



Doohamlet Community & Resource Centre

Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Rev Number	Status	Date	Comments
-	Final	1/7/2020	Approved



Doohamlet Community & Resource Centre

Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction	3
1. Who this policy is for.....	3
2. Glossary.....	4
3. Roles & Responsibilities of Employees/Volunteers	5
4. Procedures	6
4.1 Monitoring supervision	6
4.2 Dealing with inappropriate behaviour	6
4.3 Dealing with suspected abuse	7
4.4 Dealing with Incidents or Emergencies.....	9
5. Implementing The Policy.....	9
<i>Appendix 1; Role & Responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person</i>	<i>10</i>

Introduction

Doohamlet Community & Resource Centre (The Centre) Management and Employees/ Volunteers are committed to ensuring that all persons using The Centre are provided a safe and supportive environment in which people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can enjoy our facilities.

We have a particular duty of care with regard to children and young people under 18 as per Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children in Ireland. We also have a duty of care toward vulnerable adults. Through this policy we identify the behaviour expected of our Employees/Volunteers, their responsibilities and how any concerns should be addressed.

1. Who this policy is for

This policy is intended to minimise the risk of abuse or harm to children or vulnerable adults during The Centre's events and activities as well as help protect all Employees/Volunteers from false accusation.

This policy is for the Employees/Volunteers who assist with the operation of The Centre and provide an on-site presence during the running of activities and events. It is not intended that this policy will cover these Employees/Volunteers to supervise or undertake activities involving children or vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide guidance and safeguarding for situations where Employees/Volunteers come into general contact with children through their use of The Centre, such as in the circulation and shared areas of The Centre and during their general attendance on site during activities/meetings/events.

Where activities or events involve regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, the Service Providers operating in The Centre are required to have their own policy in place to cover their own activities and circumstances.

Where The Centre plans to run events/activities that places Employees/Volunteers in a supervisory role a separate policy will be prepared to cover that specific activity.

All Employees/Volunteers of The Centre will be made familiar with the policy.

The Centre's Service Providers using The Centre may be provided with a copy of this policy.

2. Glossary

The Centre: Doohamlet Community & Resource Centre Ltd, which includes the Community Centre Building and it's environs, such as car park and Community Garden. The Centre is effectively a facility, managed by a Board of Directors, which is leased by Service Providers to deliver activities, meetings or events – the Management Committee and Operational Committee assist the Board of Directors to run the facility.

Employees/Volunteers: Representatives of The Centre, employed directly by The Centre, working on employment schemes, or volunteers who support the activities and running of The Centre. These Employees/Volunteers are members of our Operational Committee and will receive induction training and annual refresher training. An Employee/Volunteer should be onsite during all activities/events being held at The Centre.

Designated Liaison Person: The Designated Liaison Person in Doohamlet Community & Resource Centre's designated child protection officer. Their role/responsibilities are included in Appendix 1. The Designated Liaison Person may also be able to assist in matters relating to vulnerable adults.

Child: Someone under the age of 18.

Vulnerable Adult: *"a person who is, or who may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and 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."* "Good Practice With Vulnerable Adults", Jackie (EDT) Prichard, Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Service Providers: Businesses, Private Interest Groups or Organisations who run or organise activities, meetings or events in The Centre, eg Private businesses, Tutors/Contractors of Government Agencies or Groups/Organisations. Service providers effectively lease facilities from The Centre to deliver their activities, meetings or events. They may operate on a commercial or not-for-profit basis. The Service Provider has responsibility for the operation and supervision of the public attending their activity/meeting/event in The Centre, including responsibility for the Health and Safety, Insurance, staffing and supervision of the activity, meeting or event. The Centre may assist the Service Provider in achieving this.

Activities may include but are not limited to music, art, drama, language, dancing classes and sporting activities. Meetings may include, but are not limited to training courses, public meetings, private meetings etc. Events may include, but are to limited, to performances, experiences and showcases.

The Service Provider who has responsibility for the child/vulnerable adult during the course of their visit to The Centre. Where applicable the Service Provider should have their own Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy in place, have their own Designated Liaison Person, and will be required to comply with their own policy and guidelines.

