

“Caring in word and deed”

Youth for Christ Northern Ireland’s Child Protection Manual

See separate documents for
on-line youth work policy, and adult safeguarding policy

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Signed : 

National Director YFCNI

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Introduction

I. Introduction

I.1 Child Protection Policy Statement

It is the policy of Youth for Christ Northern Ireland to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people involved in any aspect of Youth for Christ by protecting them from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional harm.

“Children and young people attend YFC events and activities for enjoyment, social contact and personal and spiritual development. They should not suffer from negligence or abuse at any such event or activities.

Those selected and appointed to work with children and young people should enjoy providing service, secure in the knowledge of clear guidelines.

I.2 Introduction

‘Caring In Word and Deed’ is the name of the child protection policy of Youth For Christ Northern Ireland. Our aim is to create and promote a safe environment for children, young people, leaders and staff. We have a legal duty of care to look after every child and young person we come in contact with and provide a safe environment for them as best we can.

These guidelines provide guidance to all involved in youth and children’s work and ministry within Youth For Christ Northern Ireland to help ensure that children and young people enjoy their activities with optimum physical safety and are free from the threat of abuse. It will also alert leaders to signs of distress which may indicate that a child has been harmed.

Each separate ministry and centre within the organisation must appoint a designated and deputy designated person(s) for child protection; follow the recruitment and appointment process for new leaders which includes the vetting process; make sure the right number of leaders are present; make sure all leaders attend child protection training and are fully aware of the reporting process in case a child protection concern or incident were to arise.

By adopting and using these guidelines each staff member will be raising the standard of care for those entrusted to them, no matter how brief the event or small the project they attend.

Every area of Youth For Christ Northern Ireland, centres and teams, must have adopted these guidelines and should be implementing them in all its programmes which work with children and young people, according to the National Office.

I.3 Why does Youth For Christ Northern Ireland need a Child Protection policy?

There are four main reasons why we need to have a child protection policy within Youth For Christ Northern Ireland:

I. A Legal Requirement

The law rightly requires us to have a policy in place and says we have a duty of care to children and young people that we work with. The UN Convention on the rights of the Child stipulates that “children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm. They must be given proper care by those looking after them”.¹

Five Key Principles of Child Care

The Children Order (NI) 1995 and the Child Care act (ROI) 1991 emphasise the following key principles:

Paramount Consideration – it is a fundamental principle in child care law and practice that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration in decisions taken about him/her.

Parental Responsibility – parents have a responsibility to children rather than rights over them. There may be situations where other significant adults share this responsibility with one or both parents.

Prevention – We should aim to prevent situations arising where children are separated from their families. The state should provide support and services to keep children within their families and communities, in order to promote their health and welfare.

Partnership – The most effective way of ensuring that a child’s needs are met is by working in partnership. The provision of services must therefore take into account the views of parents.

Protection – Children should be safe and should be protected by intervention if they are in danger.

2. Biblical Basis

As well as a legal imperative, there is also a biblical one. It is a biblical requirement: Jesus placed a high value on caring for the young and we are called to do the same.

Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

¹ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Next to proclaiming God's Word and the love of Christ, what could be more important than keeping our children safe?

3. The World That We Live In

No Christian organisation is immune from the problem of trusted adults misusing their position. This requires a response which is aimed at both prevention and care for those who may have been mistreated. We must not be naive to the fact that there are people in the world today who want to harm children and so we as an organisation must do all that we can to protect the children and young people we work with, promote good practice and prevent abuse.

I.4 Clarification of Terms

A child is a person under 18 years old. Where either children or young people are mentioned in the guidelines, both are intended.

A leader is anyone 18 years old or over who is engaged in work or voluntary activity which involves regular contact with children or young persons.

A leader in charge is anyone 18 years or older, who has been given the overall responsibility for that programmes and is responsible for insuring child protection policy is adhered to. They may be a paid staff member or a volunteer.

A young volunteer helper is a person aged 16 or 17 years who assists in working with children.

A leader in a **regulated position** is an adult working either as a volunteer or in a paid position, four or more times a year, in direct contact with children or vulnerable adults.

A vulnerable adult² is anyone aged 18 or over who cannot take care of themselves. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, visual or hearing problems, are old and frail, or are ill.

I.5 Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy should relate to all programmes across all Youth For Christ Northern Ireland ministries. The child protection statement and policy should be displayed clearly in all YFCNI premises. Where necessary, the policy should be adapted to suit the centre's individual needs and formally adopted by the centre's board. Each leader should be given a copy of the child protection policy and be in agreement with it.

² This definition is from the leaflet 'Adult Abuse - Guidance for Staff', published by the Northern Ireland Office and Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2009.

2



Abuse

2. Abuse

2.1 What is Child Abuse?

There are many reasons why a perpetrator abuses children. It is very important that abuse is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser. The sooner action is taken, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop and that the child will recover from his or her experiences.

It is not only adults who abuse children. Teenage abuse is a growing concern; this is when older children abuse younger children or their peers.

Child abuse does not refer solely to sexual abuse; there are four main types of child abuse. The following definitions of abuse are taken from, 'Working Together to safeguard

Children'.³ We have included some of the signs which can help us identify if abuse has taken place. This list is by no means definitive nor does it mean that if a child shows one or more of the signs they have been abused.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve an adult or other young person;

- hitting
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning
- scalding
- drowning
- suffocating
- or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Signs may include:

- ⌘ unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- ⌘ improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- ⌘ self-destructive tendencies
- ⌘ fear of physical contact, a shrinking back if touched

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development.

³ Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2010 (Department of Children, Schools and Families).

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-takers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs may include:

- :: Constant hunger
- :: Inadequate clothing
- :: Constant tiredness
- :: Poor personal hygiene

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- The exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs may include:

- :: Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- :: Continual belittling of oneself
- :: Over-reaction to mistakes
- :: Extreme fear of any new situation

- :: Inappropriate response to pain
- :: Neurotic behaviour

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities (not necessarily involving a high level of violence), whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex)
- Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as:

- Involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
- Watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

it is important to note that sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Signs may include:

- :: Sexual knowledge, including drawing sexually explicit pictures, or use of language inappropriate for the child's age
- :: Being over affectionate in a sexual way that is inappropriate to the child's age ::
- regression to younger behavioural patterns such as thumb sucking
- :: Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdosing, anorexia
- :: Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating

Child Sexual Exploitation

The following definition and signs of Child Sexual Exploitation is taken from, 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools, Department of Education NI, September 2024.'

"Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of 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. CSE does not always include physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Any child (i.e. a person under the age of 18) can be a victim of CSE. Although younger children can experience CSE, the average age at which concerns are first identified is 12-15 years of age. Sixteen and seventeen year olds, although legally able to consent to sexual activity can also be sexually exploited. Both young females and males can be victims of CSE.

CSE can be perpetrated by adults or by young people's peers, on an individual or group basis, or a combination of both, and can be perpetrated by females as well as males. While children in care are known to experience disproportionate risk of CSE, the majority of CSE victims are living at home."

Signs may include:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation.
- Truancy/leaving school without permission.
- Persistently going missing or returning late.
- Receiving lots of texts/phone calls prior to leaving.
- Change in mood - agitated/stressed.
- Appearing distraught/dishevelled or under the influence of substances.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age.
- Physical symptoms eg bruising; bite marks.
- Collected from school by unknown adults or taxis.
- New peer groups.
- Significantly older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours.
- Low self-esteem.
- Change in personal hygiene (greater attention or less).
- Self harm and other expressions of despair.
- Evidence or suspicion of substance abuse.

2.2 Substance Abuse

Young people are continually at risk of being exposed to substance abuse. This can range from smoking to experimenting with solvents, alcohol and drugs. It is important that leaders are aware of the danger signs and include awareness training in their programme planning for high risk groups.

Those under the influence of or in the possession of alcohol or drugs should NOT be allowed onto the premises of any YFC centre, but the leader in charge should use wisdom and discretion in any situation involving alcohol or drugs where a young person may be at risk to themselves or others.

For contact details of useful organisations in this field see section 12.

2.3 Domestic Abuse and Children

Violence against women and men in the home is a serious crime, which causes enormous health and social problems and emotional and psychological damage, not only to the victims, but also to their children. Children are often witnesses and are necessarily affected by the anxiety and personal threat to themselves. Domestic violence is the most common form of interpersonal crime and also the least reported.

Leaders should be aware that children may not only overhear or observe violence in the home, but may become direct victims, either accidentally or deliberately. The social pressures to remain within a violent home and the stigma which parents perceive in

relation to living in refuges or temporary accommodation as single parents should not be underestimated.

The impact of domestic violence on children can lead to physical, psychological and behavioural disorders and may subsequently affect them when they become parents. Many of these concerns will require a pastoral response from Youth for Christ.

Please see Section 3 for information on reporting concerns or disclosure.
For further information see section 12.1

2.4 Bullying

All kinds of bullying are wrong and should not be tolerated within any ministry of Youth For Christ Northern Ireland. Our centres and events should be a safe and welcoming place, inclusive of all Young People. Each YFC centre and ministry should encourage an atmosphere where children and leaders feel able to say if they or their friends are being bullied.

What is bullying?

The government defines bullying as “deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time”.⁴ Bullying can happen anywhere to anyone; anyone has the potential to bully others.

What forms does it take?

Bullying can be name calling or teasing and is often physical; where it is physical, victims are pushed, punched, kicked and hit. Victims can be forced to do things they don't want to do or are left out of games or ignored by others. Bullying can occur face-to-face or over the internet, when this occurs it is often referred to as cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is the use of cell phones, instant messaging, email, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat to harass, threaten or intimidate someone. Cyber-bullying is often done by children, who have increasingly early access to these technologies. The problem is further compounded by the fact that a bully can hide behind an electronic veil, dig using his or her true identity. The secrecy makes it more difficult to trace the source and encourages bullies to behave more aggressively than they might face-to-face.

Preventative Measures

All leaders should try to prevent bullying within their ministries. However, if it does happen, leaders must deal with it and not ignore it. An anti-bullying policy is available in section 12; ministries are encouraged to adapt this to suit their ministry. Children and young people

⁴ www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/WorriedAbout/DG_10015786

should be a part of that process. There is also an anti-bullying fact sheet in section 12 designed specifically for children.

If children are new to the group or spend a lot of time on their own, leaders should encourage others to befriend them. Having friends is one of the best defences against bullying. Leaders should always reward and acknowledge positive behaviour, especially young people who befriend others or prevent or stop bullying. Bullying should be discussed openly within the group and young people should be regularly encouraged to talk to the leaders about anything that is bothering them.

How to deal with bullying

- :: Talk to the victim(s) and find out what has happened. Reassure them that it is not their fault and they have made the right decision in telling you. Make sure they are supported throughout the process.

- :: Meet with those involved. It might be suitable to discuss the issue with all members of the group, not just those who are bullying. It is not necessary to mention the victim by name. Talk about how they would feel if they were being left out/called names etc.

- :: Discuss how the situation could be improved - if bullying is happening how it can be stopped and how can everyone feel happier in the group. Make sure everyone within the group is adhering to the code of conduct or anti-bullying policy.

- :: Once everyone has agreed that bullying should not take place, agree what the consequences should be if it were to continue.

- :: If the bullying continues, make sure the agreed consequences are carried out.

- :: If the bullying is serious, report it to the designated person and to parents.

- :: Ensure that adequate support is in place for the one who has been doing the bullying and all attempts have been made for them to be discouraged from repeating this behaviour.

- :: Keep the situation under constant review.

2.5 SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE

Increasingly people who work with children and young people are being faced with the issue of self-harm. In very basic terms it is 'the inflicting of physical pain to mask an emotional imbalance'. Anyone in this situation needs to be supported.

In 2004, the Royal College of Psychiatrists observed, 'deliberate self-harm is a term used when someone injures or harms themselves on purpose. Common examples include "overdosing" (self-poisoning), hitting, cutting, or burning oneself, pulling hair, or picking skin, or self-strangulation. It can also include taking illegal drugs and excessive amounts of

alcohol. Self-harm is always a sign of something being seriously wrong.”⁵ Disclosure of any self-harm should never be ignored; it is a clear sign that someone needs help and that self-esteem is low. Care should always be taken in how this problem is managed and advice should be sought at all times.

For contact details of useful organisations in this field see section 12.

Suicide

It is important to note that self-harm does not always lead to suicide, nor do those who attempt suicide self-harm.

Leaders must be aware that if a child discloses that they are suicidal then the leaders have a duty to inform parents or make sure they are informed. As in the case of all other pastoral concerns, ensure that individuals of any age are safe and have a network of support.

