

The Angling NI Safeguarding Policy

Section

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Policy statement/aims
- 3 Promoting good practice
- 4 Code of Conducts
- 5 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers
- 6 Responding to allegations or suspicions
- 7 Reporting concerns about poor practice or suspected abuse
- 8 Confidentiality
- 9 Enquiries and further action
- 10 Bullying
- 11 Guidelines for Reporting Accidents
- 12 Further Information

1 Introduction

The Angling NI will make provision for children and young people, ensuring that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

Staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, this is the responsibility of the HSCT Gateway Teams. The Angling NI responsibility is to ensure young people have opportunities to participate in fishing in a fun and safe environment and achieve to the best of their ability.

2 Policy statement/aims

Angling NI recognizes its role to provide a duty of care to safeguard all children involved with angling from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the children with a disability may be particularly vulnerable.

Angling NI will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in Angling NI activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Angling NI and our affiliated bodies.

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children (NI) Order 1995 and Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection of Children 2011).

Policy aims;

The aim of Angling NI Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:

- providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Angling NI and our affiliated bodies.
- Allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection/ safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

The term child protection has been expanded to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health, safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. The word safeguarding has been used with increasing frequency over the last few years in a wide range of settings and situations. It may be defined as: Doing everything possible to minimise the risk of harm. Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with young people to ensure that all are going to be kept safe. This could include:

- ensuring staff are properly checked when they are recruited
- guidelines for people who come into contact with vulnerable persons as part of their role to ensure they know what they need to do to keep everyone safe
- guidelines for planning an event or activity with vulnerable persons and
- putting measures in place to minimise the risk of safeguarding issues occurring.

3 Promoting good practice

Angling NI is determined to provide a positive environment for children where any potential risk is managed appropriately. Angling NI is committed to promoting and organising recreational and competitive activities for young people to encourage their ongoing participation.

Every individual in Angling NI should show respect and understanding for each member's rights, development, safety and welfare by conducting themselves in accordance with the Angling NI Codes of Conduct and this document.

When a child joins in an Angling NI activity who has suffered harm or abuse outside the sporting environment, our sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem if we engage with that young person in a positive and motivational way. In such instances Angling NI activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support and the Angling NI members know how to respond to the young person appropriately and maintain confidentiality.

4 Code of Conducts

All those involved in angling should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of complaints or allegations being made.

Code for coaches/officials/volunteers

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Making angling fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children on the river bank depending on the age and maturity of the child. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training/ coaching sessions or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if Angling NI officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Poor Practice

Breaches of the code of conduct may be considered issues of poor practice, where the behavior of Angling NI officials/leaders towards children in angling is not acceptable. Poor practice is dealt with through Angling NI's complaints process and procedures, either informally or formally and where a child is involved the Safeguarding Officer must be involved to help resolve the behavior. If the poor practice behavior is severe, on-going or becomes a concern of abuse the procedures in Sections 6 and 7 *should be followed*.

Indicators of poor practice would include the following:

- Bullying behavior e.g. leader is repeatedly criticising a child
- Unfair treatment e.g. an instructor regularly leaving a member out of a group/squad/meet although the child is meeting the criteria/reaching the standard required

- No recognition for particular skills/needs e.g. not providing adequate instruction according to a child's ability
- Lack of supervision e.g. an instructor regularly not attending sessions;
- Lack of encouragement for children with weaker skills
- Not listening to children's views and opinions
- Deliberate exclusion e.g. a coach is deliberately not allowing a child to have a go.

It would also be considered poor practice not to address these issues; advice can be sought from the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer or the Club Safeguarding Officer as often poor practice behavior is due to a lack of understanding of a child centered environment. It is important to help and support adults working with children to ensure they receive the training and up-skilling needed to create a child centered environment. In extreme cases the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer may consider an informal consultation with the local Gateway Team to help with the determination of the situation and if the matter requires a referral to statutory services..