Types of Abuse: Abuse can generally be categorized into four types – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse;

Neglect – where the child is suffering harm as a result of being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to or affection from adults and medical care.

Emotional abuse – where the relationship (as opposed to specific events) between a caregiver and a child is characterized by a lack of affection, approval, consistency and security.

Physical Abuse – non-accidental injury to the child.

Sexual Abuse – Used by another person for that person's sexual arousal and gratification.

3. Roles & Responsibilities of Employees/Volunteers

- Endeavour to ensure that The Centre is a physical and emotionally safe environment for Children and Young People. This includes ensuring good housekeeping within The Centre and ensure health and safety protocols are observed and implemented.
- Endeavour to ensure that The Centre is an emotionally safe environment for Children and Young People. This may involve monitoring the behaviour of others using The Centre during the activity/event and dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
- Be aware and sensitive to the scope of a child's abilities, and work in ways with young people that are inclusive. All Service Providers are also required to behave in a manner that is appropriate and sensitive to children and vulnerable adults at all times.
- Be mindful of language used to and around young people and in public spaces.
- Be sensitive to issues of personal space of young people and to the risks involved in contact work.
- Any and all instances or suspected instances of inappropriate behaviours by children's peer groups, or by adults, be they parents, visitors to The Centre, Service Providers, Employees/Volunteers or Contractors are to be dealt with transparently, effectively and expediently following the measures outlined in this policy.
- Be aware that children/vulnerable adults may have medical conditions or special needs, particularly if administering First Aid.
- Take action and seek advice from The Centre's Designated Liaison Person if you are concerned about anything they have witnessed with regard to the safety of children or young people.
- When dealing with incidents involving Children/Vulnerable Adults the Designated Liaison Person must be informed and an Incident Record Form completed.
- The Centre and its Employees/Volunteers are required to work with and cooperate with the relevant statutory agencies as required.

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by – (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.'

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

4. Procedures

4.1 Monitoring supervision

- Where necessary, request that parents/carers remain and supervise children or vulnerable adults waiting to access services or activities at The Centre.
- Children and vulnerable adults should be under adequate supervision at all times during visits to The Centre. Service Providers should have their own policies in place identifying the supervision requirements depending on the activity/event taking place. Where there is a concern that a member of the Service Provider/s staff/team is not providing adequate supervision or is conducting activities in a concerning manner report it to the Service Provider or notify The Centre's Designated Liaison Person/Management of the concern.
- Avoid meeting one young person or vulnerable adult privately in areas of The Centre - if essential then let someone else know you are there and for what reason and leave the door open.
- Staff /Volunteers must NOT Perform tasks, involving physical contact, for vulnerable adults which they are capable of doing themselves.

4.2 Dealing with inappropriate behaviour

At all times our Employees and Volunteers are entitled to deal with inappropriate behaviour that creates an unpleasant atmosphere or presents physical risk to The Centre, it's Employees/Volunteers or visitors. The following advice is given in the context of behaviour that puts children or vulnerable adults at risk, but the same procedures may be used to deal with situations that do not involve children or vulnerable adults.

- Staff /Volunteers must NOT Engage or allow inappropriate physical contact with, or make sexually suggestive comments to children or vulnerable adults.
- Do not attempt to restrain a person who is behaving violently or aggressively – remove other people from the situation and stay at a safe distance. Call for assistance.
- Where the behaviour of an adult is impacting on providing a physical and emotionally safe environment for children or vulnerable adults using The Centre, the Employee/Volunteer should;
 - Verbally reprimand – the person should be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully and asked to cease the offensive behaviour.
 - Should the offensive behaviour continue the person/people may be asked to leave the premises.
 - If the person becomes abusive or aggressive do not attempt to confront them. Remove other people from the situation and stay at a safe distance. Call for assistance.
 - The Service Provider shall be immediately informed of the incident and advised of the measures taken.
 - The Designated Liaison Person/Management shall be informed of the incident and an Incident Record filled in.

Where a child or vulnerable adult is breaking the rules;

- Give clear boundaries and guidelines and advise children, young people or vulnerable adults of the rules.

