





YOUTH INITIATIVES

Adult (18+) Safeguarding Policy

Date	Name	Position	Signed	Next Review
April 2025	Tony Silcock	Adult Safeguarding Champion		March 2026
April 2025	Deirdre McNally	Safeguarding Trustee		March 2026

Safeguarding: Basic Information

Organisational Details

Name	Youth Initiatives Northern Ireland YINI
	50 Colin Road Belfast BT17 0GL
Email	office@youthinitiatives.com
Telephone Number	02890 301174
NI Charity Number	100849
NI Company Number	622215
Insurance Details	Victor Insurance Combined Public and Employers Liability 12 th May 2025 to 11 th May 2026

Chief Executive Officer & Adult Safeguarding Champion

Name	Tony Silcock
Email	tony@youthinitiative.com
Telephone Number	02890 301174

Adult Safeguarding Champion Deputy

Name	Lynda Whinnery
Email	lynda@youthinitiatives.com
Telephone Number	07743 969963

Youth Initiatives NI is a cross community youth work charity which aims to awaken hope, inspire initiative, and mobilise youth to make a vital contribution to their community and to reconciliation in Northern Ireland, through the discovery and renewal of Christian faith in daily life.

The principal object of Youth Initiatives is to, without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, disability, sexuality, nationality, ethnic origin and political or religious opinion, promote the physical, mental, spiritual and social welfare of young people in Northern Ireland through education, youth work, and volunteering.

The charitable company fulfils its objectives through projects jointly led by staff and young people aimed at the personal, social, physical, mental and spiritual development of young people. Youth Initiatives operates 6 youth community hubs across Northern Ireland (Banbridge, Derry/ Londonderry, Downpatrick, East Belfast, Lisburn and West Belfast) with its regional headquarters based in West Belfast. Each youth community hubs work reflects the local context however the typical work includes;

- 10 - 14's programmes
- 15 - 18's programmes
- Single Gender programmes
- Good relations programmes
- Leadership programmes
- Schools work
- Streetbased youth work

These programmes are made up of a range of activities centre based programmes, games, day trips, residential weekends, summer camps, international service trips and volunteering.

Youth Initiatives NI (YI) primarily does outreach youthwork serving 10-18 year olds. Some adults aged 18-25 stay on in the organisation as volunteers and some programmes include people over 18 participating in personal and social development programmes.

Whilst Youth Initiatives recognises that the primary responsibility for the care of children, young people and adults at risk rests with parents and guardians, the community as a whole has responsibility for their wellbeing and protecting them.

Within the youth work environment, participants and volunteers come from diverse backgrounds and communities. It is acknowledged that, particularly in small or close-knit areas, participants and volunteers aged over and under 18 may know each other prior to participating and may maintain friendships or social interactions outside the organisation. These relationships may include family ties, school connections, sports teams, or local community involvement.

Policy Position

Recognition of Pre-Existing Relationships

- The organisation acknowledges that participants and volunteers may have relationships which predate their involvement in our programmes.
- These relationships, while personal in nature, may have implications within the structured youth work setting, particularly concerning safeguarding and duty of care responsibilities.

Safeguarding and Boundaries

- All participants and volunteers, regardless of age, are expected to adhere to the organisation's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy while participating in organisational activities.
- Volunteers aged 18 and over are in a position of increased responsibility and accountability under safeguarding law and policy, particularly when interacting with volunteers under 18.
- Clear boundaries must be maintained during volunteering hours, and interactions must always remain appropriate and professional, regardless of any external relationship.
- Where any disclosures come to light these will be dealt with in accordance with the safeguarding policy

Outside Relationships

- The organisation does not seek to monitor or govern the private lives of participants or volunteers outside of formal activities.
- However, where external relationships may impact group dynamics, perceptions of professionalism, or safeguarding practices, these should be brought to the attention of a senior staff member or Adult Safeguarding Champion or Deputy to allow for appropriate support and oversight

Safeguarding: Policy, Procedures and Guidelines

YOUTH INITIATIVES ADULT SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights; it can take many forms. The staff and volunteers in Youth Initiatives NI are committed to practice which promotes the welfare of adults and safeguard them from harm.

