



## APPENDIX 6

### Recognising, Responding, Recording and Reporting

#### **Recognising**

##### **Categories of Abuse:**

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) and Co-operating to Safeguarding Children and Young People (CTSCYP) 2017 defines the categories of abuse set out below. A child/young person may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. When working with children/young people it is important to be aware of all the categories of abuse these are as follows:

- **Neglect**
- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Exploitation** (is an additional form of abuse identified in CTSCYP in NI)

*\*Each category of abuse is defined in the glossary in appendix 10*

##### **Signs of Abuse:**

If you are dealing with children, you need to be alert to the possibility that a welfare or protection concern may arise in relation to children you come in contact with. A child needs to have someone they can trust in order to feel able to disclose abuse or harm they may be experiencing. They need to know that they will be listened to and action taken to ensure they will get the help they need. Without these things, they may be vulnerable to continuing abuse.

Some children may be more vulnerable to abuse than others. Also, there may be times or circumstances when a child may be more vulnerable to abuse in their lives. Children with disabilities, with communication difficulties in care or living away from home, or children with a parent or parents with problems in their own lives may be more vulnerable to harm.

The following list is intended to help your club identify a sample range of issues in a child's life that may place them at greater risk of abuse or neglect. It is important for you to remember that the presence of any of these factors does not mean that a child in those circumstances or settings is being abused only that there is potential additional vulnerability.

##### **Parent/Carer Factors:**

- Drug and alcohol misuse.
- Addiction, including gambling.
- Mental health issues.
- Parental disability issues, including learning or intellectual disability.
- Conflictual relationships.
- Domestic violence.
- Adolescent parents.

**Child Factors:**

- Age.
- Gender or sexual identity.
- Disability.
- Mental health issues, including self-harm and suicide risk.
- Communication difficulties.
- Trafficked/Exploited.
- Previous abuse.
- Young carer.

**Community Factors:**

Cultural, ethnic, religious or faith-based norms in the family or community which may not meet the standards of child welfare or protection required in this jurisdiction.

**Culture-specific practices, including:**

- Female genital mutilation.
- Forced marriage.
- Honour-based violence.
- Radicalisation.

**Environmental factors:**

- Housing issues.
- Children who are out of home and not living with their parents, whether temporarily or permanently.
- Poverty/Begging.
- Bullying.
- Internet and social media-related concerns

**Poor motivation or willingness of parents/guardians to engage:**

- Non-attendance at club appointments.
- Lack of insight or understanding of how the child is being affected.
- Lack of understanding about what needs to happen to bring about change.
- Avoidance of contact and reluctance to work with voluntary or statutory services.
- Inability or unwillingness to comply with agreed targets or plans.

You should consider these factors as part of being alert to the possibility that a child may be at risk of suffering abuse and in bringing reasonable concerns to the attention of Tusla/HSCT

**Reasonable Grounds for concern:**

There are many reasons a coach/volunteer may be concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or young person. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) states that “Tusla should always be informed when a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected”. This threshold remains the same for clubs in NI. In all cases the National IABA DLP should be informed.



It is important to remember that children/young people are sometimes abused by members of their own family, by peers or by others outside the family environment such as strangers, workers or trusted adults. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) lists the following as reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused/harmed.
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused or harmed.

Wherever appropriate, any issues should be checked with the parents/carers when considering whether a concern exists, unless doing so may further endanger the child or the person considering making the report. The DLP should be able to support this process. It is important to remember that abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

## **Responding**

### **Responding to Child Abuse:**

Regardless of how a concern comes to a coach/volunteer's attention, it must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP), in discussion with the person who raised the concern, and if required consultation with TUSLA/HSCT will decide if reasonable grounds for concern exist. If reasonable grounds for concern exist, the Designated Liaison Person will report to a Tusla/HSCT duty social worker. If as the DLP you decide not to report a concern to Tusla/HSCT, the following steps should be taken:

- The reasons for not reporting should be recorded.
- Any actions taken as a result of the concern should be recorded.
- The employee or coach/volunteer who raised the concern should be given a clear written explanation of the reasons why the concern is not being reported to Tusla/HSCT.
- The employee or coach/volunteer should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to make a report to Tusla/HSCT or An Garda Síochána/PSNI directly themselves.