- Where the rules are being broken verbally reprimand – the person should be spoken to calmly, assertively and respectfully and asked to cease the offensive behaviour.

If the behaviour persists the Service Provider shall be informed of the behaviour and asked to deal with the person.

- Where the Service Provider does not adequately deal with the offensive behaviour or the behaviour persists, inform the Service Provider that you do not consider that the incident has been addressed and The Centre’s management will be informed if the matter is not addressed. An incident report may be filed with The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person/Management.
- Where it is considered the offensive behaviour has not been addressed by Service Provider, inform The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person of the incident and allow The Centre’s Management to deal with the matter.
- Recognise and deal with gross misbehaviours, including assault, vandalism, extortion, theft and bullying. Gross misbehaviours must be reported to the Service Provider, The Centre Management, and if appropriate, to An Garda Síochána. Persons attending activities/events committing gross misbehaviours should be suspended immediately to ensure the safety of other members but the suspension should come from the Service Provider and the person involved should not be left unsupervised. Employees/Volunteers of The Centre may be required to assist the Service Provider in managing such a situation, and will be required to co-operate with any reporting, investigations and state agencies related to the incident.

4.3 Dealing with suspected abuse

Dealing with suspected abuse and abuse will vary depending on whether the matter involves a child or a vulnerable adult. The procedure below generally applies to the abuse of a child, but the same procedure may be adapted (with modification as necessary) in the case of abuse of a vulnerable adult.

Recognizing and Responding to Suspected or Disclosed Abuse – Employees/Volunteers should consider, in a measured way, the possibility of abuse if the person shows signs that may indicate abuse, for example;

- Serious injury or series of injuries for which no reasonable explanation can be offered.
- Distress without obvious reason or displays of persistent or new behavioural problems
- Unusual or fearful responses to an adult who is responsible for their care.
- Age inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge.
- Absconding from home.
- Employees/Volunteers working or in contact with Children and Young People have a duty to report the following;
 - Any physical punishment or verbal abuse of a child or vulnerable adult to be reported to the Service Provider. Where the perceived abuse is being committed by the Service Provider or a member of their Organisation the abuse should also be reported to The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person.
 - Report occasion where indecent or offensive jokes, conversations or comments have been heard or incidents where texts, imagery or discourse of an offensive or sexual nature have been witnessed to the Service Provider to be dealt with by the Service Provider.

- Employees/Volunteers must always be mindful that they may not have the correct skills, training or knowledge to deal first hand with suspected cases of abuse. Where abuse is witnessed or suspected the Employee/Volunteer must follow the appropriate protocols and should not attempt to deal with the situation themselves.
- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority. If there is a concern that the child is in immediate danger then action should be taken immediately, which may require involving An Garda Síochána.
- Where there is an immediate concern that abuse is taking place within The Centre, the Employee/Volunteer may intervene. Call for assistance. As appropriate, remove the victim/alleged abuser from the situation – if this is not possible stay in the room with the relevant parties. Under no circumstances should anyone witness to the alleged abuse be permitted to leave The Centre. Contact The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person and where appropriate contact the Service Provider. Where necessary contact An Garda Síochána. Under no circumstances should the Employee/Volunteer attempt to deal with or investigate the situation as they may undermine the investigation. The Employee/Volunteer may be required to assist the relevant authorities with their investigation or provide a witness statement.
- Disclosure of Abuse - If a person divulges abuse, it is an act of trust and should be treated with respect, sensitivity and care.
 - React calmly.
 - Listen attentively and carefully.
 - Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in telling you.
 - Do not make false promises regarding secrecy.
 - Do not ask the person to repeat the story unnecessarily.
 - Ask questions only for the purpose of clarification. Do not ask leading or intimate questions.
 - Check that you have understood correctly.
 - Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser.
 - Record the conversation as soon as possible, in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record.
 - Explain and ensure the person understands that you will have to inform your superiors who may turn the matter over to the statutory agencies.
 - Pass the information to the designated child protection person.
 - Treat the information strictly confidentially, sharing it only with persons who have a right to know.
- Where abuse has been disclosed the advice of The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person shall be sought on how the concern should be addressed.
- Where abuse is suspected the advice of The Centre’s Designated Liaison Person shall be sought on how the concern should be addressed.

