

# Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Safeguarding Policy

And

Guidelines for Work with Children, Youth and  
Adults at Risk

**2020**

**Reviewed by**

Brendan McAleer CCÉ  
Roisin Timlin Volunteer Now

**NEXT REVIEW DUE OCTOBER 2023**

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## INTRODUCTION

This policy highlights the value base, standards and procedures required for volunteers to ensure effective protection for children, young people and Adults at Risk. It should be utilised where circumstances and programmes require it e.g. weekly classes, events, residential activities and overseas trips.

For the purposes of this document: -

- ‘Chairperson’            refers to the person who heads each Branch of Comhaltas
- ‘Volunteer’            refers to a person (18 years or over) who is involved in the running of Comhaltas.
- ‘Staff’                    refers to any person who works for Comhaltas.

**CCÉ                        Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann**

**Comhaltas            Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann**

‘Designated Safeguarding Officer’ refers to the appointed person(s) within each branch who is responsible for safety of all children/young people and Adults at Risk availing of the facility

- Comhaltas fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding. Our policy applies to all, staff, branch members, volunteers, teachers, etc (hereinafter ALL referred to as “members”) working with the organisation.
- Comhaltas is an international organisation with many years experience in passing on our cultural traditions to younger generations through music, song, dance and the Irish language.
- As a Comhaltas member, staff or volunteer it is important to understand that you are in a position of responsibility, authority and trust with respect to the children, youth and any adults at risk you may work with or come in contact with in the course of Comhaltas related activities.
- The welfare of children, youth and adults at risk with whom Comhaltas works, their health and well being and their best interests are considered paramount.
- Comhaltas members are required to adhere to the Policy, Procedures and Code of Practice in the exercise of their duties.
- This document is written to ensure that working with Comhaltas in whatever capacity will be a safe and enjoyable experience for all involved.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The health, safety and well being of all our children, young people and Adults at Risk are of paramount importance to all staff, members and volunteers who are a part of Comhaltas. Everyone has the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, class, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe as participants in all our activities.

Comhaltas has a 'zero tolerance' policy with regard to abuse, intimidation, bullying (physical or emotional), racism and sexist behaviour directed towards children. All Comhaltas staff, members and volunteers must be aware of this policy and it is their duty to guarantee its implementation.

In our activities we value our children, young people and adults at risk. A culture of mutual respect between children/young people/adults at risk and those who represent the organisation in all its activities will be encouraged with adults modelling good practice in this context.

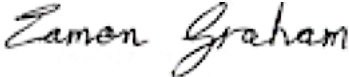
Comhaltas recognises that good safeguarding policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved with our work, including staff, branch officers, members and volunteers, as these policies can help protect them from erroneous or malicious allegations.

The policy states:

“All children, young people and Adults at Risk should enjoy Comhaltas facilities and activities without fear of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.”

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the **Ulster Council of CCÉ** on:  
**DATE: 11 – October - 2020**

**Cathaoirleach CCÉ Ulster Council**

Signed 

Print Name: Eamon Graham

**Ulster Council Safeguarding Officer 1**

Signed 

Print Name: Brendan McAleer

**Ulster Council Safeguarding Officer 2**

Signed 

Print Name: Cara Maginn

**Ulster Council Adult Safeguarding  
Champion (ASC)**

Signed 

Print Name: Grainne Scullion

### **Aims and Objectives**

This policy ensures that staff, branch members and volunteers are clear about the actions necessary with regard to child protection issues.

Its aims are:

- To raise the awareness of all - staff, branch members and volunteers- on the importance of safeguarding and to identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To ensure effective communication between staff, branch members and volunteers when dealing with safeguarding issues.
- To apply the correct procedures when dealing with an issue of safeguarding.

### **Rationale**

- To adopt a Policy, Guidelines and Code of Practice on safeguarding the welfare of children, youth and adults at risk.
- To plan and monitor the work of Comhaltas so as to eliminate situations where the abuse of a children, youth and adults at risk may occur.
- To apply agreed procedures for protecting children, youth and adults at risk to all staff, members and volunteers.
- To use supervision as a means of protecting children, youth and adults at risk.
- To ensure that staff, branch members and volunteers are aware of this Policy, Code of Practice and Safeguarding procedures to be followed
- To ensure that mandatory vetting by AccessNI is applied to all Comhaltas personnel (who have frequent access to children) who provide a service to children, youth or adults at risk and others.

### **Principles of Good Practice**

The following is a summary of the principles of good practice for the protection of children.

All Branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann adhere to the following principals of Good Practice for working with children, youth and Adults at Risk;

- 1 Comhaltas strive to promote the general welfare, health and personal development of individuals and protect them from harm of all kinds.
- 2 Comhaltas recognise that children, young people and Adults at Risk have rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect.
- 3 Comhaltas shall raise awareness about what children, young people and Adults at Risk are entitled to be protected from.

- 4 Comhaltas will adopt and consistently apply a rigorous and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- 5 Comhaltas shall plan an appropriate response procedure in relation to concerns, allegations, incidents and disclosures of alleged or suspected incidents of abuse.
- 6 Comhaltas shall establish links with parents/guardians and other relevant organisations.
- 7 Comhaltas shall stay abreast of emerging technologies and web based programmes to ensure that all members, especially those considered as children, young people and Adults at Risk can enjoy all Comhaltas has to offer in a safe and secure environment.
- 8 Comhaltas shall ensure best practice with regards to photography and videography.
- 9 This policy should be reviewed every 3 years in advance of the Annual Convention of CCÉ, i.e. on or before the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of February.
  - a) The next Review will be due in 2024.
  - b) This review will be carried out by persons appointed by the standing committee of CCÉ Uladh but shall include the designated Safeguarding Officers and Adult Safeguarding Champion of the Ulster Council.
  - c) This reviewed policy shall be approved by the Ulster Council of CCÉ before implementation.

In reviewing and implementing this policy Comhaltas work with, and adhere to, the procedures as outlined in the “Keeping Children Safe” & “Keeping Adults Safe” documents produced by VOLUNTEER NOW.

These are outlined below.

1. There is a written policy on the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding children.
2. The organisation consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
3. There are procedures in place for the effective management, support, supervision and training of staff and volunteers.
4. The organisation has simple and clearly defined procedures for dealing with actual or suspected incidents of abuse
5. There is a written code of behaviour that outlines the behaviour expected of workers and volunteers towards children.

6. The organisation has guidelines that outline how relevant information is shared appropriately with parents, children, workers and other relevant agencies.
7. The organisation has guidelines to ensure the general safety of activities and to ensure the effective management of activities.

**Compliance**

This policy document applies to all Comhaltas activities in Northern Ireland. They have been designed to work within current guidelines to meet the legislative requirements. Should any conflict arise between any of our policies and procedures and the law, then the relevant law will take precedence. We will endeavour to ensure that our policy documents are updated appropriately to reflect future changes in the law.



## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS**

Social Services have a statutory duty to investigate any case where they receive information suggesting that a child, young person or Adult at Risk may be in need of care, protection or control unless satisfied that such inquiries are unnecessary. Their objective is to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, young person or Adult at Risk by providing support services to him/her and his/her family or, where safeguards within the home are insufficient, by providing alternative care for the child, young person or Adult at Risk for as long as necessary. They also have a lead role in co-ordinating the work of all the agencies and professionals concerned with the individual's family.

### **STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Whilst the primary responsibility for the protection of children and Adults at Risk from abuse rests with the Social Services, all staff and volunteers who come into contact with children, young people and Adults at Risk have a duty to help protect them from abuse or the risk of abuse.

When volunteers see signs, which cause them concern, they may have the opportunity to talk to the individual with tact and sympathy. They should not enquire too deeply or carry out an examination. If the individual's responses do not dispel suspicion, or if it is impossible to talk to the child, then volunteers should make their concerns known to the branch Chairman or designated Safeguarding officer.

### **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

Each Branch of Comhaltas within Ulster should appoint two Designated Safeguarding Officers (*Please list your Safeguarding Officer contact details here*)

The Designated Officers for \_\_\_\_\_ (Branch)

#### **BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 1**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

#### **BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 2**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

## **The Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Two **Designated Liaison Persons** will be nominated by each Comhaltas Branch each year. The D.L.P has responsibility for managing safeguarding issues within the branch. The role and responsibilities of the DLP are:

- To implement and promote the unit's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- To act as the main contact for Safeguarding within the branch.
- To provide information and advice on Safeguarding for the branch membership.
- To create awareness of the importance of Safeguarding.
- To communicate with members on Safeguarding issues.
- To keep abreast of developments and understand the most recent information on related issues – data protection, confidentiality, legal and other, that impact on Safeguarding.
- To encourage good practice and support of the procedures involved.
- To maintain confidential records of reported cases and the action taken and to liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure that they have access to all necessary information.
- To regularly monitor and review the branch Policy and Procedures

### **Five Elements:**

#### **1. We establish a safe environment in which children/vulnerable adults can learn, perform and develop**

- We create an environment where children, youth or vulnerable adults feel secure, are encouraged to communicate and are listened to.
- We ensure children, youth or vulnerable adults know that there are adults in Comhaltas whom they can approach if they have concerns.
- We ensure that adult members of Comhaltas, and other adults working with Comhaltas, possess an understanding of the responsibility placed on the organisation for safeguarding by stating its obligation in this policy.

#### **2. We raise awareness of the child protection issues among members and co-workers**

- We ensure every member in contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults is aware of this Policy and Procedures/guidelines and are aware of their inherent responsibilities.
- We raise awareness of the Safeguarding Policy with all members, parents, tutors and supervisors.

#### **3. We practise safe recruitment and check the suitability of staff/teachers.**

- We recognise the importance of checking the background of teachers (music, singing, dancing, etc) and others before they are given responsibility to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Comhaltas, as a voluntary organisation, has registered with AccessNI, current legislation in Northern

Ireland requires mandatory vetting for all personnel working 'regularly' in regulated activity with children i.e. teaching.

#### **4. We implement Procedures in respect of suspect, alleged or confirmed cases of abuse**

- We recognise that members may in some instances have cause for concern. Should the latter occur guidance should be sought from the DLP and liaise with statutory agencies, namely HSC Gateway team and/or the PSNI.
- We will maintain effective links with the relevant agencies and co-operate with any enquiry regarding safeguarding matters.
- We will follow safeguarding procedures where an allegation is made against a member/volunteer.
- Certain children, youth or vulnerable adults are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Such people include those with disabilities, those who are homeless and those who, for one reason or another, are separated from their parents or other family members and who depend on others for their care and protection. The same categories of abuse – neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse – are applicable, but may take a slightly different form. For example, abuse may take the form of deprivation of basic rights, harsh disciplinary regimes or the inappropriate use of medications or physical restraints. All those involved in caring for persons in residential settings, including those for educational and recreational purposes, outside of the home (as in the case of attendance at Comhaltas classes/functions) must be alert to the possibility of abuse by other children, youth, vulnerable adults, visitors and members.

#### **5. We recognise the possibility of retrospective disclosures by adults**

An increasing number of adults are disclosing abuse that took place during their childhoods. Such disclosures often come to light when adults attend counselling. It is essential to establish whether there is any current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in such disclosures. If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, the counsellor/ health professional should report the allegation to the HSC Gateway Services without delay.

#### **ULSTER COUNCIL DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

Contact details for Ulster Council Designated Officers

##### **Ulster Council Safeguarding Officer 1**

Name: Brendan McAleer

Address: 64 Drumlish Road, Dromore. Co. Tyrone BT78 3BL

Tel: 07775 922 316 – 028 8224 2777

**Ulster Council Safeguarding Officer 2**

Name: Cara Maginn

Address: 11 Forest Park View, Castlewellan. Co. Down BT31 9SP

Tel: 07765 385 565 - 028 4377 0899

**Ulster Council Safeguarding Officer 3 & Adult Safeguarding Champion (ASC)**

Name: Grainne Scullion

Address: 35 Aughlisnafin Road, Castlewellan. Co. Down BT31 9JR

Tel: 07811 188 305 – 028 4377 8989

**Comhaltas Code of Practice:**

The following guidance includes a variety of contexts in which Comhaltas members carry out their activities:

The Code of Practice is to safeguard the welfare of the young children in our charge and to ensure that safe and sensible steps will continue to be taken to ensure the safe practice and environment for young people, staff, branch members and volunteers alike.

**Comhaltas General Standards and Practice***Standard*

- 1 To value each child, young person and Adult at Risk, recognising their individuality and seeking to develop their potential and to maximise their contribution to the group and to society at large.
- 2 To help children, young people and Adults at Risk develop and grow using methods appropriate to their age and development.
- 3 To encourage young people to be involved in the management and planning of the programmes in which they participate.
- 4 To treat children, young people and Adults at Risk with dignity and respect, and to encourage them to do likewise in their relationships with others.
- 5 To choose and train Comhaltas volunteers whose contribution to the group will be positive and in keeping with the standards promoted by Comhaltas Management.
- 6 To each formulate their own specific statements of aims and objectives, subject to the Office Bearers, and make them known to all volunteers, parents, children and young people.
- 7 To use appropriate language with young people, children and Adults at Risk and to encourage them to speak to each other in ways which build up dignity and mutual respect. To avoid and discourage put-downs and disparaging remarks.
- 8 To have programmes which are appropriate and planned well in advance.
- 9 To have adequate leadership in terms of child/adult ratios as determined by health & safety standards for the programme.
- 10 To ensure there is an emergency contact telephone number, as well as address, relevant medical information, photographic consent and agreement to codes of conduct on file for each child and young person.
- 11 To be aware of the parents/guardians arrangements for the delivering and collecting of children/young people from Comhaltas activities, and generally to maintain good communication with parents.