The individual employee or coach/volunteer in ROI has protections under the Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998, should they report independently. Though this specific law does not exist in NI an individual who reports a concern in "good faith" is not deliberately attempting to slander another person's name.



The IABA have a procedure for recording certain concerns which, following consideration, do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern. This procedure identifies where such concerns are recorded, who has access to these records and who is responsible for reviewing these records in line with GDPR. Concerns which do not initially meet reasonable grounds for concern may, upon review, show patterns or clusters which may heighten the level of concern. Club officials should consult the IABA DLP for advice.

**Responding to a child/young person who alleges abuse or harm:**

A child or young person may make an allegation to a coach/volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused. Children/ young people will often have different ways of communicating that they are being abused/harmed. If a child or young person hints at or tells a coach/volunteer that he or she is being harmed by someone, be it a parent/carer, another adult or by another child/young person (peer abuse), it should be treated in a sensitive way.

Remember, a child/young person may make an allegation of abuse/harm to you as a trusted adult at any time during your work with them. It is important that you are aware and as prepared for this as you possibly can. The IABA would advise that you;

- Be as calm and natural as possible.
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted by the young person.
- Do not show panic.
- Be aware that talking about anything so private and hurtful can be very difficult for the child/young person.
- Remember, the child or young person may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time.
- Listen to what the child/young person has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to.
- Do not pressurise the child/young person. Allow him or her to talk at their own pace and when recording ensure you use the child's own language.
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or shock.
- Listen to what the child or young person has to say and ensure they know you will take it seriously.
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself.
- Reassure the child/young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you.

When asking questions:

- Questions should be open, supportive and for clarification only i.e. "can you tell me more about that".
- Never ask leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse.
- You should never suggest that something else may have happened other than what you have been told.



### **Confidentiality:**

It is essential that there is a clear understanding of professional and legal responsibilities with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information. Your organisation/club child safeguarding procedures should include a statement on confidentiality.

Below are the key points your club should consider in terms of confidentiality:

- Where child protection and welfare concerns arise, information must be shared on a 'need to know' basis in the best interest of the child/young person with the relevant statutory authorities. Information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the child in a sensitive way unless to do so would place the child at further risk and advice should be sought from statutory agencies.
- Confidentiality will be maintained but no undertakings regarding secrecy can be given. Those working with children/young people and families and in adult services should make this clear to parents/guardians and to the child/young person.
- The proportionate provision of information to the statutory agencies necessary for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection.
- Parents/guardians and children/young people have a right to know if personal information is being shared, unless doing so could put the child/young person at further risk or may put the reporter at risk.
- Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people.

### **Recording**

The IABA safeguarding procedures provide the following advice and guidance on record-keeping.

- Records should be factual and include details of contacts, consultations and any actions taken.
- All agencies including clubs dealing with children must cooperate in the sharing of records with the statutory authorities where a child protection or welfare issue arises.
- Ensure that records on child protection concerns and allegations are kept securely and safely within the IABA/club.
- Records should only be used for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Records should only be shared on a need to know basis in the best interests of the child/young person.
- Clearly state who within the IABA/club has access to particular types of records.
- State the location where records are stored.
- Indicate how long the organisation will retain these types of records.
- Child protection records should be updated as required and reviewed regularly by the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

### **Reporting concerns about a Child**

All boxing clubs should follow the IABA procedures for reporting any concerns about the welfare or protection of a child that arise. You should make sure the procedures are available and followed by all staff members, volunteers, and individuals undertaking work experience in your club.



**Procedures for IABA staff and volunteers on reporting concerns should include:**

**Seeking advice and guidance:** Who to pass the concern to – who the worker/volunteer consults with and reports the concern to internally, i.e. the Child Protection Officer/Designated Liaison Person.

**Reasonable grounds for concern:** The responsibility of staff and volunteers to report to Tusla/HSCT using either the Report Form (available on the Tusla website: [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie)) where reasonable grounds for concern exist - [https://www.tusla.ie/ children-first/individuals-working-with-children-and-youngpeople/how-do-i-report-a-concern-about-a-child/](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/individuals-working-with-children-and-youngpeople/how-do-i-report-a-concern-about-a-child/) (sample in appendix 11 or the sample provided for NI club's see appendix 12).

