

Exodus Safeguarding Policy



EXODUS

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This Policy relates to both Exodus Trust (Northern Ireland registered charity) and Exodus Ministries (Republic of Ireland registered charity). Exodus Trust is a company registered in Northern Ireland (Company No. NI065788) and a registered charity (Charity No. NIC102463), registered office: 29 Railway Street, Lisburn, BT28 1XP

Exodus Safeguarding Statement

We believe that every individual is made in the image of God and is of unique and significant value; worthy of the highest standards of care.

As staff and volunteers, it is both our delight and our duty to create a safe & enjoyable environment for all children & young people we serve. Therefore, we are committed to practice that promotes their welfare & wellbeing, & protects them from harm.

Together we will endeavour to do this by:

1) Adopting and maintaining a Safeguarding Policy

We recognise that safeguarding is a **shared responsibility** that we each play a role in. This policy will seek to ensure that Exodus provides a safe environment for every child or young person we connect with and serve, alongside **effective procedures** for dealing with any concerns or disclosures should they arise.

2) Promoting excellence in safeguarding practice and environments

We will **clearly communicate good safeguarding practice** with young people, parents, volunteers, trustees and staff and set a culture where individuals are valued and cared for.

3) Recruiting well

We will be **rigorous in the safe recruitment and selection** of staff and volunteers through appropriate job descriptions, applications, referencing, interviews, criminal record checks and probationary periods.

4) Providing appropriate training

We will ensure that staff and volunteers receive **adequate and appropriate training** for their role.

5) Providing effective oversight and support to deliver on expectations

We will **maintain structures of supervision and accountability** for safeguarding from board level through to staff and volunteer management.

6) Giving clear procedures for recognising and dealing with concerns

We will ensure that everyone working with young people in a supervisory role **knows how to recognise different forms of abuse** and is **clear on our expectations** for dealing with incidents, concerns and disclosures including: responding, recording, reporting, involving statutory agencies and following up.

Policy Written By:	Jose Cummings & Helen McKay	Policy Reviewed On:	23rd October 2025
Approved By:	Exodus Trustees	Effective From:	23rd October 2025
For the Attention of and Action By:	Members of the board of trustees, staff, interns, volunteers; children and young people, parents, carers and visitors.		
Review Due on:	November 2027		
Designated Officers	Jose Cummings (Lead) jose@exodusonline.org.uk 02892 661220 Helen McKay (Deputy) helen@exodusonline.org.uk 02892 661220	Jo McCormick (Deputy; Summer Support) jo@exodusonline.org.uk	Andy Lamberton (Deputy; Summer Support) andy@exodusonline.org.uk

Rationale, Roles and Responsibilities

We recognise that safeguarding is a shared responsibility that we each play a role in. This policy will seek to ensure Exodus provides a safe environment for every child or young person we connect with and serve, alongside effective procedures for dealing with any concerns or disclosures should they arise.

Policy Basis

This policy builds on and incorporates legislation, government expectations and other best practice guides for safeguarding including:

- [The Children \(NI\) Order 1995](#)
- [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(NI\) Order 2007](#) (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)
- [SBNI Child Safeguarding: Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2020-2023](#)
- [ACCESSNI Checks: Working with children in the charity/voluntary sector](#)
- [No Harm Done: Recognising and responding to self-harm](#)
- [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Act 2012](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Children Services Co-Operation Act \(NI\) 2015](#)
- [Safeguarding Board \(Northern Ireland\) Act 2011](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe: Our Duty To Care \(Volunteer NOW; Department Of Health\)](#)
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To be reviewed every two years and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Policy and supporting materials available at: www.exodusonline.org.uk/safeguarding

For our activities, that this Safeguarding Policy covers, see:

<https://www.exodusonline.org.uk/what-we-do-for-young-people>

Board of Trustees

The promotion and oversight of excellence in safeguarding within Exodus by ensuring adherence to and updating of this policy in line with current legislation and best practice.

Peter Lynas will act as the Lead Trustee for Safeguarding.

Designated Safeguarding Officers (Lead and Deputies)

To lead the key aspects in safeguarding with Exodus as below.

Lead Safeguarding Officer is responsible for:

- The **overall delivery** of Safeguarding in Exodus
- **Advising** the Designated Safeguarding Officers on recommended actions
- **Advising** the trustees and wider organisation of safeguarding matters, staying knowledgeable about safeguarding issues and undertaking training relevant to the role.

Deputy Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:

- **Providing** the primary point of first contact for incidents or concerns
- **Promoting** safeguarding principles and practice within Exodus.
- **Responding** to incidents or concerns and ensuring appropriate response, record keeping and reporting
- **Reporting to the Lead Officer** and to the **Operations Manager** (also a DSO)
- **Liaising** with the local Gateway team and other agencies, as appropriate (with the support of the Lead Officer)

Operations Manager

To manage key safeguarding processes including:

- **Completion** of necessary checks and references during recruitment.
- Ensuring appropriate **training** for all staff and volunteers.
- Ensuring that all concerns **of abuse** are **recorded** and **followed up** by DSOs; escalating them to Gateway/PSNI where necessary
- Reviewing **Live Cases of Abuse** concerns with the Lead Officer monthly (or as a UNOCINI progresses)
- Ensuring that all concerns of **wellbeing** are followed up by Area Leaders
- **Maintaining a record** of safeguarding training.
- **Oversight** of relevant **Risk Assessments**
- **Confidential storage** of paperwork relating to safeguarding incidents or concerns and other accident/incident forms.

Area Leader Staff Members

To manage concerns over local young people, including:

- **Responding** to concerns of **wellbeing** for young people in their region, offering advice and support for the reporting person
- **Recording** in their own log any concerns reported to them
- **Escalating** any concerns of wellbeing to the Designated Officer should they be more appropriately raised as concerns of abuse.

All Staff and Volunteers

Anyone with supervising responsibility of a young person including but not limited to: employed staff, interns, team leaders, mentors and other supervisors.

To deliver excellence in safeguarding by:

- **Promoting** the welfare of all young people in your care.
- **Preventing** harm by keeping in line with the good practice guidelines
- **Protecting** young people who may be at risk from harm by following the necessary responding steps.
- **Ensuring** displays are up to date with safeguarding officer details visible in all venues and at all events.

Partners and Independent Organisations

Placement Hosts

- Commitment to **ensure the safety and well being** of all young people they receive through Exodus **in line with this policy**.
- Placement Hosts agree in writing that they agree to work within the policy.

Team Partners such as churches and schools

- **Ensuring an appropriate standard of care** for young people and following their **internal procedures** during team preparation. (**Exodus can provide safeguarding support** or advice to partners.)
- Abiding by the **code of conduct set out by this policy** while serving on placement.
- Safeguarding concerns in a partner team while on placement should be highlighted with the Safeguarding Officer within Exodus but it may be that the process is managed by the partner organisation (dependent on the nature of the concern).

Other Partnerships

- For other **events or initiatives** organised in partnership, Exodus should ensure:
 - The partners have a **suitable commitment** to safeguarding.
 - There is clarity on **where the responsibility for safeguarding** lies.
 - Where Exodus is responsible, the One Matters poster is visibly displayed during the event/initiative.

Independent Organisations using the Residential Centre or Renting the Venue

- Ensuring an **appropriate standard of care** for young people and following any localised health and safety procedures.
- Consideration should be given by Exodus to the risk posed by any shared usage of buildings or centres.
- Exodus ensures that a record of sleeping arrangements are kept by all groups using the residential centre.

Recruitment

We will seek to ensure safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers through appropriate job descriptions, applications, referencing, interviews, criminal record checks and probationary periods.

The following steps will be applied to the recruitment of all individuals with supervising responsibility for young people in Exodus (including all who constitute a 'Relevant Person' in ROI).

1. Description:

- A **clear role description** indicating the nature of the work, the expectations for the applicant and whether the post constitutes a regulated activity and will require an ACCESSNI or Garda vetting check.