**Practice: COMHALTAS NEEDS TO:**

- 1 Keep an updated list of names, address and contact numbers for all group members and volunteers.

- 2 Ulster Comhaltas shall deliver a copy of the Safeguarding Policy to each Unit of the organisation within Ulster.
- 3 Each volunteer should have access to the Comhaltas “Safeguarding Policy”, and be familiar with its contents. They should know who to contact if neglect or abuse is suspected, or if a complaint is made and what basic procedures to follow.
- 4 Each worker must have completed an appropriate application form [see Appendix VII (i)], to be kept on file.
- 5 Each group should formulate its own statement of aims and objectives, which should be accessible to all parties involved in the group. (Each new leader and group member, and their parents, should be familiarised with this.)
- 6 Each group needs to formulate in close association with the young people or children involved – a code of conduct, a discipline policy, and an anti-bullying policy, a copy of this should be kept with the group’s aims and objectives.
- 7 Each group needs to plan its programme with safety in mind.
- 8 Each group should use the appropriate permission forms for activities and outings, and complete accident reports as and when necessary.

#### **Branch Classes / Activities**

- All Branches should be responsible for the appointment of teachers / tutors.
- Ensure that TWO Branch adults, preferably one male and one female, or an adult tutor and one other adult arrive together to open the venue.
- Arrange seating appropriately for both tutor and pupil with respect to physical proximity.
- Where a tutor is dealing with an individual pupil, ensure another adult, preferably a Branch adult is in close vicinity.
- It is necessary for a tutor to report inappropriate behaviour to a Branch adult and to the DLP
- Trust your intuition if a pupil is acting inappropriately and take action, ie share concerns with the DLP and implement measures to reduce risk.
- Use verbal affirmation to praise rather than physical touch.
- Never use physical forms of discipline.
- Tutors and parents should be made aware of class timetable.
- Ensure that after class all children are collected promptly and TWO Branch adults, preferably one male and one female or a tutor and one other adult are present to lock up the venue.
- Drop off and collection times should be strictly adhered to.
- There should be adequate supervision of young people while they are waiting for class.
- A class register and incident book should be kept.

(Record details of any incident occurring – date, time, place and summary of the incident pertaining to children’s welfare)

## **Contact with Children and Young People**

### Standard

Volunteers should **avoid**:

- 1 Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or Adults at Risk away from others. A worker should never be alone with a child/Adult at Risk unless they are in the sight of others.
- 2 Taking children/Adults at Risk alone on car journeys, however short. Where this is unavoidable the child/Adult at Risk should sit in the back seat. Where possible parents should be advised before departure.
- 3 Taking children/Adults at Risk to a workers home.
- 4 Using physical force to remove a child/Adult at Risk unless:
  - It is for the child's/Adult at Risk's safety or
  - You are concerned for the safety of persons or property

*When occasions arise where these things are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the leader in charge and/or the child's parents/guardians.*

Volunteers should **never**:

- 1 Engage in rough games with children
- 2 Engage in sexually provocative games/contact/behaviour/discussion
- 3 Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- 4 Use corporal punishment
- 5 Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- 6 Make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child, even in fun
- 7 Allow an allegation made by a child to go unchallenged or unrecorded
- 8 Do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- 9 Sleep in a room with children without at least one other worker being present
- 10 Establish relationships with participants, which may have sexual overtones

### Practice

All Branches should keep a written record of the name, address, telephone number, date of birth, special medical needs and contact person for each child/Adult at Risk.

Each group should maintain the following worker/child ratios (allowing a minimum of 2 leaders at all times). Additional staff may be required to cope with the demands of high risk activities.

Approx age range	no. of leaders	no. of children
0 - 2	1	3
2 - 3	1	4
3 - 6	1	4
6 -11	1	8
11 - 18	1	8

When a 'group' consists of both males and females, the staffing should ideally reflect the composition of the participants.

Each volunteer should be given a copy of 'Guidelines for Self-Protection' (see page 34).

The standards set out above must be maintained and followed at all times.

**Please note** the Comhaltas Management expects volunteers to act with sensitivity and self-control when working with all age groups. Those engaged in Comhaltas work need to recognise the issues of power and responsibility. It is Comhaltas practice that volunteers do not misuse their role by taking advantage of participants of any age and establishing 'personal relationships'.

### **Photography: Authorisation.**

Child protection issues and sensitivity towards identity theft have presented challenges to all those involved with recording images of people for promotional purposes. In the same way that video and audio recordings require authorisation and permissions at competitions, it is also important to follow the proper procedures in photographing young persons.

A model release form is available in the downloads section of the Press room at [www.comhaltas.ie](http://www.comhaltas.ie). The subjects of any photographs must be informed that their picture has been taken and may be used for promotional purposes by Comhaltas. Ideally, if under 18 years, subjects' parents or their guardians must sign approval on the official form.



## **Appointment of Workers/Volunteers**

### Standard

Comhaltas branches should employ an open recruitment process and all appointments should only be made based on the merits of individual applicants. For the well-being and protection of programme participants all potential staff and volunteers must be vetted prior to their appointment or involvement in activities.

Full appointment procedures should be carried out as per the guidelines recommended below and in the appendix VII (iii) "Guidelines for Recruitment and Management of Volunteers and Workers".

### Practice

- 1 Each potential worker should be made fully aware of all duties and responsibilities pertaining to the appointment and the Comhaltas Safeguarding Policy.
- 2 References should be obtained and checked, including at least one from a former employer.
- 3 Workers involved in regulated activity must be vetted through Access Northern Ireland ([www.accessssni.gov.uk](http://www.accessssni.gov.uk))
- 4 All appointments, probationary periods and work reviews should be sanctioned and minuted by at least one of the following: a full Branch Committee meeting / Branch Sub-committee for Staff & Volunteers / full meeting of the Management Committee
- 5 All appointments should be confirmed in writing.
- 6 Potential workers should be assured of confidentiality.
- 7 Each worker or volunteer should serve a probationary period of at least 3 months.
- 8 A Training Needs Assessment should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.
- 9 An induction process should be followed for each new worker/volunteer – arranged by the Committee.
- 10 An inexperienced new worker may initially be required to assume an assisting role with a more experienced worker.
- 11 Safeguarding training must be provided as part of the induction process.

### Suitability

- 1 Agreement with the aims & purposes of Comhaltas
- 2 No criminal convictions for offences likely to endanger children/Adults at Risk.
- 3 Previous experience of working with children & young people.
- 4 Commitment to the aims of Comhaltas.
- 5 A commitment to treat all people as individuals and with equal concern.
- 6 Individual to be physically able to cope with activities of the group.
- 7 A commitment to undergo training.
- 8 A commitment to working in a team.
- 9 A commitment to recognise the importance of Safeguarding & the authority of line management

## Responding to Accidents / Incidents

### **Standard**

When an accident / incident occurs, the danger must be removed immediately, the injured person treated, and the accident recorded.

### *Practice*

1. Each organisation should provide Basic First Aid training for every staff member and volunteer.
2. When on outside activities, a leader trained in Emergency First Aid should be in attendance.
3. A telephone should be accessible wherever a group meets. Every leader should know how to access this facility. Notice of the nearest telephone should be clearly displayed.
4. Emergency telephone numbers should be displayed prominently.
5. Professional help should be sought if and when the trained First Aider cannot help or if further assistance is required when the First Aider can do no more.
6. A first aid box should be provided at each location. Professional advice should be sought on contents.
7. The worker in charge of the group must inform the Chairperson/or the C.S.C. of any accidents at the earliest possible opportunity.
8. The worker in charge of the group must ensure that the child's parent/guardian or the family of the Adult at Risk is immediately informed of the accident.
9. The worker in charge of the group must record all details of accidents in the Accident Book and also obtain witness statements within 24 hrs.
10. Identify cause of the incident and prevent re-occurrence.
11. If an accident is serious, the C.S.C. or the Chairperson should inform the insurance company named in the Accident Book as soon as possible.

## **Trips and Residential Activities**

### **Standards**

All trips and residential activities must be thoroughly planned and documented in advance including a risk assessment with all the relevant information accessible to all parties involved.

### *Practice*

- 1 Parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the arrangements for any trip to be taken outside of the normal venue.
- 2 The worker in charge must obtain from parents their written consent to the participation of their child and a completed copy of the health form prior to departure.
- 3 A copy of the trip information form should be forwarded to the C.S.C. and/or the Secretary.
- 4 Copies of the consent and health forms must be forwarded to the C.S.C. or held by an appropriate contact person.
- 5 A detailed itinerary of the trip should be given to all the parents/guardians, workers and the C.S.C. and/or the Secretary at least 2 weeks in advance of departure (a pre-trip information night for all concerned would be an appropriate opportunity to present this information).

### **Residential Activities**

- All trips and residential activities will be subject to all the policies and guidelines of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann including but not limited to this document at all times.
- Each residential should have at least two leaders-in-charge, preferably 1 male and 1 female. There should be at least one leader to every 8 young people.
- Leaders must ensure that males and females have different sleeping rooms. In exceptional circumstances workers must be sensitive to the needs of individuals and monitor the situation carefully.
- Young people participating should have their privacy respected by other participants e.g. rooms, changing rooms, showers, etc.
- Staff members (workers) must always use common sense and sensitivity and not leave themselves open to allegations of sexual misconduct. For example:
  - Do not enter rooms without permission
  - Do not enter changing rooms without permission
  - Do not enter showers without permission.
  - Always knock or call out and ask permission to enter areas where people may be changing.
- Never put yourself in a position of being alone with vulnerable individuals or persons at risk e.g. cars, closed rooms, out of public view.

- Staff members (workers) should, when possible, ask another staff member (worker) to accompany them when entering rooms etc.
- Staff members or volunteers should not sleep alone in dorms with young people/Adults at Risk.
- When changing or when with a group that is changing - be discreet.
- If behaviour by any individual causes offence or is deemed inappropriate, it is the leader's responsibility to discuss and deal with this as soon as possible.
- All young people attending residential activities must complete parental permission slips for under 18s and medical forms.
- Staff members and volunteers should use common sense and sensitivity around the areas of touching, hugging, etc.
- All staff and volunteers in leadership roles on residential activities will have undergone routine vetting.
- Prior to each residential, staff should meet as a group to discuss the implementation of these guidelines on the residential.

## Health

### Standard

Comhaltas staff members and volunteers should be prepared to treat each child/Adult at Risk according to their own needs and respond appropriately to any condition they may have. Workers should be appraised of the individual and diverse range of health issues existing amongst their group of young people via the parental information disclosed in the health form.

### *Practice*

- 1 All children and young people should be given a copy of the health form to be completed by their parent/guardian at the beginning of each working year. This may be supported by a revised copy prior to any trip if the parent/guardian has any amendments or additional information to provide.
- 2 This confidential form should be accessed by the worker in charge of that individual to alert them of any personal or health difficulties.
- 3 Medication should not be given to any child without the written consent of the parent/guardian or doctors treating the child.
- 4 In the event of an urgent health or medical crisis arising, professional help should be sought immediately.
- 5 Any medicines, which the child/Adult at Risk carries with them to a meeting or trip, should be clearly marked with the individual's name and parents/doctor's signed instruction for use. The allocated worker in charge of medication should then, if necessary, carry them, to be taken as prescribed.
- 6 All venues should carry the name and phone number of the nearest contact in a medical emergency and have telephone access. (i.e. if the group are out on a trip the worker in charge should carry the contact numbers with them alongside a mobile telephone.)

## Insurance

### Standard

All children's and youth work activities should have professionally advised and adequate insurance cover to include key areas of: -

- 1 Personal Accident
- 2 Public Liability
- 3 Property and Contents Insurance
- 4 Vehicle Insurance

### Practice

**Comhaltas Insurance Policy provides cover for all Branch Activities. While Comhaltas has an Insurance Policy the following guidelines must be adhered to:**

1. Ensure adults are first to arrive at the venue.
2. Ensure classes are supervised if or when the tutor has to leave the room.
3. Ensure that all pupils have been collected prior to the adults leaving the venue.
4. Pupils must be supervised at all times.
5. Ensure the venues are safe from all/any potential hazards.

## Premises

### Standard

The premises used for all Comhaltas activities should be suitable and safe and have a completed risk assessment. This includes:

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

### Practice

It is the responsibility of Comhaltas to maintain the upkeep of the premises to a safe and suitable standard. However, the worker in charge has a responsibility to:

1. Maintain and leave the premises in a clean, tidy and secure condition.
2. Notify the C.S.C. of any defects or hazards in the working/meeting environment. Ensure these points are documented in a memo/health and safety notebook.
3. Any damage caused by a user group should be reported immediately. Who should note damage in a memo/health and safety notebook along with implications, action to be taken and.
4. Regular scheduled fire drills should occur within each organisation.

## Equipment

### Standard

All equipment used by a Comhaltas group must be safe and suitable for use by the age range of the young people participating. Where a National Standard is applicable, the equipment should conform to it.

### Practice

- 1 All equipment should be thoroughly checked for defects before use.
- 2 If there are defects the equipment should not be used.
- 3 All defects must be reported to the activity organiser.
- 4 All workers should be fully conversant with assembly and use of equipment.
- 5 No child/Adult at Risk is to assist with the assembly of equipment.
- 6 Use of all equipment must be monitored by a worker.
- 7 Care should be taken that all paint, glue, felt tips, etc. are non-toxic.
- 8 Safe storage should be provided for all equipment.



## Transport

### Standard and Practice

#### 1 **General**

Coaches and minibuses are a safer and more effective way of transporting large groups than the use of private vehicles owned by parents/workers. Ideally the transporting of children should be kept to a minimum and reviewed regularly to consider alternatives.

