

## APPENDIX 18



### Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

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<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Directors, Tara Centre
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## Introduction

The Department of Health (DOH) published regional safeguarding guidance '*Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland*' in March 2016 and this was updated in August 2017. This guidance makes it clear that **safeguarding is everyone's business**, and whilst assisting organisations providing services to children and young people, it is also there to assist individuals acting as responsible citizens at home and in their local communities.

Within the guidance, the term safeguarding is intended to be used in its widest sense, encompassing the full range of **promotion, prevention and protection** activity. Effective safeguarding will promote the rights of children and young people; prevent harm occurring through early identification of risk and appropriate, timely intervention; and protect children and young people from harm when this is required.

The Tara Centre, like all organisations, must uphold the rights of children and young people, with implementation of preventative measures being at the forefront of this ethos (and which are clearly explained in this policy). Preventative measures include educating children and young people about their rights, including the right to be safe.

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) also launched the Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures in November 2017. These procedures explain the actions that must be taken when there are concerns about the welfare of a child/young person. The content has been written in a succinct style which is intended to be accessible to a wide range of users including voluntary and community organisations. The policy and procedures are available on-line at: <https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>

Volunteer Now is an organisation providing safeguarding guidance to voluntary and community organisations in Northern Ireland. Its current safeguarding guidance "Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care" (January 2022) is based on the guidance and policies referred to above. It contains minimum standards of practice for organisations and in this policy we outline how the Tara Centre aims to meet these standards. Adherence to the standards and guidance contained within this publication will enable the Tara Centre to safeguard children and young people from all forms of harm and to provide them with the highest possible quality of care.

## Legal and Policy Context

The Tara Centre recognises its legal and moral responsibilities to keep children and young people safe whilst they are in our care. We have produced this policy to provide reassurance that the welfare of children and young people is paramount. The policy has also been produced to support

staff, service providers and volunteers by providing information and guidance to increase confidence in what they do.

The Tara Centre has developed this policy in line with the following legislation, policies and good practice guidelines:

**Legislation:**

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ratified by the UK Government in 1991
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland)) 2006
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland)) Order 1998
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland)) Order 2008
- The Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland)) 2011
- The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

For further information on safeguarding children and young people legislation please visit [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

**Policy and Good Practice Guidance:**

- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (DOH, August 2017) <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>
- SBNI Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures (November 2017) <https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>
- Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty to Care (Volunteer Now, Jan 2022) <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2019/04/Keeping-Children-Safe-Our-Duty-to-Care.pdf>

## Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this policy and are defined as follows:

- A **child or young person** refers to anyone under the age of 18 (Children (NI) Order 1995);
- A **parent** (carers are also included) is the person with parental responsibility for the child.

The natural mother always has parental responsibility (unless an adoption order has been made).

The natural father has parental responsibility in the following circumstances:

- If married to the mother at the time of the birth;
  - Has gained it through an agreement witnessed by a solicitor;
  - Through a Parental Responsibility Order;
  - Post 15 April 2002, if the birth is jointly registered with the natural mother;
  - Through re-registering the child's birth.
- **Regulated activity\*** with children includes:
    1. Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, providing advice/guidance on well being, driving a vehicle only for children.
    2. Work for a limited range of establishments (specified places) with opportunity for contact with children, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises, children's hospital. Work undertaken by supervised volunteers in these places is not regulated activity.

Work under 1 or 2 is regulated activity if undertaken regularly. Regular means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more) or on four or more days in a 30-day period or overnight.
    3. Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing, or health care by or supervised by a professional (even if carried out once).
    4. Registered childminding and foster care.

\*Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

## Underpinning Principles

The Tara Centre's safeguarding children and young people policy and practice is guided by a number of principles as outlined below. These principles are reflected in the Children (NI) Order 1995. At first observance, these seem obvious, but the Tara Centre takes seriously the obligation to examine all procedures and guidelines by ensuring these principles are at the heart of the work we do, fitting into the overall ethos of '... in the service of healing, peace and holistic well-being'.

1. The **child or young person's welfare is paramount** – the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
2. The **voice of the child or young person should be heard** – children and young people have a right to be heard, to be listened to and to be taken seriously, taking account of their age and understanding. They should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions which may affect their lives and be provided with appropriate support to do so where that is required.
3. **Partnership** – safeguarding is a shared responsibility and the most effective way of ensuring that a child's needs are met is through working in partnership. Sound decision-making depends on the fullest possible understanding of the child or young person's circumstances and their needs. This involves effective information sharing, strong organisational governance and leadership, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies, individuals and professionals.
4. **Prevention** – the importance of preventing problems occurring or worsening through the introduction of timely supportive measures.
5. **Protection** – Children should be safe from harm and in circumstances where their needs are not being met they must be protected.

Our organisation's ethos commits us to ensure that the fundamental rights of children are respected. In all circumstances we pledge to create a supportive and caring environment where children are listened to, treated fairly, taken seriously and feel safe.

## **STANDARD 1: Tara Centre Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy Statement**

### **Our Commitment to Safeguard**

Staff, service providers and volunteers in the Tara Centre are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of children and young people and protects them from harm.

We wish to ensure that all children and young people can participate in an enjoyable and safe environment in which they can have fun and feel valued.

Staff, service providers and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause harm to children and young people, and to establish and maintain a safe environment for them. We will not tolerate any form of abuse wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of inclusion, transparency and openness and are open to feedback from the people who use our services including children and young people, their parents/carers, and our staff, service providers and volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

This safeguarding children and young people policy is intended to cover all functions of the Tara Centre where staff, service providers and volunteers have contact with children and young people in the course of their duties.

This policy will be owned at all levels within the Tara Centre. The Chairperson directs the development and subsequent reviews of the policy, the Board of Directors approves it and ensures that it is fully implemented and reviewed at least once every 3 years. All staff, service providers and volunteers within the Tara Centre have a responsibility for the implementation of the policy. The Designated Safeguarding Officer supports the implementation of the policy and has responsibility for ensuring the dissemination of the policy across the organisation i.e. that the policy statement is prominently displayed with the Tara Centre, and that all stakeholders receive or have access to a copy of the full policy, including our Board of Directors, Senior Management, staff, volunteers, parents and carers children, young people, service providers and funders.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- adhering to our safeguarding children and young people policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff, service providers and volunteers;
- providing effective management for staff, service providers and volunteers through supervision, support and training;

- implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the Tara Centre and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies who need to know, while involving children, young people and their parents appropriately;
- implementing a code of behaviour for staff, service providers and volunteers;
- sharing information about safeguarding children and good practice with children and young people, parents, staff, service providers and volunteers; and
- ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to.

In addition to this safeguarding children and young people policy, the Tara Centre's healthy 'organisational culture' is clearly demonstrated in its range of robust organisational policies. This policy is supported by other Tara Centre policies such as Equal Opportunities Policy, Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure, Confidentiality Policy, Data Protection Policy, Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy.

The Tara Centre is committed to reviewing this policy at least once every three years. The next review will take place in September 2025, unless there is a significant change to legislation, policy, procedure or practice in the interim.



## **STANDARD 2: Recruitment and Selection of Staff, Service Providers and Volunteers**

The Tara Centre understands the importance of having good recruitment and selection procedures in place to minimise the opportunity for unsuitable people to work or volunteer with children and young people, and that a robust recruitment and selection procedure is one of the most sensible ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people. The Tara Centre consistently applies a thorough and clearly defined method of recruiting staff, service providers and volunteers in line with legislative requirements and best practice.

An AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check is required for staff and volunteers in regulated activity (as defined under the SVG (NI) Order 2007, as amended by The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012). Therefore, before advertising a job or volunteering role, the Tara Centre will decide if it falls into the category of regulated activity.

The Tara Centre's recruitment and selection procedures for staff, regulated service providers and volunteers include the following:

- defining the post through a clear job description and personnel specification for staff and clear role description, service provision specification and contract and volunteer specification for volunteers. These identify the key skills, qualities, abilities and qualifications required to fill the post/contract. The job/role description indicates whether the post constitutes regulated activity under the SVG (NI) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) or if the post meets the pre-September 2012 definition of regulated activity. If a post falls within the scope of regulated activity, any individual included on the Children's Barred List is prohibited by law from applying for the job/role. The Tara Centre is also prohibited from employing/involving a Barred individual in regulated activity.
- an open recruitment process. The Tara Centre draws up detailed recruitment/selection material outlining the activities and aims of the organisation to ensure an open process and equality of opportunity, and all posts are advertised widely, depending on the nature of the role, to ensure it is not repeatedly drawing applicants from the same small pool of people.
- completion of an application form (supplied along with a clear job or role description and personnel/volunteer specification), which covers past work/volunteering experience. Individual service providers of regulated activities are required to complete a similar form. Information about the Tara Centre is included, along with a copy of the safeguarding children and young people policy statement. The form/application is drafted to allow participants to provide all relevant details and includes a written assurance that all information received is dealt with confidentially.

- completion of a declaration form. The applicant must declare any past criminal convictions, cautions and bind-overs which are not protected and any cases pending against them. If the post constitutes regulated activity the applicant must declare if their name is included on the Children’s Barred List. Applicants will be required to provide information on any investigation carried out in relation to child abuse in which they have been the alleged perpetrator, and agree to further enquiries being made, relevant to the declaration. The declaration form must be returned to the Tara Centre in a sealed envelope marked ‘confidential’ and is only opened when the preferred candidate has been identified.
- completion of a consent form for an AccessNI disclosure check, if required. The applicant must give written consent for the relevant level of AccessNI Disclosure Check to be requested if they are considered the preferred candidate for a post, and have been conditionally offered the job/role subject to the results of appropriate checks. The Tara Centre makes it clear that where consent to carry out an AccessNI check is not provided, the recruitment/selection process will not proceed and the applicant will no longer be considered eligible for the post/role.
- interview or meeting (in the case of a volunteer/regulated service provider) with the shortlisted applicants with at least two appropriate representatives from the Tara Centre. Information contained in the application form is explored against the experience, qualities and skills needed for the job/role. The Tara Centre can take this opportunity to gauge the applicant’s understanding of safeguarding children and young people to ensure that s/he is committed to meet the standards set out in this policy. Identification, qualification and training checks are also made (on production of appropriate documents).

Following a conditional offer of employment, regulated service or volunteering contract the following procedures apply:

- written references are sought from at least two sources (not family members), and ideally one of whom should have first-hand knowledge of any previous work/service/volunteering the applicant has undertaken with children and young people. Referees are asked specific questions on the reference form, and in particular, referees are asked to confirm, in writing, that they have no concerns about the applicant working/volunteering with children and young people. At least one reference will be followed up orally with other references followed up orally if there are any concerns or issues to be clarified.
- appropriate checks will be undertaken where required. An Access NI Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check will be requested on the preferred candidate if the job/role constitutes regulated activity. Where the post meets the former definition of regulated activity (pre-September 2012) an Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List Check will be

requested. Once the Disclosure Certificate has been received by the applicant and forwarded to the Tara Centre, it will be cross-referenced with any information provided on the applicant's declaration form. Relevant staff within the Tara Centre use discretion when a Disclosure certificate reveals criminal history information. A number of factors are considered including the nature of the information or conviction, any frequency or pattern in offending, and care is taken to consider this information alongside the requirements of the post.