2. Application - To include:

- Link to **safeguarding policy**
- **Assurance of confidentiality**
- **Declaration** of previous criminal history and that there is no known reason why they would not be suitable to work with children or young people.
- **Consent** for ACCESS NI / Garda Vetting check as required.
- **Request for 2 references** at least one of whom has knowledge of previous contact or work with young people.

3. Interview - Appropriate to the role:

- With **at least 2 representatives** from Exodus.
- **Assessment of appropriateness** for the role including the individual's ability to meet the safeguarding expectations of Exodus.
- A **check of ID** in line with ACCESSNI / Garda Vetting requirements. (The Access NI check may now be completed online).

4. References:

- References should be sought **in writing** from at least 2 people aged 21+ who are not family members or Exodus staff and ideally at least one who has first hand knowledge of the individual's previous contact or work with young people.
- References should **specifically ask for confirmation that there are no concerns** about the individual working with children or young people.

5. Vetting:

- All those seeking to work under **Exodus Trust (UK/ Northern Ireland)** whose work is likely to include **regulated activities** are required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure and barred list check from ACCESSNI.
 - **Regulated Activities relevant to Exodus are defined as:**
Unsupervised activities: Regularly teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice/guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.
 - o Regular means carried out by the same person **frequently** (once a week or more often) or on four or more days in a 30 day period or overnight.
 - o The day-to-day **line manager/supervisor** of an individual in regulated activity is also in regulated activity.
 - Exodus will **not** involve a barred person in a regulated activity.

- All those seeking to work under **Exodus Ministries (ROI)** whose work is likely to include **relevant work or activities (as defined by the Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012)** are subject to Garda Vetting.
 - **Relevant Work/Activities in relation to Exodus are as below:**
 - Any work or activity as a minister or priest or any other person engaged in the advancement of any religious beliefs
 - Any work or activity which consists of the provision of advice, guidance or developmental services (including by means of electronic interactive communications) to children unless the provision of the advice, guidance or developmental service is merely incidental to the provision of those services to persons who are not children.
 - Any work or activity which consists of care or supervision of children unless the care or supervision is merely incidental to the care or supervision of persons who are not children.

For more Guidance visit:

- [ACCESSNI Checks: Working with children in the charity/voluntary sector](#)
- [GARDA Vetting Procedure: NATIONAL VETTING BUREAU \(CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS\) ACT 2012](#)

6. Approval

- The local area leader or a member of the UK/ Ireland leadership team **signs off on all appointments** for individuals working with Under 18s.

Additional Recruitment Considerations

Partners

- Partners (such as team hosts) who will have oversight or involvement in work with under 18s will be required to confirm their commitment **in writing** to work according to Exodus Safeguarding Policies and procedures.
- The confirmation of this commitment will be **renewed at least every three years**.

Renewal

- Individuals are required to apply for **enhanced** disclosure and barred list checks (or Garda Vetting in Republic Of Ireland) during recruitment and then:
 - **Every four years after** For Staff
 - **Every two years after** All Others
- Trustees are required to apply for **enhanced** disclosure (although not Barred List checks as they are non youth facing) **every four years**. ROI Domiciled trustees are not required to take a Garda Vetting check unless they become youth facing (as advised by the umbrella body, NYCI).
- References are only required for **new applicants** or where there is a **significant increase in responsibility** such as becoming an intern or staff member having previously volunteered as a leader or mentor.

Training, Management & Oversight

We will ensure that staff and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate training for their role. We will maintain structures of supervision and accountability for safeguarding from board level through to staff and volunteer management.

Trustees

- Potential Trustees of Exodus Trust are required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure from ACCESSNI. Potential Trustees of Exodus Ireland (living in the Republic of Ireland) are not required to be Garda Vetted as they are not youth facing, as per Garda Vetting guidelines. If they should become youth facing, they will undergo a Garda Vetting process. In the same way, trustees who move into a youth facing role in Northern Ireland will have a further Access NI check done, to include the Barred Lists check.
- Safeguarding will appear as a standing item **on all trustee meetings** and include a summary of incidents arising or ongoing.
- Lead Trustee for Safeguarding to be **involved in all significant safeguarding incidents or issues as they arise**.

Induction

All staff and volunteers will receive adequate induction to prepare them for their new role within Exodus. This will cover:

- Overview of Exodus - vision, history, values, personnel and structures.
- The Role & relevant expectations **including safeguarding**
- Support structures and processes.
- Practical Information & Systems e.g. claiming expenses.

Probation

- All new staff will have to complete a **satisfactory probationary period** of at least 6 months before a full contract is confirmed. Completion of this will include a review.
- New volunteers will be viewed as being in an **informal trial** period for their first 2 months.

Training

- All staff and volunteers in a supervisory role **will receive particular skills and safeguarding training appropriate to their job or role**. This should include:
 - o An awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues
 - o Recognising the possibility of abuse
 - o Responding to and reporting concerns, disclosures or allegations,
 - o Dealing with issues such as confidentiality and code of behaviour.
 - o Understanding Exodus's own safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Designated Officers should **receive their own specific training** in line with the required outcomes identified in the [SBNI Child Safeguarding: Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2020-2023](#)
- **Update training will take place at least every three years** in order to keep skills and knowledge relevant.
- A **record** of all training including safeguarding will be kept for all staff and volunteers.
- All Area Leaders expected to respond to Concerns of Wellbeing will be trained in Mental Health First Aid.

Line Management & Supervision

- All staff and volunteers will be **provided with a line manager** or supervisor with whom they can discuss their role at regular intervals. As well as covering support and encouragement for ongoing ministry this should also **ensure the delivery of excellence in safeguarding**.
- All staff will receive an **annual appraisal** and volunteers working with young people will have the opportunity to give feedback and review their involvement at least once a year. These will all include an opportunity to raise issues around safeguarding.

Code of Conduct

All Exodus staff and volunteers have a responsibility to promote excellence in safeguarding practice and environments.

They should follow and communicate good safeguarding practice with young people, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers and visitors, and set a culture where individuals are valued and cared for.

Principles & Practices For Caring with Excellence

All contact with children and young people should reflect their value as individuals made in the image of God.

1. Make sure every young person matters by:

- Being **supportive**, approachable and reassuring.
- Showing **patience and respect** of their unique identity and need for privacy.
- Being **consistent and fair**.

2. Identify and Minimise Risk by planning and checking:

- The **physical space** being used.
- The **nature** of the activities.
- The **people** involved.

3. Know who you are caring for by:

- Being aware of who (or in the case of drop-in opportunities; how many young people) you are responsible for.
- Having medical and parent contact details available for each young person you are responsible for.
- Having access to a mobile phone and being aware of the local emergency services number.

4. Prevent harm by never:

- Engaging in rough physical games including horseplay - apart from structured sports activities.
- Engaging in sexually provocative or inappropriate games.
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form.
- Allowing children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun.
- Tolerating, ignoring or encouraging any form of bullying.
- Doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves.
- Sharing or showing of media - (music, photographs, videos etc.) with inappropriate content such as nudity, swearing, violence or discrimination.)

5. Stay above Reproach by never:

- Spending **excessive amounts of time alone** with a child or young person away from others.
- Taking children or young people **alone on car journeys**, however short.
- Taking children or young people to **your home without another** adult who has been approved by Exodus.

