

1.0 Policy Statement

The Children's Sunshine Home, operating as LauraLynn, Ireland's Children's Hospice is committed to ensuring that, the children and adults who avail of our services are treated with respect and dignity, have their welfare promoted and receive support in an environment in which every effort is made to promote welfare and to prevent abuse.

The service shall have a 'No Tolerance' approach to any form of abuse and shall promote a culture which supports this ethos. The service is also highly committed to their staff and to providing them with the necessary supervision, support and training to enable them to provide the highest standards of care to all children and adults within the service.

The prevention, detection and treatment of abuse or neglect requires a co-ordinated and consistent multidisciplinary approach. It also requires effective management, clarity of responsibility and training of personnel working with vulnerable adults and children.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, students and contractors working in the Service. Any allegation or suspicion of abuse must be reported where there are reasonable grounds of concern that a vulnerable adult has been or is at risk of neglect.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 *Abuse:* Any act, or failure to act, which results in a breach of a vulnerable person's human rights, civil liberties, physical and mental integrity, dignity or general wellbeing, whether intended or through negligence, including sexual relationships or financial transactions to which the person does not or cannot validly consent, or which are deliberately exploitive. The definition excludes self-neglect which is an inability or unwillingness to provide for oneself.

Abuse may take a variety of forms:

- Physical abuse, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.
- Sexual abuse and exploitation, including rape, sexual assault, indecent assault, indecent exposure, forced involvement in pornography, prostitution, sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent, or into which he/she was compelled to consent to.
- Psychological abuse, usually includes verbal or emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, rejection, blaming, controlling, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation, emotional blackmail, arbitrariness, denial of adult status or withdrawal from services or supportive networks and the denial of services or supportive networks (such as individuality, sexuality, education and training, leisure and sport).
- Financial or material abuse including fraud, theft or money or personal belongings, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions and/or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect or acts of omission, abandonment and deprivation, whether physical or emotional, in particular and often cumulative failure to provide access to appropriate healthcare, social care or educational services, withholding of the necessities of life including food, medication, adequate nutrition, heating or of other daily necessities.
- Discriminatory abuse including ageism, racism, sexism, that based on a child and adult's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

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- Institutional abuse may involve poor standards of care, rigid routines and inadequate responses to complex needs. This may include the level of hygiene, the space, the rigidity of the system, the programme, the visits, and the holidays.

3.2 “A *child*” means a person under the age of eighteen years, excluding a person who is or has been married.

3.3 *Intimate personal care*: care tasks associated with bodily functions, body products and personal hygiene which demand direct or indirect contact with or exposure of the “sexual parts of the body”. In addition to this, intimate care may also include tasks such as:

- help with feeding;
- oral care, shaving, hair care;
- skin care or applying external medication;
- dressing and undressing;
- help with toileting, bathing/showering, changing soiled continence pads, menstrual care;
- washing intimate parts of the body i.e. genitalia;
- catheter or stoma care.

3.4 *National Policy*: Health Services Executive (HSE) ‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy and Procedure’.

3.5 *Vulnerable adult*: An adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself /herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation.

4.0 Responsibility

4.1 All Staff & volunteers: To take action to ensure the protection of the children and adults who avail of our services from all forms of abuse. Where staff or volunteers have concerns regarding abuse or an alleged abuse, they shall inform their Line Manager or the Designated Officer immediately.

4.2 Designated Officer: Ensure that policies and procedures supporting the protection of adults and children from all forms of abuse are available and in line with best practice guidance, are implemented and reviewed regularly in compliance to National Policy.

4.3 Executive Management Team: Ensure adherence to the process for the prevention of child and adult abuse.

4.4 Line Managers: Communicate this policy and the National Policy to all staff including agency staff, volunteers and students. Ensure that all children and adults and their family/representatives are informed of this policy and the processes for safeguarding within the service.

4.5 Multi-Disciplinary Team: Interagency co-operation and information sharing.

4.6 Senior Social Worker and Acting Head of Clinical Education: Ensure all staff have undertaken the induction programme on commencement, and attended the vulnerable adult training every 3 years and child protection training every two years.

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5.0 Building Blocks for Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare

5.1 The following building blocks have been identified by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) for prevention and early intervention:

- Children and adults being informed of their rights to be free from abuse and supported to exercise these rights including access to advocacy,
- A well trained workforce operating in a culture of zero tolerance to abuse,
- A sound framework for confidentiality and information sharing across service providers,
- Risk assessments to inform the children’s and adults choices,
- A range of options for support to keep people safe from abuse tailored to the child’s and adult’s individual needs,
- A service that prioritises both safeguarding and independence and;
- Multi-disciplinary team work, interagency co-operation and information sharing.