Staff and volunteers in our organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues that cause adults harm, 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, carers, advocates, our staff and our volunteers with a view to how we may continuously improve our services/activities.

We will endeavour to safeguard the adults we work with and care for by:

- Listening to and respecting adults the adults we work with and care for
- Adhering to our adult safeguarding policy and ensuring that it is supported by robust procedures;
- Carefully following the procedures laid down for the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers;
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training;
- Implementing clear procedures for raising awareness of and responding to abuse within the organisation and for reporting concerns to statutory agencies that need to know, while involving adults at risk and their carers appropriately;
- Ensuring general safety and risk management procedures are adhered to;
- Promoting full participation and having clear procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints;
- Managing personal information, confidentiality and information sharing; and
- Implementing a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff, volunteers and children, young people and adults know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

Who is an adult at risk of harm?

'An 'Adult at risk of harm' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) personal characteristics **AND/OR** b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.

Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions'.

Who is an adult in need of protection?

'An 'Adult in need of protection' is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:

a) personal characteristics **AND/OR** b) life circumstances **AND** c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; **AND** d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed'.¹

1. These definitions are from the regional adult safeguarding policy for Northern Ireland, "Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership", (DOH and DOJ, 2015) available at www.health-ni.gov.uk

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c), and (d). The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult at risk' or an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case by case basis. Organisations can contact a HSC professional, if the adult is known to the HSC Trust or the Adult Protection Gateway team for advice.

Adult Rights

The rights of adults to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998 – their right to life is protected (under Article 2); their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment (under Article 3); and their right to liberty and security (under Article 5).

Youth Initiatives is committed to taking every appropriate step to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those with whom it works, regardless of class, gender, race or creed. This policy applies to all children, young people and adults at risk with whom Youth Initiatives is involved with regardless of age.

All Youth Initiatives staff, volunteers and casual workers must be aware of this policy and it is their duty to guarantee its implementation in accordance with their role and responsibilities.

Adults at risk are protected in the same way as any other person against criminal acts. If a person commits theft, rape or assault against an adult at risk they should be dealt with through the criminal

justice system, in the same way as in cases involving any other victim. Where there is a reasonable suspicion that a criminal offence may have occurred, it is the responsibility of the police to investigate and make a decision about any subsequent action. The police should always be consulted about criminal matters.

There are a number of pieces of legislation relating to safeguarding adults at risk which can be accessed through www.opsi.gov.uk

Some of the relevant legislation is as follows:

- Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Orders and the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009
- The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- The Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
- The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998, Section 75
- The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999
- The Human Rights Act 1998 – enacted 2000
- The Health and Personal Social Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2001
- The Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- The Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
- The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

Consent

Staff and volunteers should always be mindful of the need for the adult to consent to, and to be comfortable with, any proposed activity or service. Consent is a process - it results from understanding through dialogue and the provision of information.

Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. It may be signalled verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. As a general rule, the method of obtaining consent is likely to be dictated by the seriousness of what is being proposed. For example, an adult may signal their consent to participate by turning up at the luncheon club voluntarily.

Consent is only considered to be valid when:

- The adult has the capacity to consent, that is, they can understand and weigh up the information needed to make the decision; and

- The adult is appropriately informed, that is, they have been given sufficient information, in an appropriate way, on which to base the decision; and
- It has been given voluntarily, that is, free from coercion or negative influence.
- If any of these factors is absent, consent cannot be considered to be valid. In cases where the adult lacks capacity, decisions will usually be made on behalf of the adult in accordance with current legal provisions.

Staff and volunteers should remember that no one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special legal provision for particular purposes has been made for this. In certain situations the need for consent may be overridden. This is generally when it is in the public interest to do so, for example, the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health or life.