Engagement For All Participants

Anyone working with children or young people should strive to be mindful that each one has a unique (and sometimes difficult) home situation. Providing the below [5 things](#) will enable every young person (including those who have experienced or are experiencing trauma) to effectively participate:

- Safety
- Trust
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment

Residentials

Being away with a group on a residential or ministry trip is a vital part of disciple making youth ministry. In order to provide the best possible experience, the group leader should ensure:

- **Parents'/carers'** consent has been obtained and they have clear details of timings, locations and activities.
- Groups **adhere to the rules, regulations and schedule** of the location they stay in and respect the property of one another and their hosts.
- **The accommodation**
 - o Has **suitable facilities** for their groups' particular needs and activities.
 - o An individual leader should not sleep in the same room as one individual who is under 18, but may share a room if there is more than one young person. If one team member has to stay alone in a room, the leader must be nearby so as to monitor activity in the sleeping quarters.
 - o **Male and Female sleeping facilities** are separated, with clear rules as to when, if ever, males can be in the female rooms, and vice versa.
 - o **Toilets and washing facilities** should be segregated for male and female group members. If this is not possible, separate times should be established for washing.
- They have considered any **hazards or risks** and all activities are in line with the general health and safety guidelines.
- Group members are briefed on what to do in the **case of a fire or emergency**.
- There is to be **no smoking** in the accommodation at any time and no group member should consume any alcohol or narcotic substances at any point.
- A **record of sleeping arrangements** is kept detailing the names of children and leaders who stayed over and where they slept.
- The entire group is in the **accommodation** at the end of the day.
- Any **activities 'off site'** are carried out in groups of 3 or more.

Meetings in Homes

Regular meetings in homes (such as weekly team meetings) require everyone present in the home over 18 years of age to have a police check (Access NI)

Teams staying with families

When groups stay with a host family, the Exodus partner should ensure they:

- Are **committed Christians, members of a local church** and in sympathy with the ethos and values of Exodus.
- Have **been recommended** by their local church and will care well for the young people.
- Never **drink alcohol** around team members or offer them alcohol regardless of age.
- Will contact the placement host if they have any concerns about team members or their behaviour and call the local emergency services if there is an emergency.

Transport

When young people are transported for Exodus activities, the organiser, all drivers and any hired transport firms must keep safety as a priority at all times.

Drivers must:

- Be **suitably competent** and **qualified** for the vehicle they are using. Giving particular care to:
 - o Check before hiring self-drive vehicles with more than 8 seats.
 - o Avoid using inexperienced drivers in international settings.
 - Ensure the vehicle is in a **road-worthy condition** before use. If in doubt, the vehicle should not be driven.
 - Know what to do in the event of a **breakdown or accident**.
 - Ensure that they have **adequate and up to date insurance** cover to carry children in their car.
 - **Drive carefully** and within National speed limits.
 - Ensure passengers **wear seatbelts**.
 - Have completed an **Access NI check** if transporting under 18s without supervision.
 - Have **Parental Consent** to take under 18s off the premises.
-
- Vehicles:
 - Should provide a **single seat** and seat belt for each child/young person.
 - On **public transport** leaders should sit among the young people and be dispersed in the vehicle, aiming to keep group members in sight of a leader at all times.

Dealing with Difficulties

The behaviour of the young people we serve may not always meet our expectations. Some issues staff or volunteers may encounter include:

- **Not attending** or not **communicating** if they won't be able to attend.
- **Not committing or following through** with agreed responsibilities e.g. Bible readings or fundraising.
- **Speaking** to leaders, or others, without appropriate respect.
- Stepping **outside agreed behavioural boundaries** e.g. the Team Lifestyle Agreement.

In these situations, staff and volunteers should remember that our aim is to create a positive and safe environment for all and so **issues should be addressed early** with **fairness, gentleness and the desire for growth**. For **minor incidents** the first step should be for the **staff member or volunteer to raise the issue clearly yet informally** with the individual giving the opportunity for explanation whilst explaining the expectations that have been missed and what is now expected.

Disciplinary Procedure

For behaviour that is more serious or persistently challenging, the staff member or volunteer in charge of the group should follow these steps::

- **STEP ONE - ASSESS**
Prayerfully **talk through the challenge with a more senior colleague** (unless you are part of the Exodus leadership team when a co-worker is appropriate) to **identify the issues and agree a plan**.
- **STEP TWO - MEET**
Arrange a meeting **with the individual, a parent/ guardian** and an additional staff member/ volunteer, making clear what the meeting is about.
Within the meeting the **behaviour should be discussed** with time given to, reminding the individual of any specific incidents or informal correction and giving the **opportunity for explanation**.

Outcomes at this stage may include:

- **Marking the matter closed** either because the explanation given is accepted or the individual apologies and it is agreed that the behaviour has ceased.
 - **Communicating** a sanction.
 - **Informing the individual** that you will **need to review things** with Exodus before communicating a decision at a final meeting.
 - **Communicating any implications** if the behaviour continues or is repeated.
- **STEP THREE - FOLLOW UP**
Depending on the outcome of stage two you may need to:
 - Find ways to **encourage the individual or rebuild a relationship**.
 - Continue to **monitor behaviour**.
 - **Communicate a sanction** or decision in person, in writing or over the phone.
 - Act on the **implications when behaviour is repeated** or continues.

Additional Guidance for Dealing With Difficulties

- **Pray** for wisdom and patience throughout, (if possible with the individual(s) involved).
- **Do not conduct a formal disciplinary meeting one-to-one.**
 - There should always be **another staff member or volunteer present** (at least one of the same gender as the young person) as well as a **parent or guardian** of any individual who is under 18.
 - If on a **team placement**, parents should be informed and involved in the conversation via telephone. Those over 18 should be encouraged to have someone with them.
- **Keep others** (staff, designated person) informed and involved.
- **Never use force, 'put-downs' or humiliation** or threaten actions that will not be approved by Exodus, or followed through.
- **Record** any disciplinary events, meetings and actions.

Physical Restraint

Sometimes restraint may need to be applied to a child in order to protect him/her from harming themselves or others, or seriously damaging property. The priority at all times must be to protect all children from harm.

- Only the **minimum force** necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied.
- Leaders should never try to restrain a young person on their own; **another leader** may act as an assistant or as a witness.
- Restraint should be an act of **care, not punishment**.
- Following an incident when restraint has been used, a **report** should be inserted in an accident/incident report form and parents/carers should be notified.

Theological Sensitivity

Exodus subscribes to the [Evangelical Alliance statement of faith](#) as the basis for our work and as a non-denominational organisation working with a wide range of churches and young people, our staff and volunteers are expected to **respect the diversity of the Body of Christ** and value the backgrounds of each individual.

Guidelines on how to approach two specific issues are outlined below:

- Baptism (particularly for team members while away)

If any team member, including a member of the leadership, wishes to be baptised they must **wait until they come home**. This enables them to discuss it with their family and church leaders, and for those closest to them to be able to attend.

- Spiritual Gifts

We recognise that there are a variety of views on the practice of spiritual gifts. It is therefore important that leaders:

- **Only bring** young people into situations that they feel are appropriate for them.
- **Prepare** the group by listening to their existing experiences, discussing different positions on spiritual gifts and describing the likely scenario they will encounter.
- **Enable group members to leave** a situation if they feel uncomfortable (one of the leaders and other young people should go with them).
- **Review** by discussing how the group felt about the experience, taking time with any individuals who may have struggled and encouraging young people to chat to a mentor or church leader.

- Communion (particularly for team members while away)

Leaders should be aware of the different approaches to communion / the Lord's supper and that some team members may never have taken part. Leaders should avoid putting pressure on people to take it or **causing any difficulty for team members or parents**. They should not lead communion themselves unless they are ordained.

Media & Communication

Communication

Staff and volunteers should avoid exclusive or intensive one-to-one private messaging or correspondence and should only have mobile numbers of under 18s if the nature of their involvement requires them to phone or text them.

- **Parents** will be informed within the consent form as to how Exodus and its staff or volunteers will contact young people directly as part of the programme they are involved in.
- Use **group communication** (group texts, e-mails, facebook groups & Whatsapp groups) as much as possible.
- **If using direct texts, email or social media for specific reminders or encouragements** leaders should:
 - Keep a full record of all correspondence.

- Avoid moving from **communication to conversation**.
 - A leader can suggest discussing the subject further at the next event or, if they are concerned about the young person, arrange to meet up to talk further (within the safeguarding parameters).

