMCA staff and volunteers, to inform their practice and protect them especially when working in isolation and in vulnerable situations.

This Code of Conduct is a general guideline and each programme is required to have its own specific guidelines which are detailed also. Staff and Volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to Equal Opportunities:

- By being honest with, and showing respect;
- By respecting confidentiality and by being clear and open when confidentiality cannot be maintained;
- By offering activities responsibly in a safe environment;
- By recognising unacceptable behaviour and taking action, enables change to take place.

Staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to themselves and colleagues:

- By being honest with, and showing respect for colleagues;
- By respecting and keeping appropriate levels of confidentiality where appropriate;
- By working and planning to the best of their ability within the constraints of their association, or allocated responsibilities;
- By only working alone when immediate support is available and /or the Health & Safety of the individuals is at risk;
- By offering support to colleagues and seeking it when necessary.

Staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to educate members, volunteers and staff:

- By leading by example and setting good, positive role models;
- Not using language, which is racist, sectarian, sexist, homophobic or abusive;
- Dressing appropriately to the occasion task, and company present;
- Not smoking, drinking alcohol, or using other illegal substances whilst on duty and working with participants;
- By creating an environment within which participants can feel safe and learn;
- By enthusiastically seizing all learning opportunities either programmed or

- otherwise;
- By fully implementing the aims and objectives of Belfast YMCA.

All staff and volunteers need to be aware of the impact that their behaviour has on others. Trust is fundamental to the work of Belfast YMCA and should never be jeopardised. In recognising the issues highlighted in the Code of Conduct, it is expected that all staff and volunteers will:

- Respect everyone as an individual;
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour;
- Respect people's rights to privacy;
- Be available to listen and, if necessary, refer to more appropriate help;
- Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence and are acceptable within a relationship of trust;
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues;
- Plan not to put yourself in a vulnerable situation;
- Adhere to Belfast YMCA policies;
- Be aware that you are accountable for your actions;

Residential

Staff and volunteers should never:

- Sleep in a room with participants (unless there is no alternative and in agreement with their Line Manager);
- Establish relationships with participants that may have sexual overtones;
- Deliberately place yourself or others in a compromising situation.

Belfast YMCA expects staff and volunteers to act with sensitivity and self-control when working with all age groups. Staff and volunteers need to recognise the issues of power and responsibility. It is Belfast YMCA practice that staff and volunteers do not misuse their role by taking advantage of participants of any age and establishing 'personal relationships'. Behaviour of all staff and volunteers whilst on duty must, of course, be within the law.

Breach of Code of Conduct:

Should a staff member or volunteer be in breach of this Code of Conduct, Belfast YMCA's disciplinary procedures, as outlined in the Staff Handbook will be activated and followed.

General Safety and Management of Activities

This safeguarding policy should be read in conjunction with the Belfast YMCA Health and Safety Policy which will outline in greater detail the processes and responsibilities with regard to Health and Safety matters in the organisation

General Safety

When an accident occurs, the danger must be removed immediately, the injured person treated, and the accident recorded on the agreed form.

- A telephone should be accessible wherever and whenever a group meets;
- Every leader should know how to access the telephone;
- Emergency telephone numbers should be displayed prominently;
- It is desirable that a trained First Aider be available within the staff team;
- Professional help should be sought if and when the trained First Aider cannot help or if further assistance is required when the First Aider can do no more;
- A first aid box should be provided at each location;
- The worker in charge of the group must inform the General Secretary and/or the Adult Safeguarding Officer (ASO) of any accidents at the earliest possible opportunity;
- The worker in charge of the group must ensure that information is passed onto next of kin if consent has been given;
- The worker in charge of the group must record all details of accidents on the Accident/Incident book and also obtain witness statements within 24 hours. All "Near misses" should be reviewed during supervision. Steps should then be taken to identify the cause of the incident and prevent reoccurrence;
- If an accident is serious, the ASO or the General Secretary should inform the insurance company as soon as possible.
- The Trustees are required to inform the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland in the event of a serious incident.

Insurance

All activities should have professionally advised and adequate insurance cover to include key areas of:

- Personal Accident
- Public Liability
- Property and Contents Insurance
- Vehicle Insurance

It is the responsibility of the activity organiser and the General Secretary of Belfast YMCA to ensure that all relevant insurance policies are currently valid. In the case of

activities or events which are considered 'high-risk', the worker should consult with the ASO and/or the General Secretary who will decide on the appropriateness and adequacy of the cover available. No high-risk activity should be engaged upon without first following above procedure to ensure that the insurance cover provided is adequate. Insurance cover for transportation should be adhered to at all times.

Premises

Staff and volunteers can help ensure that activities and the environment that is being used for activities and programmes are safe, by identifying potential hazards and concerns.