#### 2 **Hired transport**

When it is necessary to hire transport, a reputable company should be used and their insurance cover checked.

#### 3 **Comhaltas Minibuses**

Comhaltas needs to allocate an individual/group to be responsible for the upkeep of the minibus. Overcrowding is dangerous and invalidates insurance cover. It is recommended that a notice be posted within the minibus stating the maximum number of passengers permissible.

All minibuses are required to be fitted with seat belts. One belt per individual no matter how small. (If an infant is to be transported then an appropriate baby carrier should be employed or the child should be held in the rear by a 'belted' adult). Seats should be filled from rear to front and emptied in reverse.

The driver should endeavour to park the vehicle so that passengers can exit onto the pavement nearest to their destination as opposed to having to cross a road. All drivers should wait until a child leaving the vehicle is safely indoors before driving off.

The driver must be properly licensed to drive the vehicle and should ensure that he/she always does so with due care and attention, adhering to the Highway Code.

Where a driver is unaccompanied it is important to ensure that no particular child is consistently left off last or collected first.

The minibus must be checked on a regular basis to ensure roadworthiness and serviced at regular intervals – see Driver's Form page 47. Any faults should be reported immediately to the person/s responsible for the minibus.

Comhaltas should ensure that the vehicle has adequate AA or RAC cover in the event that roadside assistance is required.

**4 Cars**

All parents/guardians should be encouraged to supply the name of the person/s who will regularly be responsible for delivering and collecting child to/from events.

Workers should not, as a general rule, give lifts to/from meetings without the written consent of the parent/guardian. This should be received at the commencement of the year/term and kept on record by the activity organiser.

Each worker who may be required to transport children must produce a copy of their driving license and insurance certificate to the activity organiser at the commencement of the year. Drivers should check that their passenger liability insurance is adequate, and note that overcrowding invalidates any insurance cover. Normal saloon cars should not carry in the excess of five people.

It is the responsibility of all drivers to ensure the roadworthiness of their vehicle and service it at regular intervals. Checks should be made on the tyres, fuel and oil status of the car before every journey.

Voluntary workers can use cars to transport children/young people provided the above conditions apply and that hire or reward is not involved.

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that each individual in the car is wearing a seat belt before the commencement of each journey.

All drivers must have the appropriate driving licence.

Where the AA or RAC should cover possible the driver in case of roadside assistance being required. (They should notify the activity organiser of this facility.)

It is preferable that the same driver (minibus or car) does routine transport arrangements to assist familiarity by the parents/guardians and also the child.

Seats should be filled from rear to front and emptied in reverse.

The driver should endeavour to park the vehicle so that passengers can exit onto the pavement nearest to their destination as opposed to having to cross a road. All drivers should wait until a child leaving the vehicle is safely indoors before driving off.

Leaders who come in a car should arrive well before the children.

## Practice

- Ensure that two adults, preferably one male and one female, travel in the car when only one child is being transported.
- When transporting young persons seat them in the back seat,
- Only carry the appropriate number vis a vis seat belts.
- Journey duration should be reported to another adult.
- A parental consent proforma should be completed regarding trips / outings.

## STATEMENT OF COMHALTAS BRANCH COMPLIANCE

NÓTA: All units are continually advised to raise awareness of safeguarding by:

- Appointing two DLPs
- Having the Safeguarding Policy & guidelines formally adopted by the branch annual general meeting (AGM) and noted in the branch minutes
- An item in relation to Safeguarding is listed on every meeting agenda.
- Parents of children attending classes/activities are advised of the Policy documents, name and contact of the DLP and that relevant personnel seek mandatory vetting
- Copies of all relevant documents are issued to all staff/teachers/supervisors etc
- Parents/guardians of children in receipt of music/song/dance/language tuition are invited to have sight of all policy documents if they wish to access these documents.

### DECLARATION:

**COMHALTAS BRANCH NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Safeguarding Policy has been formally adopted at a branch meeting and noted in the minutes.
- 2) A Risk Assessment has been carried out.
- 3) A SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT has been formally adopted and noted in the branch minutes.
- 4) Two Designated Liaison Persons (DLP) have been appointed.
- 5) All branch personnel – tutors, supervisors, administrators and all others who have FREQUENT ACCESS to children, youth & vulnerable adults are mandatorily vetted through AccessNI.
- 6) Copies of this Policy & Safeguarding Statement have been provided to all branch officers, teachers/tutors, and other relevant persons
- 7) This Policy, guidelines & Safeguarding Statement are available to be viewed by any branch member and by any parent/guardian of class students

### Signed:

Cathaoirleach: \_\_\_\_\_

Dáta: \_\_\_\_\_

Rúnaí: \_\_\_\_\_

Dáta: \_\_\_\_\_

DLP: \_\_\_\_\_

Dáta: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Review: October 2020

## Safeguarding Statement Template

**Craobh:** \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This is a sample template provided as a guide only to Comhaltas units and Centres. Please see the following documents for more information about developing a CCÉ Unit/Centre Child Safeguarding Statement:

- CCÉ Safeguarding Policy; Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults issued as a guide to units/centres. This policy as stands, or as adapted appropriately by the unit/centre considering local provisions, is recorded as being adopted by each unit/centre on an annual basis.
- CCÉ Child Protection Training Content and Guidelines; Training facilitated and provided by Ulster CCÉ or Dún Uladh (NI Liaise for CCE in relation to Safeguarding and AccessNI Vetting).
- “Keeping Children Safe” & “Keeping Adults Safe”: Volunteer Now Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
- Guidance on Developing a Child Safeguarding Statement ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))
- Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice ([www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie))

### **1. Name of service being provided:**

C.F. Appendix 2 Schedule of Relevant Services under the Children First Act 2015 Section 5(a), Any work or activity which consists of the provision of educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activities to children,

### **2. Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm** (brief outline of what our service is, what we do and our commitment to safeguard children):

CCÉ is a voluntary based organisation: Its aims and objectives and are stated in its Bunreacht. The organisation is understood to be a key contributor to the informal music education sector, organising community-based classes in traditional Irish music, song, dance, and other cultural activity and organising various public events and activities that promote cultural activity amongst children and adults.

**Sample Principles to safeguard children from harm:**

Regular review and appropriate updating of the CCE Safeguarding Policy taking local provision into consideration.

Our branch has an appointed Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for matters in relation to Safeguarding Guidelines and Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

All CCE personnel with regular access to children and/or vulnerable adults are requested by the organisation to apply for AccessNI Vetting.

All such personnel are asked to submit their notice of confirmed Vetting- with their vetting number – to any unit of CCÉ for which they operate any activity that involves regular access to children, youth or vulnerable adults.

If for circumstances the regular adult – e.g. volunteer teacher/tutor/ organiser/ activity leader is not available at short notice the unit will ensure that any replacement adult working with the children is in the company of a CCE vetted adult.

Minors can get AccessNI vetted, with consent from their parent/guardian. CCÉ recommends that minors who work with children, youth or vulnerable adults should be mentored by experienced and vetted adults to ensure that young leaders develop interpersonal skills that reflect best practice.

Parents and guardians of children attending classes and activities are at all times notified of appropriate schedules, locations etc of activities.

Parents and guardians are informed of the local CCÉ unit's policy and practices as relate to activities organised for children and pupils – e.g. if regular attendance at a class is necessary to ensure consideration for a branch activity.

CCÉ officers/mentors are volunteers who need to use the most efficient means of communicating details of activities relevant to their pupils/young members etc. Parents/guardians are asked to provide their mobile numbers/ email addresses in this regard. CCE adults do not knowingly communicate with a pupil / minor using any means of digital or other communication including / social media.

Any photographs or audio/visual recordings of any minor or vulnerable adult taken by a CCÉ officer/member are taken in the presence of the parent/ guardian and/or with the understood consent of the parent/guardian. It should be noted that recordings of artists, whatever age, are very much part of the intergenerational transmission of Irish traditional music and are understood to be a standard means of transmission in in oral artform.

As applies in any informal/formal instruction/activity regarding young persons or vulnerable adults it is regarded as part of the parents/guardians duty to ensure that the young person or vulnerable adult is accompanied safely to the appointed location where the activity is taking place and into to the temporary care of the designated adult. In many CCÉ settings children/youth/vulnerable adults pupils participate in a number of classes/activities which do not run consecutively. Some units are in a position to provide a waiting area with designated supervisors. Supervision arrangements in such cases – if available and if not available - should be communicated to parents/guardians. Units are encouraged to consider the process whereby pupils are known to have entered / exited the building.

The class register/attendance sheet is an important element of Safeguarding Policy implementation.

Branch teachers and mentors are clear on their role and responsibility in terms of appropriate supervision of children, youth or vulnerable adults while in their care and the general supervision practices of the branch.

Parents/guardians are informed of the Branch Policy in terms of the use of mobile phones/digital recording devices: In addition, parents/guardians understand that any use of social media by their child including sharing of digital files, relating to any CCÉ activity is not the responsibility of the CCÉ unit.

The unit has given careful consideration to the logistical lay-out of the building(s) it uses and the various rooms / areas within that are accessed by children and adults during a Comhaltas activity from a health and safety and safeguarding perspective.

CCÉ activities are understood to be group activities. If a branch finds itself with a 1:1 adult-child tuition/activity situation the door of the room remains open and the adult gives prior notification that a 1:1 situation has arisen.

CCÉ mentors, teachers and relevant personnel are recommended to complete the online TUSLA's Access to Children First E-Learning Programme.

All CCÉ units are requested to ensure that Child Protection and Safeguarding are an item of each meeting of the unit, to ensure continued awareness and to allow for continued updating and review. This inclusion of the topic on the minutes allows for local review on local provision.

### **3. Risk Assessment**

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child while availing of our services. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

	<b>Risk identified</b>	<b>Procedure in place to manage identified risk</b>
1	Challenges / specific issues relating to the building(s)/ facilities used for CCÉ classes / events to ensure adequate safety and safeguarding of children, youth and vulnerable adult.	A Branch Class/Activity Memo for supervisors, teachers/mentors, designated adults which details supervision, appropriate access and exit, class register etc, which is communicated to adults/parents.
2	A 'substitute' teacher/mentor who needs to be engaged due to need but who does not have CCÉ vetting.	The Branch has a policy in relation to same – If such a teacher/mentor is considered to teach a class / co-ordinate a branch activity on a once-off basis a CCÉ-vetted adult remains in the classroom area at all times.
3	Clarifying responsibility in terms of the care of branch junior members at CCÉ and non CCÉ public and participative events.	Ensuring that parents/guardians, relevant adult are aware of the remit of the branch/teachers/mentors in relation to the branch participation in public events and of parental/guardian duties in terms of accompanying their children and/or making provisions for the adequate care and supervision of their child/ minor.
4	Inappropriate use of electronic devices including mobile phones/ smart phones/iPads by pupils during CCÉ activities	Unit has a policy/guideline document in place in relation to the use of electronic devices during CCÉ classes/activities. Parents/guardians are informed of this policy.
5	Use of images in CCÉ publicity material	Branches of CCÉ have a policy of requesting appropriate consent regarding the use of images of minors/vulnerable adults used in promotional publicity material / communications.

#### 4. Procedures

- Our Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with the following policies and procedures:
  - (1) CCÉ Safeguarding Policy, Guidelines & Procedures in respect of Branch Involvement with Children/Youth and Vulnerable Adults
  - (2) Appointing two Branch DLPs
  - (3) Obligatory AccessNI Vetting for all Comhaltas personnel with regular access to children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.
  - (4) Carrying out a Risk assessment based on the local provisions and setting.
  - (5) Completing the Branch/ Centre safeguarding statement which is considered and adopted by the Branch Committee/ Centre Board of Management.
- Procedure for the reporting of safeguarding or welfare concerns to HSC/PSNI is outlined by CCÉ's Safeguarding policy and during training



seminars facilitated by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, CCÉ National Child Protection Liaison, Ulster CCÉ or Dún Uladh.

- The statutory requirements under the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017), and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice, are core documents which inform the above and are available on Tusla's website.
- Attendance at the training seminars' presented by Tomás Ó Maoldomhnaigh, National CCÉ Child Protection Liaison, Ulster CCÉ or Dún Uladh also provides ongoing guidance to CCÉ units and personnel.

All procedures listed are available upon request.

## **5. Implementation**

We recognise that implementation is an on-going process. Our service is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our service.

This Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_, or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which the statement refers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Cathaoirleach CCÉ, \_\_\_\_\_)

Provider's name and contact details

For queries, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, Branch DLP

## Comhaltas Safeguarding Statement Sample Template

**Section 2: Nature of service and principles to safeguard children from harm:**

Describe the nature of your services and specify the principles that you will observe to keep children safe from harm while they are availing of your service.

**Section 3: Risk assessment:** Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) provides additional guidance on carrying out the risk assessment component of your Child Safeguarding Statement.

**Section 4: Procedures:** As this is only a sample list, you will need to add to this list as appropriate, based on the outcome of your risk assessment. Please see also Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

**Section 5: Implementation:** At a minimum, reviews must be carried out by the Branch/Centre every 24 months. The Branch Committee/Centre Board of Management is responsible for conducting these reviews.

**Designated Liaison Person:** You should include the name and contact details of the Designated Liaison Person, who is the first point of contact regarding your Child Safeguarding Statement

## APPENDIX I

### ***Definition of Child Abuse/Abuse of Adult at Risk***

“Abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than another person causes significant harm. The broad categories of abuse are defined in “Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland” (March 2016).