**Informal consultation:** The process for seeking advice and guidance from the Tusla/HSCT social work office in the child/young person's area when the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or coach/volunteer is unsure whether a report should be made.

**How to report a concern:** Procedures for non-mandated and mandated persons and contact details for the designated liaison person, should be displayed within your club. It is the DLP's responsibility to complete the Child Protection and Welfare Report (RoI) form (appendix 11) or NI form appendix 12 and to forward it without delay to the Tusla/HSCT Duty Social Worker by registered post under confidential cover. In RoI reports can also be made on Tusla's secure web portal.

**Allegations of abuse caused by another child:** where the person allegedly causing harm to a child is another child (peer or peer abuse), reports should be made to Tusla/HSCT for both children.

**Guidance on dealing with adult allegations of child abuse:** In RoI Retrospective Abuse Report form is required when reporting any concerns about retrospective abuse - [https:// www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/](https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/) In NI please use appendix 12 to record the information. Please see [Non-recent abuse section of the safeguarding policy.](#)

**Immediate risk to a child:** The steps to be taken where an immediate risk to a child is believed to exist. Recording: Guidance on how the details of the concern and the actions taken are to be recorded.

**Talking to parents/carers:** In an ideal situation it is good practice to inform parents of your concern and decision to report the concern to statutory services. But if you are unsure you can informally consult statutory services first, to clarify that doing would not further endanger the child or the person making the report. You do not need to inform the family that a report is being made, if by doing so the child will be placed at further risk or in cases where the family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's/HSCT ability to carry out an assessment.

**Cases not reported to Tusla/HSCT:** The process for recording both the reasons for the decision and any actions taken. How to inform the person who raised the initial concern.



**Information for mandated persons:** As the IABA employs a mandated person, our reporting procedure states clearly that mandated persons must report concerns of harm above a particular threshold under the Children First Act 2015. See chapter 3 of Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) for more detail. Within the IABA the mandated person is the DLP and this should be the same in any clubs that have a mandated person. The mandated persons must provide a copy of their mandated report to their employer. This is a legal requirement for clubs in ROI and good practice required for clubs in NI.

**Responsibilities of a Mandated Person** – The IABA have confirmed that we have a mandated person (the National DLP) and your club need to establish whether you have any Mandated persons as prescribed under the Children First Act 2015 (ROI) schedule 2. These Mandated persons should be made aware of their responsibilities to report child protection and welfare concerns that reach or exceed the threshold for ‘harm’ as defined in the Act.

A Mandated Person has a statutory obligation to report mandated concerns to Tusla, they cannot discharge this duty to another person. However, they may make a report jointly with another person, whether the other person is a mandated person or not. In effect, this means that a mandated person can make a joint report with a designated liaison person. All records and copies of child protection and welfare concerns should be held securely by the DLP.

#### **Reporting to Statutory Authorities:**

You should always inform Tusla/HSCT if you have reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. You can find details of who to contact to discuss your concern on the Tusla/HSCT website. (see details at the end of this document)

If your concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but you feel it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, you should report it to Tusla under Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (ROI) or HSCT Gateway Team under Co-operating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2017 (see statutory contacts at the end of this document).

Procedure for the management of allegation of abuse against a coach or volunteer. Each organisation/club should have agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against a coach/ volunteer.

If such an allegation is made, three steps should be taken:

- Responding to allegations of abuse made against a coaches/volunteers.
- Reporting allegations of abuse made against coaches/ volunteers to Tusla/HSCT.
- Internal procedures for dealing with the coach/volunteer should be clearly outlined.





### **Responding to allegations of abuse made against coaches/volunteer.**

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child/ young person.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child/young person;
- Behaved towards a child/young person or children/young people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child/young person;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the club/sports organisation code of behaviour for coaches & volunteers;
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines.

If an allegation is made against a coach/volunteer in the IABA or your boxing club you must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the organisation/club guiding principles and child safeguarding procedures, the rules of natural justice and any relevant employment law. The organisation/club has a dual responsibility in respect of both the child/young person and the coach/volunteer. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla/HSCT in respect of the child/ young person and the alleged abuser;
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with a coach/ volunteer.

