

Committed to Care

**Policy : Personnel : Practice : Papers
Appendices**



**A Protection Policy
for Children and Vulnerable Adults
in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

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Section 1

Policy

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Creating a Safe Environment ...

1.1 Spiritual, Moral and Legal Obligation

Children and vulnerable adults, separated from parents and families and under our care have a right “to be protected from all forms of violence ... kept safe from harm ... and given proper care by those looking after them.” (UN Charter)

When we accept responsibility for children and vulnerable adults in any part of our work as we seek to minister to their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being, we place ourselves under a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a safe environment and adequate care for them and also to take appropriate action if any abuse is suspected or occurs. We aim to do this responsibly and efficiently before God.

1.2 Safeguarding Legislation

The following legislation relates to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. It enables organisations to carry out background checks on those individuals they engage to work, or volunteer, in ‘regulated activity’ (see below):

- ◆ Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
- ◆ Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979
- ◆ Police Act 1997 (Part V)
- ◆ Data Protection Act 1998
- ◆ Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003.
- ◆ The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- ◆ Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- ◆ Justice Act (NI) 2015
- ◆ The revisions to the Northern Ireland Filtering Scheme, 2020.

1.3 Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

The purpose of the DBS is to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, thus assisting organisations in making safer appointment decisions. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 provides the legislative framework. The DBS decides whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list.

The legislation also stipulates that it is a criminal offence for:

- ◆ A person whose name is on a barred list to make application for regulated activity
- ◆ An organisation knowingly to offer regulated activity to someone whose name appears on a barred list
- ◆ An organisation must also refer to the Police anyone it dismisses or removes from regulated activity, or would have done so if that person had not already left, because that person was felt to be a risk to vulnerable groups.
- ◆ DBS has issued a pamphlet: Barring - Making a Referral. The helpline number is: 01325 953795

1.4 Regulated Activity

This is defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. It is work which a person barred by the DBS must not do. The following is a brief summary of guidelines for work with children and adults:

Children

- A Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice/guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.
- B Work under A is regulated activity only if it is done regularly - by the same person frequently, ie, once a week or more often, or on 4 or more days in a 30 day period, or overnight.

Adults

- A There are six regulated activity categories for adults. Personal care, assistance with household needs and conveying are the areas in which EPC might become involved. Adults are not vulnerable in themselves; it is the activity or service required which renders an adult vulnerable at that point. In the case of adults there does not have to be a specified frequency for the work to qualify as regulated activity.

EPC Application

- A Unsupervised work is regulated activity provided it is hands-on and regular within the 'regulated activity' definition above (A and B): all applicants for unsupervised positions must be checked against the appropriate Barred List(s). (1.3, 2.13 F)
- B EPC still uses AccessNI's Enhanced Check facility (but not checks of the Barred Lists) for applicants whose work will not be within the scope of regulated activity because they are *supervised*. A and B together cover the whole of EPC's POCVA related personnel.
- C Family or personal arrangements are not regulated activity.
- D Parent and Toddler gatherings are not regulated activity so sessions should deal with appointments outside POCVA.

1.5 AccessNI

AccessNI is a branch within the Department of Justice, established in April 2008. It is a Criminal History Disclosure Service and operates within Part V of the Police Act, 1997. It supplies certificates that show whether people who want to carry out certain types of work, for example with children and/or vulnerable adults, have a criminal record or if other important information is known about them. Its checks can include those barred from working with children or adults. This supports safer appointment decisions.

AccessNI provides Basic, Standard and Enhanced checks. EPC uses the enhanced check which discloses an applicant's full criminal

record. The enhanced check is mandatory for the unsupervised category, in any case. Applicants for checks must normally be over 16.

Part 5, Justice Act (NI) 2015 amended by Part V, Police Act 1997 has brought significant changes to AccessNI processes which affect all registered bodies, eg, the management of registered body accounts online, online applications and the single disclosure certificate, now issued only to the applicant.