5.2 The Service shall discharge its corporate responsibility to protect the dignity and welfare of adults and children entrusted to its care and to support staff and volunteers with responsibility for them through the following measures:

- Ensuring insofar as is reasonably practical that sufficient resources are available to enable best practice standards of care to be delivered.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their duty of care to report a past or current concern for the safety of the adults and children availing of services in the service.
- Providing safe systems of work to minimise the potential for abuse.
- Providing information which sets out how adults and children, families/representatives and carers can report concerns or complaints of abuse.
- Consulting with each child and adult regarding the expectations relating to their behaviour, and the behaviour of other adults and children in a manner consistent with their ability and capacity.
- Rigorous application of recruitment, selection, assignment and supervision procedures to ensure that staff and volunteers possess the required skills and attributes.
- Providing induction for all new staff and volunteers to ensure that they are aware of the standards of care expected from them.
- Providing effective supervision, support and training for all staff and volunteers so that they are aware of the standards of care expected from them and shortfalls in standards are dealt with promptly.
- Communicating the policy in relation to abuse prevention to all staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that the welfare of adults and children is of paramount importance and to ensure that the adults and children and staff/volunteers know the action to be taken if abuse is suspected or alleged.
- Ensuring that adults and children have access to an advocate or an advocacy service as required.
- Ensuring that adults and children have private access to their representatives, family, advocates and external professionals.
- Managing allegations of abuse against staff members or volunteers promptly and with due regard for the rights of the staff member and volunteer to fair procedures whilst safeguarding the welfare of adults and children.

5.3 The service shall have an effective procedure for assessing and managing risks with regard to safeguarding. In assessing and managing risks, the aim is to minimise the likelihood of risk or its potential impacts while respecting an ambition that the individual is entitled to live a normalised life to the fullest potential.

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5.4 Identifying risk factors can help to prevent abuse by raising awareness among staff, volunteers and managers who care and support the children and adults who may be most at risk of abuse. Staff and volunteers shall use these insights to develop effective risk assessments and prevention strategies.

- 5.5 Common personal risk factors include:
- Diminished social skills/judgement,
 - Diminished capacity,
 - Physical dependence,
 - Need for help with personal hygiene and intimate body care,
 - Lack of knowledge about how to defend against abuse.

- 5.6 Common organisational risk factors include:
- Low staffing levels,
 - High staff turnover,
 - Lack of policy awareness,
 - Isolated services,
 - A neglected physical environment,
 - Weak/inappropriate management,
 - Staff competencies not matched to service requirements,
 - Staff not supported by training/ongoing professional development.

6.0 Key Principles for the Protection of the Child and adult from Abuse

The following principles are critical to the safeguarding of adults and children from abuse:

- Human Rights
- Person Centeredness
- Culture
- Advocacy
- Confidentiality
- Empowerment
- Collaboration

6.1. Human Rights

6.1.1 The Service shall ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware that each child and adult has the right to lead as normal a life as possible and, in particular, that the deprivation of the following rights may constitute abuse:

- Liberty;
- Privacy;
- Respect and dignity;
- Freedom to choose;
- Opportunities to fulfil personal aspirations and realise potential in their daily lives;
- Opportunity to live safely without fear of abuse in any form;
- Respect for possessions;

6.1.2 The service shall ensure the children and adults are facilitated and encouraged to integrate into their communities. The service is proactive in identifying and facilitating initiatives for participation

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in the wider community, developing friendships and involvement in local social, educational and professional networks.

6.2 Person Centeredness

6.2.1 The service shall ensure that the child/adult is at the heart and centre of any exchange concerning the provision or delivery of care or support provided.

6.2.2 The service shall support and enable the realisation of the child's/adult's goals rather than an individual fitting into what the services or system can offer

6.3 Culture

6.3.1 The service shall have an open culture with a genuinely person-centred approach to the care and support each child/adult receives.

6.3.2 Staff and volunteers shall feel supported and safe to raise any safeguarding concerns they may have.

6.3.3 The service has a safeguarding statement in place which is underpinned by a '**No-Tolerance**' approach towards abuse and neglect.

6.4 Advocacy

6.4.1 The service shall ensure that each child/adult who avail of our service has access to an advocate to facilitate communication and information sharing.

6.4.2 Each child and adult shall be facilitated to access citizen's information, advocacy services or an advocate of their choice when making decisions, in accordance with their wishes.