Where required, a registration check with an appropriate Professional Body e.g. BACP, IAHIP, BAAT, HPA, FHT will also be required.

At this point the Tara Centre will make a final recruitment decision, and where satisfied, a conditional offer of employment/service/volunteering contract will now be confirmed with the preferred candidate:

- all appointments are ratified by the Tara Board of Directors/Trustees.

The Tara Centre ensures that all information relating to the recruitment and selection of staff, service providers and volunteers is securely and confidentially stored. Handling and storage of criminal history information complies fully with Access NI's Code of Practice for the storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information.

Copies of the Tara Centre's policy on the handling of AccessNI information; the security policy regarding disclosure information; and the policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders are available on request. Contact the General Manager, Tara Centre, for further information.

### **STANDARD 3: Effective Management of Staff, Service Providers and Volunteers**

Effective management of staff, service providers and volunteers ensures that everyone in the Tara Centre is clear about what we are trying to achieve and what their particular job/role is. The Tara Centre wants to prevent harm to children and young people we support and the provision of appropriate training and support and supervision of staff and volunteers helps to achieve this. We also want staff, service providers and volunteers to feel valued and listened to.

The Tara Centre's management procedures for staff, service providers and volunteers include the following:

#### **Induction, encompassing the following elements:**

- information on Tara Centre's activities and ethos;
- meeting co-workers and relevant managers and leadership team;
- information about key stakeholders and their roles;
- practical information about breaks, tour of the building etc;
- awareness raising and training on the recognition, recording and reporting of abuse;
- what is expected and required of staff, service providers and volunteers and the boundaries or limits within which they should operate;
- introducing the staff member/service provider/volunteer to relevant Tara Centre policies, procedures and guidelines, with an opportunity for clarification as required, and a written acknowledgement that they understand and agree to abide by them;
- written acknowledgement of completion. The staff member/service provider/volunteer and their manager/co-ordinator sign off the induction.

With an increasing number of people entering the workforce from outside Northern Ireland, the Tara Centre will be mindful of cultural sensitivities, and consider that cultural awareness raising may be required to minimise misunderstandings about what is considered acceptable and unacceptable practice within the established culture here. This may be part of the initial induction programme:

#### **Probationary period for staff and a trial period for service providers/volunteers:**

- all appointments of staff and volunteers should be conditional on a satisfactory period of employment or involvement, the timeframe for which will be agreed. During this time, the line manager will pay particular attention to the work of the individual, attitude to and aptitude for working with others, including children and young people. A record will be made of any matters arising during the probationary/trial period and any training needs identified;

- all contracts entered into with regulated service providers will include an initial period for monitoring and review. During this time the contract liaison co-ordinator (normally the General Manager) will pay particular attention to the services provided, attitude to and aptitude for working with others, including children and young people. A record will be made of any matters arising during the initial review period and any training needs identified;
- following an agreed probationary/trial period, there is a review of the staff member's/service provider's/volunteer's performance in the job/role. If there are concerns, provision will usually be made to extend their probationary/trial period, to offer additional or specific training, or to terminate their services altogether. If there are no concerns the post will be confirmed in writing and/or extended in accordance with its terms;

**Relevant training is provided appropriate to the job/role:**

- in addition to induction, all staff, regulated service providers and volunteers (including the Board of Directors, and Designated Safeguarding Officer and Designate/Nominee) receive training, appropriate to their need and their job/role.
- staff, service providers and volunteers receive training on basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues including recognising possible/actual abuse; responding to and reporting concerns, disclosures and allegations; and dealing with issues such as confidentiality. The Designated Safeguarding Officer and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer receive training at the next level, appropriate to their role and responsibilities. All children and young people safeguarding training provided for staff, service providers and volunteers meets the learning outcomes outlined in the SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy, available at: <https://www.safeguardingni.org/resources/learning-development-strategy-framework-2015-18>
- training is also provided on the Tara Centre's safeguarding children and young people policy, procedures and guidelines, including recording and reporting procedures and the code of behaviour for staff, service providers and volunteers;
- other related training depends on specific needs of the Tara Centre and its services users, and may vary depending on specific programmes being offered.
- additional training needs identified are discussed with their line manager/coordinator;
- training is updated regularly (at least every three years) in line with relevant changes in legislation, policy or practice;

**Support and supervision for all staff, service providers and volunteers, appropriate to the post/role:**

- the Tara Centre Board of Directors are aware that staff, service providers and volunteers need to feel supported in the work that they do, to enable them to work to the required high standard. This need is filled with opportunities for one to one sessions with their line manager, group supervision, group development sessions and full staff/contractor meetings which assist the Tara Centre in identifying and dealing with any issues that prevent the work being carried out effectively

**Annual appraisal for staff and annual review for volunteers:**

- this helps the Tara Centre assess performance and how the staff member or volunteer has been undertaking the job/role. This allows the opportunity to give feedback on the individual's general performance, competence and relationships with co-workers and children and young people. This meeting also gives an occasion to recognise the good work they are doing, identifying future training needs to develop their skills further, and refresh expectations of the job/role.

The Tara Centre keeps written records of all areas of staff, service provider and volunteer management, development and support including records of support and supervision, team meetings, annual appraisals/reviews, training needs identified and training completed. These records are stored confidentially and in line with the Tara Centre's Data Protection Policy.

## **STANDARD 4: Raising Awareness of, Responding to, Recording and Reporting Concerns About Actual or Suspected Incidents of Abuse**

It is important that Tara Centre staff, volunteers and service providers know how to recognise abuse, and how to pass on any safeguarding concerns to relevant people within the organisation. **This does not mean that staff, service providers and volunteers are responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred, but they do have a responsibility to be alert to the physical signs, actions and/or behaviour by children and young people, staff, service providers or volunteers that suggests that something may be wrong.**

### **Abuse**

Child abuse occurs when the behaviour of someone in a position of greater power than a child causes significant harm. It can involve direct and indirect contact and can include online abuse. Categories of abuse and possible indicators are defined in Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People In Northern Ireland (August 2017) and any action taken by statutory agencies will be based on these definitions. These definitions and possible indicators are outlined in Appendix 1 of this document.

**Abuse can occur anywhere and an abuser can be anyone who has contact with the child/young person.** Staff, service providers and volunteers should be aware that abusers come from all sections of society, all professions and all races, can be male or female, and old or young. An abuser could be a parent/carer, relative, friend, peer, healthcare, social care or other worker, volunteer, or less commonly a stranger. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Other children and young people who may be at greater risk of harm include: Looked After Children; children and young people who go missing; young people in supported accommodation; young people who are homeless; children of parents with additional support needs; children and young people with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender young people; and unborn babies (pre-birth risk).

### **Bullying**

Although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme forms it could be regarded as abuse. It can take many forms including emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal and cyber. Bullying can leave children/young people with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred, they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst bullying can result in a child/young person self-harming and even attempting suicide. The Tara Centre will not tolerate any form of bullying. The Tara Centre has developed Anti-Bullying guidelines. These can be found in the Code of Behaviour for children and young people in Standard 5 of this document.

### **Safeguarding in Specific Circumstances**

'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland' (August 2017) addresses safeguarding in specific circumstances, where the abuse of children and young people can manifest in a number of forms and can involve a combination of the forms of abuse identified in Appendix 1 of this document. Some of the specific forms of abuse which are identified in the regional policy include female genital mutilation (FGM), honour-based violence (HBV), forced marriage and child sexual exploitation (CSE). Definitions and possible indicators for each of these forms of abuse are outlined in Appendix 2 of this document.

Where any member of staff, service provider or volunteer has a concern that a child or young person may be at immediate risk of FGM, forced marriage or honour-based violence they must report this to the PSNI without delay. Where there is a concern that it may have already taken place this must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as per reporting procedures.

It is also important that staff and volunteers are aware that some children and young people are more vulnerable to abuse because of their life circumstances. The following children and young people may be at greater risk of harm:

- Looked After Children;
- Children and young people who go missing;
- Young people in supported accommodation;
- Young people who are homeless;
- Children and young people living in a violent or abusive domestic environment;
- Children of parents with additional support needs;
- Separated, unaccompanied and trafficked children and young people;
- Children and young people with disabilities;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender Young People;
- Unborn babies (pre-birth risk).

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child or affect the environment in which they live (Bellis et al 2016). ACEs can include abuse; neglect; domestic violence; mental ill health; alcohol or drug misuse, parental separation; a household member in prison; homelessness; adversities associated with living in care; chronic ill health or serious illness; the death of a parent or sibling; and the impact of the conflict in our region. This is not an exhaustive list, there are many other adversities which children and young people experience.



ACEs can create levels of stress that are dangerous to the child's brain development, behaviour, health, and learning. Individuals who have experienced multiple ACEs are more likely to have poor physical and mental health in adulthood. They are also more likely to engage in health harming behaviours. Staff and volunteers should be mindful that such behaviours can signify trauma and they should adopt a trauma sensitive approach in their work. However, there are many protective factors that can help mitigate the harmful effects of ACEs. Using a trauma sensitive LENS can help staff and volunteers to reflect and explore why an individual may be behaving in the way that they are, what their needs might be, and what support they may require.

Look - at their behaviour/language/environment

Explore - what may have happened and how you can help

Needs – consider what their needs are

Support – consider the support they may require

Further information can be found at <https://www.safeguardingni.org/aces-and-trauma-informed-practice>. Free e-learning programmes can be accessed at <https://www.ascert.biz/specialist-courses/>

### **Reporting Concerns**

Where there are concerns raised about a child or young person, or where a disclosure or allegation is made, people often feel anxious about passing on information. Often staff, service providers and volunteers can feel afraid that their concerns may be wrong, and because of this, they may delay in passing on vital information regarding a child or young person.

It is important to note that it is not the responsibility of one person in an organisation to evaluate information regarding a child or young person and any safeguarding concerns. It is unlikely that one person will hold all the information relevant to the child as often important information may be held by several people and more than one organisation, but each piece of information may add to the overall jigsaw, which can show a fuller picture of a child or young person's situation. Sharing information is one of the most important ways to prevent and detect abuse of children and young people.

### **How staff, service providers and volunteers may be alerted to signs that a child/young person is suffering harm**

It is possible the child may disclose to you; someone else may share their concerns; the child may show 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/neglect; the behaviour of a person close to them makes you feel uncomfortable; or the behaviour of another member of staff/service provider/volunteer makes you feel uncomfortable.