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

Action on Elder Abuse : definition of abuse 1993

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

### ***Standard***

Workers and volunteers should recognise that abuse may take one of a number of forms. Whilst staff members and volunteers are not expected to be able to diagnose abuse it is sensible to be appraised of the range and possible indicators involved.

### ***Practice***

A presentation of the definitions, types and indicators should be included in safeguarding training and annual updates provided for workers and volunteers at the commencement of each year. It should be noted that many of the indicators would only be apparent if bathing an individual child or as part of a medical examination. Comhaltas workers would practise neither of which.

## APPENDIX II

### Range and Indicators of Child Abuse/Abuse of Adult at Risk

**NEGLECT:** The persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs. This may include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing. Failure to protect from harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate medical care or a lack of supervision.

Possible signs and symptoms:

- Exposure to danger, lack of supervision
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing for the time of year
- Constant hunger
- Untreated illnesses

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** The deliberate physical injury or a failure to prevent physical injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Possible signs and symptoms:

- Scratches
- Bite marks
- Bruises in unusual places such as arms, stomach head or back
- Bruises or marks consistent with either straps or slaps
- Burns of all kinds that do not have an explanation consistent with the marks.
- Cigarette burns
- Undue fear of adults, shown by ducking when approached (as if anticipating being hit).
- Fearful watchfulness.
- Failure to thrive.

**BULLYING:** Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Possible Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child, for example:

- Is frightened of attending the group;
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing";
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);

- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** The forcing or enticing of a child to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact including penetrative or non penetrative acts or non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material

Possible physical indicators:

- Itching in the genital area
- Soreness in the genital area
- Unexplained rashes or marks in the genital area
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Stained or bloody underclothes
- Recurrent tummy pains or headaches
- Bruises on inner thighs or buttocks

Possible behavioural indicators:

Frequent masturbation- (many young children may masturbate occasionally for comfort or experimentation)

- Inappropriate language for age of child
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge for age of child
- Making sexual advances to adults or other children
- Wariness of being approached by anyone possibly combined with a 'dazed' look.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child to cause severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child they are worthless or unloved or causing the child to feel frightened or in danger. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse.

Signs and symptoms:

- Overly withdrawn child
- Overly aggressive child
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Persistent rocking movement
- Inability to relate to peers

**EXPLOITATION:** is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child, young person or another person at risk; to take selfish or unfair advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for

personal gain from using them as a commodity. It may manifest itself in many forms including slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, domestic violence and abuse, sexual violence and abuse, or human trafficking.

**GRAVE CONCERN:** while strictly speaking not a form of abuse but a category of registration of abuse, this term covers children whose situation does not currently fit any of the four categories above but where social and medical assessments indicate that they are at significant risk of above. These could include situations where another child in the household has been harmed or the 'household' has been harmed or the household contains a known abuser.

**Remember:**

- 1 Look for a cluster of signs and symptoms
- 2 Record and date all observations of worrying marks/behaviour and keep these observations safe they are confidential material as well as possible evidence.
- 3 Seek advice about what you see and hear.
- 4 Some of these signs even in combination are not necessarily proofs in them selves that abuse has taken place.

**HOW CAN YOU BE ALERTED TO SIGNS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT?**

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

- They may disclose to you;
- Someone else may tell you of their concerns or something that causes you concern or that someone has disclosed to them;
- They may show some signs of physical injury for which there does not appear to be a satisfactory or credible explanation;
- Their demeanour/behaviour may lead you to suspect abuse or neglect;
- The behaviour of a person close to them makes you feel uncomfortable (this may include another staff member, volunteer, peer or family member); or
- Through general good neighbourliness and social guardianship.

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

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Responding to Allegations, Disclosures or Concerns of Abuse**

#### Standard

A worker who has a concern, and/or receives an allegation or disclosure of abuse must not independently investigate the incident but must immediately report the matter to the activity organiser and the C.S.C. Any independent investigation could well aggravate the situation or 'invalidate' any disclosure. Everyone working with children/Adults at Risk has a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidents of abuse.

#### Practice

- 1 If a child makes a disclosure or allegation to a worker or volunteer, the worker or volunteer must make it clear that someone else will need to be told. Do not promise confidentiality. Do not make any other promises. Do accept the validity of the child's/Adult at Risk's disclosure and try to remain as objective as possible.
- 2 The worker must document the disclosure / allegations as soon afterwards as possible to maintain accuracy. Note any 'advice' given to the child/Adult at Risk.
- 3 The worker must not ask any specific questions of the child before, during or after the disclosure as this may invalidate any allegations if the questions are of a leading nature.
- 4 Report immediately to the worker in charge who will in turn report the incident to the designated person within the Branch. The designated person then has a duty to pass the information on to Social Services or PSNI.

## APPENDIX IV

### Information on Disclosure

If a child/Adult at Risk gives an indication that he/she may want to tell you about a problem you should -

- Arrange a time and place where you can talk privately as soon as possible after the individual has initiated contact – remember to do this within sight of others
- Stay calm and reassuring
- Explain that you cannot promise to keep what the individual tells you a secret
- Listen to and do not dismiss what the child/Adult at Risk tells you – explain that, whatever the circumstances, he/she has support available
- Do not press for details – some cases of abuse need further and possibly extensive investigation. It is better for the individual if he/she does not have to repeat the details unnecessarily
- Ask the child/Adult at Risk whether he/she has told anyone else
- If the individual hasn't, ask him/her to think about who would be a good person to tell
- Tell the child/Adult at Risk that you will help him/her to tell that person
- Explain that there are other people whom you might have to contact. Who these people are will depend on the procedure your organisation has already adopted
- Do not make promises to the individual – the situation may cause you to react emotionally and cause you to make promises, which cannot, in the event, be fulfilled
- Tell the child/Adult at Risk that you are pleased that he/she has decided to tell someone, and he/she was absolutely right to tell
- Let the individual know that you believe them and understand how difficult it is to talk about such experiences

A wide range of possible situations can fall into the category of a 'disclosure/allegation'. Because it is impossible to know in advance what a child/Adult at Risk will say, it is advisable to always follow the suggestions given above. Children will probably tell you about incidents involving bullying or bribes perhaps from peers. Whilst they may have been important enough for the child to tell you about, they may require no further action.

In cases where the individual is at risk or the disclosure is obviously of a serious nature, you will need to follow the procedure as dictated by Comhaltas.

You are not expected to be a therapist, but because the individual has chosen to talk to you and because you have listened and believed, you have already helped the child/Adult at Risk. Many victims of child sexual abuse say that having the first person they told be supportive was the first step in recovering from their experience.



After you have talked with the child, follow the procedure laid down for reporting such incidents.

In the event of disclosure, you should be:

- 1 Reassuring
- 2 Empowering
- 3 Advising
- 4 Supporting
- 5 Listening
- 6 Counselling
- 7 Non judgmental
- 8 Referring
- 9 Affirming
- 10 Following up

### **Definition of Confidentiality**

**Confidentiality** is defined as ***“something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another’s secret affairs”***.

The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss with no-one.

When dealing with a conversation regarding a safeguarding allegation or disclosure, staff and volunteers should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. They should reassure the individual that the limits are to ensure the child or Adult at Risk’s safety and well-being. The individual should be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and if appropriate be involved in information sharing.

**For More details please see the Confidentiality Policy attached to this Policy (Appendix X – see page 53)**

Comhaltas will never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of the child paramount.

Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.

**APPENDIX V**
**Reporting Arrangements**

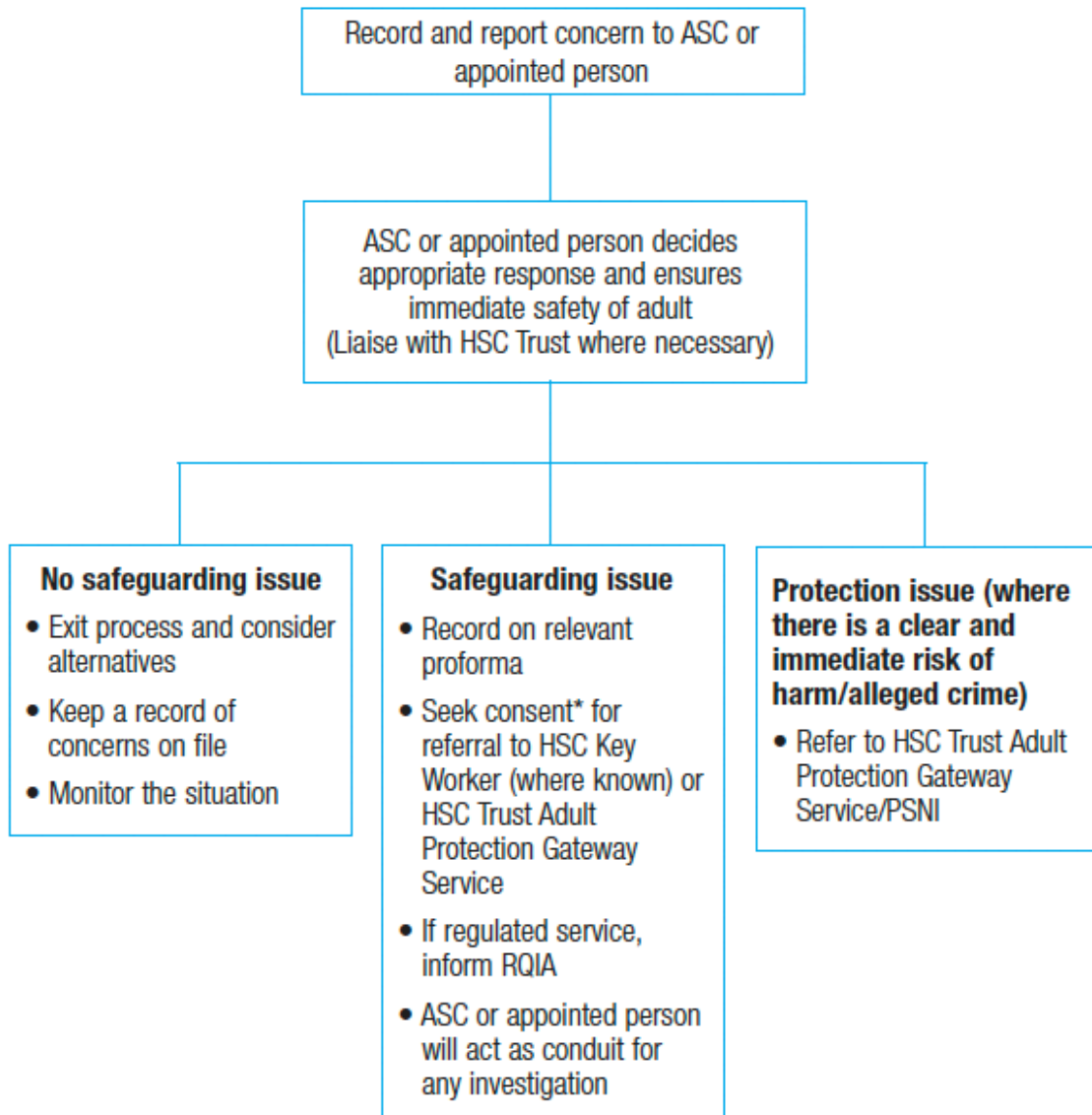
(Child)

The first time you notice any signs or symptoms you may be very shocked. Try not to convey this shock to the child, especially if the child is telling you about the problem. Remain calm, listen to and observe the child. Trust your own judgement. When you are confronted with behaviour or development that is not within the normal range, and particularly if you suspect abuse inform the designated person within the Branch who will seek advice from the professionals.

**PLEASE SEE BELOW SAMPLE REPORTING PROCEDURES**


## Reporting Arrangements

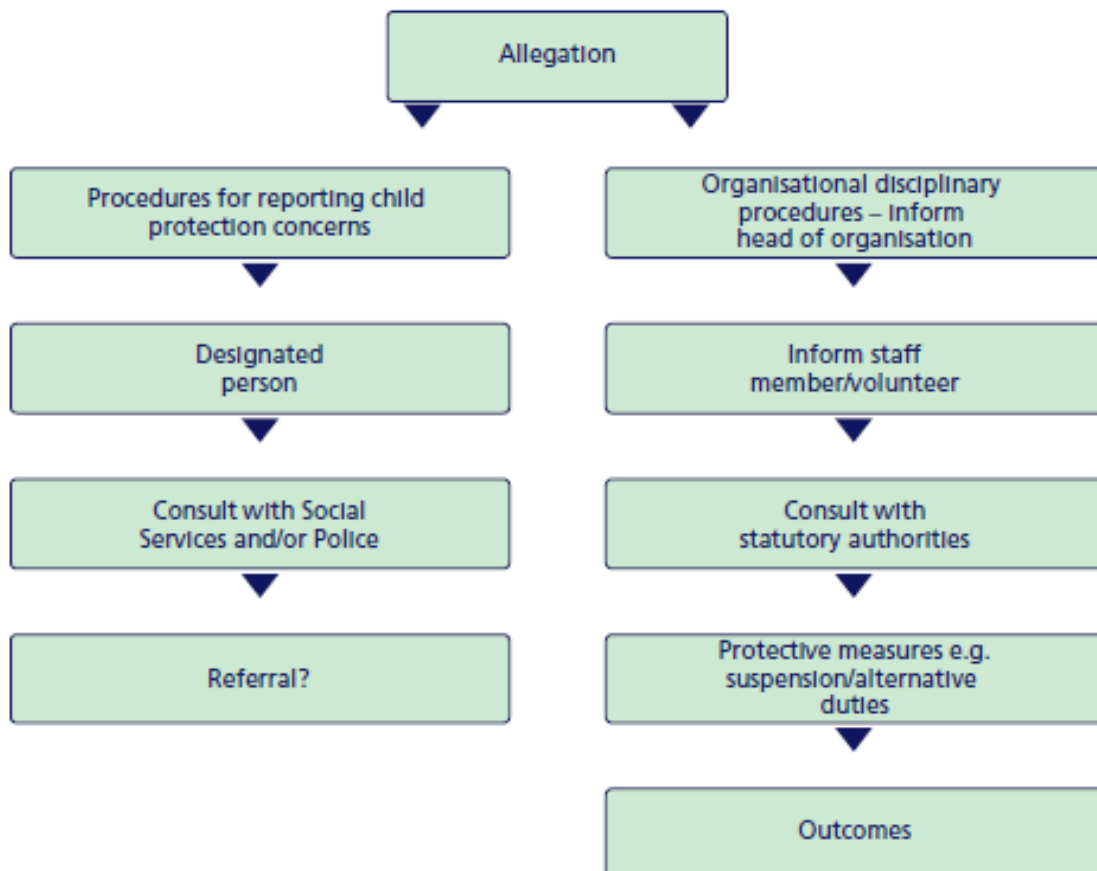
(Adult at Risk)



## REPORTING REGARDING A MEMBER OF STAFF OR A VOLUNTEER

If it is believed that a member of staff/volunteer has harmed a child or Adult at Risk or placed them at risk of harm, the same reporting procedures and policy should be followed and a referral made to Social Services, HSC Trust Adult Protection Gateway Service, the Police, AccessNI and / or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

In the case of the allegation/disclosure involving one of the Designated Safeguarding Officers, the staff/volunteer should report this to the Ulster Council Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) or Adult Safeguarding Champion or the most senior Designated Safeguarding Officer or Adult Safeguarding Champion available.