6.4.3 The service shall support each child/adult who avail of our service to seek and receive information, explore and understand their options, make their wishes and views known to others and make decisions for themselves.

6.4.4 The service shall support each child and adult who avail of our service to represent their own views, wishes and interests, especially when they find it difficult to express them.

6.4.5 The service shall enable the children and adults who avail of our service to be involved in decisions that would otherwise be made for them by others.

6.5 Confidentiality

6.5.1 All children, adults and their families shall be secure in the knowledge that all information about them is managed appropriately and that there is a clear understanding of confidentiality among all service personnel.

6.5.2 All information regarding concerns or allegations of abuse or assessments of abuse of a child/adult should be shared, on 'a need to know' basis in the interests of the child/adult, with the relevant statutory authorities and relevant professionals.

6.5.3 The service shall ensure all staff and volunteers are aware that no undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. However the service acknowledges it is important to respect the wishes of the child/adult as much as is reasonably practical.

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6.6 Empowerment

6.6.1 Staff and volunteers shall empower the children and adults who avail of our service to make informed choices about their lives.

6.6.2 Staff and volunteers shall ensure they support the children and adults to maximise their opportunities to participate in the wider society.

6.6.3 The children and adults shall be empowered to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk where appropriate.

6.7 Collaboration

6.7.1 The service recognises interagency collaboration is an essential component to successful safeguarding.

6.7.2 The following are key features to promote good interagency collaboration such as:

- Leadership commitment to collaboration,
- Team working on a multidisciplinary level,
- A history of joint working/joint protocols,
- Development of information sharing processes,
- Perceptions of good will and positive relationships,
- Mutual understanding and shared acknowledgement of the importance of child and adult protection.

7.0 Promotion of the Children’s and Adult’s Dignity

7.1 All staff and volunteers shall respect the privacy and dignity of the child and adult by:

- Listening to the adults and children.
- Giving the adults and children the time to carry out activities.
- Treating the adults and children as individuals.
- Valuing and respecting the adults and children.
- Involving the adults and children in decision-making, where appropriate.
- Only providing intimate care when it is acceptable to all persons concerned.
- Never physically punishing or in any way verbally abusing a child or adult.
- Never telling jokes or make comments of a sexual nature in the presence of a child or adult.
- Never using bad language in the presence of a child or adult.
- Being sensitive to the possibility of developing favouritism, or becoming over involved or spending a great deal of time with any one of the adults or children.

7.2 The service shall promote a positive attitude amongst staff, volunteers, children and adults that respect the personal space, safety and privacy of the adults and children.

7.3 All staff and volunteers shall act in a way that supports the rights of the adults and children to lead an independent life based on self-determination

7.4 Each adult and child shall have access to personal monies and where appropriate control their own financial affairs. The service shall provide information and advice on money management for the adults.

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7.5 All staff and volunteers will recognise adults and children who are unable to make their own decisions and/or to protect themselves, their assets and their bodily integrity, and ensure adequate protection for them.

7.6 The staff shall work in partnership with each child and adult and their family/representatives to promote their safety and wellbeing, in accordance to their wishes.

8.0 Recruitment and Selection

8.1 The service shall follow a rigorous recruitment and selection process for all staff and volunteers to ensure that they possess the required skills, attributes and competencies for the role.

8.2 All staff, volunteers and contractors will be required to undergo a Garda Vetting check.

8.3 Volunteers who have significant and regular contact with adults and children shall be managed in accordance with the volunteer policy and procedure.

8.4 All staff and volunteers shall have a job description, which clearly sets out the caring responsibilities of the job and the duty of all staff to report concerns of the safety and welfare of the adults and children.

8.5 All staff and volunteers shall undergo an induction process to ensure that they are clear about the standards of care and support expected from them and any protocols to be followed when interacting with the adults and children.

8.6 As part of the mandatory training programme, all staff and volunteers shall be required to participate in vulnerable adult training every three years and child protection training every two years. In line with the Mandatory Training policy all new staff including relief staff shall have 3 months to complete all mandatory training.

8.7 Staff shall be required to undergo a probationary period to establish their suitability for the job.

8.8 Staff and volunteers shall continually receive performance feedback, supervision and training to assist them in delivering high quality standards of care and support.

8.9 The service acknowledges that early intervention is key to ensuring that poor working practices do not develop and culminate in a more serious incident.

9.0 Personal and Intimate Care with Adults and Children

9.1 All staff performing personal and intimate care to the adults and children, who require such assistance do so in accordance to the child and adult's Individual Care Plan and in a manner which respects the dignity and bodily integrity of the children and adults in line with the services Personal and Intimate Care Policy.