Being alert to abuse plays an important role in ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and it is important that all concerns about possible abuse are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken.

In cases where a **child or young person discloses abuse** to a member of staff, volunteer or service provider it is important that staff/service providers/volunteers know how to react appropriately, according to the following guidelines.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DO NOT</b>
<b>Stay calm.</b>	Don't panic.
<b>Listen and hear.</b> Give time to the child/young person to say what they want. Accept what they are saying.	Don't ask leading questions.
<b>Reassure</b> that they have done the right thing in telling you.	Don't promise to keep secrets.
<b>Record in writing</b> what was said as soon as possible in the child's own words.	Don't enquire into the details of the abuse.
<b>Record in writing</b> (date and sign your report).	Don't make the child/young person repeat the story unnecessarily.
<b>Report as per Tara Centre procedures at the earliest possible time.</b>	Don't delay in reporting.

Children who are very young or have a disability or communication difficulty may need skilled help to communicate their message. Children whose first language is not English may need extra help which the General Manager will ensure they receive.

**Under no circumstances** should any individual member of staff, service provider or volunteer, or the Tara Centre (as an organisation) attempt to deal with the problem of abuse alone or investigate the situation. It is important that everyone is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred. That is a task for professional agencies following a referral to them regarding a safeguarding concern. The primary responsibility of the person who first suspects or is told of abuse is to report it in line with the Tara Centre reporting procedure and to ensure that their concern is taken seriously.

### **Recording and Reporting**

There may be emergency situations when it is appropriate to contact the police immediately. But whatever the circumstances of the concern, disclosure or allegation, it is vital that the staff member,

service provider or volunteer records the details and reports these to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer in the Designated Safeguarding Officer's absence) without delay. Sharing information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is one of the most important ways of safeguarding children and young people.

The Tara Centre has implemented a reporting procedure that is communicated to staff, service providers and volunteers at induction, contract commencement and through support supervision meetings, and contract review, as well as at safeguarding training. Staff, service providers and volunteers are also provided with a copy of the Tara Centre's safeguarding children and young people policy which outlines the recording and reporting procedure. The following reporting procedure should be followed:

Staff, service providers and volunteers should record any concerns, disclosures, allegations and/or suspicions of abuse on the **Child/Young Person Abuse Report Form** in Appendix 3 of this document. This should include the date and time that the staff member, service provider or volunteer became aware of the concerns, the parties who were involved, and any action taken. Any questions asked in 'checking out' the concerns should also be recorded on this report form. This information must be kept in a secure place (including electronic filing) and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

It is also good practice for staff, service providers and volunteers to record the fact that they made a report, on what date and to whom the report was made.

### **Confidentiality**

When a staff member, service provider or volunteer has a concern about a child/young person they are working with, that concern needs to be recorded and reported on a 'need to know' basis. Staff, service providers and volunteers should be clear that information relating to a concern, disclosure, allegation or suspicion should only be passed on to the relevant people whose task it is to decide what action to take. It should not be shared inside or outside the Tara Centre, other than with those who need to know, such as the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated safeguarding Officer . Breaches of confidentiality can be damaging to the child/young person and any investigations that may take place. The Tara Centre has robust systems in place for the maintenance of all records, including records of alleged or suspected abuse.

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) Role and Responsibilities**

It is essential that everyone in the Tara Centre knows that the General Manager acts as the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the Co-ordinator of Support Services acts as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer in their absence) will communicate internally with staff, service provider and volunteers and externally with appropriate authorities about matters relating to safeguarding. Internally they will be a source of advice and support, and also receive safeguarding children and

young people concerns. Their key responsibilities and contact details are outlined in Appendix 4 of this document.

When the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or in his/her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, is alerted to concerns about a child/ young person, their role is to act promptly and in accordance with the Tara Centre's reporting procedure which will include the following steps:

- Ensure that the child/young person is in no immediate danger and that any medical or police assistance required has been sought;
- Consider whether the concern is a safeguarding issue or not. This may involve some 'checking out' of information but being careful not to stray into the realm of investigation;
- Consult with a social worker from the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team or the child/young person's social worker if they have one. Where there is any doubt a hypothetical situation can be explored with the social worker, who should advise on the best course of action to take;
- Make a formal referral if the social worker in the Gateway Team considers the concern to be a safeguarding issue. In cases of alleged or suspected criminal abuse, the social worker should discuss the case with a Police Officer in the local PSNI Care Unit and decisions will be made as to whether a crime may have been committed and if so, how the case is to be investigated.
- Be available, as required, to the investigation undertaken by the Gateway Team and/or the PSNI;
- If it is not considered a safeguarding issue, and it is decided that there should be no referral made to a statutory authority, a record should be made of the concern and the details kept on file, including any action taken, the reasons for not referring, and the situation monitored on an ongoing basis.

**Where there is any doubt or uncertainty about whether there is a safeguarding issue this should be discussed with the HSC Trust Gateway Service.**

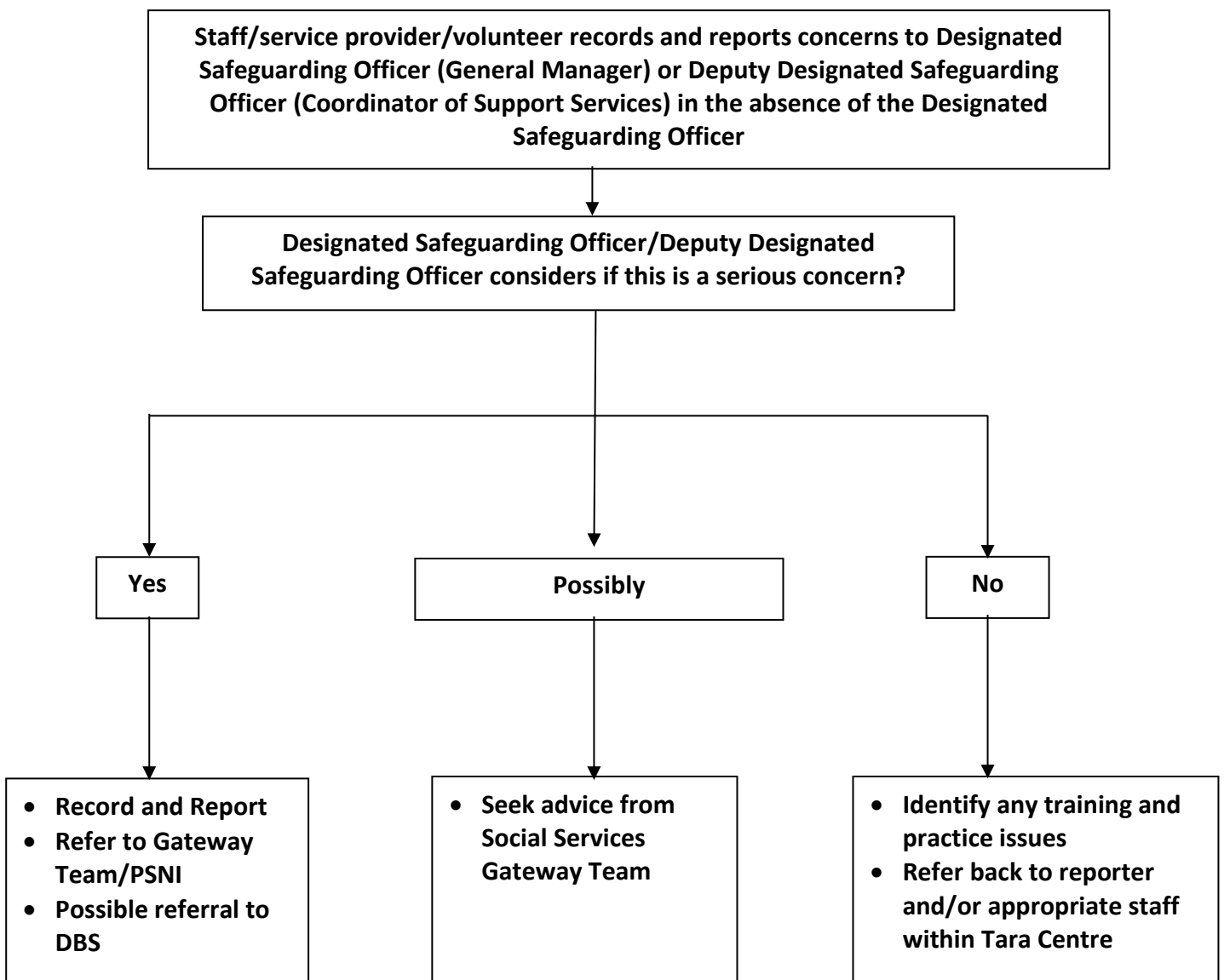
#### **Referral to the HSC Trust Gateway Team:**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer should contact the HSC Trust by phone in the first instance, but should send the referral in writing under confidential cover within two working days. They should expect to receive an acknowledgement from the HSC Trust within two working days of the referral. As a minimum the referral information must include the name and address of the child/young person and his/her current location or address; the nature of the harm; the need for medical attention, if any; the reasons for suspicion of abuse; any action

already taken; and any other information that may be useful e.g. information related to the alleged perpetrator and his/her location.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer will be required to provide this information on the Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) Form. This form will be provided by the HSC Trust.

**Flow Chart 1 – Reporting Procedures**



**What if the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer Cannot be Contacted?**

In circumstances where the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer cannot be contacted staff, service providers and volunteers can contact the local HSC Trust or PSNI (contact details are included in Appendix 4 of this document). However, they must record

the name of the person in the statutory agency to whom they reported and the date and time of the report. They must also inform the Tara Centre's Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible after they have made the report.

### **Allegations Against Staff, Service Providers and Volunteers**

One of the most difficult situations for any organisation to deal with is an allegation of abuse against a member of staff/service provider/volunteer. In many cases the person may be a close colleague, friend or neighbour. Nevertheless, the response is at all times consistent with policy, regardless of relationships, as the primary interest must always be the safety and well-being of children and young people.

The Tara Centre Board of Directors is well aware of its dual responsibility in such situations, firstly to the child/young person and secondly to the staff member/service provider/volunteer. Therefore, there are procedures for dealing with an allegation made against a member of staff/service provider/volunteer, which, in the case of a concern about a child or young person, run parallel to the procedure for reporting a safeguarding children concern.

### **Record and Report**

If a staff member/service provider/volunteer receives any information about an allegation against another staff member/service provider/volunteer this must be recorded and reported to their Designated Safeguarding Officer (or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer in Designated Safeguarding Officers absence) on the **Child/Young Person Abuse Report Form** in Appendix 2 of this document.

Information recorded should include:

- the date and time that the staff member/service provider/volunteer became aware of the allegation.
- The general nature of the allegation.
- That the allegation is of a child abuse nature.
- When and where the incident is alleged to have occurred?
- Who was involved?
- Whether any other persons were present?