4.4 Dealing with Incidents or Emergencies

In the event of an accident or injury requiring medical attention involving a Child/Vulnerable Adult;

Minor injuries

- The Service Provider shall be consulted.
- Personnel trained in First Aid should be contacted and where necessary First Aid administered.
- Parents are always informed of incidents or accidents involving their child. The matter should be discussed with the parent/guardian at the end of the session.
- It may be necessary to call a parent/guardian to The Centre prior to the end of the session.
- An Incident Record Form should be completed. The parent/guardian shall be requested to sign the relevant form.

Serious Incidents

- The Service Provider shall be consulted.
- A parent/guardian should be contacted immediately.
- A member of The Centre management team should be contacted.
- Where a visit to Doctor/Hospital is required, and the parent/guardian or the Service Provider cannot arrange someone to attend, an Employee/Volunteer should accompany or follow an injured child/vulnerable adult.
- Notify the Designated Liaison Person and The Centre management of the occurrence within 24 hours of the incident.
- An Incident Record Form should be completed. The Parent/guardian shall be requested to sign the relevant form.

5. Implementing The Policy

- This Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy is part of the induction process for new Employees/Volunteers. All Employees/Volunteers of The Centre are required to read and sign that they have been made aware of the policy.
- Employees/Volunteers can avail of regular refresher training on the general policies and procedures of The Centre, including this policy.
- Employees/Volunteers will be sanctioned to implement this policy for the health and wellbeing of all Children/Vulnerable adults and all users of The Centre.
- The Centre's Service Providers may be provided with a copy of this policy.
- This policy will be made available online on the website www.doohamlet.com.
- A notice advising that a policy is in place will be placed on a noticeboard in The Centre.
- A Designated Liaison Person for child protection and a Deputy has been appointed and all Service Providers will be informed who the Designated Liaison Person is and details will be displayed.
- Contact details for the local duty social work team and An Garda Síochána will be made available for Employees/Volunteers.
- This policy will be reviewed and referenced each time an incident is reported or every 2 years if that is sooner.

This policy was adapted by the Management Committee of Doohamlet Community & Resource

Centre on 1st July 2020.

Appendix 1; Role & Responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person

A2.1 Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) include:

- To be a point of contact for information and advice on child and vulnerable adult protection and welfare concerns and issues to the Employees/Volunteers of The Centre
- Be accessible to all Employees/Volunteers
- Ensure that they are knowledgeable about child and vulnerable adult protection and welfare and that they undertake any training considered necessary to keep updated on new developments
- Ensure that the Child and vulnerable adult Protection and Welfare Policy and procedures of the service are disseminated to Employees/Staff and followed
- Be responsible for reporting concerns about the protection and welfare of children or vulnerable adults to TUSLA – Child & Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána and liaise with such agencies as appropriate
- Keep relevant people within The Centre and its Board informed of relevant issues, whilst maintaining confidentiality
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by The Centre, any liaison with other agencies and the outcome.
- Maintain confidential records of all child protection and welfare concerns in The Centre.
- Advise The Centre of child protection training needs, additional measures or precautionary measures to ensure the safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults.
- Provide a report at the Annual General Meeting in relation to any matters relating to Child/Vulnerable Adult protection. Details of any cases should be kept confidential.

A2.2 Recognizing & Reporting concerns about a Child's Welfare/Possible Abuse

*Please note useful Resources: Children First, the Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook and the other documents referred to in this resource document can be found at www.tusla.ie. The website also contains a wide range of information on child protection and welfare issues.

In accordance with Children First Everyone must be alert to the possibility that children with whom they are in contact may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

The Child and Family Agency should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Child protection concerns should be supported by evidence that indicates the possibility of abuse or neglect.

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

- (I) the safety and well-being of the child must take priority
- (II) reports should be made without delay to the Child and Family Agency.

