



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 4

Date formally agreed by Paralympics Ireland Board: 18th March 2014

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 minimise 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.

Vulnerable Adult: A vulnerable adult is defined as a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation

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.

Administrator: While an administrator may not actively be involved in children's sport, they may be involved in organising activities and events.

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/ Children's Officers: 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 Tusla.

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 and the Child and Family Agency (TULSA), and in NI it is the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

Paralympics Ireland Safeguarding Policy – Introductory Statement

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

Overview:

Paralympics Ireland is an organisation focused on providing “Elite” Irish athletes with disabilities the opportunity to compete at Paralympic Games, World and European Championships. Occasionally, an elite athlete comes to the fore in Ireland who happens to be under 18 years of age. Paralympics Ireland therefore has a responsibility to have Safeguarding measures in place for these athletes.

Purpose:

To ensure that Paralympics Ireland complies with the *Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport (“The Code”)* 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 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2011)*

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 person by promoting and prioritising safeguarding.*
- 2. Ensure the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person 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, Health & Social Care Trusts, Police Service NI & An Garda Síochána) shall receive full so-operation in any matter relating to the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person.*
- 5. Any matter concerning the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person shall be treated with all confidentiality.*
- 6. Implement all policies and practices pertinent for the protection, safety and welfare of a child or young person and ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.*
- 7. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the organisation annually.*

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.

Date of next Policy Review: 01/11/2021

1 - PREAMBLE

1.1 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 ISC, SportNI, their own NGB, or Local Sports Partnership. Each nominee must be a current member of the relevant NGB. As a minimum at least one member of the support staff team must have completed such a workshop. 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.

1.2 Types and Recognition of Abuse

- **Definition of 'physical abuse':** Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

- **Definition of ‘neglect’:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).
- **Definition of ‘sexual abuse’:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Definition of ‘emotional abuse’:** Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent/carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child’s developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child’s development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

2 - POLICIES

Paralympics Ireland has a number of supplementing policies to coincide with the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

2.1 *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 NGB 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 (<http://bit.ly/zlaxeR>)

- 2.2 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 (<http://bit.ly/wVlkkA>) The provision of accommodation at Paralympic Games is by the local organising committee. Where possible, Paralympics Ireland will attempt to fully satisfy “The Code”, however, this may not be possible due to the limitations of accommodation space provided to Paralympics Ireland by the local organising committee, but Paralympics Ireland will endeavor to ensure the best practice standards are adhered to and will communicate these to organizing committee when required.
- 2.3 Garda Vetting:** All nominees must complete the Paralympics Ireland Garda Vetting Application Form prior to nomination or at the time of nomination. Any appointments made are at all times provisional and subject to satisfactory completion of the Garda Vetting process in accordance *Paralympics Ireland’s Garda Vetting Policy* as amended from time to time (<http://bit.ly/xIUCu1>)

3 - PERSONNEL

3.1 Paralympics Ireland Staff- Full time/Part-time and volunteers 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.

3.2 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 (ref; 3.3) process are all important components of Paralympics Irelands recruitment and selection process.

3.3 Garda Vetting: Each person involved with Paralympics Ireland ie staff, volunteers, team managers, support staff etc. will be subject to the process of vetting by the Garda Central Vetting Unit 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 4 years before the person will need to be re-vetted.

4 - PREVENTION

4.1 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* (<http://bit.ly/zlaxeR>) 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.

5 - PROTECTION

5.1 Designated Safeguarding Officer: 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 and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of child 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:

Colin Armstrong

He may be contacted at (01) 6251175 or at colin@paralympics.ie
Emergency no: (01) 6251180

5.2 Mandated Person(s): The mandated persons has two main obligations under the Children First Act 2015

- To report harm of children, above a defined threshold, to Tusla
- To assist Tusla, 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:

Colin Armstrong

He may be contacted at (01) 6251175 or at colin@paralympics.ie
Emergency no: (01) 6251180

6 – REPORTING PROCEDURES

6.1 Recognition, Responding and Reporting Abuse: Signs of abuse can be physical, behavioural or developmental. A cluster or pattern of signs is the most reliable indicator of abuse. Indicators should be noted. It is important, however, to realise that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor.