## REPORTING to Social Services or Police

**Comhaltas is duty bound to refer all allegations to Social Services Gateway teams.**

Information on reporting child/Adult at risk abuse or neglect

### Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts Gateway Services for Children's Social Work

<b>Belfast HSC Trust</b>			
<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>028 90507000</b>		
<b>Areas</b>	Greater Belfast area		
<b>Further Contact Details</b> (for ongoing professional liaison)	<b>Greater Belfast Gateway Team</b> 110 Saintfield Road Belfast BT8 6HD		
			
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/">http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/</a>		
<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service</b> (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)	028 95049999 (Regional number) / 028 90565444 (Belfast City Hospital Social Services number)		
<b>South Eastern HSC Trust</b>			
<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>03001000300</b>		
<b>Areas</b>	Lisburn, Dunmurry, Moira, Hillsborough, Bangor, Newtownards, Ards Peninsula, Comber, Downpatrick, Newcastle and Ballynahinch		
<b>Further Contact Details</b> (for ongoing professional liaison)	<b>Greater Lisburn Gateway Team</b> Stewartstown Road Health Centre 212 Stewartstown Road Dunmurry Belfast, BT17 0FG Tel: 028 90602705 Fax: 028 90629827	<b>North Down Gateway Team</b> James Street Newtownards, BT23 4EP Tel: 028 91818518 Fax: 028 90564830	<b>Down Gateway Team</b> Children's Services 81 Market Street Downpatrick, BT30 6LZ Tel: 028 44613511 Fax: 028 44615734
			
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.setrust.hscni.net/">http://www.setrust.hscni.net/</a>		
<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service</b> (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)	028 95049999 (Regional number) / 028 90565444		
<b>Northern HSC Trust</b>			
<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>03001234333</b>		
<b>Areas</b>	Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Larne, Ballymena, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush and Coleraine		
<b>Further Contact Details</b> (for ongoing professional liaison)	<b>Central Gateway Team</b> Unit 5A, Toome Business Park Hillhead Road Toomebridge, BT41 3SF Tel: 028 7965 1020 Fax: 028 7965 1036	<b>South Eastern Gateway Team</b> The Beeches 76 Avondale Drive Ballyclare, BT39 9DB Tel: 028 94424377 Fax: 028 9334 2531	<b>Northern Gateway Team</b> Coleraine Child Care Team 7A Castlerock Road Coleraine, BT51 3HP Tel: 028 7032 5462 Fax: 028 7035 7814
			
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/">http://www.northerntrust.hscni.net/</a>		
<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service</b> (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)	028 95049999 (Regional number)		
<b>Southern HSC Trust</b>			
<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>08007837745</b> ( Free phone number from landlines only)/ <b>028 37415285</b> (Central number)		
<b>Areas</b>	Craigavon, Banbridge, Dromore, Lurgan, Portadown, Gifford, Armagh, Coalisland, Dungannon, Fivemiletown, Markethill, Moy, Tandragee, Ballygawley, Newry City, Bessbrook, Annalong, Rathfriland, Warrenpoint, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel, Newtownhamilton		
<b>Further Contact Details</b> (for ongoing professional liaison)	<b>Craigavon/Banbridge Gateway Team</b> Brownlow H&SS Centre 1 Legahory Centre Craigavon , BT65 5BE Tel: 028 38343011 Fax: 028 38324366	<b>Newry/Mourne Gateway Team</b> Dromalane House Dromalane Road Newry, BT35 8AP Tel: 028 30825000 Option 1 Fax: 028 30825016	<b>Armagh/Dungannon Gateway Team</b> E Floor South Tyrone Hospital Carland Road Dungannon, BT71 4AU Tel: 028 87713506 Fax: 028 87713671
			
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net/">http://www.southerntrust.hscni.net/</a>		
<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service</b> (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)	028 95049999 (Regional number)		
<b>Western HSC Trust</b>			
<b>Telephone (for referral)</b>	<b>028 71314090</b>		
<b>Areas</b>	Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh and Enniskillen		
<b>Further Contact Details</b> (for ongoing professional liaison)	<b>Derry Gateway Team</b> Whitehill, 106 Irish Street Derry, BT47 2ND Tel: 028 71314090 Fax: 028 71314091	<b>Omagh Gateway Team</b> Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital 1 Donaghane Road Omagh, BT79 ONS Tel: 028 82835156 Fax: n/a	<b>Enniskillen Gateway Team</b> 2 Coleshill Road Enniskillen BT747HG Tel: 028 66344103 Fax: n/a
			
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net/">http://www.westerntrust.hscni.net/</a>		
<b>Out of Hours Emergency Service</b> (after 5pm each evening at weekends, and public/bank holidays)	028 95049999 (Regional number)		

### Who to contact if you suspect adult abuse, exploitation or neglect?

If you ever feel in immediate danger or think someone else may be in immediate danger, you should telephone 999 and speak to the police. If you suspect abuse, exploitation or neglect is taking place, it is important that you report your concerns to the Adult Protection Gateway Service at your local Health and Social Care Trust or by contacting the police.

HSC Trust	areas covered	9.00am - 5.00pm telephone numbe	out-of-hours emergency telephone number
<b>Western Adult Protection Gateway Service</b>	Londonderry/Derry, Limavady, Strabane, Omagh, Enniskillen	028 7161 1366	028 9504 9999
<b>Southern Adult Protection Gateway Service</b>	Craigavon, Banbridge, Dromore, Lurgan, Portadown, Gilford, Armagh, Coalisland, Dungannon, Fivemiletown, Markethill, Moy, Tandragee, Ballygawley, Newry City, Bessbrook, Annalong, Rathfriland, Warrenpoint, Crossmaglen, Kilkeel, Newtownhamilton	028 3741 2015 or 028 3741 2354	028 9504 9999
<b>Belfast Adult Protection Gateway Service</b>	Greater Belfast area	028 9504 1744	028 9504 9999
<b>Northern Adult Protection Gateway Service</b>	Antrim, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, Larne, Ballymena, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Portrush, Coleraine	028 2563 5512	028 9504 9999
<b>South Eastern Adult Protection Gateway Service</b>	Lisburn, Dunmurry, Moira, Hillsborough, Bangor, Newtownards, Ards Peninsula, Comber, Downpatrick, Newcastle, Ballynahinch	028 9250 1227	028 9504 9999

### Police

To contact the police in a non-emergency situation telephone 101. In an emergency situation telephone 999.

## APPENDIX VI

### Guidelines for Self Protection

1. In the event of any injury to a child/Adult at Risk, accidental or otherwise ensure that the incident is recorded and witnessed by another adult.
2. Keep records of any false allegations a child/Adult at Risk makes against you. This should include everything from 'you're always picking on me' to 'you hit me'; and comments such as 'don't touch me'. Use the incident form to keep dates and times.
3. Get another adult to witness the allegation, if possible. If you are in a school or residential setting, take the individual to the leader in charge and explain what happened. A record of that meeting should also be kept.
4. If a child/Adult at Risk touches you in an inappropriate way, record what happened and ensure that another adult is also informed. It could be a totally innocent touch, so do not make the individual feel like a criminal. However, remember that ignoring this or allowing it to go on may place you in an untenable situation. Neither is it a good idea for the child/Adult at Risk to be allowed to continue this behaviour as another person might use such a situation to their advantage and then say the child/Adult at Risk instigated it.
5. On journeys, always have two members of staff along. If it is on overnight trip or residential, always check the rooms in pairs.
6. Do not place yourself in a situation where you are spending excessive amounts of time alone with one young person away from other people. If you are speaking one to one, ensure that the door to the room is kept open at all times.
7. If you are in a residential setting never, under any circumstances, take a child/Adult at Risk into your bedroom.
8. It is unwise to take children/Adults at Risk in your car alone.
9. It is unwise to take children/Adults at Risk to your home, as they then could describe rooms, furnishings, etc.
10. If you are in a care situation with children with special needs, try to have another person present when changing nappies or clothing or bathing a child.
11. Never do something of a personal nature for children/Adults at Risk that they can do themselves. This includes cleaning bottoms, unbuttoning trouser buttons, or any activity that could be misconstrued.
12. Do not go into the toilet alone with children/Adults at Risk.
13. Be mindful of how and where you touch children/Adults at Risk. Never pat an individual on the bottom.
14. Do not extend hugs or kisses on the mouth to children/Adults at Risk. This might be particularly relevant to those working with special needs children. Though we want to give love and attention to children, this guideline is important not only for a worker's protection, but also for the individual's as well.
15. When taking children/Adults at Risk on an outing, think of how you appear to the public when dealing with them. It may mean that disruptive individuals cannot go on outings.
16. If you are suspicious of abuse by a colleague, peer or any other person, you must disclose this to the C.S.C. or the Chairperson. If there is an attempted cover-up, you could be implicated by your silence. "Why didn't (s)he tell? - Something to hide?"
17. Always inform people (i.e. Line manager or other team members) of any uneasiness or fears you may experience during your work with young people/Adults at Risk.

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **FORMS AND HOW TO USE THEM**

#### **APPLICATION FORM FOR CCÉ**

Every person wishing to work with children/Adults at Risk should complete this form. Potential workers should also be given the relevant information on the group they wish to work with, and a copy of the Comhaltas Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

#### **DECLARATION OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS, CAUTIONS AND BIND-OVER ORDERS**

#### **GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS**

#### **REFERENCE FORM**

To be used for any new worker joining the team. The referee should not be a relative, and should have known the person well for at least three years.

#### **PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

To be completed by the parent or guardian of the child/youth. A leaflet giving basic information about the group, i.e. Time and place, leader in charge, aims and objectives, should accompany this form.

Additional information may be required whenever children will be away from their parent/guardian for more than 24 hours e.g. Residential weeks or weekends. This form is confidential. It should be filled in by the child's parent/guardian and returned to the group leader. The leader should ensure that the forms are completed and returned for each child that they are read through notes taken, and the forms brought away with the group. A copy of the forms should be left with a responsible person or forwarded to the C.S.C. A leader (preferably with some first aid or medical training) should be made responsible for seeing that the various instructions are carried out, medicines, taken etc. When taking groups of younger children away it is usually best for medicines (other than asthma inhalers) to be taken into the care of a leader. This will avoid them becoming lost – or experimented with by other children. Remember that leaders should not dispense any medication without parental permission.

#### **TRIP INFORMATION FORM**

An information sheet containing all relevant details should be produced and sent, three weeks in advance, to the parent/guardian for any trip or outing where the children are taken away from their usual meeting place, even if only for a few hours, or if they are to be involved in a special event (e.g. Day long programme or overnight). Consent forms must be returned in advance of the



event otherwise the child should not be permitted to attend the event. A detailed Itinerary should be attached.

#### ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

To be completed by leaders and witnesses in the event of any accident or incident. If an accident occurs where emergency treatment is necessary, take the individual to the nearest casualty department (make sure you know where that is) or local surgery. Contact the parents/next of kin as soon as possible, and for children take the child's Health Form to the hospital or doctors with you. Aim to have a leader with a first aid qualification on every residential trip. Complete the accident report form as soon as possible.

#### CONFIDENTIAL REPORT FORM

To be completed whenever there is a complaint made by another leader, by a child, or by a parent, about any person involved in the Youth or Children's work.

#### DRIVERS FORM - MINIBUS MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

To be completed by the driver of the minibus / car at the commencement of any journey. This form provides a list of items to be checked before departure.