Staff and volunteers should:

- Always presume that the adult at the centre of the decision or action is able to give or withhold consent unless it is established otherwise;
- Make every effort to encourage and support the adult to make the decision for themselves and communicate the decision. This includes giving them all the necessary information which is explained or presented in a way which the adult fully understands. If lack of capacity is established, it is still important that you involve them as far as possible in making decisions.
- Be aware that an adult who has capacity has the right to make what others may regard as an unwise decision. Everyone has their own values, beliefs and preferences which may not be the same as those of other people, but sometimes a balance needs to be struck between the adult's human rights and the need to intervene to protect others;
- Provide support to an adult where they have withheld consent and this has been overridden; and
- Understand that an adult can change their mind about any choice or decision they have made.

Where there are concerns about consent, for example, doubts about whether it is valid, the staff member or volunteer should bring this to the attention of their Supervisor, who should in turn seek from the Adult safeguarding champion or deputy. This should be kept under continuous review.

In some cases it may be necessary for the withholding of consent to be overridden. This is generally in circumstances where there is a strong overriding public interest, or where a crime is alleged or suspected.

Capacity

Mental capacity means the ability to make a decision and take actions. An adult will always be assumed to have capacity to make a decision unless it is suspected otherwise. This means staff and volunteers should always start by believing that the adult can make their own decisions unless they can prove otherwise. It does not matter what the adult looks like, how they behave, what age they are or if they have a disability or illness.

Staff and volunteers must be aware that capacity can fluctuate, and it is both issue and time specific, therefore it should be kept under regular review.

If a member of staff or volunteer has any doubts about the capacity of an adult to make a decision or

series of decisions, they should inform their Adult Safeguarding Champion or deputy, who should seek professional advice from the local HSC Trust. It may be necessary for a HSC professional to conduct a capacity assessment.

Any decisions made or actions taken on behalf of an adult who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests, after considering their preferences. The person/agencies making the decision must consider whether it is possible to do this in a way that would interfere less with the freedoms and rights of the adult. Where appropriate, relevant family members or carers will be consulted regarding what action to take.

Advocacy

An adult who lacks capacity to make a decision may have the potential to benefit from advocacy services. Advocacy helps people to:

- Access information and services;
- Be involved in decisions about their lives;
- Explore choice and options;
- Defend and promote their rights; and
- Speak out about issues that matter to them.

Advocacy helps to ensure that the adult at risk remains central to the decision making process.

An advocate should not make decisions on behalf of the adult, but always work in partnership with them.

The Appropriate Statutory Agencies involved in investigating safeguarding issues are:

If you think an adult at risk is in immediate danger, contact the police on **999**. If you're worried about an adult but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns.

- **Contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)**. The police can make an emergency protective response if there is an immediate concern about the safety of an adult in need of protection. **Tel: 999**
- **Contact the relevant Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Services team**. In circumstances that are not an emergency, the [HSCT gateway services team](#) is the first point of contact for all new referrals to adult social services. (see contact details below)
- **The Regional Emergency Social Work Service** provides an emergency social work service outside of normal office hours, after 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, weekends and public/bank holidays- for emergencies that cannot wait until the next working day.
- **Contact thirtyone:eight** If you or anyone else you know, need to talk about these or if there is anything else that you want to report please contact **0303 003 1111**.

HSC Trusts

HSC Trusts	Normal working hours (9am to 5pm)	Regional Out of Hours*
Belfast	(028) 9504 1744	(028) 9504 9999
Northern	(028) 9441 3659	(028) 9504 9999
South Eastern	(028) 9250 1227	(028) 9504 9999
Southern	(028) 3756 4423	(028) 9504 9999
Western	(028) 7161 1366	(028) 9504 9999