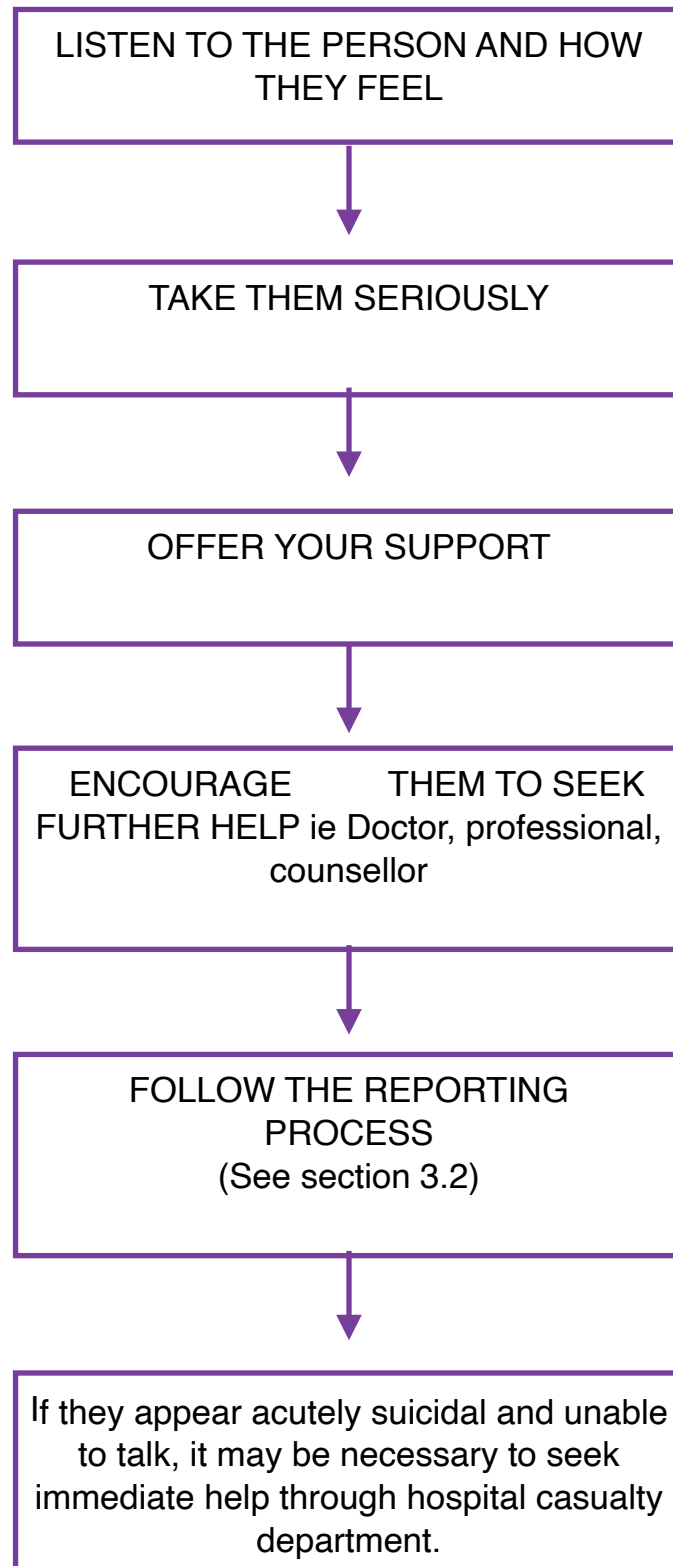
Signs of potential suicidal tendencies:

- :: Withdrawing from friends and family
- :: Loss of interest in usual activities
- :: Signs of sadness, hopelessness and irritability
- :: Making negative remarks about themselves
- :: Talking or writing about suicide
- :: Putting their affairs in order
- :: Giving away personal items
- :: A sudden change from extreme depression to appearing to cope and being calm

These signs are not definitive but are possibly some of the signs displayed by someone who is suicidal. Others may show no sign of their pain at all. The only way to address our concern is to ask.

⁵ Royal College of Psychiatrists Self Harm fact sheet 26, 2004

What to do if you think or know that a young person is suicidal?



3

Responding,
Reporting &
Recording



3. Responding, Reporting and Recording

3.1 Responding to incidents/accidents/concerns/disclosures

Responding to incidents and accidents

Many issues that are brought to a leader's attention are not necessarily a concern about a child's welfare or an allegation of abuse but are often may minor concerns or problems, in other words, an incident or an accident.

An example of an incident would be a male leader who leaves a young girl home by himself without previous knowledge from or communication to parents/carers or other leaders.

An example of an accident would be a teenager falling over in youth club and needing first aid treatment.

It is important that leaders know how to handle concerns or problems, no matter how minor, and that they are able to respond to more serious concerns.

Centres should have copies of the accident/incident report form to record details of accidents and incidences. These forms should be used for the recording of accidents, incidents, injuries and any action taken. Each entry should be signed by the Youth Worker in charge. Parents/guardians should be informed in person or by phone of the accident/incident as soon as possible. See section 12 for accident/incident report form.

Responding to concerns and disclosures

A concern about a child may refer to an incident when a child has shown signs of abuse.

A concern may also refer to inappropriate or difficult behaviour that an adult has shown towards a child.

A disclosure refers to when a child shares that abuse has or is occurring.

Responding to concerns and disclosures must be based upon a clearly defined reporting process. Knowing what to do, who to contact and who needs to know will ensure that the incident is dealt with appropriately. The primary responsibility is to report any concern as soon as possible and ensure that the concern is taken seriously.

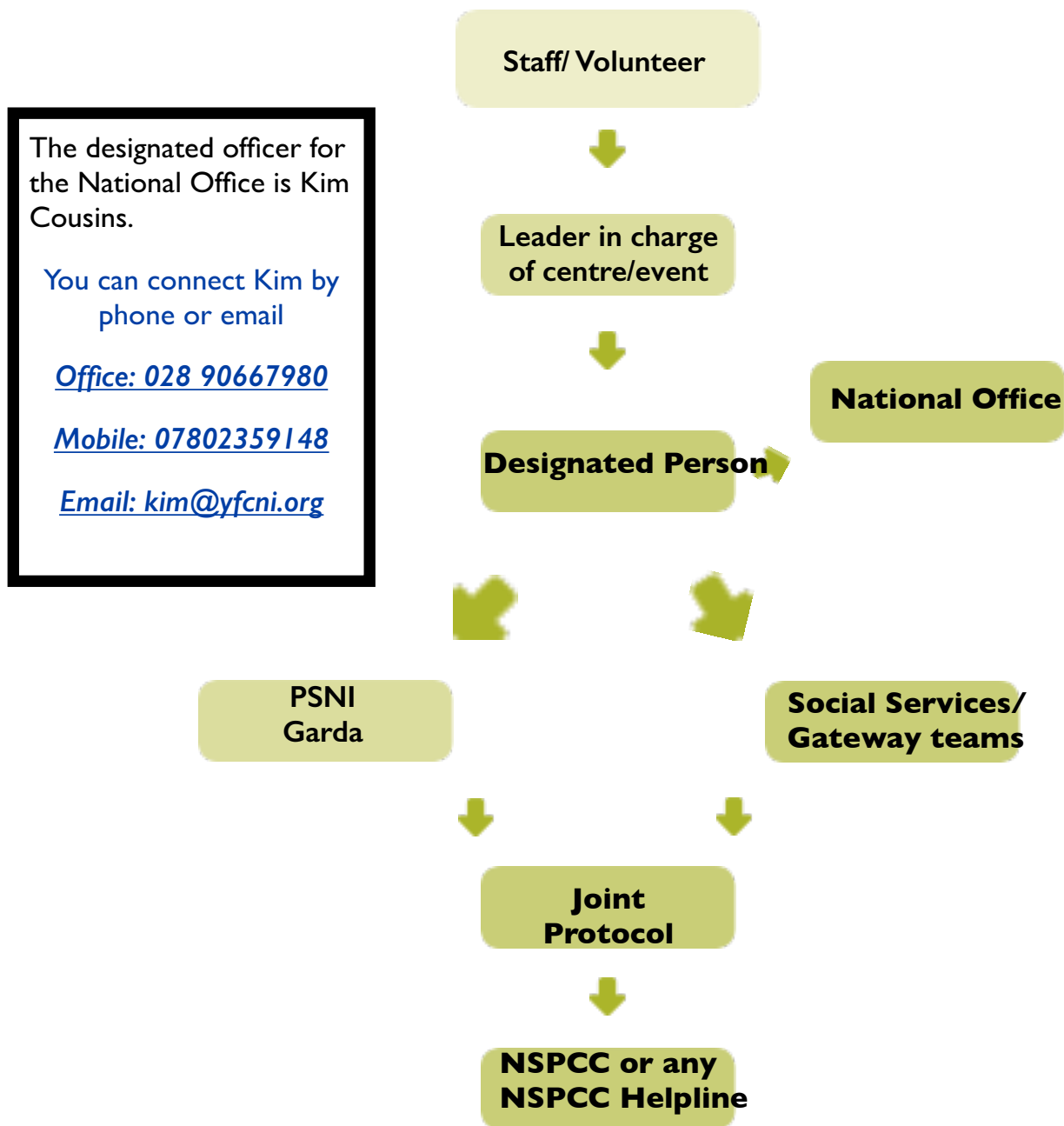
In the event of a concern that involves alleged or suspected child abuse, a Report of Concern form must be completed and passed to the designated person who should be made aware of the situation as soon as possible.

If there is ever a concern that a child might be in danger then do not hesitate to contact the PSNI immediately.

What to do and what not to do if a child discloses to you:

DO'S	DON'TS
Stay calm	Do not panic
Listen and hear	Do not ask leading questions
Give time to the child to say what they want	Do not make the child repeat the story unnecessary
Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling	Do not promise to keep secrets
Write down what was said to you or what you observed as soon as possible	Do not investigate
Write down the exact words used by the child or young person	
Inform the designated/ deputy designated person.	Do not delay
Record your report	Under no circumstances should you attempt to deal with the problem alone
Your department or centre leader will report to Youth for Christ Northern Ireland's designated/ deputy designated officer	

3.2 The Reporting Process



Flowchart explaining the reporting process:

1. If a child is in danger or a criminal offence has taken place, then the PSNI or Social Services must be informed immediately. Do not delay this by having a meeting. Remember that the task of deciding whether or not abuse has occurred rests with the professional agencies. If there is disagreement on whether or not to refer a concern to a child protection agency, any individual, as a concerned citizen, can still make a referral.

2. The person who has the concern should tell the Youth Worker in charge.
3. The Youth Worker in charge should inform the appropriate coordinator, either the Centre designated person or National Office designated person,
4. This contact should decide a course of action *as soon as possible*; considering all the information available and decide to whom, if anyone, it needs to be reported.
5. The National office must be made aware of any concerns, complaints and disclosures. Appropriate advice and support will be given if requested.
6. Consideration should be given by the designated person to offering support to the Youth Worker or other person who made the initial report.
7. In a centre context, information should be restricted to the designated person, that being the Centre Coordinator.

3.3 Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

It is a legal requirement that Youth For Christ Northern Ireland must inform the independent safeguarding authority if they remove a person from volunteering or working in regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults in Northern Ireland.

According to the safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) order 2007, a regulated activity provider, such as a Youth For Christ centre or ministry, must refer to the ISA when they have withdrawn permission for a person to engage in regulated activity because they think that the person meets the following criteria:

- :: The person has received a caution/conviction for a relevant offence. This would be a serious offence that automatically bars a person from working with children or vulnerable adults. For example, the rape of a child.
- :: The person is suspected of being engaged in relevant conduct. Examples include conduct which endangers a child or vulnerable adult or is likely to endanger them and conduct of a sexual nature involving a child. This conduct could be acts of omission or commission.
- :: When the harm test is satisfied. The harm test is where it is thought that a person may harm a child or vulnerable adult, cause them to be harmed, or where a person has put a child/vulnerable adult at risk of harm, attempted to harm a child/vulnerable adult or incited another to harm a child/vulnerable adult.

More information can be found on the independent safeguarding authority website:
www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

3.4 Recording

Child's words

It is very important that any words a child says are recorded accurately. If a child says something of concern to a leader, this should be recorded immediately on any piece of paper at hand and then the Report of Concern form written up at a later stage. Once completed, the Report of Concern form should be given to the designated person and kept confidentially.

Report of Concern form

The leader who has received the concern should complete a Report of Concern form which is available in section 12.

Try to have available the following information:

- :: The name and address of the child
- :: Age of the child
- :: The nature of any injury or complaint

- :: The need for medical attention (if any)
- :: What your concern actually is
- :: What course of action you have already taken (if any)
- :: Any other information you may have: e.g what school they attend, the name of their GP

Record of Meeting form

A record should be kept of any meetings held in relation to a child protection concern. It should be recorded what the concern was and whether or not the decision was taken to report to an outside agency. The Record of Meeting form can be used as a prompt (see section 12) and once completed should be kept confidentially in a safe place. such records will be sought and examined if an investigation is carried out.

Storing Records

Recording is stored securely online or paper format. Any online storage is password protected with only essential individuals having access to this. This includes the Report of Concern and any Report of Meeting, as well as any other documentation.

Safeguarding recordings are held confidentiality and securely. They are held for the legally required length of time in line with Data Protection legislation and GDPR principles. As per the Youth For Christ NI Privacy Policy, information regarding young people will be held until they turn 21 and at this point any essential details will be archived. This means that information stored is specific to what is needed, up to date, held securely and confidentially.