**APPENDIX VII (i)**
**APPLICATION FORM FOR COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ  
ÉIREANN**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE \_\_\_\_\_

POST(S) APPLIED FOR (please tick one or more)

*Music, Language, Song or Dance Tutor* [ ]

*Door/Desk Attendant* [ ]

*Providing Transport* [ ]

*General Assistant* [ ]

**CURRENT AND PREVIOUS VOLUNTEERING OR PAID APPOINTMENTS:**

(Please start with most recent)

Employer's/Group's name, address and type of business	Positions held (briefly describe duties)	From (mth/yr) To	Reason for leaving

**EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS**

University/College	Subject	From (mth/yr)	To (mth/yr)	Results (Hons/Level attained)
Technical, professional, commercial or relevant in-house training				
College/Institute	Type of training	From (mth/yr)	To (mth/yr)	Results
Membership of professional bodies / Professional registration				

*(Continue on a separate page if necessary)*

Please provide the names and addresses of two people (not relatives) who have known you well and would be able to comment on your suitability for this/these post(s)

**Referee 1:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity does this person know you? \_\_\_\_\_

**Referee 2:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

In what capacity does this person know you? \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX VII (ii)**
**Declaration of Criminal Convictions, Cautions & Bind-Over Orders**
**In Confidence**

<b>Are you included in the Adult's Barred List?</b> (if yes give please give details)	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>Do you have any cases pending?</b> (if yes give please give details)	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

<b>Do you have any convictions, cautions, informed warnings, diversionary youth conferences or bind-over orders that are not subject to 'filtering' (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (NI) 1979, as amended in 2014)?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
If yes, please provide details below, giving as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter.		

<b>Have you ever been the subject of an Adult Abuse investigation which alleged that you were the perpetrator?</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>NO</b>	
If yes, please list full details below including the name of police unit or HSC Trust involved in the investigation. If possible please provide the approximate date/s.	

**Declaration and Consent**

I declare that the information I have given is complete and accurate. I understand that I will be asked to complete an AccessNI Disclosure Certificate Application Form if I am considered to be the preferred candidate. I consent to the appropriate AccessNI check being made and I agree to enquiries relevant to this declaration. AccessNI operate a Code of Practice in connection with the use of information provided to, or the discharge of any function by Registered Bodies. A copy of this is available on request or can be got at; <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/accessni-code-of-practice.pdf>

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Any surname previously known by: \_\_\_\_\_

Position applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

**A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position with CCÉ**

A copy of our Confidentiality Policy and Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders is available as part of our Safeguarding Policy or upon request

**DECLARATIONS** Please ensure you sign and date this declaration before returning your application form.

**DATA PROTECTION ACT DECLARATION** - The information on the application form will be held and processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

I understand that the information is being used to:

- Process my application for employment/volunteering;
- Form the basis of a computerised record on the recruitment system for processing and monitoring purposes;
- Form the basis of a manual job/volunteering file with other application forms and will be used for processing;
- If appointed, form the basis of a manual and computerised employment / volunteering record.

I declare that the information provided on this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any false or omitted information may result in dismissal or other disciplinary action if I am appointed.

Signature

Date

**Please note:**

All information received will be dealt with in confidence.

## APPENDIX VII (iii)

### **Guidelines for Recruitment and Management of Volunteers and Workers**

Has your prospective staff and volunteers completed the Volunteer and Worker Application form supplied with this pack?

#### **Did they?**

- Indicate their interests and any other voluntary activities in which they are involved?
- Supply names of two referees, who are not family members?
- Supply their national insurance number?
- Sign the declaration of past convictions or cases pending?
- Sign a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding policy?

#### **Did You?**

- Give them a written assurance of confidentiality?
- Check their references given in the application form?
- Give them a copy of the induction package for staff and volunteers? Which should include:
  - Safeguarding Policy and reporting procedures.
  - Relevant code of conduct.
  - Information on the principals and policies of Comhaltas.
  - Written guidelines about their specific duties and responsibilities and those for all staff and volunteers.
- Make them aware of the complaints procedure that exists within your Branch?

#### **Induction process – Before you appoint / approve you should:**

- Approve and minute all appointments at a Board meeting.
- Obtain AccessNI clearance.
- Confirm the appointment in writing.
- Organise for supervision and support assistance for all staff and volunteers. (No one should ever be on their own) This should be followed up by a review with each appointee
- Organise for a trial / probationary period of at least 3 months for all new staff and volunteers.
- Set a date for the appraisal of each member of staff and all volunteers. (Minimum yearly) suggestion would be at A.G.M. (Staff and Volunteers Concerned should be in attendance)
- Have in place a system to monitor concerns/complaints when they are brought to your attention?
- Ensure they have attended Safeguarding training within the last 3 years. (this should be organised within the Branch or Comhaltas every 3 years)
- Convene a Training Needs Assessment during the probationary period of each appointment.

**APPENDIX VII (iv)****PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

Complete this form in full; it is necessary for your child's safety and protection. Read carefully the note below to ensure you are in a position to give consent. Please inform us of any changes to this information as soon as possible.

Information concerning programmes will be displayed in the centre and every attempt will be made to provide advanced notice of out of centre activities. Occasionally this notice may be limited to take advantage of transport or offers.

Permission is given for my child to participate in \_\_\_\_\_ Comhaltas programmes and activities, including out of centre activities. (Programmes that include a residential experience or activities considered to involve additional risk will be notified and will require the completion of a further detailed consent form).

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick: Member  Non- member  2 or more per family

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No \_\_\_\_\_

School attended: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_

My son/daughter is participating in. (Please give name of programme/activity)

\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE IDENTIFY BELOW ANY ILLNESSES, CONDITIONS, ALLERGIES OR DISABILITIES OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE AWARE (i.e. Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy, Heart trouble or any allergy to a particular food or drink).

\_\_\_\_\_

IS HE/SHE CURRENTLY TAKING ANY FORM OF MEDICATION? **Yes/No**

If yes, please give details.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DOES HE/SHE NEED TO BE IN POSSESSION OF OR NEED TO BE ABLE TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION DURING PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES? **Yes/No**

CAN HE/SHE ADMINISTER THIS MEDICATION WITHOUT ASSISTANCE? **Yes/No**

PLEASE DETAIL ANY OTHER INFORMATION YOU FEEL MAY BE USEFUL TO US IN CARING FOR YOUR CHILD

---

HAS YOUR SON/DAUGHTER BEEN INJECTED AGAINST TETNUS? **Yes/No**  
**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

SUN SCREEN: In the event of your child needing but not having sun screen may we apply this on your behalf? **Yes ? No ?**

My child is allergic to SUNSCREEN **Yes ? No ?**

CAN YOUR CHILD WALK HOME ALONE? **Yes ? No ?**

MY SON/ DAUGHTER CAN BE COLLECTED BY:

(name of individual) \_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_

SOME PROGRAMMES INVOLVE WATER AND OTHER ACTIVITES. DO YOU PERMIT YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITES **Yes/No**

CAN YOUR CHILD SWIM? **Yes ? No ?**

A child will not be permitted to attend an activity without a completed parental consent form. A hand written note will not be accepted. However, if a child attends a programme without a valid parental consent form, and a programme worker is unable to contact someone with parental responsibility, then the child may be taken on the activity, if the programme worker judges the child may be at risk by being left behind.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE. Under the children (N.I) order 1995 a mother usually has parental responsibility. A father is not necessarily considered to be the legal parent unless he is (a) married to the natural mother or (b) has obtained formal legal partnership. Again others may have parental responsibility such as uncles, aunts, grandparents and guardians provided that it has been obtained formally through the courts.**



**APPENDIX VII (vi)****Trip Information Form**

Programme/Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader in Charge: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

Transport Arrangements:

Equipment Required:

**APPENDIX VII (vii)****ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

**This form must be completed as soon as possible after an accident/incident.  
Leaders should ensure that the Accident/incident Book is also completed.**

**Name of person:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Guardian/Next of Kin:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from injured party): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Witness 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Witness 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Accident/Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Accident/Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Accident/Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





**APPENDIX VII (ix)**

**Driver's Form – Minibus Maintenance Checklist**

The bus is to be washed and cleaned every week, inside and outside. The following items must be checked and maintained every week and prior to every journey. All defects must be reported to the Secretary. Please remember that it is the driver's responsibility to ensure the vehicle is road-worthy and safe for passenger travel.

Date	Oil	Water	Fuel	Lights	Body work	Tyres	Window Wipers & Water	Seat belts	Defects Reported	Signature

## APPENDIX VIII (i)

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TUTORS & VOLUNTEERS**

- 1 Each Tutor is required to arrive 10 minutes before their first class to collect their folder at the main desk in the foyer and set up room.
- 2 Each class must begin on time and end on time.
- 3 Your class must not be left unattended at any time.
- 4 Attendance records are your responsibility and must be completed before each class begins in accordance with Health and Safety and Safeguarding Legislation.
- 5 Folders must be left back at the main desk after your class is over.
- 6 Tutors will treat all persons, especially children and adults at risk with courtesy, respect and dignity.
- 7 Tutors will at all times show due consideration for the diversity of the class and different cultural needs and traditions within it.
- 8 Be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties;
- 9 Inappropriate language by tutors will not be tolerated.
- 10 Tutors should avoid being alone with a child or adult at risk. If this cannot be avoided, two adults should be present.
- 11 Physical contact between children or adults at risk and tutors will be appropriate at all times. Favouritism will not be accepted.
- 12 Bullying of, or discrimination against children/adults at risk by tutors working with them will not be tolerated.
- 13 Bullying of, or discrimination against children/adults at risk by their peers will not be tolerated.
- 14 Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable within Comhaltas.

***Guidelines on the use of technology, including photography.***

Tutors and volunteers should:

- 15 Not photograph/video a child or adult at risk, even by mobile phone, without the parent or Guardians valid written consent;
- 16 Ensure that any photographs/videos taken are appropriate;
- 17 Report any inappropriate use of images;
- 18 Report any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the internet that involves a child or adult at risk.

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN PLEASE CONTACT:

**THE BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WHO IS**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

**APPENDIX VIII (ii)****PARENTS/GUARDIANS CODE OF CONDUCT**

Parents/Guardians have an influential role to play in encouraging their children to adopt positive attitudes to maintain the ethos of Comhaltas.

It is required that Parents/Guardians agree to the following:

- 1 Know the start and finish times of your child's or adult at risk music lesson /lessons. It is the Parents/Guardians responsibility to ensure the student arrives promptly and safely to each lesson.
- 2 In the instance of a child or adult at risk having more than one lesson per day, it is the Parents/Guardians responsibility to supervise the student between lessons.
- 3 Parents/Guardians must collect their child or adult at risk immediately after class finishes from the premises. Students are not permitted outside unaccompanied.
- 4 Comhaltas are not responsible for children or adults at risk before, between or after their class/classes.

In addition, Parents/Guardians will:

- 5 Respect Tutors opinion and encourage children/adult at risk to do likewise.
- 6 Show appreciation for Tutors/Volunteers.
- 7 Praise good performance and efforts from all individuals and groups.
- 8 Congratulate all participants regardless of the outcome.
- 9 Use correct and appropriate language at all times.
- 10 Support your children/adult at risk involvement and help them to enjoy their Comhaltas experience.
- 11 Respect the rights, dignity, diversity and worth of every child/adult at risk regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- 12 Not discriminate against individuals and their families who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs from their own;
- 13 Be prepared to attend/support events organised by the Branch for your child/adult at risk.
- 14 It is the Parents/Guardians responsibility to inform the Tutors/Volunteers of any conditions, Medical or otherwise regarding their child/adult at risk.
- 15 It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to ensure their child/adult at risk understands and cooperates with the Child/Young Persons Code of Conduct.
- 16 It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to check the notice board each week regarding forthcoming events or unexpected changes in classes.

**IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN PLEASE CONTACT:**

**THE BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WHO IS**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

## APPENDIX VIII (iii)

### CHILD/YOUNG PERSONS/ADULT AT RISK CODE OF CONDUCT

All children/young people/adult at risk are encouraged to be open with their Tutor/Volunteer and share any concerns or complaints.

It is required that all children/young people/adult at risk agree to the following:

- 1 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone equally.
- 2 Show respect to your Tutor during your music lesson.
- 3 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within Comhaltas.
- 4 Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable within Comhaltas.
- 5 Good behaviour is expected at all times especially during class.
- 6 No running around the building, no running on the stairs.
- 7 Children/young people/adult's at risk are not permitted outside the Building.
- 8 On entering and exiting the building the main door must be used at all times.
- 9 Use of side doors is strictly forbidden.
- 10 Give your name to the Desk Clerk prior to each lesson.
- 11 Be on time for music lessons so not to disrupt the smooth running of the lesson.
- 12 Come prepared for class – Instrument, Pen/Pencil and Note Book.
- 13 Food or chewing gum is not permitted during lessons.
- 14 All mobile phones must be switched off during lessons.
- 15 Work hard at your music in your own time at home.
- 16 Enjoy your music.

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN PLEASE CONTACT:

**THE BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WHO IS**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

## APPENDIX VIII (iv)

### ADULT STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well being of all its members. The Branch believes that it is important that Members, Tutors, Volunteers and Parents associated with the Branch must, at all times show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of everyone.

It is required that all musicians agree to the following:

- 1 Respect the rights, dignity, diversity and worth of everyone equally.
- 2 Show respect to your Tutor during your music lesson.
- 3 Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within Comhaltas.
- 4 Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable within Comhaltas.
- 5 On entering and exiting the building the main door must be used at all times.
- 6 Use of the side door is strictly forbidden.
- 7 Give your name to the Desk Clerk prior to each lesson.
- 8 Be on time for music lessons so not to disrupt the smooth running of the lesson.
- 9 Come prepared for class – Instrument, Pen/Pencil and Note Book.
- 10 Food or chewing gum is not permitted during lessons.
- 11 All mobile phones must be switched off during lessons.
- 12 Work hard at your music in your own time at home.
- 13 Enjoy your class.

