



Paralympics Ireland Safeguarding Policy

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Paralympics Ireland Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Paralympics Ireland is an organisation focused on providing “Elite” Irish athletes with disabilities the opportunity to compete at Paralympic Games, World and European Championships. On occasion these athletes may be deemed children (under 18 years of age) or an adult at risk. Paralympics Ireland therefore has a responsibility to have Safeguarding measures in place for these athletes.

(Note: This policy only becomes effective if an athlete under 18 years of age, or an athlete who is deemed a vulnerable adult is nominated for selection to compete at events where entry is coordinated by Paralympics Ireland)

Purpose

To ensure that Paralympics Ireland complies with the *Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport* as produced by Sport Ireland and Sport NI, as well as being consistent with principles of the “*Childrens First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*”. In addition, with being consistent with Safeguarding Ireland and HSE guidance and the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse – National Policy and Procedures’ (2014)*.

Policy Statement

Paralympics Ireland has agreed and adopted the following Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy;

1. To fully commit to the safety and welfare of its team members especially young or vulnerable persons by promoting and prioritising safeguarding.
2. Ensuring the protection, safety and welfare of a child/young person or an adult at risk is of paramount importance.
3. Ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognize, identify, and respond to signs of safeguarding concerns.
4. Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns and support is given to those who raise or disclose a concern. Also, the relevant statutory authorities (Child & Family Agency, HSE, Health & Social Care Trusts, Police Service NI & An Garda Síochána) shall receive full co-operation in any matter relating to the protection, safety and welfare of a child/young person or an adult at risk.
5. Any matter concerning the protection, safety and welfare of a child/young person or an

adult at risk shall be treated with all confidentiality.

6. Implement all policies and practices pertinent for the protection, safety and welfare of a child/young person or an adult at risk and ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
7. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the organisation annually.

(Note: Glossary of terms can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document)

Clauses

Paralympics Ireland affiliate organisations:

1. Each member organisation of Paralympics Ireland must have a written Child Protection or Safeguarding Policy in place and a Safeguarding Officer or equivalent appointed in compliance with the Paralympics Ireland National Federation Agreement.
2. In the case of sports coordinating groups, each member organisation must conform to clause 1 above.

Application

Paralympics Ireland Safeguarding Policy applies to the following, without exemption whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- Paralympics Ireland Board
- Paralympics Ireland Staff – Full-time, Part-time and volunteers.
- Paralympics Ireland Support Staff e.g. Sports & Medical Staff.
- Paralympics Ireland Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Managers and Trainers.
- Paralympics Ireland Classifiers.
- Paralympics Ireland Athletes.
- Any non-athlete participants.

Nomination of team support staff (*in the case of an athlete on the team being under 18 years of age*):

- It is recommended that all Support staff nominees from member organisations for the Irish Paralympic Team and other sport specific teams coordinated by Paralympics Ireland have completed a Basic Children's Awareness Workshop or equivalent as facilitated by the Sport Ireland, Sport NI, their own NF, or Local Sports Partnership. This is applicable to anyone who has regular access to children and young people as part of their work as stated by Children First Act 2015 (ROI). Each nominee must be a current member of the relevant NF. This will be a requirement of attendance for any Paralympics Ireland paid staff in regulated activity (i.e. with a duty to care for athletes under 18).

- Paralympics Ireland will ensure that all Paralympics Ireland appointees, such as sports science service providers etc. satisfy the conditions of this Safeguarding Policy. Paralympics Ireland will work with appointed sport science and medical service providers to ensure consultations/treatments are only carried out on athletes under 18 years in the company of a chaperone.

Policies & Procedures

Paralympics Ireland has several supplementing policies and procedures to coincide with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

- **Consent to Participate:** Athletes under 18 years of age will only be considered for selection or inclusion in Paralympics Ireland activities/events subject to written consent from parents/guardians. The nominating NF or Coordinating Group are responsible for obtaining this consent prior to a nomination to Paralympics Ireland. A copy of this written consent must be submitted to Paralympics Ireland with the nomination documentation. This written consent can be in the form of completion of Schedule 1 of the [Paralympics Ireland Participant Rules](#) as amended from time to time.
- **Accommodation:** Accommodation will be provided for all athletes under 18 years of age at Paralympics Ireland events in accordance with the Paralympics Ireland Accommodation Policy (as amended from time to time). This accommodation policy is guided by the *Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport* as produced by Sport Ireland and Sport NI. The provision of accommodation at Paralympic Games is by the local organising committee. Paralympics Ireland will endeavour to ensure the best practice standards are adhered to and will communicate these to organizing committee when required.
- **Paralympics Ireland Staff (Full time/Part-time) and Volunteer Personnel:** Paralympics Ireland is fully committed that all necessary steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people or vulnerable adults in any capacity within the organization. This applies to those currently working in roles and positions, in a paid or unpaid capacity and any personnel who may be recruited in either a paid or unpaid position in the future.
- **Recruitment & Selection of Paralympics Ireland Personnel:** Paralympics Ireland has a duty of care to have a safe and efficient recruitment process in place in respect to all roles within the organization. Reference checking, interviewing, relevant experience and qualifications and the completion of the Garda Vetting process are all important components of Paralympics Ireland's recruitment and selection process.