This information must be kept in a secure place shared only with the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

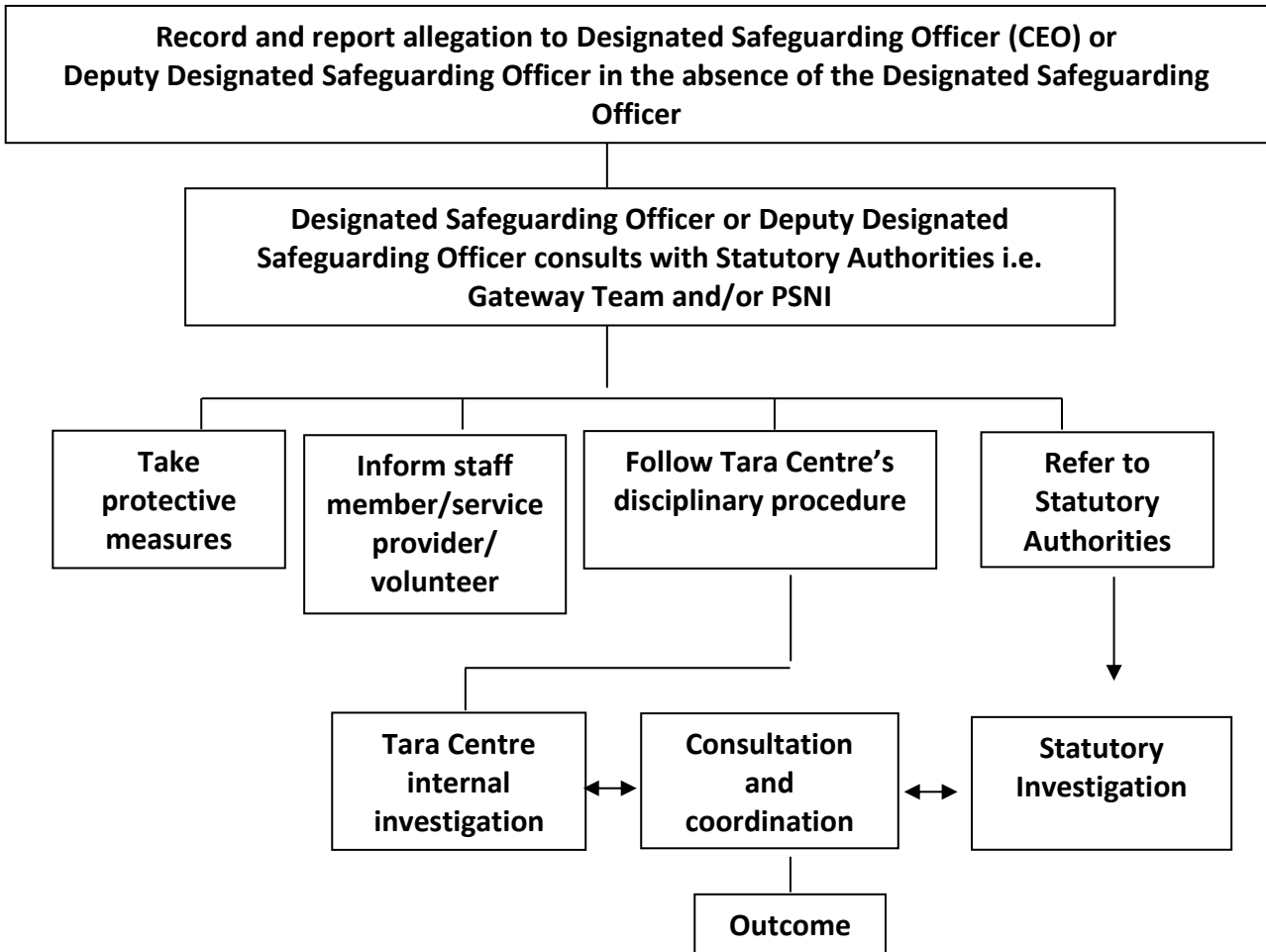
When the information has been reported all details should be recorded fully by the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer and then passed on to the

Chairperson who will direct the organisational procedure in respect of the staff member/volunteer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer will implement the procedure in respect of the child/young person.

The steps outlined below are taken:

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer consults with the HSC Trust and/or PSNI as soon as possible to ensure that any subsequent action taken by the organisation does not prejudice any possible HSC Trust or PSNI investigation;
- Subject to the outcome of the above consultation the Chairperson will inform the staff member/service provider/volunteer that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of it. They will be invited to respond to the allegation and their response will be fully recorded. The staff member will also be advised of any action to be taken;
- Staff members will be advised of sources of personal support.
- Actions to be taken may include advising the staff member that no further action will be taken or that protective measures will be taken such as transferring the staff member/service provider/ volunteer to another post without contact with children and young people, or suspending/moving him/her from their role. It should be noted that suspension is a neutral act to allow the investigation to proceed and to remove the staff member/volunteer from the possibility of any further allegation. If it is necessary to suspend a staff member/volunteer, the allegation should be dealt with as quickly and as sensitively as possible. Additional steps may be required to deal with the contractual position of service providers;
- Further consultation may be required with relevant statutory authorities to determine what, if any, further action is required. Where a criminal investigation has been instigated no further internal investigation or gathering of further evidence will take place to avoid prejudicing the investigation.
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer will maintain a record of all information and actions taken at each stage regardless of whether or not a referral has been made to statutory agencies. Where a decision is made not to make a referral to statutory agencies the reasons for this will be recorded including any discussions with statutory agencies.

**Flow Chart 2 – Dealing with Allegations Against Staff, Service Providers and Volunteers**



1       <b>or</b>	Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – individual removed from regulated activity	Refer the individual to the DBS and if relevant, inform appropriate professional body
2       <b>or</b>	Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – individual reinstated to regulated activity	Appropriate disciplinary sanction should be applied, training/retraining undertaken, appropriate support and supervision provided. If relevant, inform appropriate professional body.
3       <b>or</b>	Allegations of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – ongoing concerns e.g. practice concerns.	Staff member/service provider/volunteer should be offered additional support, training/retraining and supervision if necessary. If relevant, inform appropriate professional body.



4	Allegations of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – no ongoing concerns	Staff member/service provider/volunteer should be offered support. Training/retraining and supervision provided if necessary.
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### Possible Outcomes of Investigation

As outlined in the Flow Chart above, there are four possible outcomes which the Tara Centre Board of Directors consider and plan for:

1. **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is removed from regulated activity.** If the investigation finds that the allegation is substantiated, that is harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred, and the individual is removed from regulated activity, the Tara Centre is under a statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) under the SVG (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. If the staff member/service provider/volunteer resigns, retires or terminates the contract, at any point during the investigation process, the investigation will still be concluded and a referral made to the DBS if it is found that harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred.
2. **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is reinstated to regulated activity.** It is possible that the investigation finds that the allegation is substantiated, but the circumstances of the case are such that the individual can be reinstated to their job/role or contract re-instated subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, training and support and supervision or contract term arrangements being implemented. Despite the finding that harm/risk of harm has occurred, the decision to return the individual to the job/role means that a referral to the DBS is not required.
3. **Allegations of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – but there are ongoing concerns.** In a situation where the investigation concludes that the allegation is unsubstantiated and that the individual has not harmed a child/young person or placed them at risk of harm, but the organisation has ongoing concerns about the conduct of the staff member/service provider/volunteer, the organisation may conclude that the individual can be reinstated with additional support, supervision and training/retraining.
4. **Allegations of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – there are no ongoing concerns.** In an instance where the internal investigation finds that the allegation is unsubstantiated, that is the individual has not harmed or placed at risk of harm a child/young person, the staff member/service provider/volunteer may be reinstated and provided with support to reintegrate back into the organisation. Training and supervision may be necessary, depending on the nature of the allegation and findings of the investigation.

Regardless of the outcome of an investigation, dealing with allegations made against staff, service providers and volunteers can be traumatic and unsettling for any organisation. It is therefore vital that all staff, service providers and volunteers have a clear understanding of how allegations will be handled, and how the Tara Centre's disciplinary procedure and for provisions for terminating contracts will be consistently implemented. The allegation will be handled sensitively from initiation to conclusion ensuring that anxieties expressed or demonstrated by children, young people, parents, carers, or any other member of staff, service provider or volunteer are acknowledged and addressed.

### **What if a Staff Member's/Service Provider's/Volunteer's Concerns are Not Taken Seriously?**

If a staff member/service provider/volunteer raises a safeguarding concern but the Designated Safeguarding Officer/Designated Nominee is reluctant to pass it on, the staff member/service provider/volunteer should discuss the concern with the Company Chairperson (as head of the organisation). Where this fails, the staff member/service provider/volunteer should contact the local HSC Trust Gateway Service or the PSNI (see Appendix 5 of this document for contact details). Full record keeping is essential.

### **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing occurs when a member of staff, service provider or volunteer raises a concern about misconduct, illegal or underhand practices by individuals and/or an organisation; or about the way care and support is being provided, such as practices that cause harm or risk of harm to others or are abusive, discriminatory or exploitative. This will include situations where a staff member's, service provider's or volunteer's concerns are not acted upon by the Designated Safeguarding Officer, the Deputy Designated Officer or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

The Tara Centre has a Public Interest Disclosure Policy and Procedure in place which makes it clear that:

- The Tara Centre is committed to the highest possible standards of conduct, openness, honesty and accountability;
- The Tara Centre takes poor or malpractice seriously, giving examples of the types of concerns to be raised, to ensure that a whistleblowing concern is clearly distinguished from a grievance;
- Staff/ service providers or volunteers have the option to raise concerns outside of line management structures;
- Staff, service providers or volunteers are enabled to access confidential advice from an independent source;

- The Tara Centre will, where possible, respect the confidentiality of a member of staff raising a concern through the whistleblowing procedure;
- It is a disciplinary matter to both victimise a bona fide whistle-blower and for someone to maliciously make a false allegation.

There may be situations in which concerns or allegations turn out to be unfounded. It is important that everyone in the Tara Centre knows that if they raise a concern which, through the process of investigation, is not validated, they have not in any way been wrong in their initial action. Responsible action needs to be encouraged in the organisation and whistle-blowers should be confident of support. It is everyone's duty to be vigilant in preventing abusive practice. To access the full Public Interest Disclosure Policy please contact the GENERAL MANAGER, Tara Centre.

### **Guidance for a Complainant Who is Dissatisfied with the Way the Tara Centre has Dealt with a Concern**

Every avenue will be explored to deal with a complainant's concerns. If anyone is unhappy with the way the Board of Directors has dealt with their concerns, they can ask for an independent review. They cannot ask for the matter to be reinvestigated but can ask for the process (i.e. how it was dealt with) to be reviewed.

The individual should write to the Board of Directors setting out the reason why they are unhappy with the process. If they have any difficulty doing this, they can contact the Western Health & Social Care Trust to discuss other ways they may be able to help to ask for a review.