1.6 Registered Bodies

An AccessNI registered body is a legitimate organisation which is likely to send more than 20 standard or enhanced check applications every year, acts in line with AccessNI's Code of Practice and is entitled to ask an exempted question under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979, ie, is legally entitled to ask an individual to disclose their full criminal history (other than protected cautions and convictions), including spent convictions.

Only approved signatories, lead signatory and counter signatory, are authorised to manage the registered body's disclosure process. AccessNI audits its registered bodies and can impose penalties on a registered body that breaks the conditions of registration. EPC is a registered body.

1.7 Definitions

For the purposes of the Policy

- A *Child*: A person under 18 years of age.
- B *Vulnerable Adult*: Any person aged 18 or over who is in need of assistance by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness, and who is unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation which may be occasioned by the acts or omissions of other people.
- C *Regulated Person*: Anyone who is engaged in any activity in our congregations, paid or unpaid, which involves regular contact with children or vulnerable adults as defined in 1.4 Regulated Activity. The regulated persons list is located in 2.12. (1.4 Adults)

1.8 Committed to Care

The principles and procedures of the EPC policy, *Committed to Care*, must govern our approach to the work in each congregation and organisation and be well publicised in each. The welfare of children and vulnerable adults will, from biblical and legal perspectives, be paramount in all planning and practice.

Committed to Care provides guidance to members of sessions, youth organisations and all leaders and helpers. It sets out measures to protect against abuse and the threat of false accusation, so that:

- A Parents and guardians can feel confident that those they have entrusted to our care are in a safe environment governed by the requisite legal procedures and good practice.
- B Leaders and helpers will know the procedures and be assured of the protection and support of the Church.

1.9 Policy Commitment, Maintenance and Review

Presbytery-POCVA Board

- A The Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church assumes overall responsibility for the EPC policy on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- B Presbytery implements its responsibilities through the POCVA Board, appoints its personnel and defines its responsibilities.
- C The POCVA Board will audit the POCVA activity in each congregation bi-annually or more often if substantial reason exists. The audit will include the session annual reviews required under CC 1.9 I. (Appendix 4 - Audit Procedures - Congregations)
- D In consultation with the POCVA Board, Presbytery will undertake a major review of its children and vulnerable adults protection policy at least every three years, the next review to be completed by Dec 2023. The online location of *Committed to Care* enables continuous updating as the need arises.
- E Presbytery must commission an audit of the policy and its implementation triennially, the audit to be independent of those carried out by the POCVA Board.

Sessions

- F Each EPC congregation must adopt this policy, publicise it and put it into practice in all organisations and activities that involve children and vulnerable adults.
- G Each session will maintain a record of a commitment from each regulated person to access Committed to Care online and to comply with its requirements. (CC 08).
- H Each session will place on permanent display on the POCVA-Youth notice board
 - ◆ A statement that our policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults is on display on the church website www.epcni.org.uk/POCVA
 - ◆ Policy commitment statement (CC 01)
 - ◆ Statutory Protection Agency contacts (CC 18)
 - ◆ Basic First Aid (CC 19 - Appendix 1)
 - ◆ In Case of Fire (CC 20 - Appendix 2)
 - ◆ Church Insurance (CC 21)
- I Each session will carry out an annual review in May of all its POCVA activities in the previous 12 month period to ensure that a safe environment and current best practice procedures are being maintained and that any weaknesses identified are addressed. Session Check List Form will assist (CC 22).

Personnel

- J All regulated persons will confirm annually, with signature, on the Annual Agreement Form (CC 09) that:
 - ◆ They have not been convicted nor are under investigation of abuse or inappropriate behaviour

- ◆ They continue to agree with the policy, *Committed to Care*, accessible online.
- ◆ They will continue to implement its requirements
- K Session must lapse the appointment of any regulated person (RP) who fails to complete the Annual Agreement Form and inform the Board.
- L Each regulated person will receive training as specified in Section 2.18 - Training and Competency.