The premises used for all work should be suitable and safe. This includes:

- Adequate provision of toileting facilities;
- Appropriate and adequate lighting. (Torches/night lights should be available for emergencies);
- Appropriate and adequate heating systems;
- Adequate provision of security and safety appliances;
- All fire exits and entrance and exit routes should be kept clear and marked for any situation. All keys to entrance or exit doorways should be easily accessed for emergency situations;
- All fire alarms should be installed following professional advice and maintained as advised. Workers should be trained in their use;
- All work/meeting areas should be marked with an 'Assembly Point' in the case of an emergency;
- No heating/cooking items, electrical appliances, or naked flames other than those tested and fitted by a professional should be used.

It is the responsibility of Belfast YMCA to maintain the upkeep of the premises to a safe and suitable standard. However, the worker in charge has a responsibility to ensure that the procedures outlined in the Belfast YMCA Health and Safety policy are fulfilled.

Adult Safeguarding Officer (ASO)

Each local association should appoint an Adult Safeguarding Officer who can seek support from the YMCA Ireland Adult Safeguarding Officer. The ASO provides strategic and operational leadership and oversight in relation to adult safeguarding for an organisation or group and is responsible for implementing its adult safeguarding policy statement.

The ASO should ensure that, at a minimum, the organisation safeguards adults at

risk by:

- Recognising that adult harm is wrong and should not be tolerated;
- Being aware of the signs of harm from abuse, exploitation and neglect;
- Reducing opportunities for harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect to occur; and
- Knowing how and when to report adult safeguarding concerns to HSC Trusts and/or the PSNI.

What are the key responsibilities of an ASO?

“Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” summarises the key responsibilities for the ASO as follows:

- To provide information, support and advice for staff and volunteers on adult safeguarding within the organisation;
- To ensure that the organisation’s adult safeguarding policy is disseminated and support implementation throughout the organisation;
- To advise within the organisation regarding adult safeguarding training needs;
- To provide advice to staff or volunteers who have concerns about the signs of harm and ensure a report is made to HSC Trusts where there is a safeguarding concern;
- To support staff to ensure that any actions take account of what the adult wishes to achieve – this should not prevent information about any risk of serious harm being passed to the relevant HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service for assessment and decision-making; To establish contact with the HSC Trust Designated Adult Protection Officer (DAPO), PSNI and other agencies as appropriate;
- To ensure accurate and up to date records are maintained detailing all decisions made, the reasons for those decisions and any actions taken;
- To compile and analyse records of reported concerns to determine whether a number of low level concerns are accumulating to become more significant; and make records available for inspection.

What sort of information should an ASO monitor?

Most ASOs will already have daily access to a great deal of information that will assist the organisation or group improve the services it provides to adults at risk or in need of protection. To meet the governance requirements set out in the Policy, the ASO should compile an annual Adult Safeguarding Position Report using the following core data:

- Number of referrals made to HSC Trusts involving both an adult at risk and an

- adult in need of protection;
- Number of adult safeguarding discussions where the decision taken was to not refer to HSC Trust;
- Any untoward event that triggered an adult protection investigation;
- Adult safeguarding training opportunities provided and uptake across staff groups; and
- Any action that Belfast YMCA plans to take to ensure it is compliant with “Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership” and to implement the organisation’s own adult safeguarding policy.

What does the ASO do with the Adult Safeguarding Position Report?

The Position Report is an important overview and governance tool for all organisations and groups supporting adults at risk or in need of protection. As such, it contains significant information for your organisation’s Senior Management Team and/or Trustees.

It should be scrutinised by them on an annual basis. It would also be appropriate to provide core information from the Position Report in any organisational annual reports or updates. The Position Reports should also be made available for any external audit purposes if required.

Role of Belfast YMCA Adult Safeguarding Officer

Key responsibilities of the Belfast YMCA Adult Safeguarding Officer are to:

- Be responsible to the Board of Belfast YMCA;
- To comply with the standards and practices outlined in this document;
- Have responsibility for updating information on relevant issues and monitoring the effectiveness of the Adult Safeguarding policy;
- Maintain a network of contacts of outside authorities such as local Gateway teams / police / fire authorities / Health and Social Care Trusts, Volunteer Now, etc. They should ascertain contact names and phone numbers and seek appropriate advice when necessary;
- Have responsibility for ensuring that all new workers who will work with the groups mentioned in this policy receive a copy of and understand the organisation’s Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided;
- Receive and deal with all concerns in respect of adults at risk of harm and adults in need of protection;
- Make formal reports if necessary;
- Keep appropriate records and store them in a safe and confidential manner;
- Have responsibility to carry out an annual audit of procedure.

