Recognising and Reporting Abuse of Adults at Risk Policy

FILE MANAGEMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1) Introduction 2

2) Scope 2

3) Purpose 2

4) Definitions 2

5) Policy Statement 3

6) Process 3

6.1 How Safeguarding Concerns May Be Raised 3

6.2 Reporting Abuse of Adults at Risk 3

6.3 In cases of emergency or where there is imminent danger 3

6.3.1 Republic of Ireland 3

6.3.2 Northern Ireland 4

6.4 Responding to a disclosure from an Adult at Risk of abuse 4

7) Responsibilities 6

8) Non-compliance 6

9) Appendices 6

1) Introduction

Abuse of an adult at risk may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may comprise one form or multiple forms of abuse. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse may occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person who acts in breach of that trust. Abuse can also be perpetrated by people who have influence over the lives of vulnerable persons, whether they are formal or informal carers or family members or others.

People with disabilities and older people may be particularly vulnerable due to:

- diminished social skills
- dependence on others for personal and intimate care
- capacity to report
- sensory difficulties
- isolation
- power differentials

2) Scope

This policy applies to all Special Olympics Ireland (SOI) employees (including those on permanent or fixed term contracts and work placement), and volunteers. We all have a duty of care to report any allegation, disclosure or concerns of abuse to adults at risk.

3) Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities and process for employees and volunteers in response to recognising and reporting abuse of adults at risk.

4) Definitions

Definitions of abuse [1]

Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse includes rape and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent, or into which he or she was compelled to consent.

Psychological abuse includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial or material abuse includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission includes ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory abuse includes ageism, racism, sexism, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

[1] HSE Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Institutional abuse may occur within residential care and acute settings including nursing homes, acute hospitals and any other in-patient settings, and may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex need.

It is critical that the rights of vulnerable persons to lead as normal a life as possible is recognised, in particular deprivation of the following rights may constitute abuse:

- Liberty
- Privacy
- Respect and dignity
- Freedom to choose
- Opportunities to fulfil personal aspirations and realise potential in their daily lives
- Opportunity to live safely without fear of abuse in any form
- Respect for possessions

It is important that adults who are vulnerable are shown the same respect and dignity as any other adult; and have access to information they need in a manner in which they can understand, to make informed choices.

5) Policy Statement

Special Olympics Ireland encourages people to report any safeguarding concerns; if you have a concern about abuse, neglect or coercion. The message from Safeguarding Ireland is to – 'Call out Abuse' and report it.

6) Process

6.1 How Safeguarding Concerns May Be Raised

How safeguarding concerns may be raised

- Self-reported
- Raised by another athlete
- Observed by a staff member or volunteer
- Concern of a staff member or volunteer

6.2 Reporting Abuse of Adults at Risk

It is essential that there is a collaborative approach to safeguarding through family members, services, sports organisations and statutory authorities. This includes open and transparent processes, and practices that include adults at risk in decision making and discussions that affect them. A person-centred approach should always be taken.

If there is an allegation, disclosure or concern of abuse to an adult at risk you should contact the Designated Liaison person in your club. The Designated Liaison Person will record the concern and take the appropriate steps through the relevant Statutory Authority. **In cases of emergency or where there is imminent danger** you should follow the guidance below. However, you should then contact the Designated Liaison Person in your club so they can also implement the necessary reporting procedures.

6.3 In cases of emergency or where there is imminent danger

6.3.1 Republic of Ireland

If it is an emergency and/or out of hours you should contact An Garda Síochána via 112/999. If you are experiencing abuse which is placing you or someone you know in immediate danger, you can call the Garda confidential line at **1800 666 111**.

The main provider of services to safeguard adults at risk of abuse in the Republic of Ireland is the HSE which operates an Adult Safeguarding Policy within older person's services and services for people with disabilities. There are nine regional Safeguarding and Protection Teams covering all community health regions in the Republic of Ireland. The teams are tasked to assess allegations of abuse or neglect and may intervene to address concerns (being mindful of the will and preferences of the adult at risk of abuse). In collaboration with the HSE, communication is essential and a multi-agency response will be developed. Upon making a report the HSE will put a plan in place to assess the concern, this plan is live and will be adapted as needed. In some case the service provider will take the safeguarding lead and the Safeguarding and Protection Team will take an advisory role.

See Appendix 1 for the local contact details for each of the nine regional teams.

6.3.2 Northern Ireland

The Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are the statutory authorities. The HSCT can provide advice via their gateway teams to those who have a concern of abuse. A template report form can be requested from the HSCT team during consultation. Out of hours the Emergency Social Work service is available by phone on 0044 28 9504 999 or if the person is in immediate danger contact the PSNI by phoning 999.