Digital Discipleship

Connecting with young people using video calls provides an excellent opportunity for discipling in a different setting. It requires staff and volunteers to be appointed using the same standards as face-to-face contact and should **only take place when**:

- There is never a **one-to-one** setting between a leader/mentor and one young person aged under 18.
- If there are more than 10 young people, there should ideally be at least 2 supervisors.
- **Consent** has been given by parents/ guardians of under 18's specifically for video communication.
- **Call security is a priority**
 - The link to the call is **not accessible to the public**.
 - Passwords or waiting rooms are used where possible.
 - The leader **hosts the call**.

Leaders should also:

- Be wise in regards to what will appear in the **background of their call**. Young people under 18 should be encouraged not to take the video call **alone**. Ideally it should take place in an open space, such as their living room, or kitchen.
- Ensure behaviour online should be **in line with the Exodus code of conduct**, as with a face to face meeting; concerns about any young person should be followed up in line with the reporting procedure.

Photographs & Video

Exodus and its leaders may from time to time use photographs or videos which include young people to celebrate or highlight opportunities within the organisation.

If doing so the following guidelines should be followed:

- Permission must be sought from **both a child and their parent for photographs** to be used.
- If using photographs of children and young people, it is preferable to **use group pictures**.
- **Children** and young people should **not be identified** by name or other personal details.
- Carefully consider **location and pose** to avoid any embarrassment.
- **Do not insist** that a child participates.

Leaders should encourage young people to be sensible when taking photos or videoing each other. They should let peers know if their intention is to post photographs online, giving them the opportunity to object.

Social Networking

Staff and Volunteers should:

- Think carefully **before adding a child or young person in Exodus, as a friend** or follower on a personal social networking site.
 - Only for young people who have joined an Exodus programme and have parental permission for communication.
 - Only be for the purpose of communication about the opportunity (rather than friendship)
- **Delete or 'untag' any photos** in which they are depicted, in what could possibly be construed as, compromising situations.
- **Not post photographs** of young people, anywhere on the internet, unless they have written **parental consent**.
- **Consider comments online** the same as if they were made in a public place.

If a child discloses something to a leader via a social networking site, then the disclosure must be dealt with by following the normal reporting process.

Positions of Trust

Exodus expects all staff, interns and volunteers to conduct themselves with professionalism and care at all times. Exodus does not condone any romantic or intimate relationship with programme participants as this may invite those in supervisor roles to misuse a position of trust.

Health and Safety

Health and safety is a primary concern for Exodus. Activities should be planned and run in a way so as to minimise the opportunity for young people to suffer harm.

Accidents & Incidents

If a young person is **hurt or there is a “Near-miss”** during an activity the leader in charge should:

- **Ensure the young person is out of harm.** This may include accessing help from a first aider or calling the emergency services.
 - o If a child needs professional medical attention every effort should be made to **contact a parent or carer immediately.**
- Speak to their **supervising** member of staff to make them aware of the incident and agree a plan for communicating with parents.
- Record the incident using the **Accident / Incident Report Form** within **24 hours.**

The supervising staff member will then ensure that:

- The incident is communicated to a parent / carer.
- The **Accident / Incident Report Form** is signed by a parent and returned to the **Operations Manager.**

The **Operations Manager** will review and make recommendations based on the incident and store the form in line with the Data Protection policy.

See also The Online Forms available at: [/www.exodusonline.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.exodusonline.org.uk/safeguarding) & [Additional resources - Accident/Incident Form \(Online\)](#)

Fire

- All leaders should be aware of fire exits and evacuation procedures for the locations where they are with young people.
- **Every Exodus Centre should**
 - o Have adequate fire alarms which are **tested weekly.**
 - o Carry out an **annual fire drill.**
 - o Ensure appropriate annual checks are carried out on all fire **safety equipment** including fire fighting equipment and emergency lighting.

First Aid

- Each **Exodus Centre** should have at least one nominated and adequately trained first aider. The name(s) of these people should be **clearly displayed** in their relevant centres.
- Each **Exodus event** should have a nominated trained first aider.
- Every **Exodus centre** will have an **appropriately stocked** and up to date first aid kit and users of the centre should know where this is kept and be able to retrieve it as needed.
- Every **Exodus team** will be provided with a **basic First aid kit.**
- Any **first aid treatment** should be recorded and reported using the accident/incident procedure.

Swimming

Swimming should only take place in designated swimming areas with a trained lifeguard present.

Heights

Young people should not be permitted to carry out any activity where their feet will be above head height unless additional professional safety procedures are in place and permission has been granted by the Exodus Operations Manager.

Practical Work

Exodus encourages young people to get involved in practical service in local and international communities. These activities must be **appropriate** for the individual's skill and experience and should not include power tools.

Supervision

Young people in Exodus activities should be appropriately supervised at all times. The number of adults required will be dependent on the nature of the activities, the location and the individual needs of group members.

The Standard Recommended Ratios for various ages are:

- **0-2 years** 1 adult to 3 children
- **2-3 years** 1 adult to 4 children
- **4-8 years** 1 adult to 6 children
- **9-12 years** 1 adult to 8 children
- **13-18 years** **1 adult to 10 children**

For groups with young people of both sexes, it is ideal to have gender balanced supervision. In the case of teams any single gender leadership pairs for mixed groups must be approved by the teams coordinator.

Insurance

Exodus will provide **comprehensive cover** for its activities including public liability, employers liability, tour company liability and travel insurance. This provides cover for "normal" Exodus activities such as group work, parties, mentoring, teams travelling, basic practical work, training etc.

Should staff or volunteers wish to carry out unusual or high risk activities they must first communicate these with Exodus' Operation Manager and **wait for approval**.

Travel Insurance

Exodus provides travel insurance but it is recommended that all team members travelling outside the UK and Ireland obtain a GHIC or a valid EHIC (Global Health Insurance Card) available from the NHS online.

Personal Property

All personal items remain the responsibility of the individual, our insurance policy will not pay out in cases of negligence. If loss/ damage occurs where all necessary steps have been taken to secure personal items then a claim can proceed.

Churches and Schools

Churches and schools that are running Exodus Teams will operate under their own employers and public liability insurance whilst preparing for the placement. The Exodus employers and public liability will come into effect when the team leaves for the placement.

Non-Exodus Buildings

For any other buildings, in which staff or volunteers plan to run activities adequate cover must be provided by the owner. Recognising & Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

Recognising & Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

We will ensure that everyone working in a supervisory role with young people knows how to recognise different forms of abuse and is clear on our expectations for dealing with incidents, concerns and disclosures including: responding, recording, reporting, and working with Designated Safeguarding Officers to involve statutory agencies and follow up concerns.

Concerns within Exodus are addressed by asking the following two questions;

- Are you concerned about wellbeing? Is this a young person who needs help?; or
- Are you concerned about abuse? Is this a young person who needs protection?

Recognising Risk

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and so the following section is designed to help staff and volunteers in Exodus understand:

- The reality that abuse exists
- The importance of our role in identifying and highlighting young people of concern
- The types of abuse we may have concerns around.

Concerns About Wellbeing

Concerns about the wellbeing of a young person relates to their overall wellbeing, including their mental health. This may be things you notice, or told to you by the young person or another individual. You should seek support from the local Area leader.

Concerns About Abuse

Concerns about abuse of a young person relate to the categories below. These concerns may arise from things you notice, allegations about the young person or a disclosure from the young person. You should notify a Designated Officer.

A Child in need of protection

A child in need of protection is a child who is **at risk of, or likely to suffer, significant harm** which can be attributed to a person or persons or organisation, either by an act of **commission** or **omission**; or **a child who has suffered or is suffering significant harm**.

The Children's Order defines 'harm' as **ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development**. The Order states that 'ill-treatment' includes **sexual abuse**, forms of ill-treatment which are **physical** and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical; 'health' means physical and / or mental health; and 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Types & Signs of Abuse

Physical abuse – deliberately physically hurting a child.