## **STANDARD 5: Code of Behaviour**

Having a Code of Behaviour for the Tara Centre will minimise the opportunity for children and young people to suffer harm. It will also help to protect staff, service providers and volunteers by ensuring they are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them and the boundaries within which they should operate. Many aspects of the Tara Centre Code of Behaviour are common sense but it is worth formalising these to ensure consistency of practice throughout the organisation.

The Tara Centre Code of Behaviour reflects the nature and activities of the organisation. It provides a clear guide to staff, service providers and volunteers on how they should behave when working with children and young people. It is a positive document, encouraging positive behaviours. However, the Code also highlights behaviours to be avoided and those which are unacceptable.

If a staff member, service provider or volunteer is unsure of their actions and feel they may have breached the Code, they should consult with their Line Manager without delay.

Breaching the Code is a serious issue that will be investigated. Staff/service providers/volunteers who breach any of the following may be subject to contract termination, the Tara Centre's disciplinary/problem solving procedures and ultimately dismissal, and if it constitutes harm/risk of harm, referral to the HSC Trust, PSNI, DBS and regulatory bodies, as appropriate service providers may have their contracts terminated. To access full details of the disciplinary/problem solving procedures please contact the GENERAL MANAGER, Tara Centre.

## **Communication**

### **Staff, service providers and volunteers must:**

- treat children with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- be consistent, fair and equitable with all children and young people;
- be supportive, approachable and reassuring;
- be supportive in a manner appropriate to age and stage of development;
- listen to children and young people and communicate with them appropriately;
- be respectful of a young person's right to privacy;
- help children to develop their own sense of their rights as well as helping them to know what they can do if they feel that there is a problem;

- involve children and young people appropriately in decision making;
- be patient with children and young people;
- treat each child/young person as an individual and adopt a child centred approach;
- develop a culture that enables children to talk openly about their contact with staff, volunteers and others.

**Staff, service providers and volunteers should never:**

- make sexually suggestive comments to or about a child/young person;
- act in a way that is intended to shame, belittle, intimidate or degrade a child/young person;
- form inappropriate relationships with children or young people;
- develop overfamiliar relationships with children and young people or create over dependency;
- never develop relationships with children and young people that could be deemed to be exploitative or abusive;
- gossip about children, young people and their families;
- let allegations made by a child/young person go unreported;
- invite a child/young person to their own home;
- use inappropriate language with children and young people;
- allow a child/young person to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- give their personal contact details to children and young people.

## **Physical Contact**

**Staff, service providers and volunteers should:**

- ensure that physical contact is supportive, takes place in an open environment and is not secretive;
- ensure that physical contact is governed by the age and developmental stage of the child;
- respect the boundary of physical and emotional space that others require, using touch in a prudent and responsible way;

- ensure that touch is only ever in response to the child's needs and never in an intrusive or sexualised way;
- ensure that physical contact is appropriate to the task required;
- ensure that intimate care is carried out carefully, sensitively and respectfully;
- never engage in any inappropriate contact with a child/young person;
- ensure that any dangerous behaviour by children and young people is stopped;
- not do things of a personal nature that a child/young person can do for themselves;
- not engage in any type of physical intervention or restraint, unless specifically trained and informed to do so within their job/role;
- inform their line manager/coordinator of any changing or additional needs with regards to physical support required by a child/young person.

## **Diversity**

### **Staff, service providers and volunteers should:**

- be open to and aware of diversity in the beliefs and practices of children, young people and their families;
- be aware of the difficulties posed by language barriers and other communication difficulties;
- use all of the communication tools necessary to understand what a child/young person is trying to tell them;
- not discriminate against children, young people and their families who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs from their own;
- report any discrimination by other staff members/service providers/volunteers.

## **Safe Supervision**

### **Staff, service providers and volunteers should:**

- ensure that children and young people in their care are not left unattended or unsupervised;
- ensure whenever possible that another adult is present or close by when providing therapy.

**Staff, service providers and volunteers should avoid:**

- spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child/young person away from others;
- taking a child/young person alone on a car journey unless with the full consent of the parent/carer and their line manager/coordinator;
- meeting a child/young person outside of the auspices of the Tara Centre.

**Staff, service providers and volunteers should never:**

- abuse, harm or place at risk of harm a child/young person;
- condone or participate in behaviour of children and young people which is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- provide alcohol or any drug substance to a child/young person;
- never provide medication to a child/young person; this is the responsibility of their parent/carer;
- engage in rough physical games with children and young people, including horseplay;
- engage in sexually provocative games with a child/young person;
- handle a child/young person's money;
- borrow money from, or lend money to, a child/young person.

**Technology****Staff, service providers and volunteer should:**

- ensure that photographs/videos are only taken by an individual/organisation authorised by the Tara Centre;
- never photograph/video a child/young person, including by mobile phone or tablet, without prior written parental consent or consent from the young person themselves (where they are 16+);
- ensure that any photographs/videos taken of children and young people have a required purpose and that this purpose has been explained fully to those giving consent;
- ensure that any images of children and young people are appropriate. Images that capture children and young people in what are commonly understood as non-public activities e.g. toileting or changing clothes, or which show body parts not usually visible in public settings,

are never to be taken. Children should always be fully clothed. Images involving groups should be about the activity, not the individual child;

- never use mobile phones with photographic and video facilities in changing facilities or residential accommodation;
- avoid naming the child/young person where their photograph has been used.
- avoid using their photograph where a child/young person has been named.
- report any inappropriate use of images;
- obtain informed written parent/guardian permission before embarking on any digital project with children and young people. If the names of children and young people are used in the credits, use only their first names and do not link individuals to specific roles;
- never make or receive calls or texts while supervising or caring for children and young people, unless in case of emergency. To do so in front of children would be considered both unsafe and inappropriate conduct. Anything which compromises the ability to maintain a safe environment and give full attention to the supervision of children should be actively discouraged;
- discourage the use of mobile phones or tablets during activities, as both have a facility to take photographs and videos which can be immediately uploaded onto the web or social networking sites without permission.
- never give out their personal contact details to children and young people they are working with;
- never contact children and young people (e.g. via phone, text, email) without prior written consent or by copying to a parent/carer. Additional communication should be directed to the child's parent/carer;
- never use inappropriate communication with children through the internet, e-mail, text messages or otherwise;
- never contact children and young people they are working with outside of the organisation's activities, including befriending them through their own personal pages on social networking sites;
- report any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour on the internet that involves children and young people;
- ensure that all e-mails sent to and received from children are retained and archived;
- contact young people by group e-mail which should also be forwarded to parents/carers;



- Send group emails using the bcc box to ensure the privacy of children, young people, their parents/carers. It is the right of each individual to decide who has access to his/her e-mail address. All e-mail providers offer a bcc function which allows the sender to send an e-mail to many people without revealing the addresses of the other people receiving the e-mail. Group e-mails should give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: “if you wish to be removed from this e-mail list please contact the leader”;
- ensure that each leader, child and young person is aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable usage of e-technology, using the above points as a guide. Cyberbullying is addressed in the Tara Centre’s Anti-Bullying Guidelines which can be found below.

It is important that children and young people are made aware of the dangers associated with new technology, such as social networking sites and the internet, and know to tell someone if they encounter anything that makes them feel unsafe or threatened.

## **Dealing with Challenging Behaviour**

Many children and young people are dealing with complex issues which can lead them to act out negative behaviour that is challenging for leaders and for other children and young people around them. Issues like separation, bereavement, bullying, discriminatory behaviours, eating disorders and addiction can have a huge impact on children and young people’s self-esteem. We must be sensitive to their needs and remember that safeguarding is much broader than recognising, responding to and reporting abuse. It is about ensuring that children and young people have the help and support they need to be safe.

As leaders dealing with challenging or unacceptable behaviour, we should remember that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. In order to ensure the safeguarding of children and young people the following are guidelines for staff, service providers and volunteers:

- agree clear behavioural standards and consequences for their breach in advance (see below for code of behaviour for children and young people);
- try to defuse situations before they escalate, emphasising safety as the concern;
- focus on and affirm appropriate behaviour;
- try to help the child/young person who is having a behaviour difficulty to name the feelings;
- attempt to find out what the problem is and work towards finding a solution;
- talk to the child, in his/her own language, about choosing good behaviour, and make the child aware of the different consequences following choices made. Inform the child that s/he will be asked to leave the activity if the behaviour continues to be inappropriate;

- if necessary, take the child to one side in order to discuss the problem and work together towards finding a solution. Re-integrate the child positively into the activity as soon as possible;
- in cases of extreme behavioural difficulties which pose a threat to the child, staff or other children/young people, take the child to one side and contact the parents immediately;
- dealing with children's challenging/unacceptable behaviour should never involve physical punishment or any form of degrading or humiliating treatment;
- record and report any incident of behavioural difficulty to the leader of the activity;
- parents/carers should always be informed of any behavioural issues or incidents involving their child.

## **Code of Behaviour for Children and Young People**

### **Do:**

- respect yourselves and each other;
- respect and listen to leaders;
- treat everyone fairly;
- listen to each other;
- learn from each other;
- include everyone;
- be friendly to each other and have fun;
- stand up for yourselves and each other;
- encourage everyone to join in;
- look out for each other;
- be respectful of the property of others;
- switch off mobile phones during activities;
- talk to a leader if you have a problem or concern.

### **Don't:**

- Don't hurt anyone;
- Don't pick on anyone;
- Don't tease anyone;
- Don't call anyone names;
- Don't use inappropriate language or comments;
- Don't take anyone else's things;
- Don't ignore bullying of any kind;
- Don't cheat or lie;
- Don't bring anything that might cause harm to yourself and others;
- Don't consume alcohol or drugs while participating in Tara Centre activities.

All participating children and young people must sign and adhere to the agreed Code.

## Anti – Bullying Guidelines

Everyone taking part in activities and services delivered by the Tara Centre should be able to have fun and enjoy taking part. Bullying is wrong and the Tara Centre does not tolerate bullying wherever it occurs or whoever is responsible. If bullying does happen, it should be reported to a member of staff as soon as possible.

### What is bullying?

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as behaviour, that is usually repeated, by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. This definition statement is based on the definition of bullying as laid out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of—

- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- (b) any other act, or
- (c) any combination of those,

For the purposes of this legislation the term act also includes an act of omission.

### Bullying can be:

**Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, (hiding possessions, threatening gestures);

**Physical:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;

ridiculing, humiliation, taking peoples things, setting people up and spreading rumours;

**Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

**Sexual:** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;

**Homophobic:** because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;

**Verbal:** Name calling, teasing, mocking, taunting and threats;

**Cyber/Online:** all areas of internet, such as email and social media misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. Bullying usually has three key elements:

- It is usually repeated behaviour that happens over a period of time
- It usually involves an imbalance of power
- It is intentionally hurtful behaviour

All unacceptable behaviour must be challenged, whether it is bullying or not.