Any reasonable concern or suspicion of abuse or neglect must elicit a response. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child.

Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 introduced the criminal charge of reckless endangerment of children. It states:

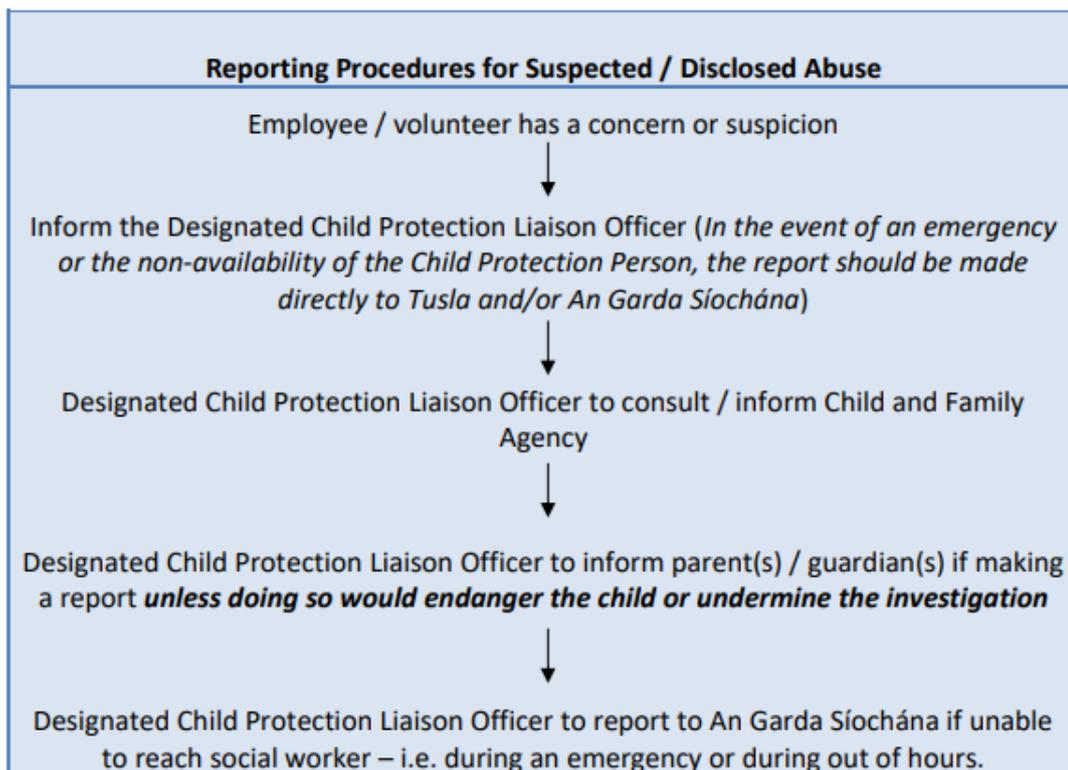
'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by – (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation, is guilty of an offence.'

The penalty for a person found guilty of this offence is a fine (no upper limit) and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

A concern could come to attention in a number of ways:

- A child/vulnerable adult tells you or indicates that she/he is being abused. This is called a disclosure
- An admission or indication from the alleged abuser
- A concern about a potential risk to children posed by a specific person, even if the children are unidentifiable – Information from someone who saw the child being abused
- Concern about the behaviour or practice of someone operating in The Centre, brought to your attention by an Employee/Volunteer
- Evidence of an injury or behaviour that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in any other way
- Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect
- An injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, but an innocent explanation given
- All Personnel are expected to consult Children First and the Child Protection & Welfare Practice Handbook for detailed information on the signs and symptoms of abuse

Procedures for Responding to a Child Protection or Welfare Concern



- Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes him or her to harm or risk pending Child & Family Agency intervention.
- If there are reasonable grounds for concern the DLP should complete the Standard Report Form without delay and send it to the Duty Social Work Team in the Child & Family Agency, Support Services Building, Rooskey, Monaghan 049-4369800
- In the event of an emergency and the unavailability of a Duty Social Worker, the DLP will contact An Garda Síochána, Castleblayney 042 974 7900. Indicate the general nature of the concern and request to speak with Garda.
- If the child has made a disclosure, a written record will be made.