Youth for Christ NI is committed to protecting and respecting all personal data collected under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR). We are committed to upholding all our legal requirements under this law by:

- o Only collecting what we need, keeping data up to date, secure and private; and
- o Protecting the rights from whom we collect data which includes knowing what data we hold and having the right to get it removed at any time.

3.5 Managing Offenders

Youth for Christ NI believes that within the context of grace and forgiveness, attendance at certain events is open to everyone. At the same time, the protection of our children must remain paramount at all times.

A person who has cautions or convictions on their record may still be able to attend a YFCNI open event. However, if a person has convictions of abuse against children then they should never be in a position of leadership with children. If a centre or ministry is following the Child Protection policy guidelines, by having all new leaders in regulated positions undergo the vetting procedure, then any convictions will be known through this process (for more information on vetting, see section 5.2).

If it becomes known that a person who has been convicted of offences against children is attending a YFCNI event, the National Office should be contacted. This is not to say they cannot attend but so that advice can be taken to ensure that attendance becomes safe for the protection of the children and others attending and for the offender themselves. If an offender has restrictions placed upon them from PSNI/An Garda Síochána or Probation Services, YFCNI must work in partnership with these agencies.

3.6 Dealing with Complaints

If a young person or parent/carer has a general complaint about the running of a centre or ministry, such complaints should be directed through the Centre Coordinator to the board. The complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decisions and the action, if any, that will be taken. Young people and parents should be made aware of the grievance procedure.

Please see section 12 for grievance procedure for young people or parent/carer.

3.7 Confidentiality

Who needs to know what?

It is always important that child protection issues are treated confidentially, only those who need to know about an incident or concern should be informed. This will mean that where the Centre Coordinator or designated person considers that a child is at risk of abuse, or that a criminal offence may have been committed, it should be reported to:

- :: Social services
- :: The National Office designated person

And in that order, unless advice is needed.

Informing Parents

Depending on what the incident or concern about a child is, parents/carers may need to be informed. In certain circumstances, PSNI or Social Services will advise; if they do not then contact the National Office for advice.

Alleged Perpetrator

If an allegation has been made against a leader, advice must be taken as to whether or not they should be informed.

3.8 Reporting Contacts

Northern Ireland

Any abuse issues relating to children in Northern Ireland should be dealt with either by the PSNI or social services.

Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Within the PSNI, it is the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) that deals with issues relating to children. They are part of the overarching public protection unit; there is one CAIU in each of the 8 policing districts. They are made up of male and female detectives who work in plain clothes and are specially trained to investigate all alleged and suspected cases of child abuse.

Contact the central number **0845 600 8000** or in the event of an emergency phone **999**.

Health and Social Service Trusts

All reports of a child protection nature in northern Ireland are dealt with by either PSNI or by a local gateway Team located within the health & social service Trusts, who provide integrated health and social care services across northern Ireland. Contact details for social services located within each Trust can be found on the health and social Care in northern Ireland website www.n-i.nhs.uk

4

Areas of
Responsibility



4. Areas of Responsibility

4.1 The Role of the Centre or National Board of Directors/Trustees

The National Board of Directors is responsible for the protection of children within the remit of Youth For Christ NI.

Each Centre Board is responsible for the protection of children with the remit of their local centre.

An exception to this would be independent organisations or workers, such as local community groups, using YFCNI premises, even with the permission of the Board. (See section 5.5)

Appoint a Designated Person

Local Centres

- Each YFCNI Centre's Board of Directors must appoint a designated officer and a deputy officer whose role it is to co-ordinate the area of child protection within that centre.
- Once appointed, it is important that the designated person(s) are supported in their role.
- In order to carry out his or her responsibilities thoroughly the designated person(s) will need support from other leaders and board members. Some may need more help than others depending on the size of the centre/event and the level of youth and children's activities involved. (See section 4.2)

National Office

- The National office should appoint a designated officer and deputy from the National staff team. This person is currently Kim Cousins.

You can connect Kim by phone or email

[Office: 028 90667980](tel:02890667980)

[Mobile: 07802359148](tel:07802359148)

[Email: kim@yfcni.org](mailto:kim@yfcni.org)

Oversee the appointment of Centre Leaders process

- It is the responsibility of Centre's Board of Directors to oversee the recruitment process for volunteers and paid youth workers. Once appointed, all leaders need to be supported and valued within their role. (See section 5)

Adopt a child protection policy and review it regularly

- It is the responsibility of YFCNI's Board of Directors to formally adopt a child protection policy for the overall ministry and to carry out a review of the policy every three years. The review should not be considered an inspection, but more of a 'health check' to look at issues that have risen, how they have been dealt with and any further work which needs to be done.

Keep child protection on the board agenda

- The Board of Directors of a Local Centre and the National Office has the responsibility to appoint and oversee all new leaders, so they need to be informed of each new appointment.
- It is the Board's responsibility to be aware of child protection issues and concerns relevant to their centre/ministry. That said, the board may not always be made aware of every incident or issue because of confidentiality reasons, and in some cases they may simply be informed that there was an incident and no other specifics will be given.
- In order to ensure that the board is kept up to date, child protection should be an item on each board meeting agenda, even if there is nothing to report, it should be recorded that this is the case.

4.2 The Appointment of a Designated Person

The appointment of a designated person is very important and should be considered carefully. The people best suited for this task are Centre Coordinators and those whose occupations, or lengthy voluntary experience, that have brought them into contact with children. It is recommended that the role of the designated officer be the responsibility of the centre coordinator and that a board member take up the role of designated officer.

The Designated Person should complete the Registration for Designated Person form (available in Section 12) and send a copy to the National Office.

4.3 The Role of the Designated Person

There are five main roles of the designated person:

1. The designated person must be consulted with if a child protection incident arises. If this were to occur the guidelines in Section 3 should be followed. This includes liaising with the Police Service NI and Social Services if appropriate.
2. To ensure all staff and volunteers within their ministries or centre are fully trained in child protection matters and AccessNI checked. The designated person does this by contacting the National Office who will provide ongoing training sessions.
3. To oversee the appointment process for new leaders including co-ordinating the distribution of application forms and making sure that leaders are vetted and reference

request forms are sent. Members of board, leaders in charge of programmes and administrative staff can help with this process.

4. To remain a point of contact with the National Office so that relevant information such as the child protection update can be sent. Therefore it is important that the office is informed of any change in a designated person's contact details.

5. To report to their specific board on a regular basis about any child protection issues, this does not include specific details about a child protection incident (as this information may have to remain confidential) but for example, changes to the vetting system, information about a training session or concerns to do with leader compliance of the policy in the centre or ministry.

For chartered centres, their Centre Board acts as the governing body to which the Designated Person is accountable. The Youth For Christ NI National Office and Board can act as a support where requested.

For pioneer centres, the Youth For Christ NI Board acts as the governing body to which the Designated Person is accountable.

4.4 The Role of the National Office in Child Protection

The main functions of the staff at the National Office are:

1. To offer support and advice on child protection issues to Centre Coordinators, designated persons and parents.
2. To provide child protection training for: volunteer leaders, designated persons, Youth Workers, board members and interns.
3. To regularly review and update child protection policies.
4. To keep up to date with changing legislation and inform those who need to know.
5. To facilitate the vetting of leaders where appropriate.
6. To work with PSNI, social services and probation services on behalf of a centre where necessary.

Please contact staff at the National Office to discuss any issues or ask any questions to do with child protection.

5

Recruitment and Appointment Process



5. Recruitment and Appointment Process

5.1 The Recruitment and Appointment Process

It is necessary to have a recruitment and appointment policy in place to select leaders in order to provide a safe environment for children and young people. A proper appointment procedure is one of the most sensible and effective ways of assessing a person's suitability to work with children and young people, and may in itself act as a deterrent to potential abusers. This is often felt to be an unnecessary burden, particularly if the person is part-time, a volunteer or already known to a YFCNI centre or ministry. However, the more routine the procedure becomes, the less intimidating it will be to all concerned. By having good standards of practice in our organisations, people are more likely to want to join. Increasingly parents want evidence of good recruitment.

Care needs to be taken to ensure that anyone who may be unsuitable for working with young people is not given the opportunity to become a leader.

The Appointment of Leaders Process

Application Form: an application form must be completed by everyone (paid staff and volunteers) applying to work with children and young people in regulated positions. The application form includes the vetting process according to legislation and good practice, an application form, a job description (or role description in the case of volunteers), info about the organisation and a copy of child protection policy statement. Applicants will be asked to declare any past criminal convictions. An application form for staff/ volunteers is available in section 12.



Interview process:

(for paid staff) A panel of a minimum three people including the Centre Coordinator and National Representative (for centres) and National Director and Board Representative (for National ministries) should carry out an interview in order to appoint the right person for the job available. At the interview, a child protection policy summary should be provided and explained and the interviewee should be given a copy.

(for voluntary roles) The Centre Coordinator/ Ministry Coordinator and where appropriate one other centre/ministry representative should carry out an interview/ meeting in order to ensure the proposed volunteer has the ability and commitment

required for the role. At the meeting, a child protection policy summary should be provided and explained and the interviewee should be given a copy.

Referees: The names of two referees should be given by the applicant. The referees should **not** be family members, the Centre Coordinator or ministry coordinator or any of the interviewers.

In the case of paid staff and if the applicant is coming from a previous place of employment, then a reference should be sought from their previous supervisor. Otherwise, references should be from people who have first-hand knowledge of a potential staff member or volunteers work with children/young people, their christian experience and have known the applicant for at least two years.

It is usually the role of the Centre Coordinator/Ministry Coordinator to send a reference request form (see section 12) to the referees given. These do not need to be sent to the National Office with the ACCESS NI form but should be kept for the centre's own records.

Centre Board approval: All application forms must be signed by either the Centre Coordinator or a member of Board to say that as far as all are aware, the applicant is suitable for the role for which they are applying.

Form to be sent to National Office: All AccessNI forms must be sent to the National Office. It is at this stage that appropriate vetting will take place in line with current legislation and practice. The designated person, whose role it is to distribute forms and collect them before returning them to the National Office, must check the forms carefully to make sure they have been completed thoroughly.

Where a prospective volunteer or staff member is not from this country sufficient measures must be taken to ensure there has been a Police check within their own country. Once an overseas volunteer or staff member arrives in this country, they must complete the AccessNI process here if they plan to stay longer than two months.

Letter of appointment to Centre Coordinator/Ministry Coordinator:

Once the vetting process is complete, a letter/email will be sent from the National Office to the designated person of the Centre/Ministry to notify them of the outcome. The applicant can now be appointed.

In Northern Ireland the applicant will also receive a certificate directly from Access NI.

5.2 Vetting

General Vetting Principles

In order to comply with the law and good practice, all leaders taking up a regulated position to work with children and young people must be vetted. The process of vetting leaders involves a criminal record check which will show if an applicant has any criminal convictions.

The vetting process does take time and because of this, centres and events are urged to recruit their leaders well in advance and allow for this time when planning events such as a Summer Programme. Contact the National Office to find out how long the process is currently taking.

Please remember that vetting is only a part of the appointment process. Just because a person does not have a criminal record, does not mean that they are suitable to work with children, it simply means they have no criminal record. Therefore it is important to have a good recruitment process in place. The National Office encourages the model of the Three C's - Character, Competence and Chemistry.

For more information see http://www.willowcreek.com/gls/downloads/leader_to_leader/differentiation/Axiom_-_The_Three_Cs.pdf

A person who does have a criminal conviction will not necessarily be barred from working with children and young people within a YFCNI setting. Only convictions considered relevant will be taken into consideration when an appointment is made.

Please be assured that all certificates, forms and conviction information are treated sensitively and confidentially at the National Office.

Northern Ireland

New leaders (since April 2005) who are working in a regulated position with children and young people should complete the most recent application form for leaders which includes an Access NI form.

Leaders on a rota basis for centres or events, should only complete the application form if they meet the frequency test (four or more times a year).

Regulated Position

At the time of writing a regulated position is defined as:

An adult (a person 18 years old and over) working either as a volunteer or in a paid position, four or more times a year, in direct contact with children (a person under 18 years old).

YFCNI take the policy that any young volunteer or helper aged 16 - 17 years old should also be vetted.

5.3 Training

The importance of training

As well as being appointed properly, it is important that leaders have adequate training to do the job required of them. It is the responsibility of the Board not only to appoint leaders but to support them in their role; this includes providing appropriate opportunities for training.

Child protection training is essential to all people who work with children and young people in all fields of life, within a professional and voluntary basis. Within YFCNI, child protection training is delivered at a staff, volunteer and board level.

It is essential that staff and volunteers within YFCNI attend Child Protection training facilitated by a YFCNI trainer, as this training is specific to the organisation's own policy.

Trainers are kept up to date continually with changes to policy, law and practice as well as resources available and upcoming events.

YFCNI Child protection training

Leaders and helpers who work with children and young people should attend YFCNI Child protection as soon as they have been appointed in their role as volunteer or staff member.

- Those who are involved in regular weekly contact, should attend refresher YFCNI Child protection training every two years and have an Access NI check carried out every three years. This includes young leaders/helpers (for definition, see section 1.3).
- Volunteers involved in summer programmes who are not working with children regularly, must be Access NI checked and attend YFCNI Child protection training every year.
- Even those who have a good knowledge of child protection issues in another field should attend, as YFCNI Child protection training is the only training available that is specific to the policy of the YFCNI.