Potential Signs or Symptoms

- Unexplained injuries, such as bruises, fractures, or burns
- Injuries that don't match the given explanation
- Untreated medical or dental problems

Sexual abuse – when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others.

Potential Signs or Symptoms

- Sexual behaviour, language or knowledge that is inappropriate for the child's age
- Pregnancy or a sexually transmitted infection
- Statements that he or she was sexually abused
- Trouble walking or sitting or complaints of genital pain
- Abuse of other children sexually

Emotional abuse – the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child.

Potential Signs or Symptoms

- Delayed or inappropriate emotional development
- Loss of self-confidence or self-esteem
- Socially withdrawal or a loss of interest or enthusiasm
- Depression
- Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
- Avoidance of certain situations, such as refusing to go to school or use the bus or attend groups
- Desperately seeks affection
- A decrease in school performance or loss of interest in school
- Loss of previously acquired developmental skills

Neglect – the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Potential Signs or Symptoms

- Poor growth or weight gain
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of clothing or supplies to meet physical needs
- Taking food or money without permission
- Eating a lot in one sitting or hiding food for later
- Poor record of school attendance
- Lack of appropriate attention for medical, dental or psychological problems or lack of necessary follow-up care
- Emotional swings that are inappropriate or out of context to the situation
- Indifference

Exploitation – the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

Potential Signs or Symptoms

- Going missing from home, care or education
- Involvement in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or antisocial groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation.
- Involvement in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Spending time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels
- Not knowing where they are, because they have been moved around the country
- Involvement in petty crime such as shoplifting

- Having unexplained physical injuries;
- Having a changed physical appearance, for example lost weight.

Bullying – although bullying is not defined as abuse, in its more extreme forms it could be regarded as abuse. It can take many forms, including emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal and cyber. Bullying can leave children with feelings of worthlessness and self hatred, they can feel lonely and isolated. At its worst, bullying can result in a child or young person self-harming and even attempting suicide.

Self Harm describes any way in which a young person might harm themselves or put themselves at risk in order to cope with difficult thoughts, feelings or experiences. It affects up to 1 in 5 young people and spans the divides of gender, class, age and ethnicity. **It should never be ignored or passed over.**

[See Also - Additional Resources: Responding to Self Harm Concerns](#)

Identifying Concerns

There are a number of ways that you could be alerted that a child or young person is suffering harm:

- **The child** may disclose to you.
- **Someone else** may tell you that the child has disclosed abuse, or they strongly believe the child has been abused
- The child may **show some signs** of physical injury or a behavioural change for which there appears to be no satisfactory explanation.
- Awareness of, or suspicion about, abuse may come about as a result of something disclosed to you as a **third party (parent, friend, co-worker) who suspects** or has been told of abuse.
- Something in the **behaviour of one of the workers** or in the way a worker relates to the child alerts you or makes you feel uncomfortable.

Increased Risk

Keep in mind the background of the child or young person when identifying concerns.

1) The Trilogy of Concerns (or 'Toxic Trio')

The trilogy of risk may be at play behind the scenes of any young person in your care; any young person who has a combination of the following three things at home is at increased risk of abuse:

- Poor mental health of parent/guardian
- Substance abuse at home
- Witness/victim of domestic violence - *it is important to note that it is not necessary for the child to have witnessed such treatment or behaviour; or to have been present when it happened [Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in NI]*

2) Impact of Social Issues (poverty, discrimination) Upon Children's Wellbeing

- **Poverty**

Children experience poverty when they don't get the nutrition, water, shelter, education or health care they need to survive and thrive. This is called "multidimensional poverty" and describes a deprivation of multiple basic rights.

The effects of experiencing poverty in childhood are grave. Growing up deprived of any basic need – from nutrition to shelter to education – hinders children's physical and cognitive development, limiting their social and economic opportunities as adults.

[For more information on the effects of poverty on children: <https://www.unicef.org/social-policy/child-poverty>]

- **Discrimination**

In a similar way, discrimination has cognitive and social effects for children and young people. Highlighted in reports such as those done by the [United Nations](#).

3) Trauma Informed Approach - Using a 'trauma sensitive LENS'

Using the below [LENS](#) can help us respond effectively to those who may be experiencing trauma related to ACES, and also helping us be on the lookout for abuse.

L - Look

- Behaviour
- Body Language
- Environment

E - Explore

- Think, 'what may have happened'
- Think about how you can help
- Think about safety

N - Needs

- Basic needs
- Understanding
- Explanation

S - Support

- Support
- Signpost
- Safeguard

For more information on a trauma informed approach, resources are available at: www.safeguardingni.org

4) Other Vulnerabilities in Northern Ireland

As identified in "Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in NI"; The below groups of children & young people were identified in this publication, and we should be aware of their increased vulnerability.

- Looked After Children
- Children/young people who are missing (one off absences and frequent absences)
- Those facing homelessness or in support accommodation
- Those who are fostered (under the age of 16)
- Those who have parents/carers with additional needs
- Those who are separated from family, or trafficked from their home
- Those with disabilities
- Those in the LGBT community

Dealing with Concerns

All allegations, concerns or disclosures about abuse must be based on the fundamental principle that the welfare of the child is paramount and so the following section is designed to help staff and volunteers in Exodus know what to do.

This process and the associated forms should be easily accessible to all working with young people in Exodus. The Process of Concern, Respond, Report, Record can be found in [this Flowchart](#).

Respond

- Listen, hear and accept what is said.
- **Stay** calm.
- **Give** time for the child to say what they want.
- **Reassure** them that they have done the right thing in speaking to you.
- Make sure there is no **immediate danger**.
- As soon as you are alone, **note down** as much as you can remember from the conversation, and the exact words used by the child/young person
- **Do Not**
 - **Ask Leading questions**
 - **Promise** to keep **secrets**
 - **Enquire or investigate** yourself.
 - **Make the child repeat** unnecessarily

Report

- Call the appropriate individual within 24 hours
 - i. For **concerns of abuse** this is the Designated Officer (Jose / Helen 02892661220)
 - ii. For **concerns of wellbeing**, this is the local Area Leader
- **Do not** speak to anyone else including a co-worker, parent or other member of Exodus staff.
- If the concern of abuse is passed onto Social Services by the Designated officer, they may ask you to fill in a UNOCINI form (with our help) **within 24 hours** to pass onto social services

Record

- After talking to the appropriate person about your concern, record your notes using the forms available at: exodusonline.org.uk/safeguarding
 - o If you are unable to access this form please type or write key information of dates, facts and individuals.
- Include additional notes on your conversation with the Designated Officer or Area Leader
- Keep secure and confidential and pass on to the **local designated officer**.
- Stay clear and **factual - if you wish to** give an explanation for your concern this should be clearly marked as an opinion.
- If recording a physical injury, name the type of injury (i.e. burn, bruise, cut) and the size (i.e. size of a 50p) and where (top of forehead, left hand side) - **do not photograph a child or young person**

Designated Officer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the local designated officer to follow up concerns and ensure appropriate communication and support for the individual reporting by:

- Following the **reporting procedures** as set out in the guidelines.
- **Consulting** with the The Lead Officer, who will work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the right action is being taken
 - o This may be Gateway, the local HSCTs, the NSPCC or CiNI or the PSNI where required
- Keeping a “**case file**” for each incident or concern.
- Ensuring appropriate **communication** with parents or carers.
 - o This should be done within the advice from the NSPCC (9-5pm) or the Gateway Team (outside these hours)
 - o Parents / Carers of U18s should be informed of concerns unless there is a risk it will do more harm than good.
 - o They should know if a UNOCINI form has been submitted (unless they are involved in the abuse)
- **Identifying and ensuring pastoral support** is provided for the young people and staff/ volunteers involved.
 - o Again depending on the nature of the situation any support should be given with advice from the NSPCC/Gateway team.
- If a concern has been reported to the Gateway team, the Designated officer should then **remain available** to the Gateway Team or PSNI as the investigation is underway.
- Following up with any Area Leaders who have received a concern of abuse, for their support and advice.