PSNI

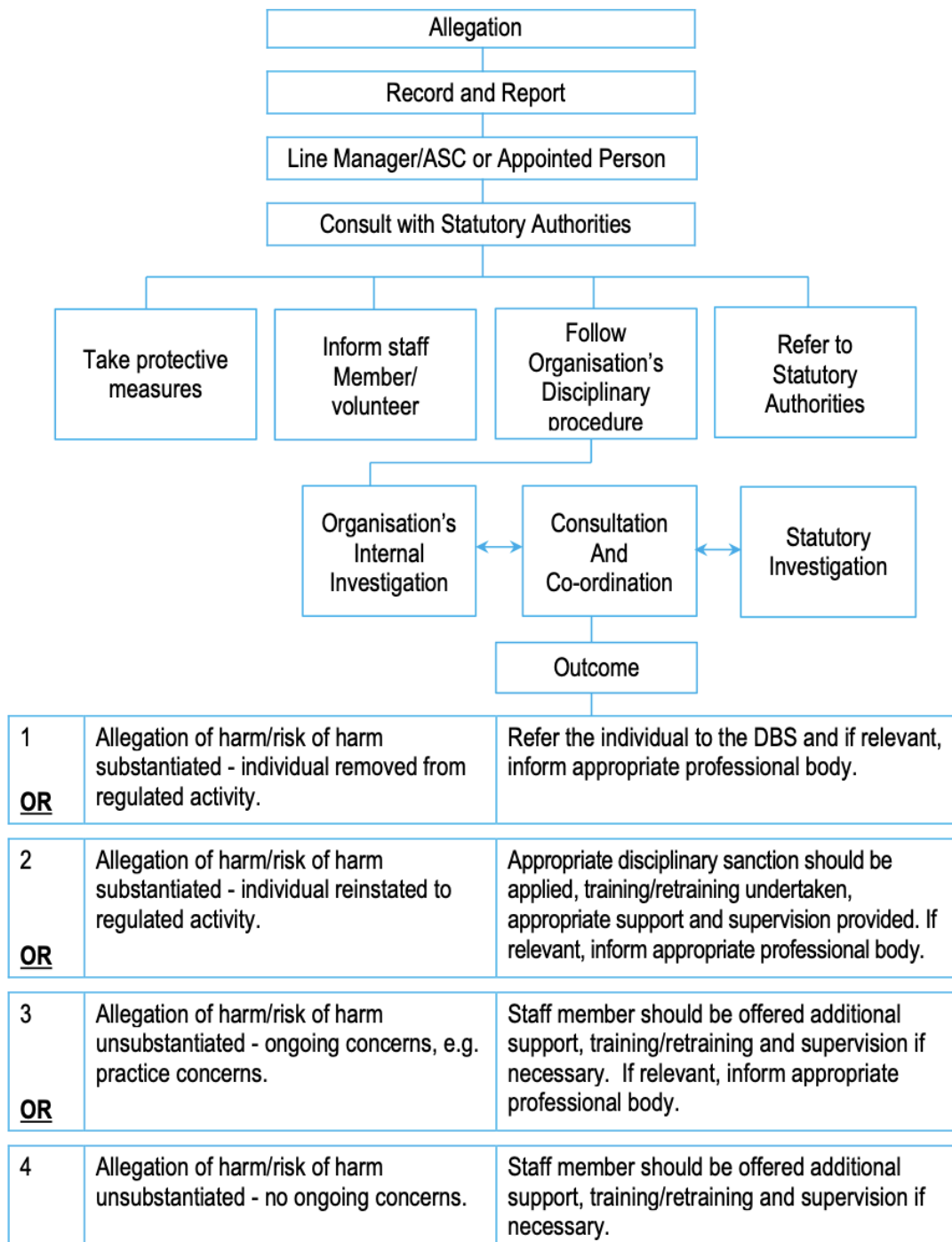
Emergency	999
Non Emergency	0845 600 8000
General Enquiries	0845 600 8000

RQIA (Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority)