Child protection training is available in three different levels – foundation, refresher and board training. Foundation training is for first time leaders who have not attended Child protection training before. Refresher training is for leaders who have attended foundation training and therefore have a working knowledge of the organisation's policy. Board training is for those who are part of the local or national board and have responsibility for the welfare of young people in the care of their organisation.

It is recommended that the National Office and Centre Coordinator keep a record of all training that has been undertaken and who has attended. The designated person should organise training for the leaders in their centre/ministry by contacting the National Office.

Training will normally occur 3 - 4 times a year - September/ February/ June and/or July. Centre's or ministries that have a large group needing trained may also be able to have a training session directly for their group. For more information on this and when and where training is happening in the next year, contact the National Office.

Training for Designated Persons

Once a new designated person has been appointed they should attend a training session specifically for designated persons. Please contact the National Office to find out about this training.

Training for employed youth workers

Once appointed, an employed youth worker should also attend Child protection training at the first available opportunity.

Training for Boards

All Centre and National Board members should be vetted and attend Board related YFCNI Child protection Training. Child protection training for Boards is organised through the National Office on a yearly basis (as policy or legislation demands). Centres will be contacted directly about these events.

5.4 Register of All Leaders

A register of all leaders working with children within a Centre/Ministry should be kept and reviewed on an annual basis. This register should be forwarded to the National Office yearly as part of the chartering process. The register should be a record of all leaders and helpers in all programmes, whether they have completed an application form or not, are on a rota basis or are under the age of 18. A register of all leaders is available in section 12, as well as an annual update form which should be used to update the register

5.5 Employment of Paid Workers

When a centre is employing someone to work with children, young people or adults they must follow the appointment process as usual (5.1). As well as this, other issues that need to be considered are set out below:

Probationary Period

For paid posts, appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period which is usually six months.

Annual Appraisal

In line with YFCNI policy, the employee should have an annual appraisal of the post using a structured scheme that allows both the employee and employer to review progress in different areas of the job. An appraisal form should be completed by both the employee and the employer. See Section 12 for recommended appraisal form.

5.5 Recruitment of Volunteers workers

When a centre is recruiting a volunteer to work with children or young people they must follow the appointment process as usual (5.1). As well as this, other issues that need to be considered are set out below:

Probationary Period

For year out interns, the probationary period should be 6 weeks. For centre volunteers appointment should be conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period of 10 sessions. There is no probationary period for summer intern or those serving for less than 3 weeks.

5.6 Induction of staff and volunteers

All leaders, whether volunteers or staff should receive an induction into the organisation.

For staff this should include an introduction to YFC and it's history, an introduction to the centre/ ministry they will be involved in, general guidelines both written and unwritten for working in the ministry/centre, child protection training, expectations of them, the culture of the organisation and a staff welcome pack which should include the necessary policy documents including the staff handbook.

New staff members should also be given the opportunity to attend the YFC area staff induction training for new staff.

For volunteers, the induction should include an introduction to YFC and it's history, an introduction to the centre/ ministry they will be involved in, general guidelines both written and unwritten for working in the ministry/centre, child protection training, expectations of them, the culture of the organisation and a volunteer handbook which should include YFCNI'S staff and volunteer grievance procedure. See section 12 for a copy.

6

Working
Together



6. Working Together

6.1 Responsibilities of All Leaders

To ensure that the organisation responds in a correct and prompt manner to concerns, accidents and incidents within an organisation, all leaders need to check that:

- :: There are accident/incident report forms on the premises.
- :: The leader in charge has immediate access to names, addresses and phone numbers of the children/young people attending.
- :: There is access to a phone in the event of an emergency.
- :: All leaders are aware of the reporting procedure in the event of a concern or accident/incident (the Report of Concern form is available in section 12).
- :: All leaders should know the name and phone number of the designated person(s). (See section 4 for information on the designated person)
- :: All leaders should have a good understanding of the need to keep personal details of young people and other leaders confidential.
- :: Leaders should be sensitive and where appropriate, exercise confidentiality to the backgrounds, medical history and family circumstances of all children.

6.2 Team Work

1. Each leader and helper must be fully acquainted with the child protection policy and reporting process.
2. Each Centre/Ministry should draw up clearly defined aims and objectives for its overall running and review this on an annual basis.
3. Each leader and helper should be acquainted with, and be in full support of, the code of conduct for the organisation.
4. Within each Centre/Ministry, a clearly defined line of accountability should be in place, whereby all leaders and helpers report to the appointed leader in charge. The leader in charge reports to the Centre Coordinator or National Office, with which ultimate responsibility lies.
5. At any given meeting, leaders and helpers should be informed of the specific programme, and be clear about one another's responsibilities.
6. Acquaint the team (especially new leaders and helpers) with useful advice on getting to know the young people; i.e. trying to get to know the names of the young people as quickly as possible; talking to the young people about themselves, what they like, what they do during the rest of the week; talking to the young people about yourself.
7. At the conclusion of the sessions/programme, i.e. weekly meetings or at the end of a project, there should be an evaluation of the programme, when leaders and helpers can share information about issues and any difficulties that may have arisen.

A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers is found in section 12.

6.3 Working with Parents/Carers

The responsibility of parents/carers

Parents/carers are primarily responsible for their children. They have a responsibility to return consent forms promptly within the agreed deadlines, to inform organisational leaders of any changes to their child's medication or circumstances and also encourage their child to abide by the rules of the organisation.

Parental consent forms

A parental consent form should be completed when a young person enrolls in a centre (a sample multi-purpose consent form can be found in section 12).

It is not always necessary for consent forms to be issued annually. For example, if a centre generally has the same children every year and consent forms have been completed when the child started with the centre, the centre can take the decision to issue consent forms every other year. In the years that a consent form is not sent out, parents should be asked to inform the centre of any changes in contact details, family circumstances or medical information that the leaders need to be made aware of.

If a day trip, special activity or residential is organised, a specific consent form covering this should be completed. It is important to have a parent/carer signature and information regarding medication and allergies etc. (a sample form can be found in section 12).

The information on consent forms and sign in sheets should be kept confidential to the leaders of the centre/ministry. The forms should be kept in a secure location on YFCNI premises (eg a locked filing cabinet), but should be accessible when the group meets. If the group is on an outing or residential, the leader should ensure that he or she has the information contained on consent forms with him or her.

Sign-in sheet

A sign-in sheet should be used for every activity taking place on YFCNI premises or off site. It is important that young people sign out as well as sign in so that leaders are aware of how many people are in the building at any one time.

Incidents and Concerns

Depending on what the incident or concern about a child is parents/carers may need to be informed. In certain circumstances PSNI or social services will advise; if they do not then contact the National Office for advice.

6.4 Discipline

Code of Conduct

In every aspect of life, organisations function best where there are clear guidelines and structures.

It is important that all leaders know what the boundaries and rules of an organisation are and that these are explained to children and parents.

The best way of doing this is by having a code of conduct for children and young people when attending organisations, drawn up at the commencement of the year's activities. A code of conduct will help to create a safe, secure environment and an atmosphere where children will feel that they can relate to the leaders and helpers.

In some organisations it is the young people themselves who draw up the code of conduct with the help of the leaders. It can be easier to enforce the boundaries if the young people play a part in deciding what these should be. However, it is not always appropriate and in some organisations it may be more suitable that the leaders decide on the boundaries and acceptable behaviour. Parents should be informed of the code of conduct once it is agreed upon. (A sample code of conduct fact sheet is available in section 12)

Discipline Guidelines

If a young person breaks the code of conduct or agreed rules then sanctions need to be put in place and carried out to ensure a safe environment for all. When disciplining children of all ages the following guidelines need to be adhered to:

Never

- Use force (smack, hit)
- Discipline out of anger (but out of love)
- Use a 'put-down' with children/young people
- Humiliate a child or young person
- Reject the child, just the behaviour
- Allow some children to take all your time and energy
- Compare children with each other

Always

- Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding
- Pray for and with the children
- Work on each individual child's positive characteristics
- Be a good role model and set a good example
- Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention
- Be consistent and work together as a team
- Ensure other leaders know what you have said – this avoids manipulation.

7

Good Standards of Practice



7. Good Standards of Practice

7.1 Physical Contact

Physical contact with children should be child initiated and appropriate to the age and gender of the child. If a child is in distress it may be perfectly acceptable (and sometimes necessary) to offer comfort and reassurance by placing a hand on their shoulder or taking their hand. This is a valid way of expressing concern and care for children and most children will feel comfortable with it. Making staff and volunteers frightened of any physical contact with children is not an effective way of reducing abuse.

Leaders should avoid being on their own with a child; if a child wishes to talk confidentially with them they should remain visible to other adults.

Leaders must avoid physical contact which may be misconstrued by a young person or other observer.

Leaders should never:

- :: Spend an excessive amount of time alone with children away from others
- :: Take children to your home without the child's parents and the Centre Coordinator/ Minsirty Coordinator's knowledge (or without an appropriate Home AccessNI check)
- :: Allow or engage in inappropriate touching in any form
- :: Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged (although it is important to acknowledge the context we work in)
- :: Make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child, even in fun
- :: Let allegations made by a child go unchallenged or unrecorded
- :: Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves
- :: Engage in rough or inappropriate behaviour
- :: Rely solely on their reputation to protect themselves

It may sometimes be necessary for leaders to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. In such situations leaders need to be sensitive to the child and undertake personal care with the utmost discretion (see section 7.7 for more information on working with children who have special needs)

Using Restraint

Sometimes restraint may need to be applied to a child in order to protect him/her from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. The priority at all times must be to protect all children from harm.

The proper use of restraint requires skill and judgement. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. Leaders should never try to restrain a young person on their own. Another leader may act as an assistant or as a witness. Remember that restraint should be an act of care, not punishment. Following an

incident when restraint has been used, a report should be inserted in an accident/incident report form and parents/carers should be notified.

7.2 Recommended Ratios

All organisations must abide by the recommended ratios of children/young people to leaders. In determining the ratios of staff to children/young people Centre Coordinators/ Ministry Coordinators should bear in mind that there should be a minimum of at least 2 leaders present at all times.

Supervision ratios

The level of supervision must be adequate and decided upon depending on the nature and venue of the activity as well as the age range of the children involved. Therefore when deciding how many staff and volunteers are required to supervise, leaders must take into consideration a range of practical measures.

- The number of participants in the group.
- The nature of the site /venue.
- The activities to be undertaken – if the activity is one of a hazardous nature e.g. mountain climbing
- It is important that each supervisor knows the responsibilities that they are expected to bear.
- It is recommended that no journeys/visits should be undertaken without a minimum of two volunteers in attendance.
- It is for the leader in charge to exercise their professional judgement in deciding the level of supervision, taking into account the guidance as stated above.
- Where a party consist of children of both sexes males and female supervision should be provided unless otherwise agreed.

Young leaders/helpers

Young leaders (aged between 16 and 18) should not be left alone in a supervisory capacity with children/young people. They may however be counted as staff members to make up stated ratios, so long as other adult staff/ volunteers are present and in charge.

Ratios for indoor activities

Under 8 years

0 to 2 years = 1 leader to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 leader to 4 children

4 to 7 years = 1 leader to 8 children

8 years and over

8 years and over = 1 leader to 10 children/young people.

There should be a gender mix of leaders with a mixed gender group of children or young people.

Ratios for outdoor activities

Under 8 years

0 to 2 years = 1 leader to 3 children

2 to 3 years = 1 leader to 4 children

4 to 7 years = 1 leader to 6 children

8 to 13 years

The recommended ratios for children after 8 to 13 years and over are 2 leaders to 15 children. One additional leader for every 8 extra children, or part thereof.

13 years and over

The recommended ratios for young people aged 13 and over are 2 leaders to 20 children (preferably one of each gender). One additional leader for every 10 young people, or part thereof.

7.3 Transport

Youth Work may involve transporting young people at some stage.

Whether this is by car, coach or minibus and whether it is to and from the centre/National Office building or an organised outing or residential, safety must be considered a priority at all times.

Drivers

When planning an outing, leaders of organisations must exercise discretion as to who the drivers of the vehicles will be. A driver transporting other people's children must be aware of his/her responsibility towards the passengers and drive carefully within the national speed limit. A driver should know what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident and must ensure that they have adequate and up to date insurance cover. 'R' (NI) drivers and recently qualified drivers (ROI) should not be used as drivers on an outing or residential due to their lack of driving experience.

In addition leaders should observe the guidelines below which will help ensure protection for both them and the young people. Drivers must contact their insurance company to ascertain if their insurance cover is adequate.

Minibus drivers

Northern Ireland

Drivers who obtained their full car driving licence before 1 January 1997 may drive a minibus in the UK (until their licence expires) if they hold a valid full driving licence for private cars and if the vehicle is not being used for hire or reward.

Drivers who obtained their full car driving licence on or after 1 January 1997 are only licenced to drive a vehicle with up to eight seats (in addition to the driver). To drive a minibus, such drivers need to gain category d1 pCV entitlement on their licence by meeting higher medical standards and passing an appropriate test.

