

# North Kilkenny Community First Responder Group



## Safeguarding Young People and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures

*April 2024*

## **Table of Contents**

If you hover over the form/section you are interested in and hold the “Ctrl” button on your keyboard as well as clicking on the mouse you will be directed instantly to that section.

Foreword.....	2
Policy Statement.....	3
The purpose of this Policy Statement.....	3
Context and Scope .....	4
Risk Assessment.....	4
Child Safeguarding Statement: Relevant Service and Relevant Person .....	5
Relevant Person .....	5
Code of Behaviour – Standards of Behaviour .....	5
Safeguarding principles.....	7
Children.....	7
Vulnerable Adults.....	7
Garda Vetting of Volunteers .....	8
Contact details .....	8
Nominated Relevant Person .....	8
Deputy Relevant Person .....	8
Appendices.....	9
Appendix i – Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Statement.....	9

### **Foreword**

This document sets out the requirements for attending CFR calls where there may be the presence of children and vulnerable adults in accordance with the Children First Act 2015, the Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse. It is distributed as part of the information pack for all volunteers.

It is hoped that this policy will prove a practical and useful addition to best practice in attending CFR calls where there may be the presence of children and vulnerable adults.

## Policy Statement

The North Kilkenny CFR Group (NK CFR) child and vulnerable adult protection policy stems from the following principles: The safety and welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility.

- The welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Per the Child Care Act 1991, a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married. This definition includes the term young people.
- A vulnerable person is defined as an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself/herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. The restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, any disability they may have, gender, race, family status, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, membership of the Traveller community, geographical location, or socio-economic status have a right to protection from abuse.
- The need to comply with current statutory requirements and guidance on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

## The purpose of this Policy Statement

We at the North Kilkenny Community First Responder (NK CFR) Group are committed to safeguarding the well-being of children and vulnerable adults who may be present when a member(s) of our group attend a call or when they participate in events or training run by us.

Our aim is to ensure:

- A commitment from all volunteers within the NK CFR Group to safeguard children and vulnerable persons from abuse and a recognition that all persons are entitled to this right, regardless of their circumstances. This includes the children of adults who use our services and vulnerable adults in the company of adults who use our service.
- As far as practicable that each child or vulnerable adult availing of our service is safe from harm while availing of that service.
- Promotion and adherence to a "No Tolerance" approach to any form of abuse and to promote a culture within the NK CFR group which supports this ethos.

The NK CFR Group will meet our commitment to keeping children and vulnerable adults safe by:

- listening to children/vulnerable adults and respecting them
- appointing a Relevant Person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding
- writing detailed safeguarding and child protection procedures
- making sure all volunteers understand and follow the safeguarding and child protection procedures
- ensuring the groups safeguarding policy is easily accessible to children, young people and their families should they have a concern e.g. link to document on Facebook.

- building a safeguarding culture where volunteers know how they are expected to behave and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.
- recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of the NK CFR Group.

## Context and Scope

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults in Ireland – Child Care Act 1991 and the Children First Act 2015 and all associated guidelines, as well as Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, published by the Health Service Executive.

Everyone working with children and vulnerable adults has a responsibility for their well-being and protection, including all volunteers at the Johnstown/Crosspatrick/Galmoy Community First Responder Group.

It is the responsibility of the group Co-Ordinator to ensure that every new volunteer:

1. Receives a copy of the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
2. Understands and signs the Code of Behaviour
3. Receives training on the subject matter.

All volunteers will:

4. Be provided with guidelines on how to access child protection training at induction
5. Agree to abide by the NK CFR Group Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

## Risk Assessment

As set out in the HSE National Policy and Procedures (2014), the NK CFR Group have put in place an effective procedure for assessing and managing risks with regard to safeguarding in respect of all relevant activities. In safeguarding terms, the aim of risk assessment and management is to prevent abuse occurring, to reduce the likelihood of it occurring and to minimise the impacts of abuse by responding effectively if it does occur.

It should be noted that risk in the context of this policy is “any potential for harm to a child while availing of the service” (Section 11(1)(a) of the Children First Act 2015) and child safety is the risk of abuse and not general health and safety risk.

“harm means in relation to a child –

- a) Assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or

- b) Sexual abuse of the child, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances or otherwise.”

In assessing and managing risks, the aim is to minimise the likelihood of risk or its potential impacts. For a list of identified risks and how they will be managed please refer to the NK CFR Group Young People/Vulnerable Safeguarding Statement in [Appendix i](#).

## **Child Safeguarding Statement: Relevant Service and Relevant Person**

The Children First Act 2015 defines a ‘provider’ as “a person—

- (a) who provides a relevant service, and
- (b) who, in respect of the provision of such relevant service provides -
  - (i) educational, research, training, cultural, recreational, leisure, social or physical activity to children,
  - (ii) care or supervision of children, or
  - (iii) formal consultation with, or formal participation by, a child in respect of matters that affect his or her life, whether or not for commercial or any other consideration.