Section 2

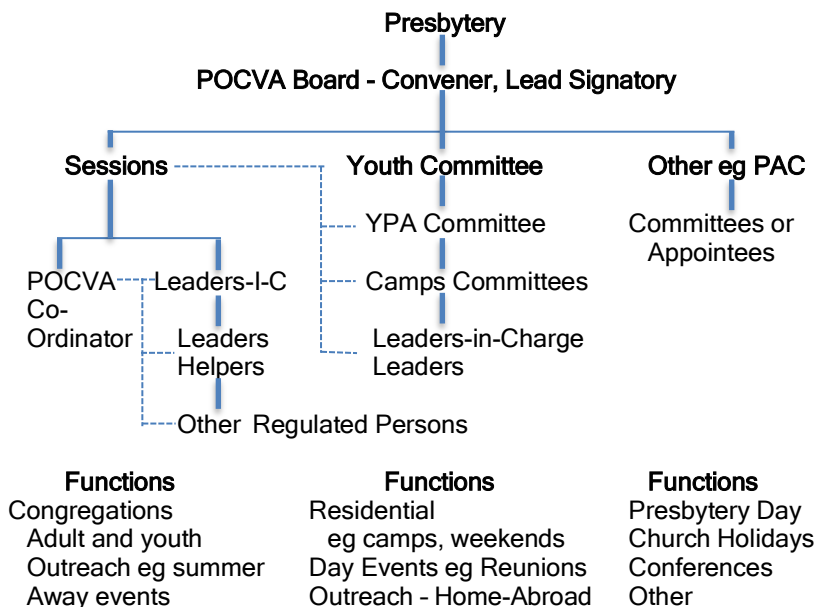
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Cultivating responsible leadership ...

2.1 Responsibility Structure



2.2 Lead and Counter Signatories

- A** Presbytery must nominate Lead and Counter signatories who must be 18 or over. AccessNI must approve them.
- B** The Lead Signatory must be assigned at all times and is the principal point of contact for AccessNI. If a Lead Signatory leaves the position AccessNI must be informed immediately and Presbytery must urgently nominate a replacement and quickly submit an application in respect of that person to facilitate AccessNI clearance.
- C** The Lead Signatory and other nominated Counter Signatories will be responsible for managing the AccessNI procedures. The Counter Signatory(ies) normally carry out the ongoing procedural duties such as processing Disclosure Applications.

2.3 POCVA Board Constitution

- A** Presbytery will appoint its personnel and define its responsibilities. The Board Convener is normally a member of Presbytery, but if Presbytery appoints a non Presbytery member as the Board's Convener-Lead Signatory, Presbytery should appoint a Board contact from its membership.
- B** Appointees must have aptitude for this work and be able to devote priority time to it.
- C** The Board will consist of 6 members. Board members should retire and be replaced on a basis determined by the Board to share the work and extend experience among the congregations.

2.4 POCVA Board Responsibilities

- A To keep the policy under review and advise Presbytery of the need for update and revision.
- B To facilitate all disclosure applications through AccessNI. The Board will receive approved application documents for regulated persons from church sessions and process them, normally online.
- C To carry out AccessNI five year re-checks as specified in 2.14.
- D To assist each session, youth and other committees to ensure the full implementation of the policy at congregational and denomination levels.
- E To audit the implementation of the policy in congregations and youth organisations dealing with each unit in turn within a 2 year period before the next Presbytery review. (1.9 C)
- F To evaluate the suitability of comparative training programmes.
- G To arrange training sessions as specified in 2.18, where necessary in conjunction with appropriate agencies.
- H To have a working knowledge of each agency role and its contact procedures - see 2.6 C.
- I To report in writing to Presbytery, specifying any area where the Board seeks Presbytery response
 - ◆ Half-yearly each February and October
 - ◆ March annually for inclusion in Annual Presbytery Reports
 - ◆ Additionally as situations require