However, a volunteer driver is allowed to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats (in addition to the driver) for social purposes by a non-commercial body, provided that the driver has held a full B licence for at least two years, is 21 years old or over and under 70 years old (unless s/he has passed PCV medical and gained restriction 120), the vehicle meets the weight restriction and you are not towing trailer.

Private Cars

Leaders should avoid transporting a child or young person on their own. It is good practice to have another leader or other children in the car. However, if a situation does occur when a leader has to transport a child alone, they should ensure that other leaders know this is happening and that the child is in the back seat. If possible, parents should be made aware that their child will be in the car on their own with a leader, affording them the opportunity to make alternative arrangements.

Drivers should declare in writing to their insurers that they carry children in their vehicles, and keep a copy of relevant paperwork with their insurance documents.

Seat belts and child restraints

Centres or individuals who carry other people's children in cars must make sure they use child restraints for each child carried, or adult seat belts appropriately. Child restraints are rearward-facing baby seats, forward-facing child seats, booster seats and booster cushions. Seat belts must be worn for any journey, no matter how short. In Northern Ireland, it is legally the driver's responsibility to ensure that seat belts are worn for all passengers under the age of 14 and in the Republic of Ireland, it is the driver's responsibility that seat belts are worn for all passengers under 17 years old.

Booster seats must be used when travelling by car in line with relevant legislation:

Northern Ireland

Children under 12 years old or less than 4' 5"/135cm in height must use a booster seat. The exceptions according to the law are:

- :: When travelling by a taxi
- :: When there are already two booster seats in the back and no room for a third
- :: Where there is an 'unforeseen circumstance' (eg giving a child a lift home when their parents have not turned up.)

Republic of Ireland

Children under 5'/150 cm in height and weighing less than 36 kilograms (generally children up to 11 or 12 years old) must use the correct child seat or booster cushion. The only

exception to using a child seat, booster seat or booster cushion is if a child is travelling in a taxi.

Minibuses, buses and coaches

If driving the centre's minibus(es), drivers must be named on the centre's insurance policy. Accident/incident report forms and a breakdown logbook should be carried in the centre's minibuses and kept up to date. A first aid kit and fire extinguisher should also be on board and drivers should be familiar with their use.

The law states that it is the driver's responsibility to make sure that each vehicle is in a road-worthy condition before use. Failure to do so may result in the driver being legally liable in the event of any accident. Therefore, each driver must carry out a range of checks to ensure the road-worthiness of the vehicle. If in doubt, the vehicle should not be driven.

In minibuses, children over 3 years old must wear seat belts or use child restraints if available. In the Republic of Ireland road traffic regulations require the fitting of seat belts in all forward facing seats in minibuses.

On larger buses and coaches all seated passengers aged 14 years and above must wear seat belts if they are fitted. The driver must notify passengers when they board that they have to wear their seat belts and/or signs must be displayed at every seat.

When booking a minibus, bus or coach, make sure it has seat belts and ask whether child restraints can be provided or whether you can use your own, but be aware that it may not be possible to fit them properly because the seats and seat belts are different from cars.

Supervision while travelling

Leaders who accompany young people in minibuses/coaches/boats/trains etc should, where possible, sit among the young people and be dispersed in the vehicle. For example, there should be at least one adult travelling in the back of a minibus and preferably near the exit points of the vehicle. Their group members must be in the sight of a leader at all times.

7.4 Residential Programmes and Outings

National Office and Centres can offer a wide range of activities outside YFCNI premises.

These may include day trips to the seaside, forest parks, theme parks, visits to the cinema, theatre, museums and shopping trips.

Outings / Off - site Activities

All trips, camps and residentials must be thoroughly planned and documented well in advance and relevant information made accessible to all parties involved. A risk assessment will be completed and signed off by the Centre Coordinator or staff member responsible. The following procedures must be followed:

- Parents/guardians must be informed in writing of the arrangements for any trip to be taken outside of the normal venue.
- The worker in charge must obtain from parents their written consent to the participation of their child and a completed copy of the health form prior to departure.
- A copy of the trip information form should be forwarded to the Designated Person and/or the Centre Coordinator
- Copies of the consent and health forms must be forwarded to the Designated Person or held securely by an appropriate contact person.
- A detailed itinerary of the trip should be given to all the parents/guardians, workers and the Designated Person and/or the Centre Coordinator at least 2 weeks in advance of departure (a pre-trip information night for all concerned would be an appropriate opportunity to present this information).

As well as this, residential programmes often become the highlight of any centre's youth programme; offering more opportunity to enhance relationships within the group. While recognising the tremendous impact these trips can have on a young person's emotional, physical and spiritual development, the Centre Coordinator/Ministry Coordinator ought to note the following:

The Residential Centre

Check your location and accommodation. Ensure that it is adequate for your groups and activity. The centre must have adequate insurance cover for your group and the activities it hopes to engage in. Insurance should in particular cover high-risk activities (e.g. canoeing, rock climbing etc.) See section 12, Appendix 15. The centre should inform you of its rules and regulations. Make every effort to be aware of its timetable (Whether it has a lights-out time, meal times, what time it expects the group to arrive and to depart.) The centre should provide access to first aid/GP in the event of an emergency. The centre should also provide separate sleeping accommodation for males/females.

Residentials

When on residential the following recommendations should be adhered to alongside the procedures and recommendations outlined throughout this policy

- Each residential should have at least two leaders-in-charge, preferably 1 male and 1 female with appropriate ratios having been considered as outlined previously.
- Leaders must ensure that males and females have different sleeping rooms. In exceptional circumstances workers must be sensitive to the needs of individuals and monitor the situation carefully.
- Young people participating should have their privacy respected by other participants eg rooms, changing rooms, showers, etc.
- Staff members and volunteers must always use common sense and sensitivity and not leave themselves open to allegations of sexual misconduct.

For example:

- Do not enter rooms without permission from young people present
- Do not enter changing rooms without permission from young people present
- Do not enter showers without permission from young people present

- Always knock or call out and ask permission to enter areas where people may be changing.
- Never put yourself in a position of being alone with vulnerable individuals eg cars, closed rooms, out of public view.
- Staff members or volunteers should, when possible, ask another staff member or volunteer to accompany them when entering rooms etc.
- Staff members or volunteers should not sleep alone in dorms with young people.
- When changing or when with a group that is changing - be discreet.
- If behaviour by one of the young people causes offence or is deemed inappropriate, it is the leaders responsibility to discuss and deal with this as soon as possible.
- Parental permission slips for under 18's and medical forms must be completed by all young people attending residential.
- Staff and volunteers should refrain from physical contact with young people. Where needed to care for a young person (e.g. offering a hug when a young person is upset), staff and volunteers should use sensitivity and ensure young people are comfortable or give permission.
- All staff and volunteers on residential will have undergone routine vetting.
- Prior to each residential, staff should meet as a group to discuss the implementation of these guidelines on the residential.

Parental Consent

Parents'/carers' consent must be obtained when taking any young person away for a residential or outing. The consent form for special outings /activities /residential programmes should be used (see section 12).

Before taking a group away, ensure that parents/carers are aware of the following:

- :: The programme/activities their child is encouraged/expected to participate in, especially high-risk activities (E.g.: bouldering, canoeing etc.)
- :: Whether there will be shopping trips or other free time in town areas and, if so, the level of supervision during such trips.
- :: The names of leaders/helpers accompanying the group and a contact number (Where possible it is advisable to arrange a pre-residential briefing for the parents, giving information and allowing parents an opportunity to meet the leaders/helpers).
- :: The centre telephone number and address.
- :: The group's 'contract' (ie what rules the young people will be asked to abide by) and possible consequences if these are broken.
- :: What clothes and other items the young people might be expected to need.
- :: How much pocket money might be sufficient (it is advisable to set a limit on this).
- :: That the names and contact details of all young people and leaders attending a residential/camp etc. will be left with a nominated person in the centre.

Young people

Young people must have parental/carer consent to participate in the residential programme and its named activities. They should be fully informed of the nature of the residential

programme, ie what is expected of them. They should never be coerced or forced into any activity with which they are uncomfortable. They should be involved in the drawing up of rules and a contract for behaviour and be made aware of sanctions should they fail to comply.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment will help leaders when planning events, to consider the hazards and risks that the group will come across during the time that the children are in their care.

A risk assessment form (see section 12, appendix 14) should be completed for each outing, residential or community/outreach event (for more information on risk assessment, see section 9.2).

Checklist:

- :: What is the best time to go – time of year, time of week?
- :: How will you get there?
- :: How much will it cost?
- :: Have you completed a risk assessment form? (see risk assessment form in section 12)
- :: Is the place you are visiting suitable for the age range you are taking?
- :: Is the proposed outing age appropriate, e.g.: is the film, or the theatre show suitable?
- :: Can the venue cater for any children who have special needs?
- :: What food will be provided and will this be appropriate for children who have allergies?
- :: Are there enough leaders?
- :: Is there a good gender mix of leaders (if appropriate)?
- :: Does the outing warrant additional insurance?
- :: Has consent been given by parents/carers? (see special consent form in section 12)
- :: Has consideration been given to places to stop for refreshments/toilets?
- :: Is there an alternative plan if the venue is weather dependent?

Remember to inform a nominated person from the congregation of your exact location, contact mobile phone number and home contact numbers in case of emergency for all children, young people and leaders (see residential/outing form in section 12).

When the outing or residential is over, leaders should carry out a review and ask what went really well and what could be improved on.

7.5 Centre Sleepovers/Stay Awakes

Churches are increasingly using church halls as overnight accommodation for Ministry projects. Before such a venture is considered, organisers should think through security and safety issues. A risk assessment form is recommended (see section 9.2). The following checklist should be used to ensure the accommodation is suitable:

- :: Parental consent must be sought.
- :: Only ground floor accommodation is considered suitable for sleeping.

- ⌘ There should be appropriate male/female segregation and supervision (for ratios see section 7.2).
- ⌘ Sleeping accommodation for leaders/helpers and young people, where possible, should be separate, but the young people's accommodation ought to be easily accessible.
- ⌘ Leaders/helpers must always avoid staying on their own with a young person; there must always be other leaders/helpers or young people present.
- ⌘ There should be at least one nominated first aider and a complete first aid box.
- ⌘ The accommodation should be suitable for any child attending who has special needs.
- ⌘ There should be adequate mobile phone reception or a landline.
- ⌘ There should be at least two separate routes leading from the sleeping accommodation and out of the building.
- ⌘ Fire extinguishers should be positioned in appropriate and accessible locations.
- ⌘ Doors should be checked for ease of opening in an emergency.
- ⌘ Exits should be clearly marked and unblocked.
- ⌘ Clear instructions in the event of an evacuation should be given to both young people and leaders/helpers.
- ⌘ Portable heating appliances should not impede exits and should be turned off during sleeping hours.
- ⌘ Leaders/helpers should have torches in case of power failure.
- ⌘ There should be a no smoking, no alcohol, drug free rule applied to the premises.
- ⌘ A record of sleeping arrangements should be kept detailing the names of children and leaders who stayed over and where they slept.

Once these issues have been considered organisers should only proceed if they are confident that the facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the group.

7.6 Photographs

Since the introduction of the Data Protection Act in 1998, Youth organisations must be very careful if they use photographs, videos and webcams of clearly identifiable people. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- ⌘ Permission (verbal or written) should be obtained of all the people (children and adults) who will appear in a photograph, video or webcam image before the photograph is taken or footage recorded.
- ⌘ It should be made clear why that person's image is being used, what use you will make of it, and who might want to look at the pictures.
- ⌘ Children and young people should not be identified by name or other personal details. These details include email, phone or postal addresses.
- ⌘ When using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to use group pictures.
- ⌘ Carefully consider location and pose.
- ⌘ Do not insist that a child participates.
- ⌘ Obtain a written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.

Please note that the sample consent form contains a parental consent for use of images of children for general YFCNI purposes.

Young people taking photographs of each other

Leaders should encourage young people to be sensible when taking photos or videoing each other, especially if they are to be posted on the internet. Young people should be encouraged to let their friends know if their intention is to post photographs online, giving them the opportunity to object. Young people may need to be reminded that once photographs are on the internet they have no control over where they end up. Centre Coordinators may want to include this issue in their Code of Conduct.

7.7 Working with Children who have Special Needs

YFCNI Centres and Ministries should be a place where all children and their families are welcome.

Be informed!

Talk with the parents or carers to find out what a child's specific needs are and how they are normally met at home or at school. Assume nothing and don't be afraid to ask! Some children with special needs may require one-to-one help in a group or organisation; perhaps an extra leader will be needed for this responsibility.

For extra information and advice about working with children who have particular special needs and conditions contact the National Office. You will find a useful list of websites in section 12, appendix 1.

Personal care

Children and young people who have a disability can be at greater risk of abuse. They will often require more help with personal care, such as washing, dressing, toileting, feeding, mobility etc., or may have limited understanding and behave in a non-age appropriate way. If a child needs help with toileting or more intimate care it is important to make sure their dignity is preserved. It is good practice that as far as possible the same leader, with the same gender as the child is involved in helping them.

