

KNOCK CHILD CONTACT CENTRE

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Knock Child Contact Centre believes that all children and young people have the right to be protected at all times and that the welfare of the child is paramount. It recognises that child abuse occurs irrespective of religion, culture and social class.

Confidentiality issues will be overridden by the need to act for the welfare of the child.

All children have the right to be safe and not to be harmed.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Centre's Health and Safety Policy.

1. Introduction

The Management Committee of Knock Child Contact Centre aims to ensure that children remain safe while at the Centre. Part of achieving this goal is the provision by the Management Committee of a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which users and referrers are made aware of and can see upon request. Staff and volunteers are trained in the policy and procedure, and must themselves complete an application form, provide the names of two referees, undergo an interview and Criminal Records Disclosure check (through AccessNI) before beginning work at the Centre. An appointment is also conditional on a satisfactory 3 month trial period.

2. Aim

The aim of the following Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is to provide guidance to the paid and volunteer staff of the Contact Centre, regarding how to respond to issues of child abuse and how best to avoid children or young people being exposed to negligence or avoidable risks.

3. Basic Principles

Knock Child Contact Centre:

1. Believes that children and young people need safe environments in which they can develop and grow in confidence.
2. Recognises that organisations working with and supporting children and young people have a duty to keep them safe.
3. Places Safeguarding children and young people and Child Protection at the centre of its activities
4. Is committed to and working towards meeting the objectives contained within the Families Matter framework.

5. Believes that children and young people should not be exposed to negligence or avoidable risks.
6. Recognises that Safeguarding and Child Protection are emotive issues that need to be handled both sensitively and carefully
7. Is committed to creating and implementing policies and procedures that will ensure where risks may exist regarding children and young people they will be both assessed and carefully managed in consultation with agencies that have a child protection responsibility.
8. Recognises the difference between Child Protection and Safeguarding namely:
 - **Child Protection involves recognising signs of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect and acting upon it.**
 - **Safeguarding involves keeping children and young people safe from a much wider range of potential harm and looks at preventative action and not just reaction.**
9. Is committed to ensuring that all its management committee, volunteers and staff know about and operate in accordance with the following procedure when a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue arises namely:
 - Recognise
 - Respond
 - Report
 - Record
 - Refer

(Report = Volunteer informing the Coordinator and the Coordinator informing the Committee if required.
 Refer= Coordinator informing Social Services or other appropriate agency.
 Where there is any doubt or uncertainty about the nature or extent of actual or likely harm, the Coordinator/Deputy Coordinator should seek advice from the local Gateway Team of the Health and Social Care Trust.)
10. Is committed to ensuring that all its management committee, volunteers and staff are aware of, kept up to date with and operate in accordance with good practice in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Recruitment

Knock Child Contact Centre will have a clearly defined recruitment process for its staff and volunteers. This will include application forms, checking ID, interviews, checking references, induction procedures and probationary periods. The Coordinator will be responsible for ensuring these processes are followed in relation to Volunteers. The Management Committee will be responsible for ensuring these processes are followed with regard to recruitment of staff.

Knock Child Contact Centre's commitment to Safeguarding and Child Protection will also extend to the following:

Access NI Checks

All of its volunteers, staff and management committee will be checked to an enhanced level when they first join the organisation and every three years thereafter. All of its volunteers, staff and management committee will be aware of and kept up to date with good practice and procedural changes in relation to Access NI checks.

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

This has been created to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. It will work with Access NI to gather information about people who want to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults.

Knock Child Contact Centre will modify its own recruitment practices and procedures to take account of directives issued by the ISA.

Managing Safeguarding and Child Protection

1. Knock Child Contact Centre will have a named person who will be responsible and accountable for all aspects of the organisation's work in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.
2. This person will be responsible for:
 - Ensuring the Centre is aware of and operating in accordance with the Safeguarding Board's policies and procedures in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection.
 - Ensuring that volunteers/staff have access to the phone numbers they need to consult on or report allegations or concerns relating to Safeguarding or Child Protection to Social Services Gateway Teams and or the police.
 - Ensuring that either themselves or another member of staff passes accurate information relating to Safeguarding or Child Protection to the statutory agency responsible for investigating it both directly and quickly - initially by telephone, followed up in writing and seeking a written acknowledgment.
3. Establishing timely contact and seeking advice from NACCC if they have any concerns about Safeguarding, Child Protection or Inappropriate Referrals to their centre.