Sample Category Indicators

ABUSE	Physical	Behavioural
Physical	Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas Bites, burns and scalds	Becoming withdrawn or aggressive Reluctance to change clothing
Emotional	Drop in performance Crying	Regressive behaviour Excessive clinginess
Neglect	Weight loss Untreated fractures	Changes in attendance Reluctance to go home
Sexual	Torn or bloodstained clothing Inappropriate sexual awareness behaviour or language	Distrustful of adults Sudden drop in performance

The above is only a sample list and is not exhaustive

6.2 Grounds for Concern: Consider the possibility of abuse if there are reasonable grounds for concern. Reasonable grounds for concern exist when there is:

- a specific indication from a young person or vulnerable adult that s/he has

- been abused
- an account by a person who saw the young person being abused
 - evidence, such as an injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way
 - an injury or behaviour which 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. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
 - consistent indication, over a period of time, that a young person is suffering from emotional or physical neglect

6.3 Responding to Disclosures: If a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the young person to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing them about details of what happened

- stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the young person is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the young person is saying seriously
- understand that the young person has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be as positive as possible so that they may be less concerned if talking to those involved in any further investigation
- be honest with the young person/vulnerable adult and tell them that it is not possible that keep information a secret
- make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made
- not question the young person/vulnerable adult unless the nature of what s/he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that”
- check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report to statutory agencies unless doing so would endanger the young person/vulnerable adult or compromise any further investigation
- give the young person/vulnerable adult some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, Child and Family Agency (TULSA in ROI), Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT in NI) or depending on the location at the time and nature of the disclosure the statutory agencies of that country. It should be kept in mind that the young person/vulnerable adult may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage.
- carefully record the details in writing
- pass on this information to the Paralympics Ireland Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible
- reassure the young person/vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Never

- Question unless for clarification
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make/pass a judgment on alleged abuser
- Take sole responsibility, consult the designated safeguarding at the time officer so you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself.

6.4 Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Abuse:

The following steps should be taken in reporting abuse to the statutory authorities:

- (a) observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information

- (b) report the matter as soon as possible to the Paralympics Ireland Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) with responsibility for reporting abuse. If the DSO has reasonable grounds for believing that the young person/vulnerable adult has been abused or is at risk of abuse, s/he will make a report to the TULSA/HSCT or organisation in that jurisdiction who has statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual abuse. National Governing Body DSO should be informed as soon as possible that there is a safeguarding issue to enable them to take responsibility for dealing with the matter or to support the person and monitor the situation
- (c) in cases of emergency, where the young person/vulnerable adult appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the DSO is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities
- (d) if the DSO is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist s/he can informally consult with the local statutory agencies, (Paralympics Ireland should ensure they have out of hours contact numbers for training event they are organising within Ireland for their local area).S/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

6.5 Guidelines about responding to an allegation about a staff member/volunteer:

Should Paralympics Ireland become aware of an allegation of abuse of a child or children by a coach/volunteer during the execution of that coaches/volunteers duties, the Designated Safeguarding Officer, following consultation with statutory services will privately inform the coach/volunteer of the following:

- the fact that the allegation has been made against him/her;
- the nature of the allegation.

The coach/volunteer should be afforded an opportunity to respond following advice from statutory services. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will note the response and pass on this information when making the formal report to the relevant authority.

The report to the relevant authority should contain observations, dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Safeguarding Officer is unable to contact a duty social worker, the PSNI or Garda (police authority in a particular country) shall be contacted.

Under no circumstances will a young person be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities

All subsequent actions following an allegation of abuse against a coach/volunteer will be taken in consultation with the TULSA, HSCT, PSNI and An Garda Síochána. An immediate meeting will be sought with these agencies for this purpose. The Paralympics Ireland Designated Safeguarding Officer is also available to provide support and advice.

Under Paralympics Ireland rules, any coach/volunteer/manager who is the subject of a statutory investigation into alleged child abuse, is required to stand down from all Paralympics Ireland activities until the investigation is completed. Therefore, the Paralympics Ireland Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed immediately of any formal notification to the Statutory Authorities, by another party.

When a person is asked to stand down it should be made clear that it is only a precautionary measure in keeping with standard procedures/guidelines and will not prejudice any later disciplinary proceedings.

The coach/volunteer concerned should be advised that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory requirements. He or she should be treated with respect and fairness, and also be assured that all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

Paralympics Ireland will carefully consider the outcome of the statutory investigation and will then assess if there are any outstanding disciplinary issues in relation to their internal rules or infringements of the Paralympics Ireland best practice guidelines. It must be remembered that the fact that the alleged abuser has not been prosecuted or been found guilty does not mean that they are appropriate to work with young people in the future.

Internal Paralympics Ireland disciplinary proceedings can only be initiated after the Statutory Authorities have completed theirs.