A Personal Care plan can be drawn up by parents/carers to advise leaders on how to best meet the needs of the child (see section 12.18 for an example). Leaders can complete a Personal Care log (see section 12.19 for an example) to record how the needs of the child were met each time they attended the organisation.

Be inclusive!

As far as possible, try to make sure that all children can participate in the activities that you have organised. Try not to rely on one particular method of teaching.

For example, a word search is not a suitable activity for a child who is dyslexic; other

children may struggle with running or ball games due to poor mobility skills. Biblical teaching can be used to show that we are all different and yet we are all special to God.

7.8 Safety of Equipment

All equipment used by a youth or children's group must be safe and suitable for use by the age range of the young people participating. Where a National Standard is applicable, the equipment should conform to it.

In addition:

- All equipment should be thoroughly checked for defects before use.
- If there are defects the equipment should not be used.
- All defects must be reported to the Centre Coordinator.
- All workers should be fully conversant with assembly and use of equipment.
- No child / young person is to assist with the assembly of equipment.
- Use of all equipment must be monitored by a worker.
- Care should be taken that all paint, glue, felt tips, etc. are non-toxic.
- Safe storage should be provided for all equipment.

8



Technology

8. Technology

In an increasingly complex world the opportunities for child abuse are growing. Those who care for children need to be aware of the opportunities for abuse through the misuse of the internet, text messaging, video and other media. While good use of such media can be beneficial we must be vigilant and alert to the possibilities of misuse and the consequent harm to young people that can result.

8.1 E-safety Definition

e-safety – or electronic safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of mobile (cell) phones, computers (laptops, netbooks, tablets) and other electronic devices including games consoles, to communicate and access the Internet, emails, texts messages (SMS), Instant Messaging (IM), social networking sites (SNS) and other social media; often referred to as Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The technology is constantly advancing bringing with it additional safeguarding considerations. An e-safety policy should be adopted and adapted to reflect all communications between YFC workers and children/young people (those under 18 years of age) recognising the merging between online and offline worlds and the distinctiveness and difficulties within faith based organisations of defining clear boundaries for everyone.

The e-safety policy should include guidance on both fixed and mobile internet technologies. e.g. PCs, laptops, tablets, web cams, digital video equipment, mobile phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), digital cameras and portable media players or any other forms of mobile communication device being used.

8.2 The organisation/centre commitment to e-safety

We will exercise our right to monitor the use of our computer systems. This will include access to websites, the interception of e-mail and the deletion of inappropriate material where it believes unauthorised use of the computer system is or may be taking place, or the system is or may be being used for a criminal purpose or for storing unauthorised or unlawful text, images or sound.

When using a computer or electronic device with Internet at the centre/ministry, children will not be permitted to:

- Search for and/or enter pornographic, racist or hate-motivated websites;
- Download, forward-on, copy or burn onto CD any music, images or movies from the internet where permission has not been granted by the copyright holders;
- Disclose any personal information e.g. addresses (postal, email or messenger), telephone numbers, bank details. This includes personal information about another person;
- Send or display offensive messages or pictures;
- Use obscene language;

- Violate copyright laws;
- Trespass in others' folders, work or files (i.e. enter without permission);
- Retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures;
- Harass, insult, bully or attack others;
- Damage computers, computer systems or computer networks;
- Use another user's password; or
- Use computers for unapproved commercial purposes.

Sanctions:

- Violations of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use.
- Additional disciplinary action may be added in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- When applicable, police or local authorities may be informed.

Children and Young People will be expected to make appropriate and safe use of ICT

Children and young people will be required to agree to the following expectations for responsible Internet use:

Where using a network or similar I will use only use my own login and password which will be kept secret

I understand that I must not bring software into the church/organisation without permission

I am responsible for e-mail that I send and for contacts made. I will only send messages which are polite, sensible and free from unsuitable language.

I will ensure that they are carefully written. I will not send any attachments which are hurtful, abusive or offensive.

If I receive anything, see anything or come across a website which may be unsuitable or makes me feel uncomfortable I will immediately tell a responsible person [name/title of worker].

I understand that I must never give my home address, phone number, send photos, give out personal information, or arrange to meet someone who contacts me over the internet.

I will not send anonymous messages and I know that chain letters are not permitted.

I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I will not be allowed to use the Internet and/or e-mail and that my parents/carers will be informed.

Rationale:

When a child or young person joins a group, club or activity, responsible ICT use should be included on the general consent form the parent/carer signs (i.e. that ICTs are operating and may be used to communicate with their child). The centre's e-safety policy should be attached to the consent form.

It is the joint responsibility of workers, the centre/ministry and the parent or guardian of the child to educate them about their responsibility when using the Internet.

If the parent/carer requests their child is not communicated with via ICTs, this must be respected and an alternative found.

This responsible Internet Use statement helps to protect children by clearly stating what use of the computer resources is acceptable and what is not.

This agreement should be signed by the child, their parent/carer and the centre/ministry.

We will make appropriate Use of any Photographic and/or Video Images taken during centre or ministry activities

Clear guidelines must be operated when taking photographic and video images of young people involved in centre or ministry activities as follows:

- Photographs that include children will be selected carefully and will not enable individual children to be clearly identified.
- Children's full names will not be used anywhere on the web site in association with photographs.
- Permission will be sought before any images are taken and/or displayed. Images should only be used for the specific purpose agreed by the person photographed.
- Written consent must specify what purposes the image will be used for, and how it will be stored if not destroyed.
- If the intention is to use an image on the internet, this must be clearly stated at the time that consent is sought.
- Further written consent is required if images are to be used in other ways than originally specified.
- When using photographs of children, use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone or fax numbers.
- Ensure that any use of images reflects the diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.

Rationale:

Parents will be given the opportunity to decide if they want pictures of their son/daughter to appear on the website.

A list of parents who do not require their son/daughter to appear on the website should be kept and regularly updated.

This ensures that privacy is respected and no embarrassment is caused.

The policy should apply to all images and audio content be it still photographs, films or audio clips. Images count as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Newspapers and other print media are bound by the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice. Legitimate journalism is a 'special purpose' under the Data Protection Act, which exempts it from the requirement of security, but there are numerous restrictions on photographing children.

We will ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place, including the use of filtering software on all computers used within the centre/ministry

To ensure that unwanted and unsolicited information, viruses and other malware does not intrude on the use of ICT, the centre or ministry will ensure all appropriate and reasonable steps are taken to protect computers and the users of them as follows:

- Filtering software will be installed on all computers used at the centre or as part of any activities operated by the centre or ministry.
- On centre websites, details are prominently displayed as to where to find help online including having the CEOP button on the web site.
- Appropriate parental controls will be activated on all TVs and games in the centre/ministry.

Rationale:

To ensure the integrity of the system and to protect children ensure that filtering software, firewalls etc are enabled.

We will respond appropriately and sensitively to all e-safety concerns.

Where concerned that there may be an e-safety incident, this will be reported to the National Office or centre's designated safeguarding officer in the same manner as the reporting of any other safeguarding concern. They can then determine if the matter should be reported to the statutory authorities or other appropriate agencies e.g. CEOP.

We will operate safe email communications with children and young people.

When using email to communicate with children and young people, workers should:

- Obtain parental agreement before they use email services to communicate with a child or young person; and
- Use clear, unambiguous language to reduce the risk of misinterpretation (e.g. workers should never use terms such as 'luv' to round things off).

Rationale:

Ensure all messages can be viewed if necessary by the worker's supervisor and this policy is explained to children and young people. Although unlikely to happen, this can help deter bullying, insulting or abusive emails

We will make use of appropriate confidentiality clauses in all email correspondence.

All email should contain an appropriate clause regarding confidentiality as follows:

Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of (insert name of centre/ministry) unless otherwise stated. If there is a concern, e.g. that the sender or someone else, particularly a child, may be at risk of serious harm, we may need to share those concerns. In such circumstances we will inform the sender giving details of who would be contacted and what information would be given.

Rationale:

Children can find it easier to communicate via email as nobody is physically present. This means the child may be more willing to share personal and sensitive information about themselves or a given situation than they would face to face.

Whilst it is entirely appropriate to offer general advice and support, counselling should only be done by those qualified to give it. In any event it is advisable to add a rider to the bottom of any email stating the level of confidentiality.

We will make appropriate use of mobile phones where they are needed.

Mobile phones should only be used where necessary and will be guided by the following considerations:

- Where appropriate use group rather than individual texting.
- Texts should be for information not communication.
- Take care with the language they use, avoiding ambiguous abbreviations such as 'lol' which could mean 'laugh out loud' or 'lots of love' and always end with their name.
- Any texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on/shown to the worker's supervisor.
- **Only staff** are permitted to take photos of young people using their mobile phone (only with parental consent and young person) and any images of children taken on a mobile phone should be downloaded to the centre / ministry organisations' computer and kept securely.
- Volunteers are not permitted to take photos of young people on their phones.
- Staff should not keep images of children on their mobile phone.
- Staff and volunteers should not as a general rule give out their personal mobile number to children. The centre/ministry recognises that this may be needed at times (with the agreement of the parents and leaders).
- As well as ensuring that calls / texts are not sent after 9 pm also ensure that calls and texts are not sent whilst the child is at school / college (stipulate times), as this may be against the educational establishments rules.
- Workers should enable a password/lock on their phone for data protection and do not allow unauthorised access.
- Workers should not make contact with young people after (agree acceptable time) at night.

Rationale:

Not every child or young person has the use of a mobile phone and, even if they do, parents may not want the worker to have the number. It is important therefore to have alternative means of communication.

It is advisable that a worker be supplied with a work-dedicated phone. This way all calls and texts can be accounted for via an itemised phone bill. It also protects the worker's right to a personal life outside work. Equally workers should make it clear that a work phone is what it says it is and not divulge their personal mobile number to the children/young people they work with.

Many mobile phones have digital cameras. Workers should ensure that they only take photographs of children and young people in accordance with the e-safety policy on photography (e.g. ensure

that consent is obtained and all images are stored in accordance with Data Protection Act principles).

Recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a young person in a crisis situation or at risk of harm

We will consider the appropriate use of Chat & Messenger Services and whether these are necessary.

Workers should ensure that all communications using IM services adhere to the following:

Communication will not take place between the hours of 9 pm and 9 am

Workers should ensure that they enable settings when using IM services which allows for conversations to be saved as text files.

Children/young people should be made aware that conversations will be recorded and kept (via text files or similar).

Rationale:

Instant Messenger Services or IM (e.g. MSN Messenger, AOL, AIM) are internet programs that allow people to write and receive messages in real time. Many young people use IM for both one-to-one (chat) and group conversations (chat rooms). Chat is a great way to engage with young people but workers should consider the following:

There should be an agreed length of time for a conversation and a curfew e.g. no communication between 9 pm and 9 am.

To ensure accountability and safeguard integrity, workers should save significant conversation as a text file as well as keep a log of when and with whom they communicated. This should be explained to children and young people.

The same protocols for workers communicating with children and young people via email and mobile phone should apply to IM. In other words, care needs to be taken with regard to language and content as well as when and for how long a communication lasts.

Enhanced IM services using technology such as web cams or Skype (voice calls over the internet) also require procedures for use by workers.

We will make safe and appropriate use of social networking sites when communicating with young people.

When using social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Instagram etc..), we will ensure that the following guidance is used by all workers:

- Volunteers should not add young people to their personal social networking page if they are involved with the youth activities and are under the age of 18.
- Centres and ministries should in preference set up a Facebook group / Fan page for the centre/ministry and invite young people to be members. (If they are over the required minimum age limit i.e.: 13 for Facebook).
- Staff are permitted to add young people to their Facebook profiles for the purpose of communication, but must have approval from parent or guardian to do so.
- All staff and volunteers should adhere to the Facebook Lifestyle Agreement.

- Volunteers should only use an agreed social networking account for contact with young people with whom they are working. This should normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose on behalf of the centre/ministry rather than an individual.
- Staff and volunteers should seek to ensure that their personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature.
- Messages sent to young people by staff, regarding youth activities should be posted openly and 'inbox' messaging should be avoided. If this is necessary in exceptional circumstances, a copy should be sent to the manager of the activity/centre to assist transparency.
- A message can be sent to a young person via SNS, private messaging by a staff member, provided another staff person is included in the message.

Rationale:

Use of social networking sites by workers makes it harder to boundary their private life, and also opens up the possibility of relationship between 'friends' who are children and 'friends' who are from the workers' adult personal world

There are risks both for children and also for workers, who may find images and text appearing on their profiles which can be damaging to their reputations and positions as role models.

9

Health
and Safety



9. Health and Safety

9.1 General Safety

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. The Child Protection guidelines bring together the two agendas of child protection and health and safety in order to create a safe environment for everyone. That is not only the responsibility of the Centre Coordinator but of every leader and helper.

Always check the premises that you are using to highlight any obvious hazards or potential risks. Do your best to have anything removed that should not be there and may cause a significant risk to the members of the group. Adequate supervision should be provided at all times and extra care should be taken when using sports equipment. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and must be screened off.