Frameworks within the Investigation

- Exodus will follow this policy when dealing with any concern
- When working with outside agencies, the following frameworks may be used to assess the needs of the young person:
 - o [Signs of Safety](#)
 - o [Think Family NI](#)
 - o [Building Better Futures](#)
- Designated Officers will work with Social Services and the PSNI in a timely manner
- For Child Protection Referrals, designated officers (most like Lead Officer) should follow these steps
 - o Verbal referrals for child protection immediately
 - o Followed up by a UNOCINI form within **24 hours**
 - o Follow up if there has been no response in **7 days**

Thresholds of Significant Harm

Can be identified by the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI):

They “provide information and advice on child protection within the organisation including the thresholds for significant harm and what needs to be referred and when to statutory organisations – Police and Social Services”

Accountability

If an individual feels the Designated officer has not dealt sufficiently with a concern they should speak first to the officer concerned, then raise it with the lead designated officer or with the Lead Trustee for Safeguarding.

If an individual has a concern relating to harm caused by a designated officer or the organisation as a whole, Exodus acknowledges the importance of giving them the process and support to raise this. If appropriate it should be raised with the Lead Trustee for Safeguarding and if not - then the **Local Health & Social Care Gateway Team**, or **Tusla** (ROI).

In these situations - confidentiality will be respected where possible, and both maliciously made false allegations and victimising of individuals with bona fide concerns, are disciplinary matters.

It is important to note that for all safeguarding concerns, not reporting a crime IS a crime.

Staff & Volunteers

If staff or volunteers have been involved in an investigation for under 18s, it must be reported to DBS - so that this will show up when another organisation submits a police check (Access NI) on them; or the equivalent (Garda) in ROI.

If a matter of concern is not raised to an outside agency, a statement explaining why MUST be signed by a senior person(s) in the organisation.

See also: Additional Resources

[Safeguarding Incident / Concern Form](#)

[Process for Responding to Concerns](#)

[Responding to Self Harm Concerns](#)

[Useful Contacts](#)

[Allegations against Staff Members or Volunteers](#)

Information & Communication

We will clearly communicate good safeguarding practice with young people, parents, staff and volunteers, and set a culture where individuals are valued and cared for. We will collect and handle personal information appropriately.

Promoting Safeguarding

- We will keep parents, young people and staff aware of Exodus commitment to safeguarding and the key information that relates to them by:
 - o Keeping this **Safeguarding Policy and Associated forms** available on the **Exodus website**.
 - o **Clearly displaying** safeguarding information in our **centres**.
 - o Communicating simple important messages through **leaflets and cards**.

Personal Information & Data

- We will collect information **relevant** to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing for all programme participants including:
 - o Parent/guardian/carer names, address and contact details including in an emergency.
 - o Additional needs - health or dietary
- **Our Principles for Data Collection and Handling as set out in our Data Protection Policy:**
 - o We care about privacy and are committed to operating lawfully and within the General Data Protection Regulation (the GDPR).
 - o We only collect what is needed
 - o We do not keep or use data any longer than is necessary
 - o We prioritise security
- All of our safeguarding practice should be carried out in line with the [Exodus Data Protection Policy](#) including:
 - o All details and disclosures retrieved during a recruitment process will be treated with confidentiality
 - o Personal Information will be held and passed on, on a **need-to-know** basis.
 - o Any staff member or volunteer with access to personal information relating to young people they are working with is required to keep that secure and confidential.
- For more information please visit www.exodusonline.org.uk/privacy-policy

Consent forms

- A [parental consent form](#) should be completed when a child enrolls in any team, mentoring opportunity, residential, one off activity or other ongoing program.
- **The form should cover:**
 - o The expected programme/activities.
 - o The level of supervision and the names of leaders/helpers and a contact number.
 - o Any expectations on the young people and what they might need to bring.

Complaints

Complaints or concerns should be raised with the Operations Manager in the Lisburn office, info@exodusonline.org.uk, 29 Railway Street Lisburn BT28 1XP, 02892 661220. They will then be followed up by the Exodus leadership team and if necessary the board of trustees.

Additional Resources

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Identifying and Sharing Significant Information	39
Responding to a Concern Involving Self Harm	40
Responding to a Concern or Emergency Call from a Team	41

Safeguarding Concern Form - *Sample Form*

This form should be completed and passed to the Local Deputy Designated Officer as quickly as possible. All concerns should be reported within 24 hours of arising. Fill in all the information you know but do not worry if you cannot complete all sections.

Your Details

Name		Role	
------	--	------	--

Person at Risk Details

Name		Age / DOB	
Address		Parents Names	
Specific Needs	e.g. communication	Gender	

Summary of Concern

What is the nature of the concern?

Disclosure ☐

Incident ☐

When & where was the disclosure / incident? (Date and Time, activity & location)

Who was the disclosure to or who witnessed the incident?

Disclosures - What did the young person actually say?

Describe any signs or indicators of abuse (with times and dates)

Did the child indicate that any particular person is the abuser?

If so, record details including their relationship to the young person.

Details of any immediate Action Taken

E.g. First Aid, involvement of external agency

Any additional comments

This may include a summary of why you are concerned but will be treated as an opinion

Person Reporting

Signature		Date	
------------------	--	-------------	--

Designated Officer

Name		Date Received	
Summary & Explanation of Initial Actions inc Dates	e.g. referral to Gateway team, contact external agencies, consulting with other designated officers		

Accident / Incident Report Form - *Sample Form*

This form should be completed and passed to your line manager as quickly as possible. All accidents or incidents should be reported within 24 hours of arising. Fill in all the information you know but do not worry if you cannot complete all sections.

Your Details

Name		Role	
------	--	------	--

Person Involved Details

Name		Age / DOB	
Address		Parents Names	
Specific Needs	e.g. communication	Gender	

Summary

When & where was the accident/ incident? (Date and Time, activity & location)

Describe the incident/accident

(i.e. what preceded the incident, what happened, what injuries were sustained)

What aid was given, if any?

(e.g. First Aid, emergency services,etc)

Who was informed?

When Informed Time & Date	Name	Their Role e.g. Staff Member	Notes Informed by / Outcome or action from that

Person Reporting

Signature		Date	
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Witness 1

The information given on this form are, as far as I know, true

Name & Role		Address	
Phone No.		Signature	

Witness 2

The information given on this form are, as far as I know, true

Name & Role		Address	
Phone No.		Signature	

Line Manager

Name		Date Received	
Summary & Explanation of Initial Actions inc Dates	e.g.		

Useful Contacts

Lead and Deputy Designated Officers [Under Exodus Ministries, these officers are our mandated persons.

Jose Cummings (Lead)
jose@exodusonline.org.uk
02892 661220

Jo McCormick (Deputy - Summer Support)
jo@exodusonline.org.uk

Andy Lamberton (Deputy - Summer Support)
andy@exodusonline.org.uk

Helen McKay (Deputy)
helen@exodusonline.org.uk

Exodus Trustee for Safeguarding

To be contacted if there is a concern related to the Lead Designated or Deputy Designated Officers.

Mr Peter Lynas p.lynas@eauk.org

Exodus Centres

Exodus Lisburn
29 Railway Street
Lisburn
BT28 1XP
www.exodusonline.org.uk

Exodus North East
36 Long Commons
Coleraine
BT52 1LH
info@exodusonline.org.uk

Childline

Free, 24 hr confidential advice & support for anyone under 19

www.childline.org.uk **0800 1111**

Self Harm UK

SelfharmUK is a project dedicated to supporting young people impacted by self-harm, providing a safe space to talk, ask any questions and be honest about what's going on in your life.

www.selfharm.co.uk

NSPCC Helpline

Support and advice for leaders and Designated Officers to help them support young people

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/our-services/nspcc-helpline/ **0800 800 5000**

Gateway

If there is a concern that a child or young person under the age of 18 years is being abused or neglected, the Designated Person should contact the Gateway team in the local Health and Social Care Trust as soon as they can and before the situation gets any worse.