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN PLEASE CONTACT:

**THE BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER WHO IS**

Name:

Address:

Tel:



## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Anyone found to be in breach of the Codes of Conduct will be faced disciplinary procedures as follows depending on the severity of the violation;

### DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE (Staff / Volunteers)

- An oral warning
- A written warning – Report incident to Branch Standing Committee
- A final written warning
- Suspension without pay/privileges
- Transfer to another task, or section of the Branch
- Some other appropriate disciplinary action short of dismissal or Dismissal
- In the case of a safeguarding incident/concern these will automatically be reported to the relevant bodies and AccessNI and the Disclosure and barring service.

### DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE (Members)

- An oral warning
- A written warning – Report incident to Branch Standing Committee
- A final written warning
- Some other appropriate disciplinary action short of dismissal
- Dismissal from activity

## APPENDIX X (i)

**Confidentiality Policy**

***Comhaltas will never promise to keep secrets. However, information of a confidential nature will only be communicated on a "need to know" basis, with the welfare of its participants, members, workers and volunteers paramount. Considerations of confidentiality will not be allowed to override the rights of children or young members to be protected from harm.***

*Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann holds information on its staff, volunteers, members, those participating with its classes and on occasion partaking in services the organisation provides. This information is collected to provide the highest standard of care and professionalism to individuals and generally, it must not be used for other purposes without the individual's knowledge and permission.*

1. The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that everyone participating with and working/volunteering for, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is aware of his or her responsibilities when using confidential information.

1.1. The principle underpinning this Policy statement is that no one shall misuse any information or allow others to do so.

All branches of Comhaltas need to establish working practices that effectively deliver the level of confidentiality that is required by law, ethics and policy statement. The objective must be continuous improvement.

2. This Policy statement is designed to:
  - a) Introduce the concept of confidentiality and the duty of confidence;
  - b) Demonstrate the practical safeguards that should be put into place;
  - c) Provide a description of the main legal requirements.

This Policy on confidentiality and security should be provided to all members, workers and volunteers.

**3. Policy statement**

3.1. This Policy statement applies to all personal information held by Comhaltas on its participants, members, workers and volunteers, whether written, computerised, visual or on audio record, or simply held in the memory of a member of staff. It applies equally to all members, workers and volunteers.

3.2. All members, workers and volunteers hold information about people that may be private and sensitive. This information is collected to provide the highest standard of care and professionalism to individuals and generally, it must not be used for other purposes without the individual's knowledge and permission. In the same way information about staff and volunteers,

which is processed for the purpose of their role within Comhaltas, should be treated as confidential. Confidentiality should only be breached in exceptional circumstances and with appropriate justification. All members, staff and volunteers should ensure that the following principles are practiced:

- When you are responsible for confidential information you must make sure that the information is effectively protected against improper disclosure when it is received, stored, transmitted or disposed of;
- Confidential information and all written records must be stored in a secure location by the Branch Secretary and/or the Designated Safeguarding Officer and those involved in a particular activity and only be accessed by these people if it is appropriate to the role that they are engaged to undertake. Electronic records held on computers should also be appropriately secured by way of password protection and restricted access.
  - Information should be disposed of within timescales that are in keeping with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.;
- Every effort should be made to ensure that everyone understands how information about them will be used before they actually supply any confidential information;
- Disclosing information outside of Comhaltas that could have personal consequences for participants, members, workers and volunteers, should only be considered where:
  - There is a safeguarding issue (usually where disclosure is essential to protect the person involved or someone else from the risk of significant harm)
  - You are required by law or by order of a court
- If you are required to disclose confidential information you should release only as much information as is necessary for the purpose;
- You must make sure that the persons to whom you disclose information understand that it is given to them in confidence which they must respect;
- If you decide to disclose confidential information, you must be prepared to explain and justify your decision. If you have any doubts discuss them with your Branch Chairperson.

## APPENDIX X (ii)

### **Sharing Information internally Policy**

Information should only be shared within the organisation on a “need to know” basis. Appropriate persons will have access to information to check that records are being made and maintained appropriately. Everyone involved in the organisation should understand how and why information is kept, and the reason for obtaining the information should be the protection of users.

Children and young people also need to know and understand information about the organisation and its activities. They need to be aware of who they can talk to if they have a concern, as well as their rights and responsibilities within and outside the organisation. This needs to be communicated in a way that can be clearly understood and take into account the age and developmental stage of the child or young person or adult at risk using alternative means of communication where necessary.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann committees at all levels involve young people to discuss matters affecting the youth in the organisation.

## APPENDIX X (iii)

### **Data protection principles**

Personal data:

- Shall be processed fairly and lawfully;
- Shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes;
- Shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed;
- Shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
- Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose or those purposes for which it was obtained;
- Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject under the Data Protection Act;
- Shall be protected against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data by way of appropriate technical and organisational measures;
- Shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection of the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to processing of personal data.

## APPENDIX X (iv)

### POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

#### **Policy Statement**

1. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by the Department of Justice, in connection with the use of information provided to registered persons, their nominees and other recipients of information by AccessNI under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing Applicant's suitability for employment purposes, voluntary positions, licensing and other relevant purposes. We undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and not to discriminate unfairly or unlawfully against the subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
2. This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
3. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann are committed to equality of opportunity (see separate Equal Opportunities Policy) to following practices, and to providing a service which is free from unfair and unlawful discrimination\*. We ensure that no applicant or member of staff is subject to less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, age, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, physical or mental disability political opinion or offending background, or is disadvantaged by any condition which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
4. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential, and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. The selection of candidates for interview will be based on those who meet the required standard of skills, qualifications and experience as outlined in the essential and desirable criteria.
5. We will request an AccessNI Disclosure only where this is considered proportionate and **relevant** to the particular position. This will be based on a thorough risk assessment of that position and having considered the relevant legislation which determines whether or not a Standard or Enhanced Disclosure is available to the position in question. Where an AccessNI Disclosure is deemed necessary for a post or position, all applicants will be made aware at the initial recruitment stage that the position will be subject to a Disclosure and that Comhaltas Ceoltóirí

Éireann will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate AccessNI Disclosure check

6. In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions)(Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended in 2014), Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann will only ask about convictions which are defined as “not protected” for the purposes of obtaining a Standard or Enhanced disclosure.
7. We undertake to ensure an open and measured and recorded discussion on the subject of any offences or other matters that might be considered relevant for the position concerned eg the individual is applying for a driving job but has a criminal history of driving offences. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the conditional offer of employment.
8. Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann may consider discussing any matter revealed in a Disclosure Certificate. We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate, and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police, with the subject of that Disclosure before considering withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
9. We ensure that all those in Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).
10. We undertake to make every subject of an AccessNI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

**HAVING A CRIMINAL RECORD WILL NOT NECESSARILY DEBAR YOU FROM WORKING WITH COMHALTAS CEOLTÓIRÍ ÉIREANN. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE POSITION, TOGETHER WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND BACKGROUND OF YOUR OFFENCES OR OTHER INFORMATION CONTAINED ON A DISCLOSURE CERTIFICATE OR PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO US BY THE POLICE.**

\*We are only able to discuss what is contained on a Disclosure Certificate and not what may have been sent under separate cover by the Police.

## APPENDIX XI (i)

### **Volunteer Grievance Policy and Procedure**

#### **Policy**

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann ('here on referred to as Comhaltas') recognise that volunteers have the right to raise grievances about any matter related to their volunteering (this could be in relation to another volunteer, a member of the paid staff, or the manner in which they are being treated by Comhaltas).

The welfare of its volunteers is of paramount importance to Comhaltas. The grievance procedure is in place to ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in a fair manner.

#### **Procedure**

1. If a volunteer has a complaint against a member of staff, another volunteer or the organisation in general they should first discuss this with their Branch, County or Regional standing Committee. The volunteer may be accompanied by a third party at this meeting.
2. If the person whom the complaint is against sits on the appropriate standing committee then the matter should be referred to the next superseding Committee.
3. If the matter is not resolved at this initial meeting the complaint should be made in writing to the Ardchomhairle. This may require a special meeting with relevant staff and volunteers. It will be dealt with as speedily as possible and treated in a confidential manner.

## APPENDIX XI (ii)

**Whistle blowing Policy and Procedure****Policy**

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann ('here on referred to as Comhaltas') is committed to achieving the highest possible standards in all of its practices. To achieve this, it encourages freedom of speech and the use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by its current and former employees, volunteers and trustees.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of employees, volunteers and trustees, working on behalf of Comhaltas, in relation to the disclosure of malpractice, including illegal acts or omissions, within the organisation by any (current or former) employee, volunteer or trustee. This is often referred to as *whistle blowing*.

**Scope**

For the purpose of this policy *whistle blowing* is defined as the disclosure of malpractice, including illegal acts or omissions, within the organisation by any (current or former) employee, volunteer or trustee.

**Legal framework**

This policy reflects the principles contained within the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which created a framework for whistle blowing across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

**Responsibilities**

In relation to the reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions, specific responsibilities are as follows:

**Trustee Board**

The Trustee Board will ensure that the Policy are properly implemented and will designate lead responsibility for this to the Reachtair.

Any investigation arising under this policy will be reported to the Board, which will also be responsible for deciding whether any external enquiry is warranted, and whether an incident should be reported to the police or local authority.

**Reachtair**

The Reachtair is responsible for ensuring that all employees, volunteers and trustees are aware of the provisions of this policy and how to report a concern or allegation.

**Raising Concerns**



Employees, volunteers or trustees who become aware that malpractice is happening (or has happened or is likely to happen) should raise their concerns with the Reachtaire immediately, who will undertake an investigation.

Where the allegation is made against the Reachtaire, concerns should be raised with the Chairperson of the Ulster Council, who may decide that an external investigation is warranted.

### **Procedure in the Event of a Disclosure**

The Reachtaire will be the point of contact for all employees, volunteers and trustees who wish to raise concerns under the provisions of this policy (except in the case of allegations against the Reachtaire, which should be reported to Chairperson of Ulster Council).

Where concerns are raised with the Reachtaire (or Chairperson) they will arrange an initial interview with the whistleblower, which will be confidential, to ascertain the area of concern. At this stage, the whistleblower will be asked whether they wish their identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation. They will also be asked whether or not they wish to make a written or verbal statement. In either case, the Reachtaire (or Chairperson) will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

### **Undertaking an Investigation**

The Reachtaire (or Chairperson) will undertake an initial investigation, which may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In certain cases, such as allegations of ill treatment of service users, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. The protection of vulnerable service users is paramount in all cases, as set out in the Safeguarding Policy.

In undertaking an investigation the Reachtaire (or Chairperson) will deal promptly with the matter, record evidence received and ensure the security and confidentiality of evidence.

If the concern raised is very serious or complex, a decision may be made to conduct an external, independent and/or specialist enquiry. In cases of suspected illegal acts or abuse the police and/or local authority may be involved. A decision to conduct an external enquiry will always be made by the Ulster Council (except where safeguarding issues are involved).

Irrespective of the outcome of any investigations, the organisation may limit the activities of the employee, volunteer or trustee concerned and consider suspension and/or disciplinary action in accordance with its disciplinary procedures.

The Reachtaire (or Chairperson) will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome.

**Action Arising from an Investigation**

If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by an individual, Comhaltas will take the necessary action to advise, manage or instigate disciplinary action against the employee, volunteer or trustee about whom the allegation has been made.

Comhaltas will also seek to remedy any malpractice by amending its policies, procedures and systems or taking other corrective action as necessary to prevent the malpractice from continuing or likely to occur again.

Where there is no case to answer, but the whistleblower held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the Reachtaire (or Chairperson) should ensure that the employee, volunteer or trustee suffers no reprisals.

Only where false allegations are made maliciously, will it be considered appropriate to instigate disciplinary action against the whistleblower under the terms of the relevant policy and procedure.

The Reachtaire (or Chairperson) will meet with the whistleblower to give feedback on any action taken. This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned.

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they will be invited to make disclosures to the Chairperson (or other Council Member(s)) who may refer the matter to the full Ulster Council. The Council will give due consideration to the issues raised, including taking specialist advice or requesting an external investigation.

If the whistleblower remains dissatisfied, Comhaltas recognises the lawful rights of (current and former) employees, volunteers and trustees to make disclosures to the relevant authorities, such as the Charity Commission, Health and Safety Executive, the police, the local authority or elsewhere, where justified.

## APPENDIX XI (iii)

**Complaints Policy and Procedure****Policy**

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann ('here on referred to as Comhaltas') is committed to achieving the highest possible standards in all of its practices working in an open, transparent and accountable way that builds trust and respect. Comhaltas aims to resolve complaints quickly, fairly and effectively. When something goes wrong, we need you to tell us about it. This will help us to improve our standards.

**Our Aims**

We aim to ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- We treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- We deal with it promptly, politely and when appropriate confidentially;
- We will respond in the correct way – for example, with an explanation, or an apology or information on any action taken;
- We will learn from complaints and use them to improve the services that we offer;
- We review regularly our complaints policy and procedures.

Comhaltas recognises that many concerns raised will be informal, and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the branch or member concerned. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be initiated by bringing the complaint to the Branch / County or Regional Chair or Secretary.

**Purpose**

Comhaltas' complaint procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Comhaltas' responsibility will be to:

- ✓ Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing;
- ✓ Respond within a stated period of time;
- ✓ Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint;
- ✓ Take appropriate action if required;

The complainant's responsibility is to:

- Raise their concerns promptly and directly with the person concerned and if their concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily informally, then to follow the formal complaints procedure as detailed;

- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date;
- Allow Comhaltas a reasonable amount of time to deal with the matter as detailed in the formal complaints procedure;
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Comhaltas' control.