The main Youth Worker should have:

- :: Access to a phone in case of emergency (make sure there is adequate mobile phone reception if there is no landline on the premises)
- :: Accident report forms readily available
- :: Contact details for all children and young people
- :: Knowledge of how many people are present at each event (in case of an evacuation)

9.2 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment form is available in section 12.14 and should be completed/reviewed for each centre/ministry on at least an annual basis or more frequently in the event of new activities being introduced. A risk assessment form should also be completed for each outing, residential or community/outreach event. There may be times when risk assessments are carried out for a specific purpose or period of time (e.g.: an individual with a temporary mobility issue or a leader who is pregnant.)

The forms should be returned to the appropriate person. This health and safety representative should collect a completed risk assessment form for each project, consider the hazards highlighted and the controls suggested. For example, if the boys' group leader highlighted on his risk assessment form that there were potholes in the car park that were dangerous to the boys and their parents, then the health and safety representative should bring this concern to the Centre/National Board and arrange to have the potholes fixed. It is important that if a risk is identified on a risk assessment form, an adequate control is put in place. Health and safety should be a regular agenda item at all board meetings.

The following guidance will help leaders when completing a risk assessment form:

- :: A hazard is something which may cause harm, e.g.: chairs piled high which a small child could climb on to. Hazards should be identified and noted on the risk assessment form.
- :: A risk is the chance that a person may be hurt by a hazard. Risks may vary according to

different age groups who attend the organisation, e.g.: piled up chairs would not be considered a risk to an older person, but would definitely be a risk to a toddler or small child.

:: A control is something that can be put in place or something that can be changed to limit the risk, e.g.: the chairs could be set around the hall instead or only piled together in pairs.

Youth for Christ NI Centres and Ministries need to demonstrate in the event of an insurance claim that they took 'reasonable care' to protect the children and adults attending their organisations.

9.3 Insurance

The provision of insurance protection for youth organisations remains a complex issue. The three main areas of cover relate to offsetting legal expenses in the event of a claim; public liability cover relating to claims for inadequate supervision, negligence, etc. and management indemnity to cover errors, omissions, negligent advice or a wrongful act. Centres/National Offices are advised to contact their insurance broker for more detailed and up to date information on these insurances. See also fact sheet on church insurance on section 12.21.

9.4 High Risk Activities

Some activities such as trampolining and bouncy castles are described as 'high risk' by insurance companies. There is a list of high risk activities in section 12.15. These activities require a little extra thought and sometimes extra supervision perhaps by trained people. You may also require parental consent depending on what the activity is. Additional insurance is often needed to cover these higher risk activities; on occasion cover may not be available. Please always plan ahead and check with your insurance broker in advance of the event.

9.5 Fire

All leaders should be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that access is not obstructed. Leaders should know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located; these must be checked regularly by a qualified person. Fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all members know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire.

9.6 First Aid

Leaders should be aware of any medical conditions or allergies that children have and any medication they are currently taking. This information should be provided on parental consent forms. See section 12.16.

Medication should never be given without written consent from parents or doctors; it should be clearly marked and be kept out of reach of children.

Each centre/event should have at least one nominated and adequately trained first aider. All leaders should be aware who the first aiders are and alert them in the event of an injury or accident. Once first aid has been administered, an accident form should be completed and

leaders should make every effort to communicate with parents/carers what has happened and any treatment that has been given.

If a child needs to be taken to the hospital, leaders should make every effort to contact parents/carers as soon as possible. See section 12 for a sample accident/incident report form and section 3.1 for more information on accident/incident forms.

A first aid kit should always be available on YFCNI premises and at planned events away from the YFCNI venues. It is important that the first aid kit is stocked with all the appropriate in-date items and equipment and that one person has responsibility for replacing items especially if it is used by various programmes within the centre/premises.

The Centre Coordinator/Ministry Coordinator must ensure that this information, along with contact details for parents or carers, is easily accessible to them when the project takes place and also when on outings, residential programmes and camps.

10

Legal
Matters



10. Legal Matters

10.1 Relevant Legislation in Northern Ireland

The main relevant legislation relating to child protection in Northern Ireland includes:

- :: The Criminal Law Act 1967
- :: The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- :: The Children (NI) order 1995
- :: Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- :: The Sex Offenders Act 1997
- :: The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- :: The Criminal Justice (Children) (NI) Order 1998
- :: The Human Rights Act 1998
- :: The sexual Offences Act 2003
- :: Protection of Children & Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- :: Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- :: Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

10.2 Relevant Legislation in the Republic of Ireland

Within the republic of Ireland the main legislation governing the care and protection of children is:

- :: The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989)
- :: The Child Care Acts 1991
- :: The Domestic Violence Acts 1996
- :: The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998
- :: Children First Guidelines 1999
- :: Freedom of Information Act 2000
- :: Children's act 2001
- :: Children Trafficking and Prostitution/Sex Offender Act 2001
- :: Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) act 2006
- :: Criminal Justice act 2006

10.3 Data Protection

Under the Data Protection Act (1998) registered organisations should be aware that they must be careful when handling personal data belonging to children and leaders (Names, phone numbers, addresses and medical information.)

Organisations must only hold data which is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held. They must ensure that personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up to date. Organisations must do what they can to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to personal data and must hold data for no longer than necessary. Therefore the following principles should be followed for all organisations in answer to the questions below:

Where should forms be kept?

- :: All consent forms, accident forms, or any information on children or leaders should be kept in a confidential but accessible location. A locked filing cabinet on centre premises is a good example.
- :: All consent forms, accident forms, or any information on children or leaders should not be kept in a person's own home for long periods of time.
- :: Leaders must ensure that they have easy access to relevant data such as children's contact details and medical information when the organisation is meeting.
- :: Incident/accident forms should also be held securely on YFCNI premises.

Who should have access to information on children and leaders?

- :: Information about children and leaders should be on a need-to-know basis.
- :: The exception to this is medical information where it is important that all leaders in a supervisory role are aware of conditions that children have.
- :: Information about leaders and children should not be given to any external party but only used for the purpose for which it was given.

What about data kept on computers?

- :: The same rules apply for data kept on computers; data is confidential and should be kept on Centre/National Office premises. In order to keep the data protected, it should be held on a dedicated password protected file.

How long should records on children and leaders be kept?

- :: Consent forms (basic information such as name, date of birth and address) should be kept for up to six years after the child has left the organisation. Thereafter, it should either be destroyed (i.e.: shredded or burnt) or given back to the child or parent.
- :: The same applies to information on leaders – i.e.: it is retained for up to six years after they have left their position.
- :: Incident/accident forms and the register of all leaders should be kept indefinitely.

11

Vulnerable
Adults



11. Vulnerable Adults

Everyone should be treated with respect and dignity. There are many adults in the Youth For Christ family, both young and old, who are vulnerable, and they should feel that the Organisation provides a place of safety and cares for them. Others may become vulnerable for a limited time, following a medical procedure or accident.

11.1 Who is a Vulnerable Adult?

*"a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services **or** is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness **or** who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself **or** unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation."*

Vulnerable adults may not be able to protect themselves against significant harm or unfair treatment. This may be because they have a mental health problem, a disability, visual or hearing problems, are old and frail, or are ill. Because of this, these adults may receive a care service in their own home or in the community. They may live in a residential care home, nursing home or a similar setting.

11.2 What is Adult Abuse?

Adult abuse can take a number of forms and cause victims to suffer pain, fear and distress. Victims may be too afraid or embarrassed to raise any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people, or unsure who to trust. There may be some situations where victims are unaware that they are being abused or have difficulty in communicating this to others.

11.3 Protection for Vulnerable Adults

What to do if adult abuse is suspected

It is important that if suspected, adult abuse is reported as soon as possible to PSNI or Social Services (for contact information, see section 3.8).

Vetting those who work with Vulnerable Adults

At the time of writing, it is necessary for those who apply to work as a volunteer or in a paid post with vulnerable adults in a regulated position to complete the appointment process which includes an Access NI form (for more information see section 5).

12

Forms, Fact Sheets
& Resources



APPLICATION FORM

For Office Use Only

FEA Ref. No:

Application For The Post Of:

Thank you for your interest in this post. Please complete this application form fully, accurately and clearly in either your own handwriting using a BLACK PEN or using a word processor in a size 12 font. If there is insufficient space for your answer, continue on a separate sheet. All details must be completed on the Application Form and forms must be signed.

When completed, this form should be returned to: The National Director, Youth For Christ Northern Ireland, Manley House, 56 Newforge Lane, Belfast, BT9 5NW. Completed applications should arrive no later than xxx on xxxxxxxxxxxx. Short-listed applicants will be interviewed in week beginning xxxxx.

Personal Details

Surname:

First Names:

Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other

Male/Female (Delete as appropriate)

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone: Daytime:

Evening:

Mobile:

Email:

Application Process

Are you available during the stated interview week, if short-listed?

How much notice are you required to give your present employer?

If appointed, when could you commence work?

Education & Training

Please list the type of post primary schools/colleges attended and give details of examinations passed and other qualifications (including those attained part-time), which may be relevant to this application.

Education (type of school only):	From- to:	Examinations Passed & Grade:

Professional Qualifications & Membership of Professional Bodies

Professional body/ institution	Date Qualification achieved	Date of membership	Level of membership

Employment History

Please state below particulars of present and previous employment. Begin with your present employer and work backwards. Indicate all periods of unemployment.

Full name, address & job title	Type of work and duties	Reason for leaving, dates & final salary

--	--	--

Job Specification

This section will help you demonstrate how you meet the Essential and Desirable Criteria for this post. Criteria will be assessed on the strength of your application form and at interview, if short-listed.

Please use examples from your life experience, including details of the skills and experience you have gained through paid employment and other activities, which are relevant to your application for this post.

Please tell us about your skills and experience in relation to the **Essential Criteria** as listed on the job description.

Essential Criteria

Please indicate which of the **Desirable Criteria** that you meet, with supporting evidence. Again use examples from your life experience, including details of the skills and experience you have gained through paid employment and other activities, which are relevant to your application for this post.

General Information

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Do you hold a current full Driving Licence? | YES/NO |
| 2. Have you ever been refused motor insurance?
If yes, please give details: | YES/NO |
| 3. Have you any current endorsements for driving offences?
If yes, please give date and details: | YES/NO |

The fact that you may not drive is no bar to your employment.

General Information

4. Have you ever been

a. convicted of a criminal offence

YES/NO *

b. 'bound over'

YES/NO *

c. subjected to a 'Caution'

YES/NO *

d. or are you the subject of any current or pending investigation? YES/NO *

*If yes, details (including type of offence, date/sentence, fine, etc.) are required from you and should be included in a **separate envelope**; which will only be opened if you are considered for the appointment and will subsequently be returned to you. Such information will be completely confidential.

5. Have you changed your name and/or address within the past five years?

YES/NO

If yes, please provide details of:

a. names previously known by:

b. addresses lived at and the dates you lived there:

Note: The employer reserves the right to seek an original marriage certificate.

N.B. Vetting: It is a condition of employment that employees submit to any appropriate statutory or contractual vetting required as duties, directly and indirectly involve contact with children. Failure to obtain or maintain such 'clearance' will result in termination where no alternative employment is available.

Health

Note: The employer reserves the right to require any employees to undergo a medical examination prior to or during employment or may seek, with the employee's permission, relevant medical particulars.

Health

1. Have you ever suffered from any chest/heart complaint, asthma, back complaint, hernia, ulcer, dermatitis (or similar skin infection) any viral infection, epilepsy, repetitive strain injury (RSI) or any other serious illness including fainting/black-outs, diabetes or undergone a major operation?

YES/NO

If so, please give date and details:

2. Have you ever been absent for over 1 week due to illness during the past 2 years?

YES/NO

If so, specify nature and length of illness:

3. Have you ever made a claim for industrial injury or disease?

YES/NO

If yes, please give dates and details:

4. Do you suffer from any condition that may affect your skills or safe working and/or the safety/welfare of fellow employees or others? (e.g. colour blindness, impaired hearing, etc.)

YES/NO

If yes, please give the nature of the condition and/or any restrictions (if any):

5. If selected do you require any special arrangements to be made for you to attend for interview?

YES/NO

If yes, please provide details on the back of this application form.

6. Are you currently receiving any treatment, medication or taking tablets?

YES/NO

If yes, please give details:

Note: Youth For Christ Northern Ireland will not accept liability for any claim resulting from any industrial injury, accident or other condition known, but not disclosed above.

References

Please give the names, present addresses and occupations of two responsible persons (not relatives or former employees) who have known you for at least two years and would be willing to supply written references. At least one referee should have a detailed knowledge of your career to date.

Referee 1

Referee 2

Name:

Name:

Address:

Address:

Postcode:

Postcode:

Tel (Code & Number):

Tel (Code & Number):

Occupation/Job Title:

Occupation/Job Title:

Note 1: Appointment will only be confirmed on the receipt of (a) satisfactory references and (b) proof of qualifications (original documents).

Note 2: The employer also reserves the right to take up references with previous employers. No contact, however, will be made with your present employer without your permission.

Declaration

Note: The employer reserves the right to interview only candidates who meet the specified criteria. Short-listing will be based only on the information supplied by the candidate on this application form.