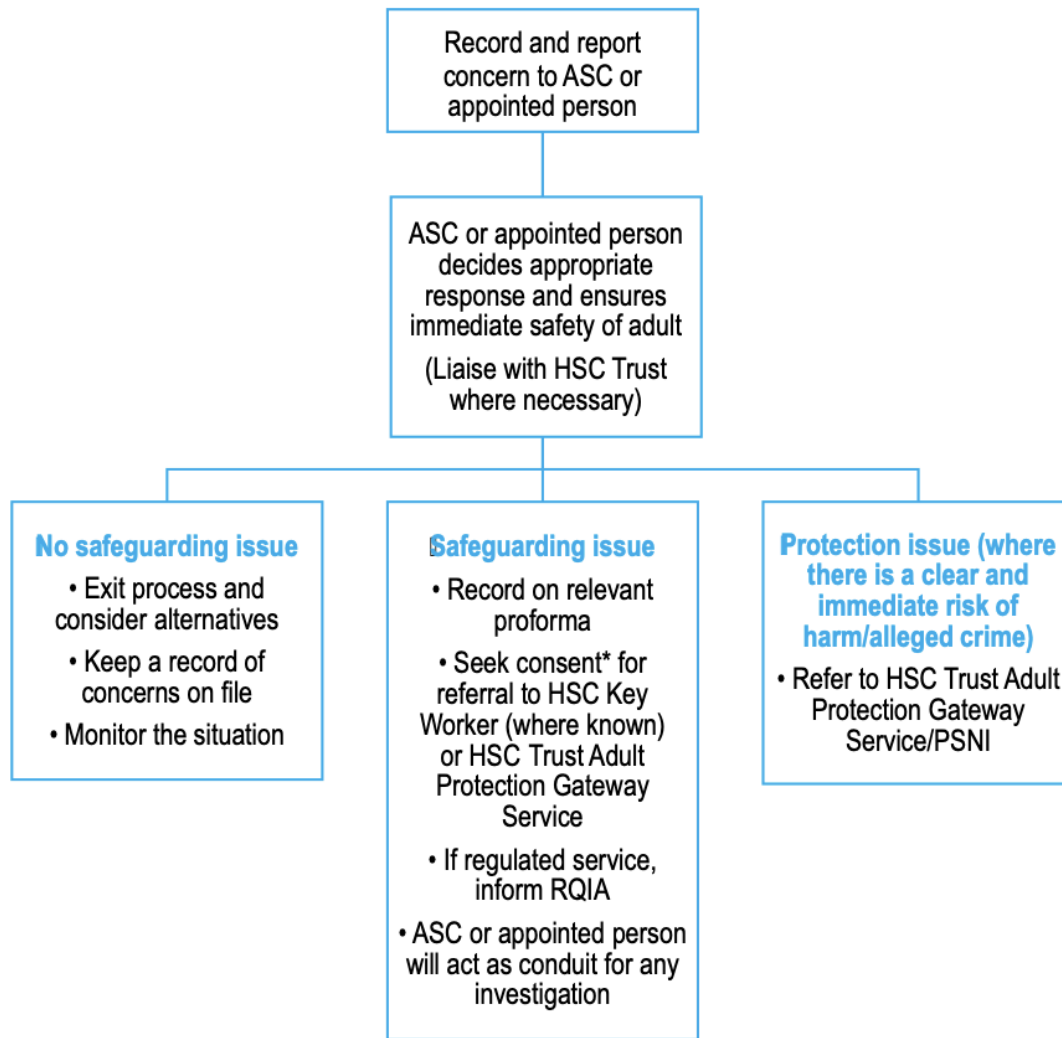
RQIA	Normal working hours (9am to 5pm)
Belfast	(028) 9051 7500
Omagh	(028) 8224 5828

Services will risk assess the situation and take action to protect the children, young people and adults at risk as appropriate either through statutory involvement or other support. This may include making a referral to the local authority.

[Safeguarding: Reporting a Concern Flowchart \(Staff Member/ Volunteer\) \(Flowchart\)](#)



Safeguarding: Reporting a Concern Flowchart



Safeguarding: Dealing with complaints

Youth Initiatives has clear standards and systems for enabling, recording and dealing with complaints by either children, young people or adults.

Our organisation has an ethos of inclusion, transparency and openness which is communicated to everyone involved including staff, children, young people and adults.

There are appropriate procedures in place to share concerns or make complaints about the organisation. Children, young people, adults or parents can speak directly to a youth worker or Area Leader to raise a concern. They may also raise concerns to the CEO or Management Team by contacting

Tel: 02890 301174 or office@youthinitiatives.com.