- **Garda Vetting:** Relevant persons within Paralympics Ireland who undertake certain work or activities relating to children or vulnerable persons will be subject to the process of vetting by the Garda Central Vetting Bureau in accordance with The Schedule 1 Act which outlines relevant work and activities. In order to establish whether they have any criminal convictions or other past behaviour that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children or young people. Vetting will last for 3 years before the person will need to be re-vetted.
- **Code of Conduct:** Paralympics Ireland have developed a code of conduct for all participants, including athletes, officials, volunteers and parents of under 18 representatives which are included as an appendix to the Participant Rules. Paralympics Ireland expects all those representing Paralympics Ireland to adhere to these codes of conduct when representing Paralympics Ireland and their country. The gravity of any breach will be reflected in the sanction imposed (if any) which can include expulsion from Paralympics Ireland Events and the Paralympic Games for an Official, the Participant and/or their guardian/parent.

Reporting Procedures

There are three potential reporting routes within Paralympics Ireland policies for safeguarding concerns/disclosures. These are as follows.

- (A) For those under the age of 18 years, such safeguarding issues will be addressed in line with Paralympics Ireland ‘Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Policy’. This is done in consultation with The Child and Family Agency TULSA.
- (B) For those who are categorised as a vulnerable adult/adult at risk, such safeguarding issues will be addressed in line with Paralympics Ireland ‘Recognising and Reporting Abuse of Vulnerable Adults/Adults at Risk Policy’. This is done in line with the HSE.
- (C) For safeguarding issues which do not fall into the above two categories, Paralympics Ireland will engage its ‘Complaints and Disciplinary Policy’.

Designated Safeguarding Officer/Person Details

Paralympics Ireland selected and appointed a Designated Safeguarding Officer who will:

- Act as a source of advice on child protection and safeguarding matters.
- Be accessible to all children, young people, vulnerable adults and personnel involved with Paralympics Ireland.
- Act in the strictest confidence with any disclosures made and follow the necessary procedures for dealing with the disclosures.
- Liaise with the Child and Family Agency (TULSA) and An Garda Síochána, the HSE, and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of abuse.

The person designated shall ensure that they are knowledgeable with regards to safeguarding and undertakes any training considered necessary to keep updated with new developments. The Designated Safeguarding Person for Paralympics Ireland is; **Tara Evans**

She may be contacted at (01) 6251175 or at tara@paralympics.ie
Emergency no: 087 202 5507

Mandated Person Details

The mandated person has two main obligations under the Children First Act 2015;

- To report harm of children, above a defined threshold, to TULSA
- To assist TULSA, if requested, in assessing a concern which has been the subject of a mandated report

The mandated person is required to report any knowledge, belief or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or at risk of being harmed. The Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse, and covers single and multiple instances. The Mandated Person for Paralympics Ireland is; **Tara Evans**

She may be contacted at (01) 6251175 or at tara@paralympics.ie
Emergency no: 087 202 5507

Note:

- **Please see Paralympics Ireland Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Policy for reporting procedure details.**
- **Please see Paralympics Ireland Recognising and Reporting Abuse of Vulnerable Adults Policy for reporting procedure details.**

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

Safeguarding or Child Protection: The term child protection has been extended to safeguarding as it reflects the wider responsibility for health safety and prevention as well as just protection from abuse. It may be defined as: Doing everything possible to minimize the risk of harm to children and young people.

Safeguarding is about being proactive and putting measures in place in advance of any contact with children to ensure that children are going to be kept safe. This could include:

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

Children & Young People (Child/Juvenile/Junior/Underage): A child or young person is defined by the law in both jurisdictions as a person under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this document the term children & young people applies to all under the age of 18.

Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults: Refers to the protection of those who may be vulnerable all forms of abuse by persons, organisations and institutions.

Vulnerable Adult: Is an adult who may be restricted in capacity to guard himself / herself against harm or exploitation or to report such harm or exploitation. The restriction of capacity may arise as a result of physical or intellectual impairment vulnerability.

Parent/guardian: For the purposes of this document when referring to parent/guardian the term is used to include parents, legal guardians, and/or carer.

Coach/Trainer: A coach is a person who assists the young participant to develop his or her skills and abilities in a progressive way.

Manager: A manager is an individual who takes overall responsibility for a team or a group of sports people and who will often have a direct input into the nature and organization of the activity itself.

A disclosure is defined as a specific allegation of abuse. It may or may not be made against a named individual.

A suspicion is when concern is expressed about abuse that may have taken place or concern that abuse may take place.

Designated Person/Officer: Is the person who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities and acts as a resource with organisations for children. This person will also be responsible for dealing with any course about protection of young people.

Mandated Person is a person named under schedule 2 of Children First Act 2015 (ROI). They have a legal responsibility to report concerns or allegations that reach or exceed the threshold of harm of abuse to the TULSA.

Statutory Authorities The authorities who promote the protection and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults who have the responsibility for the investigation and/or validation of suspected child abuse, i.e., in the ROI it is An Garda Síochána, the Child and Family Agency (TULSA) and the HSE, and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).