



Community Arts Partnership

Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

We in Community Arts Partnership are committed to practice which protects children and vulnerable adults from harm.

Policy statement/aims

*New Belfast Community Arts Initiative t/a **Community Arts Partnership*** has a duty of care to safeguard all children and vulnerable adults involved in *CAP* activity from harm. All children and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. *CAP* will ensure the safety and protection of all children and vulnerable adults involved in regulated work

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm: all those in the organisation who come into contact with children will undertake child protection training. CAP ensures that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious

beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse

- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated officer, Conor Shields

Policy aims

The aim of the *Community Arts Partnership* Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children and young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection
- allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

Community Arts Partnership will endeavour to safeguard children and vulnerable adults by:

- adopting child protection guidelines through a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- sharing information about good child protection practice with our partners in the community, participating

children and young people, parents, staff and volunteers

- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know via the organisation's designated officer

(Conor Shields), and involving community partners, children and parents appropriately

- following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training

Community Arts Partnership will request an Access NI 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 Access NI 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 Community Arts Partnership will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Access NI Disclosure check

POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

Additional Policy Statement

- a) Community Arts Partnership 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 an 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.
- b) This policy is made available to all Disclosure applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.
- c) Community Arts Partnership is 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.
- d) Community Arts Partnership 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.
- e) Community Arts Partnership will request an Access NI 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 Access NI 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 Community Arts Partnership will request the individual being offered the position to undergo an appropriate Access NI Disclosure check
- f) In line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, Community Arts Partnership will only ask about convictions which are defined as "unspent" within the terms of that Order, unless the nature of the position is such that we are entitled to ask questions about an individual's entire criminal record.
- g) 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.
- h) We ensure that all those in Community Arts Partnership who are involved in the recruitment are able to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of Disclosure information. We also ensure that they have received the appropriate guidance and understanding of the relevant legislation relating to employment of ex-offenders (e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978).
- i) We undertake to make every subject of an Access NI Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice, and to make a copy available on request.

j) Having a criminal record will not necessarily debar you from working with Community Arts Partnership, 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.

k) 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.

Please refer to the Access NI code of practice via this link

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/accessni/support/t0mc0qbi.pdf>

Adopted by board meeting, 13th March, 2014

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's and vulnerable adults' welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/ equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person/vulnerable adult first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with participants
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children/vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Making creativity fun, enjoyable and promoting respect.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- avoid spending time alone with children away from others
- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- be left in a room with a child/vulnerable adult alone
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow a child/vulnerable adult to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun
- reduce a child/vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow child/vulnerable adult to stay with you at your home unsupervised

Community Arts Partnership is committed to reviewing its policies of good practice at regular intervals

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Community Arts Partnership recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Preselection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The new on-line application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from AccessNI
- Two confidential references are required for artists

- Evidence of identity (as per passport or driving licence with photo).

In accordance with AccessNI Circular 1/2012 (issued in December 2012), ideally three documents must be produced in the name of the applicant; **one from Group 1 and two from Group 2**. If this is not possible, then **four documents from Group 2** must be produced, one of which must be a birth certificate issued after the time of birth. It is preferred that **at least** one of these documents includes photographic identification.

Group 1

- Current Passport (any Nationality)
- Biometric Residence Permit (UK)
- Current Driving Licence (UK, ROI, Isle of Man or Channel Islands or any EU Country)
- Original Birth Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channels) issue at time of birth
- Original Long Form Irish Birth Certificate – issued at time of registration of birth
- Adoption Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands)

*documentation must be less than 3 months old

**documentation must be issued within the last 12 months

Group 2

- Birth Certificate (UK, ROI, Isle of Man or Channel Islands) issued after time of birth
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate (UK, Isle of Man or Channel Islands)
- HM Forces ID Card (UK)
- National Insurance Card or notification letter with NI number (UK)
- Firearms Licence (UK and Channel Islands)
- Bank / Building Society Account Confirmation Letter
- Electoral ID Card (NI only)
- EU National ID Card
- Cards carrying the PASS Accreditation logo (UK and Channel Islands)
- Senior SmartPass (Translink) (NI only)
- Current UK Driving Licence (old paper version)
- Examination certificates (16-18 year olds only)
- Bank/Building Society Statement (UK or EEA)*
- Credit Card Statement (UK or EEA)*
- Utility Bill (UK or ROI)* – not mobile phone
- Benefit Statement (UK)*
- Addressed payslip*
- Mortgage Statement (UK or EEA)**
- Financial statement (UK)**
- P45/60 Statement(UK and Channel Islands)**
- Land and Property Services Agency rates demand (NI only)**
- Work Permit/Visa (UK) (UK Residence Permit)**
- Letter from a Head Teacher or Further Education College Principal (16-18 year olds in full time education – only to be used when other documentation routes are exhausted*

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct and Child Protection policy.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person / vulnerable adults.
- Work safely effectively with children/vulnerable adults.

Community Arts Partnership requires:

- staff to attend a good practice and child protection awareness induction, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in *Community Arts Partnership* in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated/ Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Child Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant management board officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

2. Concerns about suspected abuse:

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the

Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

- The Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
- The Child Protection Officer should also notify the relevant officer who in turn will inform the Child Protection

Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

- If the Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the Child Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the Child Protection Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the Child Protection Officer

Information is stored in a secure place with access limited to only designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure). All information supplied is shredded and disposed of. All disclosures are shredded and disposed of normally within 6 months of issue.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated Officer as in "responding to suspicions or allegations" above.

3. Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible. **See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need:**
- If the Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- Child Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Management Committee.
- Maintain confidentiality on a **need to know** basis only.
- See 4 below regarding information needed for social services.

4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record will always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Updated, agreed and adopted by Management Committee 23rd May, 2013, additional statement adopted
by board meeting, 13th March, 2014
address amended 1st August 2016

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