### **Confidentiality**

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Comhaltas maintain confidentiality. However the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

### **Principles of the Complaints Policy**

- The Comhaltas Complaints policy is based on the principle of a three-stage process (as detailed under Comhaltas' responsibility in the Complaints Procedure).
- The Complaints Policy will apply to all services that Comhaltas provides.
- If at any time during the investigation of a complaint matters arise that warrant investigation under disciplinary proceedings, or through a criminal investigation, the complaints procedure will be suspended until those investigations are concluded. Similarly, the complaints procedure should be suspended if a complainant is actively seeking legal redress.
- Where a complaint is against a member of staff or Official / Volunteer they should be informed of the support services available to them.
- A complete record of the entire process should be kept. A copy of all reports, transcripts of interviews and other relevant information should be forwarded to the Responsible Person for immediate review by the Appropriate Committee.
- Comhaltas may, at any stage of the formal complaints procedure, review a complaint and give a decision, without a formal investigation, where a member of the Ulster Executive Council deem the complaint to be deliberately repetitive or vexatious. Examples of such complaints being unsubstantiated or repetitive complaints against an individual or service, or where a complaint has previously been investigated and appropriate action taken.
- When appealing against a previous decision, the complainant will be asked to state why they are dissatisfied with how their complaint was handled.
- A final decision will be made by the Ard-chomhairle of Comhaltas.

If you have a complaint, please contact us with the details. We have sixteen weeks to consider your complaint. If we have not resolved it within this time you may complain to the Charity Commission, Companies House, Health and Safety Executive, the police, the local authority or elsewhere, where justified.

**TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS****SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Comhaltas is committed to taking every appropriate step to ensure the safety and well being of the people with whom it works, regardless of class, gender, race or creed. Comhaltas has a 'zero tolerance' policy with regard to abuse, intimidation, bullying (physical or emotional), racism and sexist behaviour directed towards children. All Comhaltas volunteers must be aware of this policy and it is their duty to guarantee its implementation.

The policy states:

“All children, young people and Adults at Risk should enjoy Comhaltas facilities and activities without fear of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.”

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the \_\_\_\_\_ Branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann:

**BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 1 & ADULT SAFEGUARDING CHAMPION (ASC)**

The Designated Officer for \_\_\_\_\_ (Branch)

Name:

Address:

Tel:

**BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 2**

The Designated Officer for \_\_\_\_\_ (Branch)

Name:

Address:

Tel:

## APPENDIX XII (ii)

**TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS****USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

**If you have a concern please contact one of the following people**

**BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 1 & ADULT SAFEGUARDING CHAMPION (ASC)**

The Designated Officer for \_\_\_\_\_ (Branch)

Name:

Address:

Tel:

**BRANCH DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER 2**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

**ULSTER COUNCIL DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS**

1. Name: Grainne Scullion (ASC)  
Address: 35 Aughlisnafin Road, Castlewellan. Co. Down BT31 9JR  
Tel: 07811 188 305 – 028 4377 8989
2. Name: Brendan McAleer  
Address: 64 Drumlish Road, Dromore. Co. Tyrone BT78 3BL  
Tel: 07775 922 316 – 028 8224 2777
3. Name: Cara McGinn  
Address: 11 Forest Park View, Castlewellan. Co. Down BT31 9SP  
Tel: 07765 385 565 - 028 4377 0899

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or 90351135

PSNI EXCHANGE: 0845 600 8000

**REGIONAL HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES CONTACTS, e.g.:**

South Eastern Health and Social Services Trust 0300 1000 300

Southern Health and Social Services Trust 028 3741 5285

Northern Health and Social Services Trust 0300 1234 333

Belfast Health and Social Services Trust 028 9050 7000

Western Health and Social Services Trust 028 7131 4090

**ADULT REGIONAL HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES CONTACTS, e.g.:**

South Eastern Health and Social Services Trust 028 9250 1227 **Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999**

Southern Health and Social Services Trust 028 3741 2015 **Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999**

Northern Health and Social Services Trust 028 2563 5512 **Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999**

Belfast Health and Social Services Trust 028 9504 1744 **Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999**

Western Health and Social Services Trust 028 7161 1366 **Out of Hours: 028 9504 9999**

## APPENDIX XII (iii)

### **TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS**

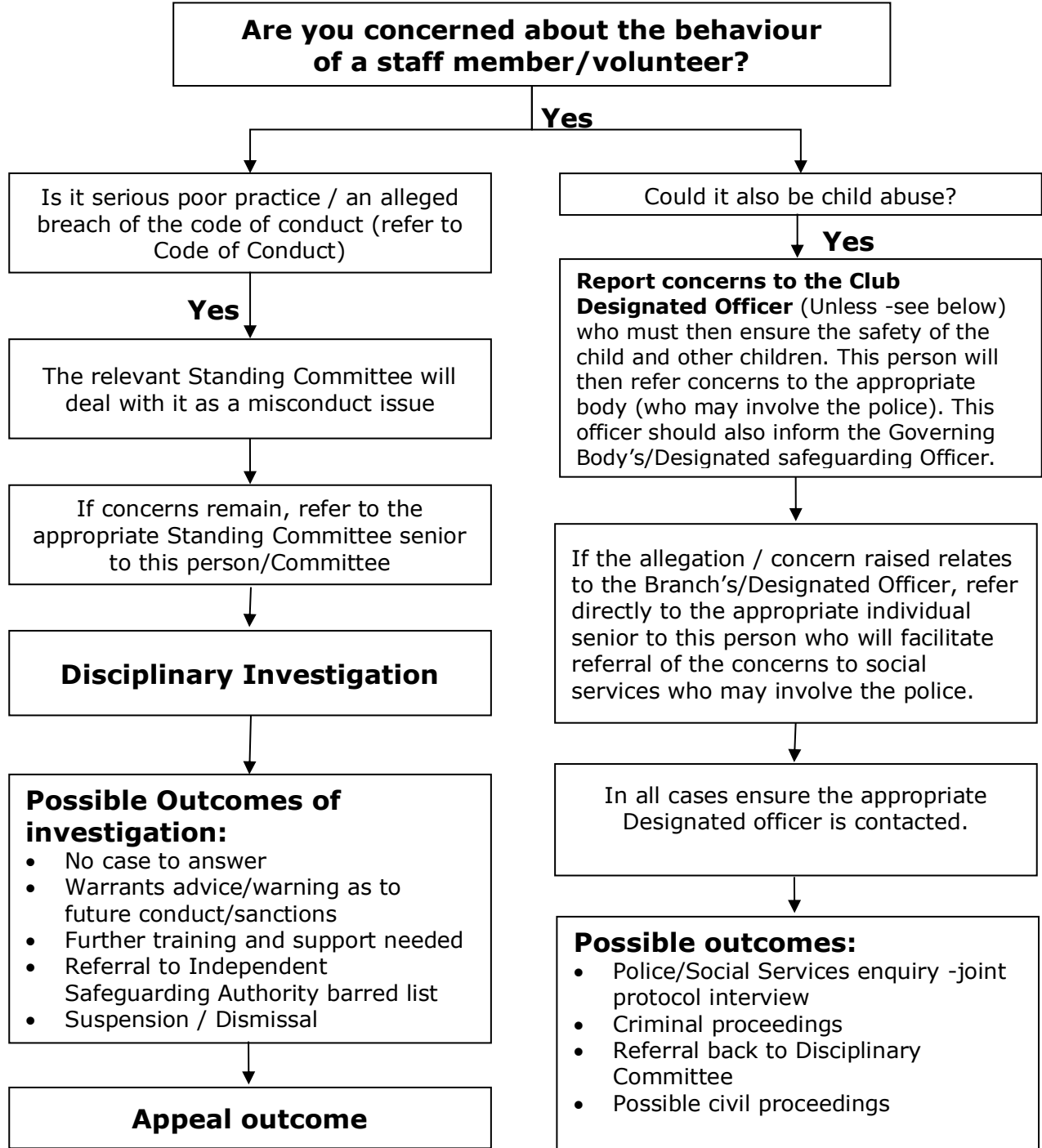
#### PROTOCOL TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

#### GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS

- In the event of an accident 2 copies of the relevant form must be filled in immediately.
- In the case of a Minor of Adult at Risk make contact with parents / guardians informing them of the nature of the accident and what action was taken.
- This form must be signed and dated by the group leader and any witnesses.
- One copy of the completed accident form must be returned and filed in the appropriate cabinet in the office, Forward 1 copy to Designated person for record keeping/ action required.
- On return of the completed Accident Form, the Accident Book in the office must be filled in, detailing the persons involved, the location and description of the accident and what action was taken.
- Sign off on any action required from senior person in charge.

#### GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ALLEGATIONS/ INCIDENTS

- If and when an incident occurs involving any member of a group, the relevant form must be filled out, signed and dated by the group leader.
- Inform designated person ASAP, 1 copy of relevant forms to designated person within 24 hours
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis" (reference confidentiality statement)
- Inform parents, unless to do so may put the child at further risk.
- If an incident occurs that involves the leader of a group, it must be reported to the Designated Person who will deal with it appropriately.
- If any sanctions against the leader are taken the information must be recorded on the back of the incident form.
- The designated person will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment.
- It is the responsibility of the person who becomes aware/witnesses an incident to report it.

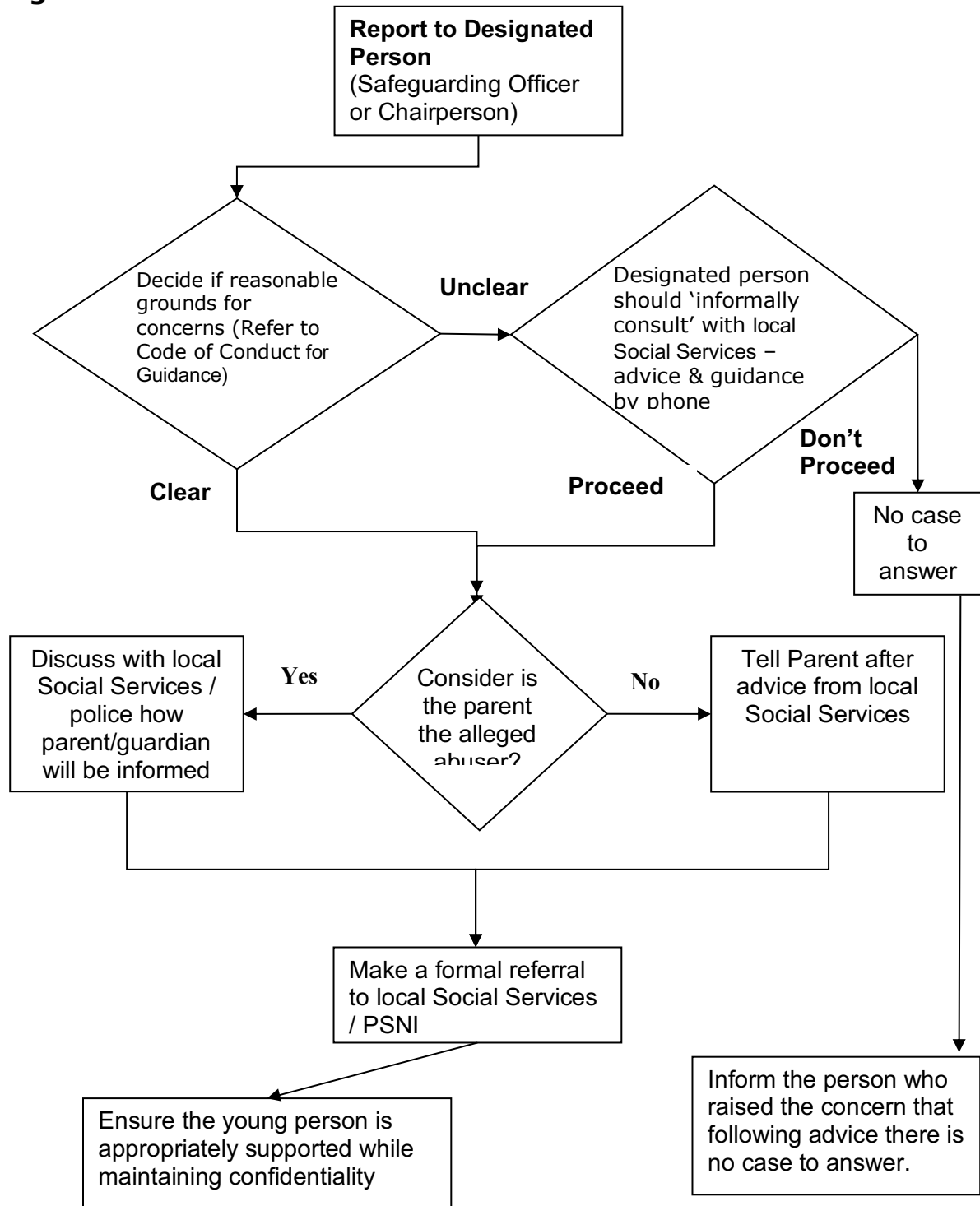
**APPENDIX XII (iv)**
**TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS**
**INTERNAL CONCERNS FLOW CHART**

**APPENDIX XII (v)**



**TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS**

## EXTERNAL CONCERNS FLOW CHART

**When the concern is about possible abuse outside the club/ organisation**





**TO BE DISPLAYED AT ALL BRANCH LOCATIONS**

## COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART

### **If you have a complaint about the Comhaltas**

Comhaltas recognises that many concerns raised will be informal, and we aim to deal with these quickly. In the first instance we would expect any complaint to be raised directly with the branch or member concerned. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be initiated by bringing the complaint to the Branch / County or Regional Chair or Secretary.

complaint reported to the Branch / County or Regional Chair or Secretary in writing.

Comhaltas will Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing

Comhaltas will investigate and respond as quickly as possible the maximum wait should be no more than sixteen weeks.

Comhaltas will implement any learnings