6.4 Responding to a disclosure from an Adult at Risk of abuse

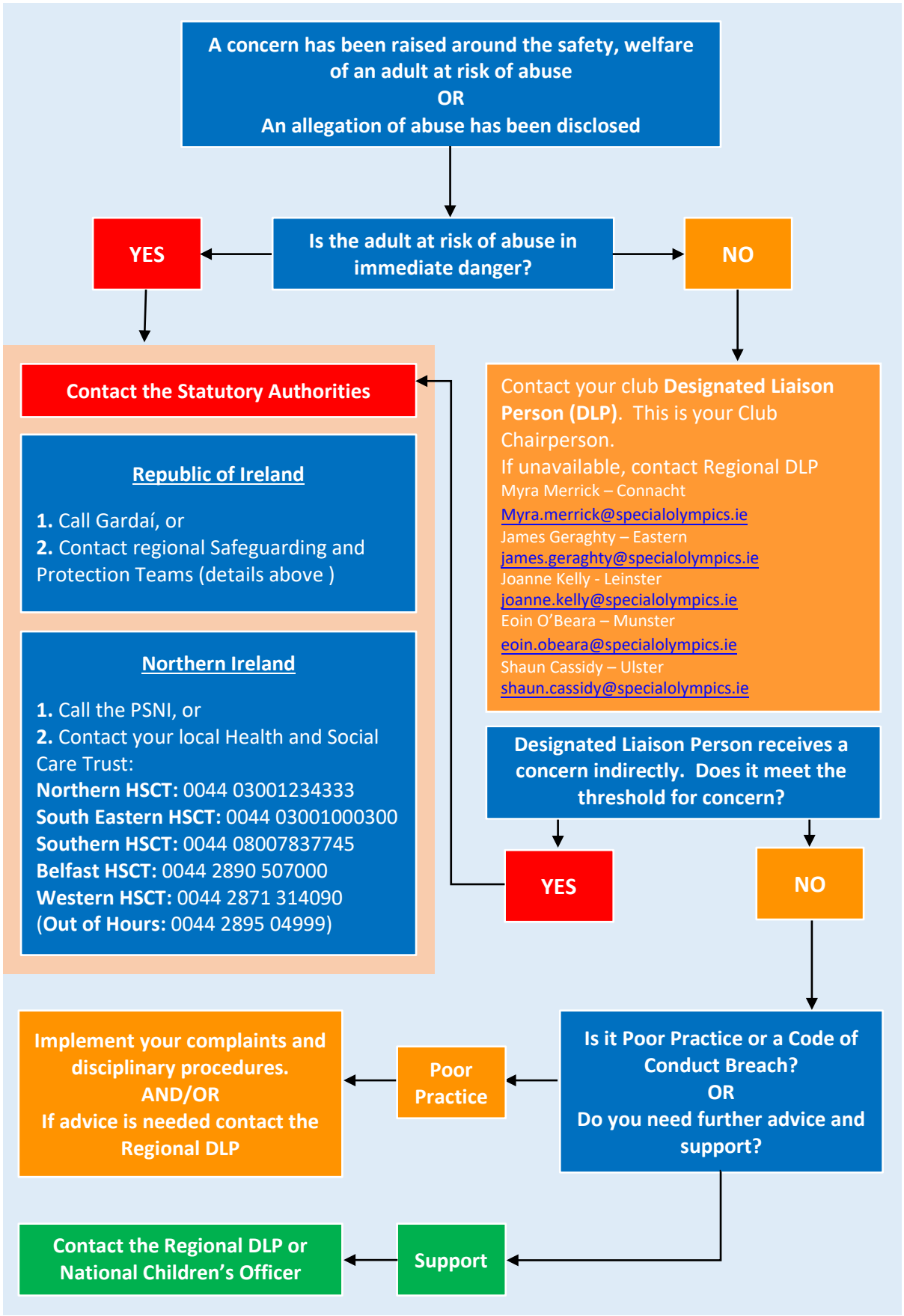
It is important to remember that if a vulnerable adult has chosen to disclose something to you it is because they trust you. It is important to note where a disclosure has been made you have a duty to report it – you cannot keep this a secret. Remember they are looking for help. Actions that can help you manage the situation include:

- Be sensitive – listen and facilitate vs interview.
- Stay calm – don't react emotionally.
- Take them seriously.
- Don't promise to keep information a secret.
- Make no judgmental statements.
- Use open, non-specific questions.
- Explain – what happens next?

You should keep a record of the report and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident(s) occurred. The next step is to report the allegation as outlined above or to the Designated Liaison Person. If you are not satisfied with the response of the Designated Liaison Person you can still choose to report to the statutory authorities yourself. If it is an emergency or you feel the adult at risk of abuse is in immediate danger you should contact the Gardaí/Police immediately.

IMPORTANT – You must employ a "needs to know" approach. Safeguarding information should only be shared with those who need to know for the purpose of safeguarding the adult at risk of abuse.

Reporting Structure for Safeguarding Issues for Clubs (ROI/NI)



7) Responsibilities

Club Safeguarding Officers work on the ground to implement safeguarding requirements and ensure a safe environment for all. They should be contacted for cases of poor practice or breaches to the Code of conduct.

The **Designated Liaison Person** will record and report all allegations, concerns or disclosures of abuse. They are the first contact in this instance.

The **Regional Director** supports and advises the club Designated Liaison Person in the reporting procedures and next steps. They also records all safeguarding allegations, disclosures and concerns of abuse that are reported

The **National Children's Officer** (NCO) is legally mandated with safeguarding responsibilities. They act as a support to Club Safeguarding Officers and as the next point of contact to the Regional Director whilst dealing with allegations, disclosures and concerns of abuse that are reported. The NCO is the first contact, in non-emergency cases, if a staff member is raising a concern about another staff member.

8) Non-compliance

Any non-compliance with this policy will be treated in accordance with legislative / regulatory requirements, the relevant contract and where appropriate, SOI's Disciplinary Policy.

9) Appendices

The local contact details for each of the nine regional teams are:

- Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal: safeguarding.cho1@hse.ie / (071) 983 4660
- Roscommon, Galway and Mayo: safeguarding.cho2@hse.ie / (091) 748 432
- Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary and East Limerick: safeguarding.cho3@hse.ie / (067) 464 70
- Cork and Kerry: safeguarding.cho4@hse.ie / 021 492 7550
- South Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford: safeguarding.cho5@hse.ie / (056) 778 4325
- Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East: safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie / (01) 216 4511
- Kildare, Wicklow, Dublin West, Dublin South City and Dublin South West: safeguarding.cho7@hse.ie / (045) 920 410
- Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath, Louth and Meath: safeguarding.cho8@hse.ie / (01) 691 4632
- Dublin North, Dublin North Central and Dublin North West: safeguarding.cho9@hse.ie / (01) 7959528.