- If there are other grounds for concern that the child has been abused or neglected, a written record will be made.
- The DLP is to inform parents if making a report unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine the investigation.
- Any reasonable suspicion of abuse must elicit a prompt and timely response.

[The Children first form](#), requires as much information and detail as is clear at the time. This will assist the Social Work Department in assessing the level of risk to the child or the support services required. If the information requested is not known to you, please indicate this by putting a line through the question. It is likely that a social worker will contact you to discuss your report.

Procedure when a referral is not made to the Child & Family Agency

- Not all concerns will meet the reasonable grounds for concern. In this case, the concern and any informal consultation will be documented and kept confidentially and securely.
- The DLP will inform the member of staff, volunteer or person who raised the concern that it is not being referred in writing, and they will indicate the reasons.
- The DLP will then advise the individual that they may make a report themselves or contact the Duty Social Work Team and that the provision of the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 will apply.

Confidentiality Statement

- No undertakings regarding secrecy can be given.
- The effective protection of a child depends on the willingness of relevant Employees/Volunteers to share and exchange relevant information as per detail outlined.
- It must be clearly understood that information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information.
- All information regarding a concern or assessment of child abuse or neglect should be shared on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child with the relevant statutory authorities.
- The provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance. They are not intended to limit or prevent the exchange of information between different professional staff with a responsibility for ensuring the protection and welfare of children.

Allegations of Abuse or Neglect made against The Centre or activities running in The Centre

This includes Employees/Volunteers/Board Members and Service Providers who operate in The Centre.

- It is recommended that two different people are nominated to manage an allegation. As The Centre has a management committee it may be necessary to call on external people who are independent to the parties.
- Where the allegation is made against a member of staff/volunteer of a Service Provider, the Designated Liaison Person or The Centre Management Committee will liaise with that organisation to determine who should take the lead role in the investigation/reporting. It is anticipated The Centre will have some involvement in all allegations brought to The Centre's attention.

- Generally the DLP is responsible for reporting the matter to the Child & Family Agency (as per the reporting procedure), however this role may be undertaken by the Designated Liaison Person appointed by the relevant Service Provider.
- And a Director or Committee Member will take responsibility for addressing the issues with the person.
- If the concern meets the reasonable grounds for reporting then it will be referred without delay to the Child & Family Agency. To be reported to the Child & Family Agency the allegation must meet the reasonable grounds for reporting of a concern.
- An informal consultation with the Child & Family Agency may be used to determine if reasonable grounds are present.
- All staff and volunteers in the service should be aware of who to contact should they become aware of an allegation of abuse or neglect against any employee in the service.

Process

1. Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made is by an adult, a written record of the allegation should be made and a written statement should be sought from this person.
2. Where The Director becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee while executing their duties, she will privately inform the employee of the following:
 - a. The fact that an allegation has been made against him/her o The nature of the allegation.
 - b. The person will be afforded the opportunity to respond.
 - c. This response will be noted and passed onto the Child & Family Agency with the formal report.
 - d. All stages of the process are to be recorded.
 - e. As The Centre has a small management committee, independent, or external parties may be called upon to investigate the incident or report.
3. Whether or not the matter is being reported to the Child & Family Agency, the Management Committee is always informed of an allegation of abuse or neglect against an employee by the DLP.

Record Keeping

- It is very important to note protective measures are intended to be precautionary and not disciplinary.
- Written records are very important. If a disclosure is made by a child, a written record of the disclosure should be made as soon as possible by the person receiving it.
- Confidentiality: the matter is treated in the strictest confidence and the identity of the employee is not disclosed, other than as required under the procedures within the policy.
- Protective measures may be required while the allegation is being investigated. The principles of natural justice, the presumption of innocence and fair procedure should be adhered to.
- In the cases where we are investigating any allegation The Centre will maintain regular and close liaison with the Child & Family Agency and/or An Garda Síochána and ensure that no action by the service frustrates or undermines any investigation.