Practices to be avoided;

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in Angling NI or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices never to be sanctioned;

The following should **never** be sanctioned.

You should never:

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- engage in sexual relationships with young people aged 16 and 17 years if the officials/coach/volunteer is in a position of authority and trust as an unequal power relationship exists.
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child
- do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the young person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact,

lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded:

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt a young person
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Code of Conduct for Young People

Young people involved in angling clearly have rights but they also have responsibilities to behave in a certain way to ensure they remain safe and everyone can enjoy angling equally.

Right to:

- Be happy, have fun and enjoy taking part in angling
- Be treated fairly by everyone, adults and other anglers
- Feel safe and secure when you are taking part in Angling NI activities
- Be listened to and allowed to reply.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Have a voice in the decisions that affect you within the Angling NI environment.
- Say no to something which makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Know that any details that are about you are treated with confidentiality.

Young Peoples responsibilities are to:

- Treat official/leaders, who may be coaches, team managers, officials or other parents with respect.
- Be fair at all times and do your best to achieve your goals. Be gracious if you do not achieve your goals
- Respect other anglers and your opponents.
- Be part of a team if selected and respect and support other team members both when they do well and when things go wrong
- Never bully or use bullying actions against another person whether face to face, online or by text. You should never hurt other team members or your opponents. This includes never taking/damaging their property, never spreading rumors or telling lies about other young people or adults
- Keep to rules and guidelines set by Angling NI
- Take part in angling without cheating. You are responsible for not cheating and must not allow others to force you to cheat.
- Listen to and respect decisions made by others. If you feel unjustly treated you can talk to the Safeguarding Officer or your parents.
- Never use violence or bad language. Do not shout or argue with officials/leaders, team mates or opposing participants – talk to someone if you are upset or angry or if someone has caused you to be upset or angry.

- Talk with your Coach, safeguarding Officer or a trusted Angling NI official if you have any difficulties or do not understand something. You should never keep secrets about any person who may have caused you harm or has made you feel upset.

5 Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

Angling relies heavily on the time and commitment freely given by volunteers, and without this the opportunities for children and young people to participate in angling would not exist. The procedures outlined below will be adopted by Angling NI for our own purposes and must be followed by organisations and clubs for whom Angling NI acts as an umbrella body.

Angling NI recognises that anyone may have the potential to harm children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Preselection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form (see sample 1). The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and should include a self-disclosure about any criminal record or social services investigation.
- Ensuring that any individual in regulated activity completes the Access NI or Disclosure and Barring Service Application process (proof of identity MUST be provided).
- Two confidential references, ideally including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact. (see sample 2)

Interview and induction;

All employees will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. New volunteers should have a meeting with club officials as part of the assessment process to ensure their suitability to volunteer with children. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- The job/role requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to Angling NI's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policy.
- They should be made aware of the Angling NI wider policies and structures.

Training;

In addition to preselection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is not likely to result in a young person being put at risk or allegations being made against Angling NI members.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.

- Work safely effectively with children.

Angling NI requires:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update/refresher training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from:
 - Sports Coach UK,
 - the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, <https://thecpsu.org.uk/training-events/> and
 - Sport NI's free online safeguarding refresher course <http://www.sportni.net/resources>.

6 Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Angling in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities (police or Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team).

When responding to a disclosure of abuse/harm

- Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent manner though listening to and facilitating the young person to tell about the problem.
- Stay calm and do not show any extreme reaction to what the person is saying is saying and take it seriously
- Permit the person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- Reassure the person that he/she was right to tell and that he/she will be helped.
- Alleviate feeling of guilt and isolation, while passing no judgment on the person against whom the allegation is made.
- False promises should not be made such as saying no-one else will be told.
- Indicate what should happen next, such as informing parents, the Club Safeguarding Officer, or Statutory Authorities, etc.
- Any and all consultations with others should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures.
- Write a detailed account of any discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse, as soon as possible after the discussion has taken place.
- Send the details to the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer
- Do not trivialize child abuse issues or exaggerate what the person has told you.