Complaints procedures are communicated appropriately to everyone involved in the organisation, including children, young people or adults through the YI Website and safeguarding video.

Having a culture of inclusion, transparency and openness means that the organisation has nothing to hide in terms of its practice, and that it is open to feedback from children, young people, adults at risk, parents and guardians, staff and volunteers with a view to improving how it carries out its activities and delivers its services. It is important to communicate that our organisation is committed to this principle through having a statement to this effect in our Safeguarding Policy.

Youth Initiatives treats everyone with dignity and respect and is committed to safeguarding them from harm, we will encourage and enable them to take an active role in planning and decision-making.

Some ways this can be achieved are through:

- A commitment to a listening environment within the organisation;
- A member's forum for those who use our services and staff/volunteers who discuss matters affecting their interests;
- Maintaining a record of matters and suggestions made by young people, volunteers and staff and their representatives and actions taken;
- Involvement of youth representatives on interview panels;
- Providing regular feedback on actions taken and developments in the organisation.

It is also important to establish and maintain contact with the parents and legal guardians who are involved in your organisation. Users will have a wealth of knowledge about the emotional, physical and cultural needs of the participants whom they care for or work with.

Complaints Procedure

This procedure is to provide a parent/guardian, child, young person or adult who considers that they have a grievance, with the opportunity to have it examined quickly and effectively, and where a grievance is deemed to exist, to have it resolved if possible, at the earliest practical time.

Stage 1 - Initial Contact

When a parent/guardian, child, young person or adult feels aggrieved on any matter they should discuss the problem initially with the worker responsible for the programme. They will attempt to resolve the issue, consulting where necessary the other members of the management team. The worker should

reply to the grievance as soon as possible, and in any case, within three working days from the time the grievance was first raised.

Stage 2 – Involvement of Area Leader or Management Team Member

If the parent/guardian, child, young person or adult with the grievance is not satisfied with the reply from the worker, or has not received a reply within three working days they may request that the matter be raised with the worker's Area Leader.

On receipt of such a request the Area Leader shall make arrangements to hear the grievance. It is the responsibility of the Area Leader to make arrangements for the hearing to be held within ten working days of the grievance being raised with them.

Stage 3 – Involvement of the CEO

If the parent/guardian, child, young person or adult with the grievance is not satisfied with the reply from the worker's Area Leader or has not received a reply within three working days they may request that the matter be raised with the CEO or Management Team member.

The CEO or Management Team member, on receipt of such a request shall make arrangements to hear the grievance. It is the responsibility of the CEO or Management Team member to make arrangements for the hearing to be held within ten working days of the grievance being raised with them.

Reference to the CEO is the final stage of the grievance.

Everyone involved, the complainant and the subject(s) of the complaint, should be given the opportunity to represent their side of the case. In the case of a complaint from an adult at risk, representation might include input from a carer or an advocate. In the case of a complaint made by a carer, representation might include input from a friend or family member. If the complaint is about a member of staff, volunteer or family member or carer acting inappropriately, the person dealing with the complaint should be very clear about:

- The nature of the complaint;
- Any previous incidents;
- Any remedial action to be taken e.g. an apology;
- Any new behaviour expected;
- What will happen if the agreed arrangements are not adhered to.

Records of discussions and information shared at each stage of the complaints procedure should be made clearly and accurately. All information relating to the complaint should be kept confidential and stored in a secure location. Organisations which provide Regulated Services will need to ensure that their complaints procedure complies with the appropriate regulatory requirement.

What about serious incidents?

If there is a complaint in relation to a particularly serious incident, for example, where abuse or exploitation is suspected, then the reporting procedure takes precedence over the complaints procedure.

Communicating complaints procedure

As well as the complaints procedure being outlined in the safeguarding policy, it should be displayed on the premises and in material relating to the organisation. If necessary, it should be provided in alternative formats, and one-to-one explanations should be provided if required. While volunteers should use the complaints procedure, members of staff should have access to the organisation's grievance procedure. The organisation should also have a whistleblowing policy for staff and volunteers where there are concerns about malpractice in the organisation