Belfast HSC Trust - 028 9050 7000
South Eastern HSC Trust - 0300 1000 300
Western HSC Trust - 028 7131 4090

Northern HSC Trust - 0300 1234 333
Southern HSC Trust - 0800 7837 745

Other Useful Contacts & Signposting

- Parentline - 0808 802 0400 - <http://www.cini.org.uk/parentline-ni>
- Lifeline 0808 808 8000 or www.lifelinehelpline.info
- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline 0808 802 1414
- National Domestic Violence Helpline – 0808 2000 247
- Family Support NI - www.familysupportni.gov.uk/Section/Family/99
- Cruse Bereavement – 0844 477 9400 helpline@cruse.org.uk
- Learning Disability Helpline (Mencap) – 0808 808 1111
- Eating Disorders Assoc. – 029 9023 5959
- Invisible Traffic – 0808 800 8001 (slavery and trafficking)

Text-A-Nurse Services

- Belfast Trust Text –A-Nurse: 07507 328290
- Northern Trust: Text –A-Nurse: 07480 635982
- Southern Trust Text –A-Nurse: 07507 328057
- Western Trust Text –A-Nurse: 07480 635984
- South Eastern Trust Text –A-Nurse: 07507 327263

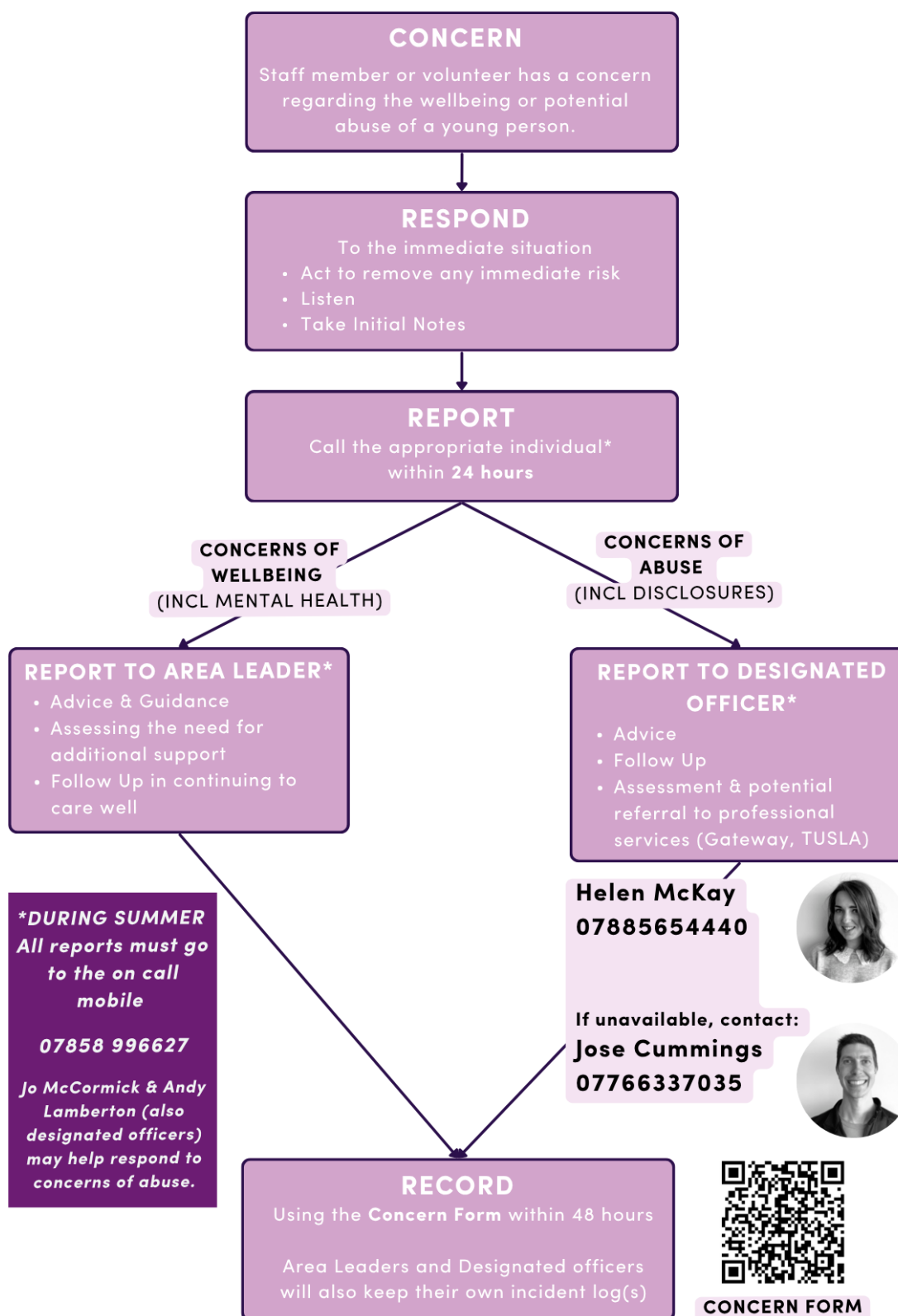
Adult Protection Gateway

- Belfast Trust - 028 9050 41744
- South Eastern Trust – 028 9250 1227
- Northern Trust – 028 9441 3659
- Southern Trust - 028 3756 4423
- Western Trust - 028 7161 1366

For **Removal of indecent Images** of a young person in your care - <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

Process for Dealing with Concerns

This process should be followed by any staff member or volunteer with a concern about a young person and then carried through by the Area Leader or Designated Officer.



Allegations against Staff or Volunteers

In the instance of an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, Exodus has a dual responsibility to both the young person and the individual being accused and so both safeguarding and discipline procedures should occur in parallel.

Designated Officer

1. Record allegation in writing and pass to the Trustee for Safeguarding
2. Follow the process for reporting concerns.

Exodus Safeguarding Board Member acting without delay

1. **Inform the individual of the allegation** (with one other person)
 - a. Offer an opportunity to respond
 - b. Ensure their response is recorded
2. **Consults with the relevant statutory authorities**, and then **confirms what further action** needs to be taken. In cases where a criminal investigation is instigated by the police, Exodus should not conduct its own internal investigation or gather further evidence that could prejudice the criminal investigation.
3. **Take all protective measures** necessary to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk. This may involve transferring the individual to another post without contact with children and young people, or suspension' without prejudice', as there should be no assumption of guilt during a period of investigation. These measures should not unreasonably penalise the staff member or volunteer unless to protect a child or young person. If it is necessary to suspend a staff member or volunteer, the allegation should be dealt with as quickly as possible.
4. **Record all information** at each stage regardless of whether or not a referral has been made to statutory services. If it is decided that no referral will be made at this point, the decision not to refer should be recorded and the reasons for this decision, including a record of any discussions with Health and Social Care Gateway Team staff. In all circumstances, the situation should be monitored so that a referral can be made if the situation deteriorates.
5. **Progress the internal investigation** sensitively and quickly through to completion ensuring that anxieties expressed or demonstrated by children, young people, parents or any other member of staff or volunteer are acknowledged and addressed.

As a result of the investigation there are 4 possible investigation outcomes

- 1) **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is removed from regulated activity.**
If the investigation finds that an allegation has been substantiated - that is, harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred and the individual is removed from regulated activity - Exodus is then under a **statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** under the SVG (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Referral to the DBS should be at the point that Exodus determines that harm/risk of harm has occurred and there has been a decision made to permanently remove the staff member or volunteer from regulated activity. This may happen at any stage during the disciplinary process and not necessarily when the process concludes. If the staff member or volunteer resigns or retires at any point during the investigation process, the investigation should still be concluded and a referral made to the DBS if it is found that harm or risk of harm to a child or young person has occurred.