Each club should follow the IABA procedures in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders. If such an allegation is made, two steps should be taken:

- The reporting procedure.
- The procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader.

### **Special Considerations**

The following points should be considered:

- the safety of the child making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the boxing club/IABA should take any necessary steps which may be immediately necessary to protect children.
- if a Sports Leader or other volunteers linked to the boxing club is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness.

### **Steps to be taken within the Sports Organisation**

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, the following steps should be taken by the club/organisation:

- advice should be sought from the local duty social worker with regard to any action by the club deemed necessary to protect the child/children who may be at risk.
- the matter should be reported to the local statutory authorities following the standard reporting procedure outlined above
- in the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Sports Leader in the club, the Sports Leader involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities.





- It is advisable that this task be undertaken by a senior office holder other than the designated liaison person/club children's officer who takes the responsibility for reporting.

When the Sports Leader is being privately informed by the senior officer of a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory authorities. This should only be done after consultation with statutory authorities if the is off a child protection threshold.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/carers, the person the allegation is against any person raising the concern) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure.

Once a statutory process either civil or criminal process is completed, the IABA/ club officials will consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the person the complaint is against has not been prosecuted by the courts or has been found not guilty (to a beyond all reasonable doubt threshold) does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible. Please remember that the IABA and clubs must make decisions on the potential risk a person may pose to young people based on the civil threshold of "balance of probability".

#### **Internal procedures for dealing with a coach/volunteer should be clearly outlined**

In the context of an allegation of abuse against a coach/ volunteer, the organisation/club disciplinary procedures should ensure that fair procedure is followed and take account of the employment contract/membership guidelines as well as the rules of natural justice. The following points should be incorporated into the procedure:

- In making an immediate decision about the coach/ volunteer's presence in the organisation/club, the Chairperson should as a matter of urgency take any measures necessary to protect the child/young person. These should be proportionate to the level of risk to the child/young person; 'protective measures' do not presume guilt.
- The Chairperson should privately inform the coach/ volunteer that an allegation has been made against him or her and the nature of the allegation. This should only be done after consultation with statutory authorities if the is off a child protection threshold.
- The coach/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond.
- The Chairperson should note the response from the coach/ volunteer and pass on this information if making a formal report to Tusla/HSCT.
- The coach/volunteer should be offered the option to have representation/support at this stage and should be informed that any response may be shared with Tusla/HSCT.
- While Tusla/HSCT will not provide advice on employment matters, advice and consultation with regard to risk to children/ young people can be sought from the local Tusla/TUSLA social work office.

The Chairperson should ensure that actions taken by the organisation/club do not undermine any investigations or assessments undertaken by Tusla/HSCT or An Garda Síochána/PSNI. The organisation/club should liaise closely with the investigating bodies to ensure this.



Once a statutory process either civil or criminal process is completed, the IABA/ club officials will consider the need to examine whether there are grounds for disciplinary proceedings for misconduct. The fact that the person the complaint is against has not been prosecuted by the courts or has been found not guilty (to a beyond all reasonable doubt threshold) does not mean that such proceedings are not necessary or feasible. Please remember that the IABA and clubs must make decisions on the potential risk a person may pose to young people based on the civil threshold of “balance of probability”.

## **Statutory Contacts Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland**

### **TUSLA-Child & Family Agency**

If in the Republic of Ireland and you have any concerns about a child you should report it to the Child & Family Agency please see website for contact details <http://www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/>

Any query or concern in relation to children out of hours should be reported immediately to An Garda Síochána.

### **Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT)**

Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison for advice on concerns.

Regional Emergency Social Work service. Available 5.00 PM – 9.00 AM Monday to Thursday and 5.00 PM on Friday to 9.00 AM on Monday. There is a 24-hour cover over public holidays.

**Tel: 028 9504 9999**

### **9.00 - 5.00 Gateway Numbers**

- Northern HSC Trust **Tel: 03001234333**
- South Eastern HSC Trust **Tel: 03001000300**
- Southern HSC Trust **Tel: 08007837745**
- Belfast HSC Trust **Tel: 028 90 507000**
- Western HSC Trust **Tel: 028 71314090**