



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN/VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING (CHWB) SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN/VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The aim of this policy is to outline and communicate the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers, trustees and sessional therapists working on behalf of the organisation in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.

CHWB is committed to creating an environment where children and vulnerable adults are safe from harm and free from abuse.

We will comply with all legislation and good practice and any suspicion of abuse will be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than that of the child / vulnerable adult causes harm. Because children / vulnerable adults can be abused in a number of ways the harm caused cannot always be easily categorised but we can identify five broad definitions of abuse as follows:

- Physical** Actual or likely deliberate physical injury to a child / vulnerable adult, or willful or neglected failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- Emotional** Where children / vulnerable adults are persistently or severely emotionally neglected, or rejected, for example, by not being given enough love or attention, by not being taken seriously, or being intimidated by threats or taunts.
- Sexual** Where children / vulnerable adults are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity.
- Neglect** Where children / vulnerable adults are persistently or severely neglected, or failure to protect a child / vulnerable adult from exposure to any kind of danger.
- Financial** A form of domestic abuse and is a way of having power over a vulnerable person. It involves someone else controlling your spending or access to cash, assets and finances.

The Centre for Health and Well Being (CHWB) is committed to preventing any form of abuse and to ensuring proper care is administered by all staff, therapists and volunteers. Our Duty to Care forms the basis for endeavouring to safeguard all children, vulnerable adults and employees. Vetting and monitoring standards and the uptake of references are essential in respect of all employees, and volunteers. We will ensure this by:

- Ensuring all staff / volunteers and employees are familiar with the good practice principals within the CHWB.
- Ensuring Level 1 Safeguarding training is regularly updated for all staff, therapists and volunteers.
- Ensuring that all children under the age of 16 are accompanied for their therapy session by a parent or guardian.
- Ensuring all therapist appointments are subject to stringent vetting procedures, which includes:
 - Proof of qualifications, professional membership, professional insurance
- All staff, therapists and volunteers are subject to an enhanced Access NI check which is refreshed every 3 years.

- Ensuring all appointments are subject to a 6 month probationary period, which involves a monthly interview to assess suitability for the position.
- CHWB retains the right to withdraw an offer of work to any individual or organisation in order to ensure the protection of children/vulnerable adults from harm.
- Adhering to the following good practice guidelines;

- 1. Promote the general welfare and health of children and vulnerable adults.**
 - Accept that the welfare of the child / vulnerable adult must be the first priority for any organisation whose work brings it into contact with children or vulnerable people.
 - Take positive steps towards creating an environment in which children / vulnerable adults are generally valued in every respect.
 - Have a policy statement on child / vulnerable adult protection.
- 2. Recognise that children / vulnerable adults have rights as individuals.**
 - Acknowledge the unacceptability at any time of threatening, violent and degrading behaviour.
 - Ensure there is a contract of understanding between the Centre and the vulnerable clients to include acceptable behaviour and their rights as individuals.
 - Treat children / vulnerable adults as individuals.
 - Encourage the involvement of children in accessing services.
- 3. Raise awareness of what children / vulnerable adults are entitled to be protected from.**
 - Be clear about what abuse is.
 - Be aware of who can abuse children.
 - Ensure that Trustees, staff and volunteers attain Level 1 Safeguarding training and that therapists attain Level 2 Safeguarding training.
- 4. Adopt and consistently apply a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting volunteers.**
 - Take reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.
 - You must not assume that some people can be excluded from undergoing a thorough selection procedure.
 - Take into account a range of matters in addition to the protection from harm.
- 5. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise opportunities for children / vulnerable adults to suffer harm by:**
 - Planning and managing the activities of the organisation.
 - Using supervision as a means of protecting children / vulnerable adults.
 - Providing training for staff, therapists and volunteers (point 3 above).
 - Making arrangements for annual reviews of staff, therapists and volunteers to assist in the process of continual improvement.
- 6. Develop procedures, which will ensure speedy and effective response to accidents and complaints and to actual or suspected incidents of abuse.**
 - Consider all the various situations where children / vulnerable adults may suffer harm.

- Develop simple and clearly defined procedures for dealing with actual or suspected abuse.
- Be well informed about the nature of the statutory child protection procedures and about your role in that process.

7. Confidentiality

- The organisation will have a clear statement about confidentiality detailing how this will be respected and will at all-time be on a need to know basis only.
- Staff, volunteers, complementary therapists and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable children/adults with other professionals particularly investigative agencies and social services.
- Where possible, consent must be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. However in some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.
- In any situation where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, it is important that the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are protected by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information.
- Consideration must be given at all times to “the welfare of the child / vulnerable adult” but confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of the child / vulnerable adult to be protected from harm.

8. Procedure in the event of a disclosure of abuse

If abuse is suspected, the safety and welfare of the child / vulnerable adult is paramount. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously. CHWB are committed to preventing any form of abuse but should there be a concern or disclosure of abuse we will respond by

- Ensure that the child / vulnerable adult is safe and protected.
- If necessary seek medical treatment.
- Ensuring the child / vulnerable adult / or employee will be supported appropriately including being accompanied until the matter is resolved.
- The disclosure/concern is reported to the Designated Officer or if unavailable to the Designated Officer on the Board of Trustees.
- The Designated Officer will inform the person who has made the disclosure / concern that they are legally obligated to report to Social Services and the PSNI.
- The Designated Officer will record information appropriately in accordance with our confidentiality policy and ongoing legislation. The record will include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, their name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the person who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.
- The Designated Officer will report the disclosure/concern to the child/adult Social Services Gateway Team on 028 9050 7000/028 9504 1744 and to a Child/Adult Protection Officer within the PSNI.

- The telephone report will be followed up in writing as soon as is possible with any notes taken retained for potential future reference.

Useful Contact Numbers

Centre for Health and Wellbeing Designated Officer:

Centre Coordinator 028 9022 3220 (office number)

Centre for Health and Wellbeing Trustee Designated Officer:

Contact office for telephone number

Social Services Child Gateway Team 028 9050 7000

Social Services Adult Gateway Team 028 9504 1744

Police Service telephone 028 9065 0222 or 999 in an emergency

Suspensions or allegations may turn out to be unfounded. It is very important that everyone in the organisation knows that if they raise a concern, which through the process of investigation is not validated, they have not in any way been wrong in their initial action.

Staff must feel confident of support when they take responsible action.

Review Period

The Trustees of the Centre for Health and Wellbeing will review the policy, ensuring it is fit for purpose, every two years. The next review will be held in April 2025.