A DSO reporting suspected or actual abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report, unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine any further investigation. The Paralympics Ireland DSO is **Colin Armstrong** and can be contacted if you have any concerns by;

Tel: 01-6251175

Email: colin@paralympics.ie

For Northern Ireland Only

Paralympics Ireland are aware of their duty under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) 2007 Order to refer information to the Disclosure and Barrign Service (DBS). In all cases there are two conditions, both must be met to trigger a referral to the DBS by a regulated activity provider. A referral must be made to the DBS when a regulated activity provider, such as an employer or volunteer coordinator:

- a. withdraws permission for an individual to engage in *regulated activity*, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not *regulated activity*; because
- b. they think that the individual has:
- engaged in *relevant conduct*;
 - satisfied the *Harm Test*; or
 - received a caution or conviction for a *relevant offence*.

An employer or voluntary club/organization is breaking the law if they don't refer someone on the DBS for any of the above reasons. If you want help referring someone to the DBS, contact the DBS referrals helpline.

If both conditions have been met the information must be referred to the DBS. The referral should be made to the DBS when the regulated activity provider has gathered sufficient evidence as part of their investigations to support their reasons for withdrawing permission to engage in *regulated* and in following good practice, consulted with their Health and Social Care if appropriate.

USEFUL CONTACTS

<p>Eastern Region Health Services Executive East Coast Area Area 1, Dun Laoghaire, 01 2808403 Area 2, Clonskeagh, 01 2680320/0333 Area 10, Wicklow, 0404 60800 Bray, 01 2744100</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Eastern Region Health Services Executive Northern Area Area 6, Dublin 11, 01 8567704 Area 7 North, Dublin 1, 01 8014620 Area 8, Dublin 5, 01 8164200</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>
<p>Eastern Region Health Services Executive East Coast Area Area 1, Dun Laoghaire, 01 2808403 Area 2, Clonskeagh, 01 2680320/0333 Area 10, Wicklow, 0404 60800 Bray, 01 2744100</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Health Services Executive - Southern Area Community Care Area South Lee, Cork - 021 4923001 North Lee, Cork - 021 4927055 North Cork, Mallow - 022 30200 West Cork, Skibbereen - 028 40580 Kerry, Tralee - 066 7184887</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>
<p>Eastern Region Health Services Executive South Western Area Dublin South City District, D2, 01 6486555 Dublin South West District, D24, 01 4520666 Dublin West District, Dublin 10, 01 6206387 Kildare/West Wicklow District Naas, 045 882400 Athy, 059 8633535 Celbridge, 01 6303155</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Health Services Executive - South-Eastern Community Care Area Carlow - 0599136588/7 Kilkenny - 056 7784782 Waterford - 051 842827 Wexford - 053 23522 Ex 222 South Tipperary - 052 77306 / 02</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>
<p>Health Services Executive - Mid-Western Community Care Area Limerick East - 061 483711 Limerick West - 061 483996 Clare - 065 6863907/08 North Tipperary, Nenagh - 067 41934 North Tipperary, Thurles - 0504 23211</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Health Services Executive - North-Western Community Care Area Sligo/Leitrim - 071 9155133 Donegal - 074 9123739</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>
<p>Health Service Executive - Western Community Care Area Galway - 091 546325/546366 Mayo - 094 9042283 / 9042284 Roscommon - 090 6637528/29</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Health Service Executive - Midland Area Community Care Area Longford/Westmeath: Athlone - 0906483106 Longford - 04350584 Laois/Offaly: Offaly - 0506 22488 Laois - 0502 92567/8</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>

<p>Health Services Executive - North-Eastern Community Care Area Cavan - 049 4377305 / 06 Monaghan, 047 30426 /30427 Louth - Drogheda, 041 9833163 Louth - Dundalk, 042 9392220 Meath - Navan, 046 9078830</p> <p>Ask for Duty Social Worker</p>	<p>Sport Ireland, The Courtyard, Sport Ireland Campus, Snugborough Road, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, D15 PNON</p> <p>Tel No. +353 1 8608800</p>
<p>Child Protection in Sport Unit, NSPCC, Jennymount Business Park North Derby Street Belfast BT 15 3HN 02890 351135 www.thecpsu.org.uk NSPCC Helpline 0808-8005000 (Freephone from UK) Child Line (UK) 0800 1111</p>	<p>Sports Council Northern Ireland House of Sport Upper Malone Road Belfast BT9 5LA Tel No. 02890 381222</p>
<p>ISPCC 20 Molesworth Street Dublin 2 01 6794944 / ispcc@ispcc.ie ISPCC Childline 1800 666666 (Freephone)</p>	