- 2) **Allegation of harm/risk of harm substantiated – the individual is reinstated to regulated activity.**
It is possible that the investigation finds that the allegation is substantiated, but the circumstances of the case are such that the individual can be reinstated to their job/role subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, training and support and supervision arrangements being implemented. Despite the finding that harm/risk of harm has occurred, **the decision to return the individual to the post/role means that referral to the DBS is not required.**

3) Allegation of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – but there are ongoing concerns.

In a situation where the investigation concludes that the allegation is unsubstantiated and that the individual has not harmed a child or young person or placed them at risk of harm, but Exodus has ongoing concerns about the conduct of the staff member or volunteer, Exodus may conclude that the individual can be reinstated with additional support, supervision and training/retraining. Exodus will also assess at this point if a DBS referral needs to be made.

4) Allegation of harm/risk of harm unsubstantiated – there are no ongoing concerns.

In an instance where the internal investigation finds that the allegation is unsubstantiated, that is, that the individual has not harmed or placed at risk of harm a child or young person, the staff member or volunteer may be reinstated and provided with support to reintegrate. Training and supervision may be necessary depending on the nature of the allegation and findings of the investigation.

Following an Investigation

An investigation into a staff member or volunteer will raise up issues for staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents. These may include:

- Possible reactions of other members of staff and volunteers of anger, disbelief, doubt, fear, guilt, shock, anxiety;
- The effects of internal proceedings, an official safeguarding investigation or criminal investigation on the individual against whom the allegation has been made;
- The reactions of staff, volunteers and other children towards a child who has been abused or whose allegation is being investigated;
- The reactions of parents and other family members.
- The reputation of the organisation and reaction within the wider community.

Exodus is committed to identifying and addressing these issues as they may arise in relation to the different groups affected.

Identifying and Sharing Significant Information

Significant information is any information about behaviour which may put children or young people at risk of harm and it is vital that it is shared appropriately with those agencies whose role it is to protect them e.g. police or Health and Social Care Trusts.

The following offers some **guidance on information that may warrant sharing**. The list is not intended to be definitive and each case should be considered carefully in line with advice from the organisation's Designated Officer and statutory services.

- **Sexual offences** including interference with children and young people, assault or exhibitionism.
- Organising **prostitution** or procuring.
- **Attempting or planning to corrupt** a child or young person.
- A **history of physical violence**, including domestic violence and assault occasioning risk to children or young people.
- **Stealing** from children and young people.
- Selling, using or possessing **dangerous drugs** illegally.
- Repeated **drunkenness** in work contexts or untreated alcoholism.
- Repeated inappropriate use of **sexual language** outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Repeated **inappropriate touching** outside the normal boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- **Failure to provide the required level of care** and attention to children and young people, including emotional abuse and neglect.
- **Failure to comply** with procedures where this puts the welfare of children and young people at risk.
- Any instance where a **case is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service**.
- **Showing pornographic** videos, internet images or publications to children or young people.
- Posting or accessing **child pornography** on the internet.

A decision as to whether there is cause for concern should be considered based on the balance of probabilities or opinions formed reasonably and in good faith. **Organisations must be clear that there is no requirement for them to gather evidence or conclusive proof in order to share information that may be significant in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people.**

While it may be difficult to share concerns about parents, colleagues, or indeed young people, which affect important working relationships, it is essential that considerations of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the right of children and young people to be protected from harm.

The prompt flow of accurate information can often be for the benefit and safety of all concerned. Significant information should only be shared with appropriate personnel and agencies on a need-to-know basis.

Responding to a Concern involving Self- Harm

These guidelines are to help staff, volunteers and designated officers as they play their part in supporting young people who may be self-harming. They should be viewed inline with the policy on responding to all concerns. Adapted with thanks from "No Harm Done: Recognising and responding to self-harm"

Concerns & Warning Signs

Self-harm describes any way in which a young person might harm themselves or put themselves at risk in order to cope with difficult thoughts, feelings or experiences. It affects up to 1 in 5 young people and spans the divides of gender, class, age and ethnicity.

There are **many signs you can look out for** which indicate a young person is in distress and may be harming themselves, or at risk of self-harm, the most obvious being physical injuries which:

- Are observed on more than one occasion
- Appear too neat or ordered to be accidental
- Do not appear consistent with how the young person says they were sustained

Other warning signs include:

- Secrecy or disappearing at times of high emotion
- Long or baggy clothing covering arms or legs even in warm weather
- Increasing isolation or unwillingness to engage
- Avoiding changing in front of others (may avoid PE, shopping, sleepovers)
- Absence or lateness
- General low mood or irritability
- Negative self-talk – feeling worthless, hopeless or aimless

Following a Disclosure or Concern about Self Harm

In line with the wider policy all staff and volunteers should remember:

- Concerns about a young person's immediate safety are an absolute priority and should be treated as an urgent safeguarding issue
- If you think a young person is at risk, they should not be left alone.
- All discussions should be recorded and shared with the safeguarding officer

Possible Steps that might be directed by a Designated Officer

- **Informing adults** who need to know in order to keep the young person safe. This will usually include parents or carers.
- **Visiting the GP** to seek further support and guidance.
- **Organising access to a counsellor** and or trusted adult who can provide practical support and guidance.
- Information about **wound care** or access to a trained first aider or medical professional who can assess and dress any wounds.

Supporting Young People who are Self Harming

Exodus staff or volunteers are not expected to be the primary point of support for young people who are self harming but if they find themselves in this place some things that are helpful can include:

- **Listening** – provide a safe space for non-judgmental, supportive listening. Even a few minutes of high quality listening can make a huge difference to how supported a young person feels.
- **Addressing stressors** – work with the young person to understand their triggers and stressors. Working through a typical day and highlighting the tough bits can be a great way to start and then think creatively of ways you might address these.
- **Finding Alternatives** – work with the young person to collect a range of different things they can use to distract or soothe themselves when they feel the urge to self-harm. This might include music, colouring, books, bubbles, photographs or inspirational quotes.
- **Signposting** - safe sources of further information – such as in **Self Harm UK**

Responding to a Concern or Emergency call from a team

When teams are away Exodus provides an on call number for leaders or parents to contact in the event of a concern or emergency. These guidelines are to help the person who is on call to respond effectively

Initial Response

- Stay Calm
- **Be helpful** - this is a stressful situation for a young person, team leader and next of kin - the role is to facilitate & ease.
- Establish if it is an **abuse concern** or a **wellbeing concern** - pass to the Designated Officer on rota if it is an abuse concern.
- **Establish key facts**
 - Who is involved/injured?
 - Age of individual(s) involved.
 - Is there any immediate risk?
 - If medical attention is required
 - what is needed
 - where is the hospital
 - When did the incident occur?
 - What has happened since then/is happening currently/current condition?
 - What decisions have to be made at this point?
 - Who is at home and best to contact?
- **Identify key issues** to be addressed and decisions required.
- If possible, **talk to the individual involved** – reassure them and hear directly from them.

Action

- **Advise or direct on immediate action** if straightforward or urgent.
- **Alternatively** seek advice and then give advice or direction.
 - **Advice should be sought** from the 2nd on call to review decisions or weigh options.
 - In the case of serious incidents, the insurance company may have to be consulted for treatment, evacuation may be preferred for treatments that can be delayed.
 - Any pause for advice or direction should include a **clear time frame** when a decision will be made (usually minutes rather than hours).
 - Agree instructions on the phone, **text confirmation** to prevent misunderstandings.

Communication

- **Inform next of kin as soon as is practicable**
 - With a low risk and an experienced leader this can come straight from the leader.
 - Get consent to any procedures/decisions.
 - Arrange that the individual involved can converse with them (as appropriate).
- **Only involve those that need to be involved** - keep decision making circles small, also reduces the number of parties needing information and prevents cross information.

Ongoing

- **Keep up to date** with the situation and communicate to key persons.
- **Record incident** on incident log, including follow ups.
- **Communicate and mark incident closed** once incident is concluded.