Under the Children First Act 2015, the NK CFR Group is a relevant service providing a community first response service. As such, we will ensure, as far as practicable, that all children are safe from harm while availing of our services. Per the Children First Act 2015, the NK CFR Group has:

- Performed **assessment of any potential for harm** to a child while availing of our services
- Prepared a written **Child Safeguarding Statement** specifying the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a child, while availing of the service, is safe from harm
- Appointed a Relevant Person

## **Relevant Person**

The relevant person is the first point of contact in relation to the Child Safeguarding Statement; their name and contact details should be included in the Child Safeguarding Statement. The Relevant Person is Cathy Dermody.

## **Code of Behaviour – Standards of Behaviour**

All volunteers are required to adhere to the Code of Behaviour. All volunteers in the NK CFR Group will be made aware of the policy and procedure and child/vulnerable adult protection will be covered in detail as part of the induction and training programme.

As a member of the NK CFR Group all volunteers will be required to report any concerns over behaviour or other evidence that may potentially indicate the presence of child or vulnerable adult abuse.

We expect everyone working with children and vulnerable adults in a voluntary capacity for the NK CFR Group to take every possible precaution to avoid situations that could be misinterpreted and/or a breach of the either the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy or Health and Safety Policy.

By setting out appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, this code will not only help to protect children, but also volunteers at the NK CFR Group.

- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally
- Listen and hear – and give time to the child or vulnerable adult to say what s/he wants to say.
- Be friendly and approachable.
- Respect a child or vulnerable adult’s right to personal privacy and personal space.
- Be aware of situations that present risks and manage these risks appropriately – always ask the Relevant Person if necessary
- Safeguard the best interests and welfare of vulnerable adults where it is recognised that they are unable to make their own decisions and/or protect themselves, their assets or their bodily integrity and ensure appropriate and accountable protection for them.
- Use only appropriate language in working with children and vulnerable adults – no cursing or swearing.
- Always treat children and vulnerable adults with respect - don't embarrass them.
- Do NOT ridicule, insult or make little of anyone during an activity
- Recognise that caution is required, particularly sensitive moments such as dealing with a child or vulnerable adult who becomes upset or is unwell. Always seek support from another team member if required.
- Ensure, in so far as possible, that the building and/or facilities used for activities/training with children and vulnerable adults are safe and secure for the people in it.
- Plan activities so that they involve more than one person being present or at least in sight or hearing of others. A minimum of two adults should be present at all times.
- Carry identification when attending a school or other location on behalf of the NK CFR Group.
- Avoid doing things of a personal nature that children and vulnerable adults can do for themselves.
- Do NOT allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which could be misunderstood. If you have to touch a child or vulnerable adult, ask their permission where possible. In some cases, you may not have time to ask permission, for example, performing life-saving CPR. In these cases, always explain your actions out loud for the people around you to hear.

There will be instances when physical contact is unavoidable and in fact necessary. Appropriate:

- Context-dependent touch within a controlled and supervised environment (e.g. demonstration of CPR or choking)
- Preventing injury (e.g. catching a falling child, appropriate restraint)
- Handshake and “high fives”.
- To administer life-saving CPR.

If you have a concern or complaint that is related to Code of Behaviour you can speak to the Relevant Person.

## Safeguarding principles

There are a number of key principles of child protection and safeguarding vulnerable adults that inform Government Policy and best practice, these are:

### Children

1. The safety and welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
2. The best interests of the child should be paramount.
3. The overall aim in all dealings with children and their families is to intervene proportionately to support families to keep children safe from harm.
4. Interventions by the State should build on existing strengths and protective factors in the family.
5. Early intervention is key to getting better outcomes. Where it is necessary for the State to intervene to keep children safe, the minimum intervention necessary should be used.
6. Children should only be separated from parents/guardians when alternative means of protecting them have been exhausted.
7. Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.
8. Parents/guardians have a right to respect, and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.
9. A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/guardians and families. Where there is conflict, the child's welfare must come first.
10. Child protection is a multiagency, multidisciplinary activity. Agencies and professionals must work together in the interests of children.

### Vulnerable Adults

1. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
2. Everyone must have a 'zero tolerance' approach to any form of abuse.
3. The duty to report safeguarding concerns rests with the person who has the concern.
4. There should be no delay in reporting a safeguarding concern.
5. It is necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the child/adult at risk of abuse.
6. There should be no delay in implementing a Safeguarding Protection Plan.
7. Good collaborative working is central to safeguarding. All parties should share relevant information that is known to them within the rules of data protection and client confidentiality.
8. Any information about a child/adult must be managed appropriately and shared/processed on the basis of "necessity" with the HSE/ HSE funded services and relevant statutory authorities.
9. Safeguarding should be founded on an approach where the child/adult is at the heart of all decisions and actions.
10. A health or social care professional already known to the child/adult at risk of abuse, or assigned to them, should be involved in the management of the concern, where possible and appropriate.