The term bullying is highly emotive, often causing great anxiety, fear and shame to both the children involved and their families. It is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters.

For that reason we should never refer to a child as ‘a bully’, nor do we refer to a child as ‘a victim’. Instead, we should refer to the child by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- *A child displaying bullying behaviours*
- *A child experiencing bullying behaviours*

We encourage everyone to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

Staff, service providers, volunteers, children and young people must be vigilant to the signs of bullying and identify bullying hotspots (i.e. where children are likely to be most vulnerable).

**Possible indicators of bullying include child/young person:**

- is frightened of attending a 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”.

Possible indicators of cyberbullying include seeming nervous when using their electronic devices; becoming obsessive about constantly being online; stopping using their electronic devices unexpectedly; avoiding discussion about what they are doing online or who they are talking to; changes in behaviour, especially after going online e.g. becoming sad, withdrawn or angry; and reluctance to go to school or take part in usual social activities.

Sometimes the child/young person experiencing bullying behaviour is afraid to tell someone else but it is important that they do so that someone can help and stop the bullying behaviour. No one should ever be bullied and everyone has the right to feel safe.

**If you are experiencing bullying behaviour or think someone else is tell a member of staff.**

Any incident of bullying behaviour must be fully recorded and reported to the leader in charge.

**Staff and service providers must support the child/young person experiencing bullying behaviour:**

- Listen and focus on the child/young person.
- Learn what's been going on and show you want to help.
- Assure the child/young person that bullying is not their fault.
- Assess the severity of the situation - the nature, frequency and duration of the bullying behaviour and the degree of distress suffered by the person.
- Inform the person's parents/carers as soon as possible.
- Work together with the child and their parents/carers to resolve the situation - ask the child/young person what can be done to make him or her feel safe. For example, this might result in the children/young people involved working in different teams or sitting separately until the issue is resolved.

Tips for children and young people if the bullying behaviour is happening online:

- Do not reply.
- Save messages.
- Use the 'report abuse' button available.
- Block the sender.
- Tell someone you trust.

**Staff Must Address the Bullying Behaviour:**

- Address the bullying behaviour with the rest of the group, if appropriate. For example, remind everyone of the anti-bullying guidelines. Facilitate a discussion around what bullying is and how it may affect a person.
- Speak to the child/young person individually. Make sure s/he knows that the bullying behaviour is inappropriate and harms others. Remind them of the anti-bullying guidelines.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the child/young person being bullied.
- Work with him/her to understand some of the reasons they demonstrated bullying behaviour.
- Outline that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell him/her that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated and if the matter persists they may be excluded from activities.
- Inform his/her parents as soon as possible.
- Work with the child/young person and their parents to try and stop the bullying behaviour and encourage positive behaviour.
- Involve him/her in making amends or repairing the situation, where appropriate.

- Monitor the situation carefully.
- If the bullying behaviour continues the child/young person may need to be temporarily or permanently excluded from activities.

Remember that any safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible as per reporting procedures.

Childnet Smart rules for children aged 4 -11 years.

<https://www.childnet.com/young-people/4-11-year-olds/get-smart/>

**Safe** - Keep your personal information safe. When chatting or posting online don't give away things like your full name, password or home address. Remember personal information can be seen in images and videos you share too. Keep them safe to keep yourself safe.

**Meet** - Meeting up with someone you only know online, even a friend of a friend, can be dangerous as this person is still a stranger. If someone you only know online ever asks you to meet up, for personal information or for photos/videos of you then tell an adult straight away and report them together on [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk).

**Accepting** - Think carefully before you click on or open something online (e.g. links, adverts, friend requests, photos) as you never know where they may lead to or they may contain viruses. Do not accept something if you are unsure of who the person is or what they've sent you.

**Reliable** - You cannot trust everything you see online as some things can be out of date, inaccurate or not entirely true. To find reliable information compare at least three different websites, check in books and talk to someone about what you have found.

**Tell a trusted adult** if something or someone ever makes you feel upset, worried or confused. This could be if you or someone you know is being bullied online. There are lots of people who will be able to help you like your teachers, parents, carers or contact Childline – **0800 11 11** or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Help, advice and resources for 11-18 year olds can be found at:

<https://www.childnet.com/young-people/11-18-year-olds/>

These guidelines for children and young people are reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

## **STANDARD 6: Management of Records, Confidentiality and Sharing of Information**

### **Confidentiality Statement**

The Tara Centre recognises the importance of ensuring peoples' rights to confidentiality and is committed to keeping all personal information about children, young people and their families confidential. An exception is when a safeguarding concern arises in relation to a child. In this situation information will be shared on a "need to know" basis and in the best interests of the child:

- Information will only be shared on a need to know basis in order to safeguard the child/young person, as per the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will have access to information to check that records are being made and maintained appropriately and to enable them to identify patterns of behaviour emerging from incident reporting, which might give rise to the need to make a report to the local HSC Trust in accordance with procedures.
- Giving information appropriately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer and/or statutory authorities for the protection of the child or young person is not a breach of confidentiality.
- Primary carers have a right to know if personal information is being shared and a report is being made to the HSC Trust unless doing so could put the child at further risk of harm.

Tara Centre staff, service providers and volunteers know that personal and sensitive details about the lives of children and young people with whom we work or who are in our care and their families should not be the subject of gossip. They also know that information cannot be passed on to others without good cause or reason and that we all have a fundamental right to privacy of information and confidentiality. Care is taken to ensure that when cases do have to be discussed with colleagues, the details cannot be overheard by others.

**However, staff, service providers and volunteers should be clear that in circumstances where they have concerns about a child or young person's safety, they should pass on information that they may have been told in confidence, in line with the Tara Centre's reporting procedures.**

Staff, service providers and volunteers within the Tara Centre acknowledge their responsibility in relation to the gathering, storage, usage and sharing of personal information in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998, sometimes referred to as the principles of 'good information handling'.

The Tara Centre Board of Directors has referred to The Information Commission's Office (ICO)'s published Data Sharing Code of Practice to assist the Tara Centre in complying with the Data Protection Act. Within it, there is guidance in factors to consider when deciding whether or not to

share personal data, including checklists to assist organisations in their decision making. The Data Sharing Code of Practice can be accessed at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

### **Principles for Processing of Personal Data**

Data protection principles underpin the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). These principles set out our obligations as an organisation collecting, processing and storing personal data.

Personal data:

- Shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in a transparent manner;
- Shall be obtained only for a specific and lawful, explicit and legitimate purpose, and this purpose will be clearly stated and we shall only collect data for as long as necessary to complete that purpose;
- Shall be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purpose for which they are processed;
- Shall be accurate and data which is inaccurate or incomplete will be updated or removed. Individuals have the right to request the erasure or rectification of erroneous data that relates to them and this will be done within a month of such a request;
- Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose or purposes for which it was obtained;
- Shall be kept safe and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction, or damage using 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.

### **GDPR provides the following rights for individuals:**

1. The right to be informed – fair processing information, transparency over how their data will be used, e.g. privacy statement.
2. The right of access – access to personal data and how it is being used and processed, e.g. subject access request.
3. The right to rectification – personal data can be rectified if inaccurate or incomplete. This should be rectified within one month of being advised and third parties may also need advised if data has been shared.
4. The right to erasure – the right to request personal data be deleted, except where there is a compelling reason for continued processing, e.g. legal obligation, public interest, statistical analysis.



5. The right to restrict processing – to permit the storage of personal data, but block or restrict processing, e.g. when accuracy of data is contested. Third parties may also need advised if data has been shared.
6. The right to data portability – individuals can obtain and reuse their personal data across different services without hindrance to usability.
7. The right to object – objection to direct marketing, processing for legitimate reasons, e.g. public interest, statistical research.
8. Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling – can only be carried out when: fulfilling a contract with the individual, authorised by law or the individual has given consent.

The Tara Centre has a robust confidentiality policy taking all of the following factors into consideration:

- What personal information is needed and the purpose for gathering this;
- How this information should be securely stored;
- Who can have access to the information and the procedure for gaining access to it;
- How long information should be kept;
- With whom information should be shared;
- How and when records will be disposed of.

To access this policy please contact the GENERAL MANAGER, Tara Centre.

### **Personal Information**

The Tara Centre requires essential personal details about all children and young people who engage in our services and activities. Essential joining information includes:

- The individuals with parental responsibility (as defined by the Children (NI) Order 1995) for the child;
- The name, address and contact number of parents as well as an emergency contact number;
- Any additional needs, medical or health issues that we need to know about;
- Contact with other professionals/agencies, if any.

The Tara Centre has registration forms for this information. The form being used depends on which service is being accessed. These are completed before the child/young person accesses any service, so that reasonable adjustments can be made if appropriate.

The Tara Centre also keeps records which reflect the child's ongoing engagement with the organisation. This will include records on attendance, activities participated in and any incidents/accidents/near misses that occur.

Careful consideration is given to the storage of, and access to, this information. The Tara Centre Board of Directors, staff, service providers and volunteers are aware that parents have the right to know why information is required and how it will be used. Parents will have ready access to the records of their child/children.

All written records are stored in a secure location and accessed by authorised personnel only. Electronic records held on computers are also appropriately secured by way of password protection and restricted access. Information given by parents will not be passed onto others without permission, except with regard to a safeguarding concern. Good record keeping of decision making is essential in cases where information sharing is being considered. The Tara Centre maintains records of the information gathered which explains and justifies their decisions.

Information is disposed of within timescales that are in keeping with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

### **Sharing Information with Children and Parents**

Children and young people also need to know and understand information about the Tara Centre and our activities. They need to be aware of who they can talk to if they have a concern. This needs to be clearly communicated in a way that can be clearly understood and take into account the age and developmental stage of the child/young person.

Anyone engaging in activities or services provided by the Tara Centre will:

- be given information about the activities, services, policies and procedures of the organisation;
- be informed of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy by the appropriate staff member on commencement of the activity/service;
- be made aware of the reporting procedures and the Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- be made aware of Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy statement and details on how to access the full policy. The statement is clearly displayed on premises;

- be informed of the procedures for giving us feedback and for making a complaint. Evaluations, surveys and meetings are all essential ways of receiving feedback about our services and activities.

The Tara Centre understands the importance of working in partnership with parents/carers. Consent will be gained for children and young people to participate in the regular activities that take place within the organisation; this will be obtained from someone with parental responsibility for the child/young person. Further consent is obtained for any off site, one off or residential activities and, where relevant, to be engaged with the organisation online.

The Tara Centre has a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness and is open to feedback from children, young people, their parent/carers, staff, service providers and volunteers with a view to improving how our activities are carried out and services are delivered.

This is achieved through:

- a commitment to a listening environment;
- people are welcome to make suggestions about how things could be improved;
- evaluating services and asking for feedback; and
- providing information and feedback on actions being taken and developments within the Tara Centre.

