## Policy Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Title</th>
<th>Safeguarding Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Number:</td>
<td>POL011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Sponsor</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Policy Owner</td>
<td>Director of Library Services</td>
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<td>Committee and date recommended for approval</td>
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<td>5 July 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality Screening Status</td>
<td>1. Screened: 23 May 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related Policies</td>
<td>• Equal Opportunities Policy</td>
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<td>• Health and Safety Policy</td>
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<td>• Records Management Policy</td>
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<td>• Social Media Policy</td>
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<td>• Whistleblowing Policy</td>
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Libraries NI is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and adults at risk participating in public library services. We recognise our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect vulnerable people from harm, abuse and exploitation. We will ensure that we have robust systems in place to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk 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 adult at risk 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 adults at risk. This definition will cover the Adult Safeguarding, Appointed Person.

**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. This definition will cover the Adult Safeguarding 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.

Adult at Risk
A person aged 18 years 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.

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.
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 adults at risk and protects them from harm. We accept and recognise our responsibility to develop awareness of the issues which cause children and adults at risk 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 Adults at Risk issued by 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 adults at risk when using library services
   - that staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk
   - 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 adults at risk.

3. Policy

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

3.2 Libraries NI recognises that the welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk 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 adults at risk.

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
Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

**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 (faltering growth).

**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.
**Exploitation**
Exploitation is intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

The procedures also recognised the particular impact of bullying and the vulnerability of those with a disability.

**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 (hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (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).

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.
## Recognising the Signs of Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Abuse</th>
<th>Physical Indicators</th>
<th>Behavioural Indicators</th>
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</table>
| **Neglect** ISecretary| - 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. | - 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 films. |
| **Physical** | - Scratches.  
- Bite marks or welts.  
- Bruising on both sides of the ear any symmetrical bruising is suspicious  
- Burns, especially cigarette burns.  
- Untreated injuries. | - 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** | - 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. | - Withdrawn, chronic depression.  
- What child tells you.  
- Inappropriate language, sexual knowledge for age group.  
- Making sexual advances to adults or other children.  
- Poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence.  
- Wariness of being approached by anyone. |
| **Emotional** | - Sudden speech disorders.  
- Wetting and soiling.  
- Signs of mutilation.  
- Attention seeking behaviour.  
- Failing to thrive, poor hair and skin. | - Rocking, head banging, thumb sucking.  
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situation.  
- Indifference to separation from family.  
- Indiscriminate attachment.  
- Poor peer relationships. |
The following list highlights some factors that may make children with a disability more vulnerable:

- Regularly suffering from sexually transmitted infections.
- Unexplained physical injuries such as bruising.
- Self-harm or suicide attempts.
- Mood swings or being emotionally volatile.
- Unexplained bruising.
- Asking for/stealing money.
- Missing school.
- Being aggressive.
- Withdrawn.
- Anxious.
- Clingy.

**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 underestimate due to low rates of reporting and even lower prosecution rates.

Most young people with harmful sexual behaviours target victims known to them, in many cases members of their immediate or extended family. This can be an especially difficult issue to deal with, partly because it is hard for us to think of children doing such things, but also because it is not always easy to tell the difference between normal sexual exploration and abusive behaviour. Harmful sexual behaviour by young people must be taken seriously. Concerns should be reported and responded to like any other potentially serious safeguarding concerns in line with safeguarding procedures including consulting local statutory services for advice.

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.

Adult Safeguarding - Recognition of Abuse
The language of adult safeguarding previously focused on protection and used the term ‘vulnerable adult.’ This was widely misinterpreted, often used out of context and, for some, the term implied weakness on the part of the adult, which many found unacceptable. There has been a move away from the concept of ‘vulnerability’ and towards establishing the concept of ‘risk of harm’ in adulthood. It places the responsibility for harm caused with those who perpetrate it.

Adult safeguarding is based on fundamental human rights and on respecting the rights of adults as individuals, treating all adults with dignity and respecting their right to choose. It involves empowering and enabling all adults, including those at risk of harm, to manage their own health and well-being and to keep themselves safe. It extends to intervening to protect where harm has occurred or is likely to occur and promoting access to justice. All adults at risk should be central to any actions and decisions affecting their lives.

Safeguarding adults is complex and challenging. The focus of any intervention must be on promoting a proportionate, measured approach to balancing the risk of harm with respecting the adult’s choices and preferred outcome for their own life circumstances. The right of a person with capacity to make decisions and remain in control of their life must be respected.

