

## **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

### **A) Introduction**

We aim to ensure that any vulnerable people, whether children, young people or vulnerable adults, are protected and kept safe from harm while they are with staff or volunteers in this organisation. In order to achieve this we will ensure our staff and volunteers are carefully selected, screened, trained and supervised.

1. We accept that it is our responsibility as a group to check that all adults with substantial access to children and vulnerable adults have been appropriately vetted and subjected to Access NI Checks prior to recruitment
2. We will ensure that every new volunteer or member of staff will complete a Personal Profile Form;
3. We will make a request for previous addresses on volunteer/job application forms;
4. We will ask for the names of two referees who will be prepared to provide a written reference;
5. We will interview prospective volunteers and staff;
6. We will note at interview all previous experience of volunteers and staff in working with children and vulnerable adults; and
7. We will carry out a probationary period for all volunteers and staff of at least 3 months.

### **B) Policy**

We at SOFT/Speedwell Trust believe that every child or vulnerable adult regardless of age has, at all times and in all situations, a right to feel safe and protected from any situation or practice which results in a child being physically or psychologically damaged. To achieve this, we will:

- Develop an awareness of the issues which may lead to children, young people or vulnerable adults being harmed.
- Create an open environment by identifying a 'Designated person' to whom the children, young people or vulnerable adults can turn to if they need to talk.
- Adopt Safeguarding guidelines through codes of conduct for members and all adults working in the organisation. Adult workers include staff, parents and volunteers.
- Ensure careful recruitment, selection and management procedures. These procedures will include regular support & supervision is provided to staff/volunteers.
- Ensure complaints, grievance and disciplinary procedures are included in our constitution.
- Provide information as required to the designated person, and/or management committee.
- Ensure good and safe working/playing practices
- Be involved in training made available through the various agencies and strengthen links with these agencies.
- Keep Safeguarding policies under regular review (every 3 years minimum)
- Have procedures relating specifically to bullying, trips, transport and use of photography

- In our group, if we have suspicions about a child or vulnerable adult's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, we will take action by reporting any suspicions to the relevant personnel
- All volunteers or staff are encouraged to share concerns with the Project Manager who will monitor child and vulnerable adult protection issues. If the situation is clearly an urgent case, the individual is too frightened to go home or we have very serious doubts about the individual's safety, we will contact the Learning Disability Team, Social Services or PSNI immediately.
- If our concerns are more general about an individual's welfare, then we will discuss these with the Project Manager, who would then make a referral to the relevant Social Work department or Learning Disabilities Team member who will make the necessary arrangements.
- It is important that all volunteers and staff communicate concerns accurately

To this end, volunteers and staff will follow the procedures below;

1. Upon the receipt of any information from the individual or suspicions, it is necessary to record what they have seen, heard or know accurately at the time the event occurs;
2. Share their concerns with the relevant school principal and/or designated officer for child protection.
3. Always REFER never INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse.

If we have concerns we must act - it may be the final piece of the jigsaw that is needed to protect that individual – and we may prevent further individuals from being hurt.

will:

- Hold a register of every individual involved with the group including relevant medical details and have a contact name and number close to hand in case of emergencies;
- Treat everyone with respect;
- Remember that some issues are confidential;
- Provide an example we would wish others to follow;
- Where possible consider activities which involve more than one responsible adult being present or at least within sight and hearing of others;
- Be aware that, someone else might misinterpret our actions even if they are well-intentioned;
- Respect the individual's right to personal privacy;
- Provide time for individuals to talk to us
- Encourage members to respect and care for others;
- Take action to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour;
- Remember to REFER not INVESTIGATE any suspicions or allegations about abuse;
- Only share concerns and seek support from those identified in the group's children, young people and vulnerable adult's protection policy;
- Complete the vetting checklist.