

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

CHILDREN

The purpose and scope of this policy is to protect children and young people who volunteer with The Hygiene Bank Ireland. This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of The Hygiene Bank Ireland as a volunteer.

Child welfare and protection policy is based on a legal framework provided primarily by the Child Care Act 1991 and the Children First Act 2015.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
 - All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or membership to the Traveller community have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
 - Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Abuse can look like:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Financial
- Organisational/Institutional
- Cyber
- Neglect

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Reporting and actioning concerns as soon as possible when they occur.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for children and young people, adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for volunteers.
- The DSO can make a report to Tusla if any safeguarding concerns that arise.

- Providing effective management for volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.
- Providing information to all volunteers and training where necessary to make sure all volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibility.
- By carrying out a risk assessment to identify any risks that might be posed to children and young people.
- Reporting and actioning concerns as soon as possible when they occur.
- Recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary Garda Vetting checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

Designated Safeguarding Officer: Rosie McDonagh

All volunteers should contact **Rosie McDonagh** for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding children. A log of the concern must be kept.

The DSO will be responsible to make decisions about notifying the relevant authorities if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

ADULTS

Aims

The Hygiene Bank Ireland operates via a network of volunteers to collect donated products to those experiencing hygiene poverty, via a third part distributor. The Hygiene Bank Ireland volunteers will not come into contact with receivers of goods, however, The Hygiene Bank Ireland acknowledges that volunteers may be vulnerable adults and we are committed to ensuring that all volunteers understand the meaning and implications of vulnerable adults. The Hygiene Bank will not tolerate the abuse of adults in any of its forms and is committed to safeguarding adults with care and support needs from harm.

This policy outlines the steps The Hygiene Bank Ireland will make to safeguard an adult with care and support needs if they are deemed to be at risk. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of The Hygiene Bank Ireland in working together with other professionals and agencies in promoting the adult's welfare and safeguarding them from abuse and neglect.

This policy is intended to support volunteers working within The Hygiene Bank Ireland to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding adults. All volunteers are expected to follow this policy.

The key objectives of this policy are for all volunteers of The Hygiene Bank Ireland to:

- Have an overview of adult safeguarding
- Be clear about their responsibility to safeguard adults
- Ensure the necessary actions are taken where an adult with care and support needs is deemed to be at risk

This policy is based on:

- Safeguarding Ireland
- HSE Safeguarding policies
- Charity Regulator advice

The Hygiene Bank Ireland will not tolerate the abuse of adults in the organisation and volunteers should be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

What is Safeguarding adults?

“Safeguarding means living safely, free from abuse or neglect. It means people’s choices are heard and respected”- Safeguarding Ireland.

All adults have the right to be safe and live a life free from abuse.

A vulnerable adult, as defined by National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012–2016 is:

“a person, other than a child, who-

(a) Is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,

(b) Has an intellectual disability,

(c) Is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age,

(d) Or has a physical disability,

Which is of such a nature or degree-

(i) As to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or

(ii) That results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing”

As set out in the HSE National Policy and Procedures (2014), the following principles are critical to the safeguarding of vulnerable persons (adults) from abuse:

- Human Rights
- Person Centeredness
- Advocacy
- Confidentiality
- Empowerment
- Collaboration

An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm but maybe unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

Types of Abuse:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Financial
- Organisational/Institutional
- Cyber
- Neglect

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more. Volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

The Hygiene Bank Ireland will not tolerate the abuse of adults and volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved in their decisions and informed consent is obtained. The Hygiene Bank Ireland should ensure that the safeguarding action agreed is the least intrusive response to the risk. The Hygiene Bank Ireland should be transparent and accountable in delivering safeguarding actions.

We will seek to keep vulnerable adults safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for vulnerable adults, adopting safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for volunteers
- The DSO can make a report to the HSE if any safeguarding concerns that arise.
- Providing effective management for volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Providing information to all volunteers and training where necessary to make sure all volunteers are aware of their safeguarding responsibility.
- By carrying out a risk assessment to identify any risks that might be posed to children and young people.
- Reporting and actioning concerns as soon as possible when they occur.
- Recruiting and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary Garda Vetting checks are made.
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.
- Using our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving vulnerable adults and carers appropriately.
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against volunteers appropriately.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for vulnerable adults and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.

The named responsible person for safeguarding duties for The Hygiene Bank Ireland is Rosie McDonagh

All volunteers should contact **Rosie McDonagh** for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding adults. A log of the concern must be kept.

The DSO will be responsible to make decisions about notifying the relevant authorities if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.

The DSO will also ensure that the safeguarding adults policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for volunteers. (if relevant to your organisation).

What should I do if I am concerned?

Volunteers at The Hygiene Bank Ireland who have any child or adult safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond
 - Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
 - Get brief details about what has happened and what the child or adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
 - Seek consent from the child or adult to take action and to report the concern. Never promise them that you will keep their concern a secret.
 - Consider that the child or adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.
2. Report
 - Any concerns should be reported to the DSO
3. Record
 - A detailed log will be kept by The Hygiene Bank Ireland of any safeguarding concerns. The log will be kept by the designated safeguarding lead and considered as part of the general meetings.
 - As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed.
 - Records will be kept secure and confidential via on-line password access only.
4. Refer
 - In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead should take into account:
 - (1) the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
 - (2) whether the adult has mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety
 - (3) the safety or wellbeing of children or other adults with care and support needs
 - (4) whether there is a person in a position of trust involved
 - (5) whether a crime has been committed

- This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:
 - (1) The Gardai if a crime has been committed and/or
 - (2) [Children First](#) or The HSE
 - (3) Relevant regulatory bodies such as the [Charities Regulator](#)
 - (4) Family/relatives as appropriate

The designated safeguarding lead should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring.

What are your roles and responsibilities?

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. All volunteers at The Hygiene Bank Ireland are expected to report any concerns to the named person for safeguarding. If the allegation is against the safeguarding lead, seek advice from Tulsa or the HSE.

The designated safeguarding adults lead should be responsible for providing acknowledgement of the referral and brief feedback to the person raising the original concern. Feedback should be given in a way that will not make the situation worse or breach the Data Protection Act. If the Gardai are involved, they should be consulted prior to giving feedback to the referrer to ensure any criminal investigation is not affected.

The local authority will decide on who will lead on a safeguarding enquiry should it progress to that stage. The named organisation should not conduct its own safeguarding enquiry unless instructed to do so by the local authority.

Volunteers should ensure that the adult with care and support needs is involved at all stages of their safeguarding enquiry ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted.

Confidentiality and information sharing

The Hygiene Bank expects all volunteers to maintain **confidentiality** at all times. In line with GDPR, The Hygiene Bank does not share information if not required.

It should however be noted that information should be shared with the appropriate authorities if a child or adult is deemed to be at risk of immediate harm. Sharing the right information, at the right time, with the right people can make all the difference to preventing harm.

The Hygiene Bank Ireland ensures that all volunteers receive a copy of this policy.