Who is an Adult at Risk of Harm?
The definition of an ‘adult at risk of harm’ takes account of a complex range of interconnected 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. The following definition is intended to provide guidance as to when an adult may be at risk of harm, in order that further professional assessment can be sought.

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.

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.

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

Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. The adult at risk may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal consideration of consent and appropriate steps should always be taken to ensure that consent is valid.

Staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision for particular purposes has been made for this, usually in law. 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.

The abuse and exploitation of an adult at risk 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.
## Types of Abuse
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:

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint or disciplining a person in an inappropriate way.</td>
<td>Fractures, bruising, burns, pain, marks, not wanting to be touched.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying, or the use of threats.</td>
<td>Withdrawn, too eager to do everything they are asked, compulsive behaviour, not being able to do things they used to, not being able to concentrate or focus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial or Material</td>
<td>Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.</td>
<td>Having unusual difficulty with finances, over protection of money and things they own, not paying bills, and lack of normal home comforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td>Direct or indirect sexual activity where the adult at risk cannot or does not give his or her consent.</td>
<td>Genital irritation, sexually transmitted diseases, offensive language, recoiling contact, persistent sexually inappropriate behaviour.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neglect or Act of Omission</td>
<td>Withdrawing or not giving the help that an adult at risk needs, so causing them to suffer.</td>
<td>Having pain or discomfort, overly hungry, thirsty or untidy, deterioration in health, changes in behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation</td>
<td>The deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person; to take advantage of another person or situation usually, but not</td>
<td>May manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic violence and abuse,</td>
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<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Abuse or mistreatment by a regime or by any individual within any building where care is provided.</td>
<td>Lack of personal clothing / possessions, no care plan, frequent hospital admissions, instances of unsatisfactory professional practice, ill treatment or gross misconduct.</td>
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Who might the abuser be?

It can be anyone:
- A partner, child, relative or friend.
- A paid or volunteer carer.
- A health, social care or other worker.
- A person claiming to be an employer of one of the above or a stranger.

Where might the abuse occur?

Abuse can happen anywhere:
- In someone’s own home.
- At a carer’s home.
- Within nursing care, residential care or day care.
- At work or in educational settings.
- In rented accommodation or commercial settings in public places.

How can you be alert to signs of abuse?

- You may see or hear something happen.
- An adult at risk may disclose an allegation to you.
- A colleague, family member or somebody else may tell you something that causes you concern.
- You may notice injuries or physical signs that cause you concern.
- You may notice either the victim or perpetrator behaving in a certain way that alerts you something may be wrong.
**Bullying of Adults at Risk**

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 an adult at risk, parent/carer or nominated care home manager.
Strategic and Legal Context

A number of statutes (Legal Context) set out the safeguarding framework and what responsibilities are on the state. These are supplemented by policies and procedures which governments have produced to support the implementation of safeguarding procedures.

Children and Young People’s Strategy 2017–2027
The draft strategy was approved by the Executive on 14 December 2016 and launched for public consultation on 19 December 2016. This document serves as the Executive’s comprehensive Strategy for Children and Young People. The Strategy is intended to be a framework which sets the high level priorities for Government in terms of co-operation, outcomes and delivery. It will be supported by a forthcoming implementation plan which will draw from Programme for Government (PfG) delivery plans and be supplemented with additional actions or information where necessary.

Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
The Act was introduced to improve co-operation amongst Departments and a wide range of bodies including District Councils, Health and Social Care Trusts, Health and Social Care Board, the Education Authority, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Police Service for Northern Ireland and the Probation Board as they deliver services aimed at improving the well-being of children and young people.

The Act also outlines how the Children and Young Peoples Strategy should be monitored; requires the Programme for Government to take account of reports on the Strategy; and provides powers for statutory bodies to pool budgets to support services for children and young people.

Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016)
This Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety document ‘Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People’ was originally issued in March 2016 and refreshed in August 2017. It provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people in the statutory, private, independent, community, voluntary and faith sectors. It outlines how communities, organisations and individuals must work both individually and in partnership to ensure children and young people are safeguarded as effectively as possible.
Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care (updated 2016) – Guidance for Voluntary Organisations

Child protection is everyone's business and the establishment of good practice continually minimises the potential for abuse and maximises the levels of safety for children in the community. The original ‘Our Duty to Care’, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety guidelines were produced in 1995. They have been well-received by a wide range of voluntary and community organisations and have assisted them in developing their own child protection policies, procedures and good practice.