What is child abuse?

The definitions of child abuse currently in use are:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is 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.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is 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. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse

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.

Neglect

Neglect is 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 food, 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.

Reference: DHSSPS (2003) [Cooperating to Safeguard Children](#)

Procedure

Volunteer

If a volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse in the Centre, he/she should:

- Take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety of the child involved.
- Involve another volunteer and/or co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- Report the incident to the co-ordinator who will record it.

If an allegation of abuse is made to a volunteer by a child, the volunteer should:

- Take seriously what the child has said
- Report the allegation without delay to the co-ordinator who will record it.

If an allegation of abuse is made to a volunteer by another adult, the volunteer should:

- Report the allegation without delay to the co-ordinator who will record it.

Co-ordinator

On receiving an allegation or witnessing an incident of child abuse, the co-ordinator shall discuss this with a nominated member of the Committee and, if deemed necessary, shall report the matter to:

- Social Services or
- Police C.A.R.E. (Child Abuse Rape Enquiry) Unit or
- N.S.P.C.C
- Follow the advice given by the appropriate agency above.
- Complete report for the records.

Practice Guidance

Some do's and don'ts for Centre volunteers/staff if a child makes an allegation.

DO'S	DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm • Listen and hear • Give the child/young person time to say what they want • Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you • Report to the co-ordinator • Record the allegations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't panic. Try to act normally • Don't make the child repeat the story unnecessarily • Don't promise confidentiality - this is not possible if criminal acts are reported • Don't ask for details of the alleged abuse • Don't investigate - don't ask leading questions • Don't attempt to deal with the problem alone <p>Don't challenge parents/carers about your concerns</p>

Safeguarding and Child Protection Awareness for Knock Child Contact Centre volunteers, staff and management committee

This is mandatory for co-ordinators, other key staff or volunteers and will be repeated or revised as required. It will always form part of the induction.

Sharing Information

1. Knock Child Contact Centre has a statutory obligation to pass information to relevant partner organisations when it is aware that a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue has arisen within the centre or elsewhere.
2. Knock Child Contact Centre has a recognised procedure for volunteers and staff to follow when they are aware that a Safeguarding or Child Protection issue has arisen within the centre or elsewhere.
3. Knock Child Contact Centre will make families using the centre and referrers aware of their statutory obligation to record and report any incidents or concerns relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection

Providing Advice and Support

Knock Child Contact Centre will ensure that its volunteers and staff receive the supervision and support they require when they are working with Safeguarding and Child Protection incidents or concerns.

Anyone who considers that there has been a failure to follow, or non-compliance with, recognised procedures and good practice in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection by Knock Child Contact Centre's volunteers, staff and management committee or when allegations involve the Centre's volunteers or staff, can lodge a complaint with the Management Committee or with the Safeguarding Panel of the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

Knock Child Contact Centre also understands that if the National Association of Child Contact Centres (NACCC) becomes aware of any failings or non-compliance with recognised procedures and good practice concerning its procedures or practice in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection it will act in one or a combination of the following ways, as appropriate and reasonable:

- Enhanced support and training for the Centre
- Agreement for further action by the Centre
- Temporary suspension from membership of NACCC
- Removal of NACCC accreditation status
- Notification of partner organisations that are making referrals to and or funding the centre.

Distribution of Knock Child Contact Centre's Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection

A current copy of this policy will be included in the guidance notes given to volunteers, staff and management committee members. Copies of the policy will also be available to referrers, families using the centre and other organisations upon request.

Revision of Knock Child Contact Centre's Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection

This will take place as and when required. Additional changes will take account of new legislation and practice guidance.

**Statement of Commitment to Knock Child Contact Centre’s
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

This form is to be completed by all Knock Child Contact Centre’s volunteers, staff and management committee members.

I _____ (insert name) have read and understood the standards and guidelines contained within Knock Child Contact Centre’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. I agree with the principles contained therein and accept the importance of implementing them in my capacity as an employee, volunteer or management committee member of Knock Child Contact Centre.

_____ Print Name

_____ Signature

_____ Job Title/Role

_____ Date