Angling NI will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, harming a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff or Angling NI member there may be three types of investigation:

- a criminal investigation
- a child protection investigation
- a Angling NI disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

7 Reporting concerns about poor practice or suspected abuse

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue. If the Safeguarding Officer has reasonable grounds for concern then they will seek advice from the Gateway Team

If the allegation is about poor practice by the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chairperson of Angling NI who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Reasonable Grounds for concern

The Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) should always be informed when there are reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse.

The following examples would constitute reasonable grounds for concern:

- A specific indication from the child that he or she was abused (disclosure)
- An account by a person who saw the child being abused
- Evidence, such as an injury or behavior, that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused in another way
- An injury or behavior that is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse e.g. a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, and other indications of abuse and/or dysfunctional behavior;
- Consistent indication, over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

The responsibility of deciding if a child has been abused lies with the HSCT, not with the people working in our Angling clubs. However, all adults have a responsibility to protect children by reporting grounds for concern.

Reporting concerns about suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to Angling NI Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

Angling NI Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team who may involve the police.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the Gateway Team.

If the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chairperson of Angling NI, who will refer the allegation to the Gateway team. (see sample 3 Incident form)

Reporting concerns outside the immediate sporting environment
(e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
- If the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact the Gateway Team or the police immediately.
- The Gateway team will advise the Angling NI Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

Providing information to police or Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team

Information about suspected abuse must be accurate and a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. It should include the following:

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to cause harm/abuse? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or Gateway Team should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

8 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a **need to know** basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Angling NI Safeguarding Officer
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused

- the person making the allegation
- social services/police

Seek social services advice on who should approach the person alleged to have harmed the child (or parents if the person is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

9 Enquiries and further action

Internal enquiries and possible suspension:

The Angling NI Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision following a consultation with statutory authorities about whether any individual accused of abuse/harm should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Angling NI Case Management Group¹ will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Angling NI Board must reach a decision based upon the available information based on the balance of probability threshold about whether the allegation is true or not. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

- The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling , www.bacp.co.uk E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk
- [NSPCC 0800 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- ChildLine 0800 11 11 www.childline.org.uk

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the person the complaint/allegation against and their family involved in the sport.

Allegations of previous abuse:

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of the Angling NI who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the Angling NI will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Gateway Team or the police. This is

¹ The case Management Group will consist of the Angling NI safeguarding officer and two other board members with safeguarding knowledge, experience and training and associations with parties involved in the incident.

because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to child abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

10 Bullying

Bullying behavior is defined as “repeated use of power, by one or more persons, intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others”. (NI Anti-Bullying Forum)

It can take many forms, but the 3 main types are;

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft),
- verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and
- emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group). See Angling NI anti-bullying policy.

11 Guidelines for Reporting Accidents

In the event of an accident, the following procedure will be carried out:

- Fill in two copies of the Accident Form (see sample Angling NI sample) for ALL accidents.
- Make contact with parents/guardians.
- One copy of form to incident book/folder.
- Forward one copy to Safeguarding Officer for record keeping/action required.
- Contact emergency services/GP if required.
- Record in detail all facts surrounding the accident, witnesses, etc.
- Sign off on any action required from senior management officer.

12 Further Useful information can be found at;

- **Angling NI** ~~Link to UAF~~ web site <http://www.anglingni.com/club-support/club-policies/>
- **The Child Protection in Sport Unit**- <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/>
- **Sport NI Safeguarding** - <http://www.sportni.net/about-us/safeguarding/meant-safeguarding/>
- **Clubmark resources** <http://www.sportni.net/clubs-coaching/clubmark-ni/clubmark-ni-resources/>

Useful Contacts

- Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
- Child Protection in Sport Unit www.thecpsu.org.uk
- Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk 020 7730 3300
- Parenting NI (formally Parents Advice Centre) - Freephone 0808 8010 722 www.parentingni.org
- NI Anti-Bullying Forum www.niabf.org.uk

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