This revised edition was in response to changes in legislation and to developments in good practice. It provides information and more detailed guidelines to ensure that those organisations working with children and young people continue to meet three very important objectives:

- ensuring that children’s safety is paramount
- creating the right atmosphere for rewarding and enjoyable experiences
- increasing the peace of mind for all concerned
- investment in children is investment in the future health of the community.

The ‘Our Duty to Care’ guidelines make a significant contribution to that investment.


Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015

The aim of this policy is to improve safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect. It has been jointly developed and published by the Department of Health and the Department of Justice on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive. 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 voluntary, community, independent and faith organisations. A key objective is to reduce the incidence of harm from abuse, exploitation or neglect of adults who are at risk in Northern Ireland; to provide them with effective support and, where necessary, protective responses and access to justice for victims and their families. The adult safeguarding policy document can be accessed on the Department of Health website.


Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland

A Seven Year Strategy

The vision of the strategy is to have a society in which domestic and sexual violence is not tolerated in any form, preventative and responsive services are provided and all victims are supported and perpetrators are held to account.


Keeping Adults Safe: A Shared Responsibility – Standards and Guidance for Good Practice in Adult Safeguarding

This publication contains the new standards and guidance for good practice in working with adults at risk. All organisations have a responsibility to ensure that adults are protected and this new publication will help your organisation
to do this. The publication contains eight sections each containing a standard and supporting
http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/training-and-standards/keeping-adults-safe-a-shared-responsibility

DFC Safeguarding Forum
One of the key undertakings to ensure the implementation of our safeguarding policy will be the operation of our DFC Safeguarding Forum. The Safeguarding Forum was established to share best practice learning examples and ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding from our Arm’s Length Bodies across the culture, arts and leisure sector within the Engaged Communities Group.

- The Safeguarding Forum has representatives from ALBs, Department of Health, Safeguarding Board NI, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and Volunteer Now
- It will meet formally, twice a year, to review issues including practice, policy, procedure and training, bringing together all of those involved in safeguarding, across our Engaged Communities ALB’s
- The Forum is empowered to meet on an ad hoc basis to address specific issues of concern, as and when they arise.
- The Forum elevates the significance of safeguarding within the organisation as well as providing a coherent management structure within which issues, concerns, policy development or practice issues can be dealt with.

Legal Context
A number of statutes set out the safeguarding framework and what responsibilities are on the state. These are supplemented by policies and procedures which governments have produced to support the implementation of safeguarding procedures.

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.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted in 1989 and ratified by the United Kingdom in 1991 and in the Republic of Ireland in 1992. It contains over 40 articles that state some basic values about the treatment of children. Of particular significance are:
Article 2 – relates to the equality of all children
Article 3 – to the best interests principle
Article 6 – the child’s right to survival and development
Article 12 – requires that children have a right to express their views and for those views to be respected
Article 19 – right to protection.

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 and respected
  - encouraged and praised
  - involved in decision making.
  
  [http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/uncrc.asp#Two](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:**

**Paramountcy** - 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.

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 adult at risk. 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;
(b) Because 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 Northern Ireland 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 Northern Ireland as 16 to bring us in to line with the rest of the United Kingdom
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2008/1769/contents

Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011
The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) co-ordinates, and ensures the effectiveness of, work to protect and promote the welfare of children. The Board includes representatives from health, social care, the police, the Probation Board, youth justice, education, district councils and the
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland is responsible for developing policies and procedures to improve how different agencies work together. 
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukia/2011/7/contents

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.
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted
Appendix Three

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF
WHEN DEALING WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK

Code of Behaviour for Staff
Libraries NI is committed to practice which actively promotes the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk and protects them from harm. We wish to establish and maintain an enjoyable, safe environment where children and adults at risk 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 adults at risk harm.

Staff will:
- act in a way which will promote, safeguard and protect the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk 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 adults at risk and report any concerns
- listen to children and adults at risk and treat them with respect
- ensure their communication with children, young people and adults at risk is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child or adult. Libraries NI recognises that this is especially important for children and adults at risk with disabilities and for children or adults at risk whose preferred language is not English.

Staff will never:
- use verbally abusive language to a child, young person or adult at risk 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 adult at risk away from others
- make sexually suggestive comments to or within earshot of a child, young person or adult at risk
- do things of a personal nature for children, young people or adult at risk 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 adult at risk and should always be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the individual
- physically restrain a child, young person or adult at risk 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.