Warning: An employee found to have knowingly given false or inaccurate information, or to have wilfully failed to disclose any relevant fact, **may** be dismissed.

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief all the information recorded in this application form is true.

Signed:

Date:

CONSENT FORM FOR SPECIAL OUTINGS/ACTIVITIES/RESIDENTIALS

Organisation:

YFC Centre Name (If applicable):

I have taken notice of the details below and give my child/young person permission to attend.

I give permission for my child/young person to attend: Yes No (Circle as appropriate)

Details of trip/outing/activity:

Date:

Time:

Method of transport:

Cost:

Collecting arrangements:

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above named child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise a member of Staff to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

Signature:

(Parent/Guardian)

Date:

Relationship to child/young person:

Printed name (in full)

Phone Number where I can be contacted in an emergency:

Home:

Work:

Mobile:

MULTI PURPOSE PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Organisation:

YFC Centre Name (If applicable):

Anything written on this Form will be held in confidence. The Staff need to know these details in order to meet the specific needs of your child/young person.

I give permission for my child/young person to attend: Yes No (Circle as appropriate)

Child's name:

Date of birth:

Preferred Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone Number where I can be contacted in an emergency:

Home:

Work:

Mobile:

If unavailable, please contact:

Name:

Contact number:

Relationship to the child:

Name of GP:

Number:

Details of known conditions (e.g. Asthma, Epilepsy, etc.)

Medication (and directions of use):

Any other details that may be helpful for staff to know:

I will inform the leaders of any important changes to my child's health, medication or needs and also any changes to our address or to any of the phone numbers given above.

In the event of illness or accident, having parental responsibility for the above names child, I give permission for first aid to be administered where considered necessary by a trained first aider, if available, or medical treatment to be administered by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.

If I cannot be contacted and my child should require emergency hospital treatment, I authorise an adult member of Staff to sign on my behalf any written form of consent required by the hospital. However, I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible.

During the time your child/young person will spend with us, photograph may be taken for general purposes (e.g. our magazine or newsletter) showing the activities available for children/young people, and for this we need your permission. On signing this form we will assume you have given permission for your child's photograph to be taken unless otherwise informed.

I confirm that the above details are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

(Parent/Guardian)

Date:

Printed name (in full)

STAFF CONSENT FORM - FOR ACCESSNI CHECK

INFORMATION ABOUT AND CONSENT TO THE ACCESSNI CHECK BY APPLICANTS FOR POST/ POSITION INVOLVING WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS.

You have applied for a post which is governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Before appointing anyone to such a post, it is our policy to ask for the relevant check to be carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). This check is to make sure that individuals who might be a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not appointed.

The check will tell us if you have a criminal record, or if your name is included on the DHSSPS Disqualification from Working with Children List or included on the DE List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List. Any information received will be treated confidentially, and we will talk to you about it before a final decision is reached. After the decision is made the information will be destroyed.

A check will only be carried out if you are considered to be the preferred candidate and are being offered an appointment. **You must tell us about all offences, even minor ones such as motoring offences, and 'spent' convictions, that is, things which happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may affect your application.**

Please complete the section below and return it with your AccessNI Form. This form also asks you to give your written consent to the check. If you do not consent we will not accept your application to volunteer.

CONSENT TO AccessNI CHECK

Do you have any prosecutions pending? Yes No (If yes, please give details)

Have you ever been convicted at a court or cautioned by the police for any offence? Yes No

If yes, please list below details of **all** convictions, cautions, or bind-over orders. Give as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter.

Have you ever been the subject of an Adult or Child Abuse investigations? Yes No

If yes, please list full details below. If possible please provide the approximate date/s.

I understand that an AccessNI check (as specified above) must be carried out before an offer of appointment can be confirmed. This has been explained to me and I am aware that spent convictions may be disclosed. I declare that the information I have given is accurate and I consent to the check being made.

Signature:

Date:

Name:

DOB:

Position Applied For:

National Insurance Number:

Home phone:

Work phone:

Mobile phone:

Volunteer Application Form

Confidential

Name

Address

Please list overleaf ALL previous addresses within the last 5 years.

Have you ever lived elsewhere in the UK or Republic of Ireland? YES/NO

If you have answered YES – Please give details overleaf.

Previous Names (if applicable)

Home phone:

Work phone:

Mobile phone:

Email Address:

Current Occupation:

National Insurance Number:

Name of Church you attend:

Name and address of Minister

Have you previously been involved in voluntary work involving children and young people? If so, please give details.

I wish to volunteer at

because

Are you prepared to undertake appropriate training? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have : A current driving licence? Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Use of a car? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you had any treatment for any illness during the past 5 years which may have a bearing on your ability to work with children and young people?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please state:

Have you ever been investigated by Social Services in relation to child protection or had a child removed from your care? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide details and advise on the outcome of the investigation.

Referees

Please give names and addresses of two referees who may be approached to support your application for voluntary activities.

Referees should **not** be family members. One referee should be from your **current** Minister.

Name:

Name:

Address:

Address:

I have completed and enclosed a YFCNI Consent Form for a POC(NI)check. I confirm that I have declared all convictions,cautions, bound over orders and have given all necessary details.

Signed:

Date:

NB only use this format if volunteers are doing outreach type work as otherwise the Christian requirements/ministers reference would not be appropriate

VOLUNTEER CONSENT FORM - FOR ACCESSNI CHECK

INFORMATION ABOUT AND CONSENT TO THE ACCESSNI CHECK BY APPLICANTS FOR POST/ POSITION INVOLVING WORK WITH CHILDREN AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS.

You have applied for a post which is governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Before appointing anyone to such a post, it is our policy to ask for the relevant check to be carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). This check is to make sure that individuals who might be a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not appointed.

The check will tell us if you have a criminal record, or if your name is included on the DHSSPS Disqualification from Working with Children List or included on the DE List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualified from Working with Vulnerable Adults List. Any information received will be treated confidentially, and we will talk to you about it before a final decision is reached. After the decision is made the information will be destroyed.

A check will only be carried out if you are considered to be the preferred candidate and are being offered an appointment. **You must tell us about all offences, even minor ones such as motoring offences, and 'spent' convictions, that is, things which happened a long time ago. If you leave anything out it may affect your application.**

Please complete the section below and return it with your AccessNI Form. This form also asks you to give your written consent to the check. If you do not consent we will not accept your application to volunteer.

CONSENT TO AccessNI CHECK

Do you have any prosecutions pending? Yes No (If yes, please give details)

Have you ever been convicted at a court or cautioned by the police for any offence? Yes No

If yes, please list below details of **all** convictions, cautions, or bind-over orders. Give as much information as you can, including, if possible, the offence, the approximate date of the court hearing and the court which dealt with the matter.

Have you ever been the subject of an Adult or Child Abuse investigations? Yes No

If yes, please list full details below. If possible please provide the approximate date/s.

I understand that an AccessNI check (as specified above) must be carried out before an offer of appointment can be confirmed. This has been explained to me and I am aware that spent convictions may be disclosed. I declare that the information I have given is accurate and I consent to the check being made.

Signature:

Date:

Name:

DOB:

Position Applied For:

National Insurance Number:

Home phone:

Work phone:

Mobile phone:

Volunteer Application Reference Form

Confidential

This is a Volunteer Reference Form for _____. They have expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer, and have given your name as a referee. If you are happy to complete this reference, all the information contained on the form will remain absolutely confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor should he/she be offered a volunteer position.

We would appreciate your being extremely candid in your evaluation of this person.

1. How long have you known this person? _____
2. In what capacity? _____
3. What attributes does this person have that would make him/her a suitable volunteer?
4. How would you describe their personality?
5. Please rate this person on the following qualities.

	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
Christian witness					
Responsibility					
Maturity					
Self motivation					
Can motivate others					
Commitment					
Energy					
Trustworthiness					
Reliability					

(Please tick one comment for each line)

The post involves substantial access to children. As an organisation that is committed to the welfare and protection of children, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or young people.

If you have answered "YES" we will contact you in confidence.

Signed:

Parent / Guardian - Contact Process to share a Concern

Confidential

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or is injured, it is important that you quickly get the right help. Do not report the concern. Call the police immediately by dialling 999.

To share a Safeguarding concern with Youth For Christ NI, Nationally or through a local centre or project please follow the steps below.

1. Identify the Concern

- Identify the issue or concern you have about your child's experience at the Centre / Project / Event.

2. Choose a Contact Method:

- Phone: Call the relevant Centre or the National Office phone number.
- Email: Send an email to the relevant Centre or the National Office designated contact email.
- In Person: Visit the Centre or National Office and speak with the Youth For Christ NI staff directly.

3. Share Your Concern

- Provide a description of your concern. Please provide as much information as you can, including details of place, dates, times and the name(s) of people involved.

Any information you provide will be used to help us understand you or the person you are concerned about.

We will treat all concerns sensitively and seriously. If your concern relates to the safety of any person we will need to share it with those who can help e.g. Police, or and / or children's Social Care.

4. Follow-Up

- The Centre or National Office will acknowledge your concern and inform you of next steps (e.g., scheduling a meeting or requesting more information).

Parent / Guardian Complaints Procedure

Confidential

1. Identify the Concern

- If you have a concern about your child's experience at the centre, programme or event (behaviour, safety, staff interaction, program quality, etc.) you have the right to contact the Youth For Christ NI Centre / Project or National Office about this.

2. Contact the Youth For Christ NI Centre / National Office

- You may contact Youth For Christ NI through one of the following methods:
 - **Phone:** Call the relevant Centre or the National Office phone number.
 - **Email:** Send an email to the relevant Centre or the National Office designated contact email.
 - **In Person:** Visit the Centre or National Office and speak with the Youth For Christ NI staff directly.

3. Request a Meeting or Submit a Complaint Form

- Ask for a meeting with the Centre Coordinator or National Office Staff, and submit a Youth For Christ NI Concern/Complaint Form. (See below)
 - **Phone/Email:** You may be asked to schedule a phone call or in- person meeting.
 - **Form:** If submitting a form, fill out and send it through the specified submission method (email, drop-off, or online form).

4. Youth For Christ NI Acknowledges the Concern

- The Youth For Christ NI Centre / National Office will acknowledge receipt of your concern (usually within 2-3 business days).
- A staff member may contact you for more information if necessary.

5. Investigation and Review

- Youth For Christ NI will review the concern, which may include speaking with your child, staff, or other relevant parties.
- They will assess the situation to understand the issue thoroughly.

6. Action Taken or Resolution Proposed

- Youth For Christ NI Centre / National Office will propose a resolution based on the investigation.
 - **Resolution Options:** Could include mediation, changes to activities, staff training, or other solutions.

7. Follow-up Communication

- After the proposed action is taken, Youth For Christ NI will follow up with you to ensure the issue has been resolved to your satisfaction.

- **Continued Concerns:** If the concern is not fully resolved, you can request further follow-up or escalation (e.g., speaking with a member of the board of directors).

8. Resolution Confirmed

- If you are satisfied with the resolution, the matter is considered closed.
- If you are still dissatisfied, you may request to escalate the concern to the Youth For Christ National Office or to the Board of Youth For Christ NI.

Parent / Guardian Concern / Complaints Form**Confidential****Youth For Christ NI Concern/Complaint Form [Centre / Project Name or National Office event / programme]**

At Youth For Christ NI, we take the well-being of all children and young people in our care seriously. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding your child's experience, please use this form to share the issue with us. We will review and address all concerns in a timely and confidential manner.

1. Parent/Guardian Information

- **Full Name:**
- **Relationship to Child:**
(e.g., Mother, Father, Guardian, etc.)
- **Contact Information:**
 - **Phone Number:**
 - **Email Address:**

2. Youth's Information

- **Youth's Full Name:**
- **DOB:**
- **Program/Activity Attended (if applicable):**

3. Nature of Concern/Complaint

Please select the category that best describes your concern:

- ☐ Behaviour/Discipline Issues
- ☐ Safety or Well-being
- ☐ Program/Activity Quality
- ☐ Staff/Volunteer Interaction
- ☐ Bullying or Harassment
- ☐ Health-related Concern
- ☐ Facilities or Environment
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

4. Detailed Description of Concern

Please provide a detailed description of your concern or complaint. Include any relevant dates, locations, names of individuals involved, and specific incidents. The more information you can provide, the better we can understand and address the issue.

Description of Concern:

5. Action Taken (if any)

Have you already spoken with any Youth For Christ NI staff or taken any action regarding this concern?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please provide details of any previous discussions or actions taken:

6. Desired Outcome

What would you consider to be an acceptable resolution to this concern?

(Please describe any specific actions you would like to see taken or outcomes you hope for.)

7. Permission to Share Information

Do you give permission for us to discuss your concern with the relevant staff, including the program leader, coordinators, or other involved parties?

- ☐ Yes, I give permission to discuss my concern with relevant staff members.
- ☐ No, I prefer that this concern remains confidential.

8. Signature and Date

By signing below, I confirm that the information provided in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

- **Parent/Guardian Signature:** _____
- **Date:** _____

Please submit this form to: Youth For Christ NI National Office or relevant local Centre / Project