

## VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

Edenderry Cultural and Historical Society (known as The Society for rest of document) provides services to a wide range of individuals and organisations throughout Northern Ireland and Co. Armagh in particular. We as The Society recognise that some of our clients will be young people and vulnerable adults. In the context of this policy a young person is defined as anyone aged under 18 years. A person, being aged 18 years or over, may be considered to be vulnerable if that person.

1. Receives personal care, or nursing, or support to live independently in their own home, or a care home.
2. Receives any health or social services.
3. Has a substantial learning or physical disability.
4. Has a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs.
5. Has a substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or to illness.

All members and volunteers of The Society can play an important part in promoting the safety and protection of the young people and vulnerable adults with whom the organisation works. The aim of this policy is to ensure that any vulnerable adults and young people are protected and kept safe from harm while they are in receipt of services from The Society. In addition to this policy, The Society has a framework of policies which are designed to ensure the emotional and physical safety of service users, members and volunteers which include.

1. Selection Policy.
2. Confidentiality Policy.
3. Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.
4. Complaints Procedure.
5. Children and Young People.

The name persons (persons with responsibility for the procedure) will be Cardwell McClure Chairman and Robert Matchett committee member.

## SELECTION AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The Society will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures will take account of the need to protect vulnerable adults and young children. All new members will be checked and if needed will be asked for an appropriate Criminal record bureau check.

All new members will be issued with information on all relevant policies and procedures, including the protection of vulnerable adults and young people, and on-going training will be provided if necessary.

All members and volunteers will have a designated person or persons who will provide appropriate ongoing support and supervision.

## REPORTING PROCEDURES

1 Abuse of vulnerable adults and young people can take many forms including physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It is not the responsibility of anyone connected within The Society, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. It is therefore vital that members raise all cases of suspected or alleged abuse in line with the procedures identified in this policy. It is important to do this as there may already have been concerns expressed by others and failure to report concerns may put a vulnerable adult or young children at risk.

2 Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse should be reported to the named persons as soon as possible.

3 The named persons will gather further information and details by interviewing the person making the report.

4 The named members will then devise an appropriate plan of action. The exact nature of action will be determined by the individual circumstances but it may include the involvement of external authorities, such as Social Workers, referral organisations and the Police.

5 In the case of disclosure or suspicion of abuse concerning a young person aged under 18, The Society will always refer the matter to the appropriate external authorities, which in first instance is likely to be a Social Worker.

6 All members and volunteers of The Society will be familiar with good practice guidelines on the immediate action to be taken following a report of abuse see page 3.

7 Any allegation made against a member or volunteer should be reported to the Committee who will investigate and take action as per the Disciplinary Policy. In the event that an allegation being made against the named members it will be looked and investigated by the other committee members and dealt with accordingly.

8 If a disclosure of abuse is made by a service user, care should be taken to explain to them the procedure that will be followed and they should be told that it may not be possible for The Society to maintain confidentiality.

9 If a service user of The Society makes an allegation about another organisation this should be reported to the Committee who will investigate and take appropriate action.

## GOOD PRACTICE

All members and volunteers should be familiar with and adhere to the Society guidelines for good practice for working with service users see page 4.

## GUIDELINES ON IMMEDIATE ACTION TO BE TAKEN FOLLOWING A COMPLAINT

1. React calmly so not to frighten or deter him/her.
2. Re-assure him/her that you are glad they have told you, and it is not their fault.
3. Don't promise to keep it to yourself, at the earliest opportunity remind them of The Society's confidentiality policy and explain what this means.
4. Explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to someone trusted to deal with it appropriately.
5. Listen carefully to what they say and take them seriously.
6. Allow them to tell you what happened in their own words.
7. It is important to clarify what you have heard, and to establish the basic facts. (However avoid leading questions and do not ask them specific questions about explicit details).
  - a. If possible make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to them why you are doing this. If not possible to do at the time, make notes as soon as possible afterwards. All notes should be dated and signed by the member or volunteer taking them. The information recorded should include:-
  - b. The nature of the suspicion or allegation.
  - c. A description of any visible injury.
  - d. Dates and times and any other factual information.
  - e. The distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay.

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH SERVICE USERS

1. If it is necessary for a member or volunteer to meet a service user outside of The Society, where possible, this meeting should take place in a public place.
2. Visiting Service users at their home is not encouraged, but it is recognised that in certain circumstances it may be unavoidable. In the event of members/volunteers visiting a service user at home they must ensure that another member knows where they are going and what time they are expected back.
3. Service users should never be given access to the home address or telephone number of any member/volunteer of The Society. Service users contact details should never be disclosed to anyone outside of The Society without their explicit consent.
4. Members/volunteers should not usually be alone in the office with a service user outside of normal meeting times, unless another member/volunteer is present until the meeting is finished.