Effective management helps ensure that valuable insights are gained and lessons are learned through contact with staff, service providers and volunteers, and satisfaction surveys from a myriad of stakeholders.

### **Dealing with Concerns and Complaints**

Children, young people and their parents/carers also need to know and understand information about the Tara Centre and our activities. They need to be aware of who they can talk to if they have a concern or a complaint. This needs to be clearly communicated in a way that can be clearly understood.

The Tara Centre has a robust complaints procedure, involving the GENERAL MANAGER, Board of Directors (including Chairperson), and external signposting as necessary. Staff, service providers and volunteers should raise their complaint through the Grievance Procedure. For full details of these policies please contact the GENERAL MANAGER, Tara Centre. The complaints procedure is communicated appropriately to everyone involved in the organisation. It is also displayed on premises and in material relating to the Tara Centre.

Records of discussions and information shared at each stage of the Complaints/Grievance Procedure will be made clearly and accurately. All information relating to the complaint/grievance will be kept confidential and stored in a secure location, accessed only on a “need to know” basis.

Where there is a complaint in relation to potential abuse, the Tara Centre’s reporting procedures as outlined in this safeguarding policy take precedence over the complaints procedure.

## **STANDARD 7:      General Safety and Management of Activities**

The welfare of children and young people must be given paramount consideration. All possible steps are taken to keep children safe while involving them in activities. Good general management and efficient and effective administration practices will help to ensure the smooth and responsible running of the Tara Centre's activities. Activities should be planned so that they are safely managed and take into account the nature of the activity and the age range and ability or additional needs of the participants.

### **Guidelines Relating to Activities**

Staff, service providers and volunteers within the Tara Centre must consider the following factors when planning any activity for children and young people:

- Activities must take place in a safe environment. An initial safety check for hazards should be done on each occasion before premises are used;
- There must be an appointed first aid person available;
- Staff, service providers and volunteers must adhere to the Tara Centre's procedures for recording and reporting accidents, incident and near misses (as outlined below);
- Staff, service providers and volunteers must adhere to the Tara Centre's procedures for dealing with emergencies;
- Employees and service providers must be fully aware of their roles and responsibilities during the activity;
- Leaders working with a mixed group must be drawn from both genders;
- There must be designated group leader for all activities;
- Parents/carers complete a registration and consent form including relevant medical details, any special needs and emergency contact numbers;
- A risk assessment must be carried out for all activities;
- Accident/incident/near miss report forms are kept on the premises and must be completed as per procedures;
- Health and safety policies must be adhered to;
- Children's attendance at each activity must be recorded;
- Personal data on children is confidential and is to be stored securely;
- Games and icebreakers should be structured to take into consideration the risk of physical injury and personal space issues;

- Insurance must be up-to-date, adequate and appropriate, with extra insurance cover for occasional activities e.g. bouncy castles;
- Areas where maintenance work is being carried out should never be used for activities with children;
- All medicines are to be stored securely;
- Non-prescription medication, topical creams, lotions or adhesive dressings may only be administered to a child with parental consent;
- Prescribed medication may only be administered to a child with the written consent of a doctor and strictly following a medication schedule. The medication given should be checked by two adults and recorded;
- Regular fire drills are undertaken, in addition to weekly testing of the fire alarm, appointed fire warden and fire extinguishers;
- A list of emergency telephone numbers must be displayed and kept up to date;
- Staff, service providers and volunteers must be competent in their given roles and additional training and support provided as necessary;
- Staff, service providers and volunteers must be aware of responsibilities in relation to ensuring safety, and safe use of equipment;
- Ratios must be identified in advance and adhered to at all times, with emergency situations being accommodated in setting the ratios (see guidance below);
- Staff, service providers and volunteers must be recruited as per the procedures outlined in this policy.

## **Supervision**

Children and young people are less likely to experience harm if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised so that they maximise participation, fun and learning, but they must also be safe. Matters to be considered include: the number, gender and age of the participants in the group; the nature of the venue; the abilities within the group and their behaviour; any special medical needs the children and young people may have; the nature of the activities to be undertaken and their duration; and the competence and experience of the staff, service providers and volunteers involved.

It is important to ensure that:

- Children and young people are never left unattended;
- When boys and girls are present, adequate numbers of workers of both sexes are available to supervise their activities.

### Recommended (not statutory) Ratio of Adults per Number of Children:

0-2 years	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-12 years	13-18 years
1 staff to 3 children	1 staff to 4 children	1 staff to 6 children	1 staff to 8 children	1 staff to 10 children

- There should be one additional staff member for every 10 children.
- Where appropriate a service provider may supplement the supervision team.

Every effort must be made to achieve the best level of supervision of children and young people at all times.

### Including Children With Additional Needs

#### In order to successfully include children with disabilities in activities Tara staff will:

- Work in partnership with the child, parents and any professionals to establish how the child can be included;
- •Make sure inclusion is possible before bringing the child or young person into the scheme;
- •Make reasonable adjustments;
- •Be interested in the child – build rapport;
- •Gather some information about the child’s impairment but remember that they are working with a child/young person and not a condition;
- •Where the child/young person has a communication impairment, acquire as reasonable and appropriate some key skills in the child/young person’s communication method
- •Arrange disability specific training as may be useful or required – e.g. on autism or epilepsy;
- •Ensure risk assessments are updated to ensure the safety of any children/young people with additional needs;
- •Consider if higher staff ratios are required where the child/young person has additional needs or behavioural problems;
- •Obtain written consent from parents/carers if the child needs intimate care – e.g. help with toileting;
- •Be open to explaining our policy of inclusion to all children/young people;
- •Use existing policies if bullying behaviour occurs;
- •Help parents of non-disabled children and young people understand your organisation’s commitment to inclusion.

## **Guidelines for Staff, Service Providers and Volunteers Who Have Responsibility for Transporting Children and Young People**

- Except in cases of emergency, a driver must never transport a child alone, and informs someone immediately if he/she does so;
- Vehicles must be road worthy, taxed and insured;
- Drivers must hold a full licence and must be fit to drive safely.

If transport is sourced from an external provider, staff must use a reputable provider who can provide evidence that the vehicle is roadworthy, taxed and insured.

### **Health and Safety Statement**

The Tara Centre has a Health and Safety Policy. While this statement refers mainly to employees, it is also applicable to service providers, volunteers and to all activities relating to safeguarding children. Where children are engaged in new activities the Health and Safety Statement should be reviewed to ensure that the particular activity is covered. Where children are engaged in one-off activities or away on trips, a written plan must be drawn up. The elements outlined above are to be included. To access the Health and Safety Policy please contact the General Manager, Tara Centre.

### **Risk Assessment and Management**

Assessing and managing risks to children and young people is integral to the Tara Centre's risk management strategy. Risks relate to Tara Centre's working, its service provision, delivery of individual activities and its social guardianship responsibilities.

Assessment of risk is the process of examining what could possibly cause harm to children, young people, staff, service providers, volunteers or others in the context of the activities and services that Tara Centre provides, in the interactions with and between individuals and with the wider community. Risk of harm can result from a number of factors, such as threatening behaviours, injury, abuse, neglect, accidents/incidents/near misses, venue/environment, lack of training/support/supervision, inappropriate ratios. Factors such as disability and medical/health/additional needs may require additional planning in advance to ensure inclusion.

In assessing and managing risks, the aim is to minimise either the likelihood of risk or its potential impacts. In safeguarding terms, the aim of risk assessment and risk management is to prevent abuse or harm occurring, to reduce the likelihood of it occurring and to minimise the impact by responding to it effectively if it does occur.



Tara Centre staff, service providers and volunteers should take time to identify risks, evaluate and put in place risk reducing measures. An identification of any risk carries a duty to report this risk to their line manager/coordinator, who will then complete a risk assessment (see Appendix 6 of this document for **Risk Assessment Record Form**). A risk review should be carried out at least once per year.

Staff/service providers/volunteers carrying out risk assessment in relation to children and young people need to consider the following:

- the assessment and management of risk should promote independence, choice and social inclusion of children and young people;
- risks change as circumstances change;
- risks can be minimised but not eliminated;
- involvement of children, young people, parents, carers and other agencies helps to improve the quality of risk assessments and decision – making;
- working in partnership to achieve positive outcomes;
- application of good practice, communication and following procedures (such as Code of Behaviour) can help to minimise risk.

No endeavour or activity, or indeed interaction, is entirely risk free and even with good planning, it may be impossible to completely eliminate risks from any activity, service or interaction. However, having in place good risk assessment and management practice is essential to reduce the likelihood and impact of identified risks.

The Tara Centre Board of Directors takes its obligations towards identifying and determining levels of risk seriously. When identifying risks, there is a specific focus on safeguarding risks, for example, by identifying the circumstances where abuse or exploitation are more likely to occur. Determining the level of risk combines its likelihood and impact, with low risk being unlikely and low impact, and high risk being likely and high impact. High level risk is given most urgent attention.

Risks can be managed in a number of ways. The Chair and the Board of Directors ‘own’ the risks associated with the Tara Centre. The primary aim of the safeguarding policy is to manage the risk of abuse to children and young people by establishing an organisational culture in which the rights of children and young people are fully respected and by putting in place a range of procedures which support that culture (of zero tolerance of abuse wherever it occurs and whoever causes it). Risk can be managed in a number of ways:

- Avoid the risk – decide not to engage with particular service or activity;
- Control the risk – by reducing its likelihood and impact;

- Finance the risk – provide resources to meet liabilities caused by the identified risks;
- Transfer the risk – engage a third party
- Accept the risk – tolerating low level risks may be acceptable to the Board of Directors

Mindful that being too risk averse can be stifling, the Tara Centre Board of Directors encourage a culture of positive risk taking, pursued in the context of promoting opportunity and safety, not poor practice. Risk assessment may involve a range of relevant stakeholders.

### **Dealing with Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses**

Staff, service providers and volunteers must report all accidents, incidents and near misses to the General Manager, recording the details on the Tara Centre's **Accident/Incident/Near Miss Report Form** in Appendix 7 of this document.

Where an accident, incident or near miss is in some way connected to a safeguarding matter, it must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer for appropriate action. The Tara Centre has a procedure in place for reviewing accidents, incidents and near misses, which should in turn inform practice and the risk assessment and management procedure. This is useful for extracting useful information and learning, to inform safer future practice by making relevant changes in practice, policy and procedure.

## **Appendix 1: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE**

The following definitions are taken from 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in NI' (DOH, August 2017) which provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people.

**Physical abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Possible indicators include fractures, bruising, pain, burns, repeated attendance at GP surgery/hospital and delay between injury and seeking medical attention.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Possible indicators include genital itching or soreness, genital bruising or bleeding, stomach/abdominal pain, sexually transmitted disease or infection, changes in sexual behaviour or language and not wanting to be touched.