Policy Review

Author:	Peter McNiece
Publication Date:	February 2020, updated January 2022
Approved by:	Howard Davey
Effective from:	February 2020
For the attention of and action by:	Belfast YMCA Board of Trustees; managers and leaders; staff and volunteers; service users; carers and advocates; and visitors.
Review Date:	January 2025
Adult Safeguarding Officer (ASO):	Peter McNiece

Belfast YMCA Reporting Procedure - Flow Chart

Record and report concern to Adult Safeguarding Officer (ASO) or appointed person



ASO or appointed person decides appropriate response and ensures immediate safety of adult. (Liaise with YMCA Ireland ASO where necessary)



No Safeguarding Issue	Safeguarding Issue	Protection Issue (where there is a clear and immediate risk of harm/alleged crime)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exit process and consider alternatives ● Keep a record of concerns on file ● Monitor the situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Record on relevant template ● Seek consent for referral to HSC key worker (Where known) or HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service ● ASO or appointed person will act as a conduit for any investigation 	<p>Refer to HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service/ PSNI</p>

Appendix 2

Adult Abuse Report Form

Please answer all relevant questions as fully as you can

Work Location
Name of Adult
Age/DOB
Gender
Name of Carers (if known)
Home Address
Please complete those sections below that are relevant
1. Disclosure by adult at risk
Where was the disclosure made (dates and times)
2. Indicators
Describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates)
Has the adult alleged that any particular person is the abuser? (If so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the adult)
3. Concerns expressed by another person about an adult at risk
Record the concerns that were passed to you (with dates and times) and if possible as the person who expressed the concerns to confirm that the details as

written are correct.

4. Details of any immediate action taken: first aid etc.

5. Has the adult expressed any reservations about you talking to your Line Manager/Adult Safeguarding Officer/appointed person about the matter?

6. Does the adult have any particular needs e.g. Communication

Signatures

To be signed by the person reporting the concern

Name

Job Title

Signed

Date	
Date received and actioned by line manager	
Name	
Signed	
Date	
Date received and actioned by Adult Safeguarding Officer or Appointed person	
Name	
Signed	
Date	
Action taken by Line Manager/Adult Safeguarding Officer/appointed person	
Signed	Date

Appendix 3

HSC Trust and PSNI Contact Numbers

HSC Trust

	Normal working hours 9am - 5pm	Regional Out of Hours*
Belfast	(028) 9504 1744	(028) 9504 9999
Northern Region	(028) 9441 3659	(028) 9504 9999
South Eastern	(028) 9250 1227	(028) 9504 9999
Southern	(028) 3756 4423	(028) 9504 9999
Western	(028) 7161 1366	(028) 9504 9999

***NOTE: Out of hours means 5pm to 9am; weekends; and bank or other public holidays.**

PSNI

Emergency	999
Non Emergency	0845 600 8000
General Enquiries	0845 600 8000

Appendix 4

Useful Contacts

Statutory Bodies	
Department of Health	www.health-ni.gov.uk
Health & Social Care Board	www.hscboard.hscni.net
Public Health Agency	www.publichealth.hscni.net
Health & Social Care Trusts	www.belfasttrust.hscni.net www.northerntrust.hscni.net www.setrust.hscni.net www.southerntrust.hscni.net www.westerntrust.hscni.net
Patient and Client Council	www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net
Health & Safety Executive	www.hscni.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	www.nihe.gov.uk
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	www.rqia.org.uk
Police Service of Northern Ireland	www.psni.police.uk
Advocates/Commissioners	
Commissioner for Older People of NI	www.copni.org
Voluntary Organisations & Service Providers	
Action on Elder Abuse	www.elderabuse.org.uk
Age NI	www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland
Alzheimer's Society	www.alzheimers.org.uk
Apex Housing Association Autism Initiatives	www.apex.org.uk www.autisminitiatives.org
Autism NI	www.autismni.org
Bryson Intercultural	www.brysonintercultural.org

Careers NI	www.careresuk.org/northernireland
Extern	www.extern.org
Careers NI	www.careresuk.org/northernireland
Independent Age	www.independentage.org
Independent Health and Care Providers	www.ihcp.co.uk
Mencap	www.mencap.org.uk
Mindwise	www.mindwisenv.org
NIAMH	www.niamhwellbeing.org
Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO)	www.niacro.co.uk
NI Women's Aid Federation	www.womensaidni.org
Praxis Care	www.praxisprovides.com
Public Concern at Work	www.pcaw.org.uk
Simon Community	www.simoncommunity.org
UK Homecare Association	www.ukhca.co.uk
Volunteer Now	www.volunteernow.co.uk
Others	
Access NI	www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni
DBS	www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service
Nidirect Government Services for Northern Ireland	www.nidirect.gov.uk
The Care Tribunal for NI	www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Tribunals/CareTribunal
The Adult Safeguarding Hub (SAaRIH)	www.saarih.com
Helplines	
AccessNI	03000 200 7888
DBS	03000 200 190
Domestic and Sexual Violence	0808 802 1414

Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Lifeline	0808 808 8000
NIACRO (Belfast)	028 9032 0157
NI Housing Executive	03448 920 900