11. Considerations of capacity and consent are central to adult safeguarding. The right of a person to make decisions and remain in control of their life must be respected.

## **Garda Vetting of Volunteers**

The NK CFR Group adheres to statutory obligations on volunteers by completing Garda Vetting for all potential candidates through the Kilkenny Volunteer Centre. Decisions on suitability for recruitment will be based on the outcome of the Garda Vetting process and the results of vetting will form only one part of the recruitment decision.

## **Contact details**

### **Nominated Relevant Person**

Name: Cathy Dermody

Phone/email: 086 3600447, cathydermody@gmail.com


### **Deputy Relevant Person**

Name(s): Susan Broderick

Phone/email: 087 0985262, Susan.Broderick2@gmail.com

This policy statement came into force on May 27, 2020.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on April 17, 2024.

Signed:  [this should be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in your organisation, for example the safeguarding and child protection lead on your board of trustees].

Date: April 17, 2024.



## Appendices

### Appendix i – Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Statement

#### North Kilkenny Community First Responder Group

The North Kilkenny Community First Responder Group are volunteers who are trained to attend certain types of emergency calls in the area where we live or work. Our aim is to reach a potential life threatening emergency in the first vital minutes before the ambulance crew arrives. Every volunteer has a responsibility and duty of care to ensure that every child/young person or vulnerable adult present during a call out or availing of and/or attending our service is safe and protected from harm. The policies and procedures outlined in this Child Safeguarding Statement apply to all volunteers performing any role of function in, or on behalf of this service.

This Young Person/Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on January 31, 2025.

#### Description of Service and Activities provided:

The aims of North Kilkenny Community First Responders Group will be:

- a) Provide life-saving emergency assistance via dispatch from NAS to members of their respective areas as an interim measure until more qualified medical assistance is available.
- b) To promote CPR and the use of an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) by members of the community through training and information sessions held within the locality.
- c) To provide training on life-saving skills to all interested groups within the area.
- d) To work with the National Ambulance Service, CFR Ireland and all associated groups to provide up-to-date information on the techniques.

In accordance with the requirements of the Child First Act 2015, Child First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice; NK CFR Group has agreed the Child Safeguarding Statement as set out.

NK CFR Group:

- Recognises that the protection and welfare of young people/vulnerable adults is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- Fully complies with its statutory obligations under the Child First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection of children;
- Fully co-operates with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to young people/vulnerable adults protection and welfare matters;
- Adopts safe practices and a Code of Behaviour to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to young people/vulnerable adults and protects volunteers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusation of abuse;
- Fully respects confidentiality requirements in dealing with young person/vulnerable adult protection matters.

#### Risk Assessment

NK CFR Group has carried out an assessment of any potential risk of harm to a young person/vulnerable adult while availing of our services. Below is a list of some areas of risk identified and procedures for managing these risks:

<b>Risk Identified</b>	<b>Procedure to manage risk</b>
Unsuitable adults having access to young people/vulnerable adults	Garda vetting for all volunteers. No volunteer will ever be alone and/or unaccompanied with a young person/vulnerable adult.
Risk of inappropriate or abusive behaviour by volunteers	Induction for all. Ensure an ethos of a “No Tolerance” approach to any form of abuse. Child protection and safeguarding training for all. Clarity of roles for all. Code of Behaviour for all. No volunteer will ever be alone and/or unaccompanied with a young person/vulnerable adult.
Inappropriate management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against volunteers	Child protection and safeguarding training for all. Clearly defined child protection policy and HR procedures that include roles and responsibilities of Managers. No volunteer will ever be alone and/or unaccompanied with a young person/vulnerable adult.
Lack of knowledge of organisational & Statutory reporting procedures	Clearly defined reporting procedures communicated to volunteers at induction. Distribution of link for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HSE Safeguarding and Protection Teams to all volunteers: <a href="https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/elderabuse/protect-yourself/safeguardprotectteams.html">https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/elderabuse/protect-yourself/safeguardprotectteams.html</a></li> <li>2. Tusla Social Worker Team: <a href="https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/">https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/</a></li> </ol>
Suspicion of abuse aroused during an official call out	Child protection and safeguarding training for all. Clearly defined child protection policy and HR procedures that include roles and responsibilities of Managers.

The following procedures support our intention to safeguard young people/vulnerable adults while they are availing of our services:

- NK CFR Group procedure for reporting of young person/vulnerable adult protection welfare issues to Tusla via National Ambulance Community Liaison Officer
- NK CFR Group procedure for management of allegations of abuse of misconduct against volunteers, of child/vulnerable adult availing of our services
- NK CFR Group procedures for provision of, and access to, young person/vulnerable adult safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm (National Ambulance Service Child Protection Policy document)
- NK CFR Group procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of volunteers.

NK CFR Group is committed to the implementation of this young person/vulnerable adult Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep young people/vulnerable adults safe from harm while availing of our services. If you have any concerns relating to Safeguarding contact our Relevant Person immediately.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Person) On behalf the Group)

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone no:** \_\_\_\_\_