### **Emotional abuse**

is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Possible indicators include being hungry/thirsty, weight loss, being unclean or untidy, isolation and inadequate supervision and experiencing pain/discomfort.

**Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person, for personal gain.

It includes child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It can be sexual in nature e.g. child sexual exploitation.

**Bullying** is the repeated use of power by one or more persons to intentionally harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others (NI Anti Bullying Forum). Although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme forms it could be regarded as abuse. It can take many forms but the main types are:

**Emotional** – excluding, being unfriendly;

**Physical** – hitting, kicking, theft;

**Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

**Sexual** – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

**Homophobic** – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality;

**Verbal** – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;

**Cyberbullying** (e.g. text message, picture/video-clip and phone call bullying via mobile phones; email, website bullying).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm.

Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred, they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst, bullying can result in a child or young person self-harming and even attempting suicide.

In these circumstances bullying should be considered as child abuse and treated as such.

## **Appendix 2: SAFEGUARDING IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Sexual exploitation can range from opportunistic exploitation to more calculated, progressive and protracted exploitative behaviours. Abusers are often skilled in manipulating and exploiting young people, using affection, attention, treats, alcohol, drugs or just a place to 'hang out' or stay to gain and abuse a young person's trust; sometimes they may manipulate the young person into believing they are in an affectionate and consensual relationship. Frequently alcohol and drugs are provided to intoxicate and immobilise victims, making them more vulnerable to abuse. Alcohol and drugs are also used to create dependence and the perpetrators' control over victims. Frequently victims are subject to intimidation, threat and actual violence and/or threats or actual violence against their family or others they care about. Whatever the method of exploitation, the young person is being taken advantage of, exploited and abused through this controlling behaviour.

**Online sexual exploitation of children and young people** involves a range of offending which includes, but is not limited to, online grooming and can occur without a child or young person's knowing they are being targeted. The [Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation website](#) provides helpful information describing the gradual, phased and progressive stages of grooming wherein the intent to exploit is ever-present and the pattern of increasing control evident. It also provides a range of useful advice to assist professionals to work collaboratively with parents/carers to help them protect children and young people from sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation can also involve children or young people being trafficked, within and across domestic and international borders, to engage in sexual activity with multiple perpetrators. While some children and young people may be more vulnerable, victims of sexual exploitation often have no obvious vulnerability factors and are not otherwise known to services, agencies or organisations. A child or young person may not see themselves as a victim of sexual exploitation, and in these circumstances is unlikely to disclose information voluntarily or may be difficult to engage. This may be as a result of threat, intimidation, fear of exploiters, loyalty to perpetrators, a negative perception or fear of authorities, or simply a failure to recognise that they have been exploited.

Sexual exploitation may also involve more than one abuser and a number of victims. Sexual exploitation can take many forms and victims and perpetrators can be from any social or ethnic background. All agencies, organisations and practitioners should be aware that no single feature can

define sexual exploitation of children and young people. They should ensure that they keep abreast of developing knowledge in other areas, have an up-to-date understanding of patterns of sexual exploitation in their area and recognise that the ways in which children and young people are exploited is constantly evolving. In doing so, it may be helpful to refer to guidance developed by the Department for Education in England, which includes further detail on the characteristics of child sexual exploitation and potential indicators of risk. This is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. FGM is child abuse. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. It is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland.

Possible signs that FGM is about to take place include: a child may talk about going on a special holiday to a country where the procedure is prevalent (a prolonged period of time away, often at the start of the school holidays); a child may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'; or a female family elder visiting from country of origin.

Possible indicators that FGM may have already taken place include difficulty walking, sitting or standing; lengthy absence from school/activities during the day with bladder or menstrual problems; prolonged or repeated absences from school/activities; behaviour changes e.g. withdrawal or depression; or seeking to be excused from physical exercises.

**Honour Based Violence (HBV)** is the term used to refer to a range of violent practices used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to sustain or promote perceived cultural and religious beliefs, and/or honour.

Such violence may occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative or another has shamed, or may shame, the family and/or community by breaking their 'honour code'. The punishment can include assault, abduction, restrictions of liberty, confinement, threats and murder.

Children, young people and adults can be victims of HBV. Where it is suspected or believed that a child or young person is at immediate risk of HBV, an immediate report should be made to the PSNI. If the risk is not perceived to be immediate, the information should be passed to the local HSCT.

Where it is known to have taken place with children or adults, this information should be passed to the HSCT and/or the PSNI to ensure that other children within the community affected are appropriately safeguarded. Further information can be found at <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/app/uploads/2021/06/HBV-Factsheet-.pdf>

Possible indicators include change in demeanour or behaviour e.g. becoming withdrawn or depressed; self-harm and/or eating disorder; drug/alcohol misuse; fearful of being seen talking to the leader by their relatives; running away from home; controlling behaviour by their family; including unreasonable restrictions; family maintaining surveillance over the young person at all times (particularly through brothers and cousins); siblings having had early marriages or dropped out of school at a young age.

**Forced Marriage** is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland, and where any individual or organisation has knowledge or suspicion of a forced marriage in relation to a child or young person, they should contact the PSNI immediately.

Forced marriage is conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. It is different from an arranged marriage where both parties choose whether or not they want to marry the person suggested to them by their families. In a forced marriage there is no freedom of choice. Forced marriage is a criminal offence in Northern Ireland.

Forced marriage is often motivated by a desire to maintain family honour; to maintain and strengthen family and community links; or for immigration and citizenship purposes. The force can be emotional and/or physical.

**Appendix 3: TARA CENTRE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON ABUSE REPORT FORM**

Please answer all relevant questions as fully as you can and pass the form on as quickly as possible (even if you cannot complete all sections).

<b>Work Location</b>	
<b>Name of Child</b>	
<b>Age/Date of Birth</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Name of Parent(s)</b> (if known)	
<b>Home Address</b> (if known)	

**PLEASE COMPLETE THOSE SECTIONS BELOW THAT ARE RELEVANT**

<b>1. DISCLOSURE BY CHILD/YOUNG PERSON</b>
When was the disclosure made (dates and times)?
Who did the child/young person make the disclosure to?
What did the child/young person actually say?



**2. INDICATORS**

Describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with dates and times)

Has the child/young person alleged that any particular person is the abuser (if so, please record details and the relationship, if any, to the child/young person below)

**3. CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY ANOTHER PERSON ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON**

Record the concerns that were passed to you (with dates and times) and if possible ask the person who expressed the concerns to confirm that the details as written are correct.

**4. DETAILS OF ANY IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN e.g. FIRST AID**

<p><b>5. DOES THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON HAVE ANY PARTICULAR NEEDS E.G. COMMUNICATION, ETC?</b></p>
<p><b>Signatures</b></p>
<p><b>To be signed by the person reporting the concern</b></p>
<p>Name:</p>
<p>Job Title:</p>
<p>Signed:</p>
<p>Date:</p>
<p><b>Action taken by Designated Safeguarding Officer/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer</b></p>
<p>Signed:</p>
<p>Date:</p>

## **Appendix 4: DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER and DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

### **Key responsibilities:**

- Establish contact with the senior member of the HSC Trust Gateway Teams responsible for safeguarding children in the organisation's catchment area;
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding children and young people issues within the organisation;
- Ensure that the organisation's safeguarding children and young people policy and procedures are followed and particularly to inform the HSC Trust Gateway Team within the appropriate Trust of relevant concerns about individual children;
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, under confidential cover;
- Liaise with the Gateway Teams and other agencies, as appropriate;
- Keep relevant people within the organisation, particularly the Head of the organisation, informed about any action taken and any further action required;
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by the organisation, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome;
- Advise the organisation of safeguarding children and young people training needs.

#### **TARA CENTRE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

**NAME: Katrina Deas, General Manager, Tara Centre,  
11 Holmview Terrace, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT79 0AH**

**DIRECT LINE: 028 82440828**

**Email: [katrina.deas@taraomagh.com](mailto:katrina.deas@taraomagh.com)**

#### **DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

**NAME: John Friel, Coordinator of Therapeutic Services, Tara Centre,  
11 Holmview Terrace, Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT79 0AH**

**DIRECT LINE: 028 82440820**

**Email: [john.friel@taraomagh.com](mailto:john.friel@taraomagh.com)**



## Appendix 5: HSC TRUST AND PSNI CONTACT NUMBERS

### STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

#### HSC Trust Gateway Teams

	Normal working hours (9am – 5pm)	Regional Out of Hours (including weekends, bank and public holidays)
Belfast	028 9050 7000	028 9504 9999
Northern	0300 123 4333	
South Eastern	0300 100 0300	
Southern	0800 783 7745	
Western	028 7131 4090	

#### PSNI

Emergency	999
Non emergency/General enquiries	101

## Appendix 6: RISK ASSESSMENT RECORD

Identify <b>MAIN RISKS</b> to people, property and/or organisation's work and reputation	Evaluate the seriousness of these risks		Assessed Level of Risk	Risk Owner	How can you manage these risks				Action Completed (date)	By Whom	Review
	<b>Likelihood of it happening</b> Unlikely Possible Likely	<b>Impact of it happening</b> Minor Moderate Major	<b>Combination of likelihood and impact</b> Low Medium High		<b>Stop the Activity</b>  Action needed	<b>Reduce the Risk</b>  Action needed	<b>Finance Risk</b>  Action needed	<b>Transfer the Liability</b>  Action needed			<b>How and when will you review the risks in this area?</b>
A)											
B)											

**Appendix 7: ACCIDENT/INCIDENT/NEAR MISS RECORD/REPORT FORM**

**ACCIDENT / INCIDENT / NEAR MISS** (please circle one)

<p>Name: (person involved/injured)</p>  <p><i>If more than one person has been involved please use separate forms for each person</i></p>	<p>Date:</p>	<p>Time:</p>
<p>Status:</p> <p>Service User ( ) Employee ( ) Volunteer ( ) Visitor ( ) Other ( )</p>		
<p>If Other, please specify</p>		
<p>Details of Accident/Incident/Near Miss:</p> <p>(Please include what happened prior, event details and what was done immediately and by whom. Please include a drawing if helpful, use extra sheets if necessary.)</p>		
<p>Details of injuries or damages and any first aid/medical treatment given:</p>		
<p>Name of Person Reporting:</p>		
<p>Job Title:</p>	<p>Date:</p>	

## Management Section

Long Term Action Plan: (What action is to be carried out to prevent the Accident/Incident/Near Miss happening again).	
Is a risk assessment (or support plan) review required as a result of this Accident/incident/Near Miss?	<b>YES ( )</b>  <b>NO ( )</b>
Action to be out by: (Name)	By Date:
Line Manager Section reviewed by: (Name)	Date:
RIDDOR Report confirmed by: (name)	Date:



## Acceptance of Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_

hereby declare that I have read and understood the Tara Centre Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and will comply with the associated procedures and guidelines.

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

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