9.2 All healthcare staff shall be aware that the adults and children may be modest, or fearful regarding personal and intimate care. It is, therefore, very important for staff to introduce themselves, explain who they are, what they are doing and why they are doing it.

9.3 Communication in a manner/method that is appropriate and meaningful to the children and adults is essential so that misinterpretations on the child's and adult's part do not occur.

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- 9.4 The purpose and scope of any personal and intimate care shall be made clear to the child and/or adult.
- 9.5 If any part of the personal and intimate care will potentially be physically or psychologically uncomfortable, the child or adult shall be informed in advance of the personal and intimate care. Where clinical holding may be required during personal and intimate care a risk assessment shall be completed to establish whether it is appropriate.
- 9.6 Adults and children shall be treated with respect and understanding at all times, and their privacy should be respected.
- 9.7 Adults and children shall not be uncovered unnecessarily during the course of personal and intimate care. Towels, blankets or clothing shall be used to cover those parts of the body, which are not involved in the personal and intimate care.
- 9.8 Staff shall knock on toilet/bathroom doors and await a response before entering.
- 9.9 Staff shall ensure that curtains, where utilised, are fully closed, allowing for no gaps when providing care.

10.0 Protection within the Physical Environment

- 10.1 The service shall endeavour to ensure that its building and premises are secure, through the use of fob access to protect the adults and children, staff and visitors.
- 10.2 All visitors or external contractors are required to sign in at reception and wait for the intended person they are meeting with. Visitors and External Contractors entering residential areas shall be accompanied at all times by a member of staff.
- 10.3 Adults and children, their relatives/representatives and staff, shall be protected in the case of emergency as detailed within the Emergency Plan.

11.0 Care of Vulnerable Adults and Children

- 11.1 All staff and volunteers involved in the care and support of vulnerable adults and children must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of the adults and children.

This includes:

- Being honest and trustworthy.
- Communicating in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining the service’s policy regarding confidentiality of the children’s and adults information.
- Being reliable and dependable – responding to identified care needs or ensuring that other’s meet their duty of care (e.g. preventing any deficit of identified care service by omission).
- Maintaining professional boundaries with the adults and children and their families.

- 11.2 When a child and adult is very agitated or disoriented, key family members or significant others who have a positive relationship with the child or adult will be requested to assist by spending time with the child or adult. Staff will always seek to reassure and re-orient any child or adult who is agitated (as per the services Restrictive Practices Policy).

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- 11.3 During the development of an individual care plan, should staff have concerns relating to the adults or child's vulnerability, the multidisciplinary team shall be involved in devising appropriate interventions to assist the child and adult. The child and adult, and their family/representatives if appropriate, shall be involved in the process where this is deemed possible.
- 11.4 Adults, children and visitors shall be aware of their responsibilities in relation to treating other adults and children and their relatives with dignity and respect.
- 11.5 Any staff member or volunteer who has concerns regarding a child's or adult's level of vulnerability should inform their Line Manager, the Social Worker or Designated Officer and seek appropriate advice.
- 12.0 Maintaining Professional Boundaries with the Children, Adults and their Relatives/Representatives**
- 12.1 When staff and volunteers establish professional relationships with adults and children and their relatives/representatives, they must reflect the dual standards of safety and compassion. It is important for staff and volunteers to maintain professional boundaries at all times with the adults and children and their relatives/representatives.
- 12.2 Staff must help the children, adults and their relatives/representatives to understand the professional nature of their caring relationships with the adults and children.
- Staff must avoid any activity they are not employed to carry out.
 - Staff must never share personal phone numbers, social media usernames or personal email addresses.
 - Any gifts that's staff receive from the children/adults or their relatives/representatives are required to give them to the Office of the CEO. No personal gifts can be received.
- 13.0 Staff Education**
- 13.1 All staff and volunteers shall receive education and training in relation to Vulnerable Adults and Child Protection including the prevention, detection and response to abuse. This shall be provided during induction training and through the mandatory training programme.
- 13.2 Staff and volunteers shall be trained in dealing with situations where the safety of a child or adult may be compromised. Their approach shall support responsible risk taking and capacity, as a means to enhancing the quality of life, competence and social skills of adults and children.
- 14.0 Audit and Evaluation**
- An annual audit shall be undertaken to determine compliance to this policy and procedure. This shall be completed via a review of relevant records, including incident reports, through observation and by utilising the appropriate audit tool.

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