2.5 Congregational Session Responsibilities

- A To be responsible ultimately for all matters relating to the POCVA policy in the congregation, and for all leaders-in-charge, leaders and helpers participating in events on the premises or at other venues.
- B To place on permanent display on the POCVA notice board (Appendix 6–Notice Board Display)
 - ◆ A prominent statement in large, bold font: 'The church's policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, *Committed to Care*, appears on the church's website, www.epcni.co.uk/POCVA.
 - ◆ Session's Policy Commitment Statement (CC 01)
 - ◆ List of its organisations with their objectives and leaders (CC 02)
 - ◆ Current contact list of Statutory Protection Agencies (CC 18)
 - ◆ Basic First Aid (CC 19), In Case of Fire (CC 20), Insurance (CC19)
- C To appoint and confer regularly with the POCVA Co-ordinator, and specify duties additional to those of 2.6.
- D To administer applications from potential regulated persons and to forward them to the POCVA Board for AccessNI processing.
- E To maintain a regulated persons database as required in 2.15 (CC 03).

- F To decide all local personnel appointments after AccessNI checks.
- G To ensure that all personnel have committed to the online Committed to Care—1.8, 1.9 G.
- H To ensure that all personnel attend the training required in 2.18.
- I To ensure that all regulated persons maintain Policy implementation.
- J To obtain from regulated persons an Annual Agreement Form (CC 09) to update personal data and renew commitment to *Committed to Care*.
- K To monitor the absence of regulated persons as required by 2.17.
- L To inspect the incident book regularly.
- M To review the congregation’s organisations each May and file for audit.
- N To maintain all current POCVA-related records in a secure place and to archive those for previous years as required in 3.2.2.
- O To make all records available for POCVA Board audits through the POCVA Co-ordinator.
- P To carry out premises and activity risk assessments at least annually, including COVID-related risks, copy them to all personnel and ensure that they are fully understood.
- Q To ensure that statutory checks, eg, Fire Extinguishing Appliance (FEA), Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), maintenance, health and safety, and disability-friendly standards are maintained throughout the premises.
- R To ensure compliance with transport rules. (3.2.3, 3.3.3, Appendix 3)

2.6 POCVA Co-ordinator Responsibilities

- A To administer, on behalf of session, the record-keeping, training, procedures and documentation required by the policy.
- B To produce all local documentation.
- C To update the local bodies and contacts on the Statutory Protection Agencies List (CC 18) annually in readiness for September and to ensure that each Leader-in-Charge has a working knowledge of each agency role and its contact procedures.
- D To carry out additional POCVA duties specified by the session.

2.7 Leader-in-Charge Responsibilities

For each organisation session will appoint a leader-in-charge who must be a member of EPC, be responsible to the session and liaise with the POCVA Co-ordinator on the duties of 2.6. The responsibilities are

- A To access *Committed to Care* at www.epcni.co.uk/POCVA, acquire comprehensive knowledge of it and apply it personally and through leaders and helpers to all aspects of the organisation.
- B To provide leadership to the organisation’s leaders and helpers.

- C To plan, with session, leaders and helpers, a programme of teaching and activities for each semester and to review the programme each May, as a minimum, to help future planning.
- D To implement the programme in accordance with the policy.
- E To report to the session-POCVA Co-ordinator on any incident or issue relating to the organisation and record in the incident book.
- F When leaders-in-charge need to supplement their teams they must not approach a potential candidate directly but ask the session to implement the selection and recruitment procedure. (2.12)
- G EPC classes all leaders-in-charge as 'Unsupervised' which places them within regulated activity. This requires them to be checked, initially and for re-checks, against the appropriate barred list. (1.4, 2.13 F)

2.8 Leader Responsibilities

Leaders must be 18 or over. All new appointees must be EPC members or EPC adherents involved in EPC life and approved by session. Session will encourage leader-adherents towards EPC membership. Leaders report directly to the leader-in-charge. Leader responsibilities are

- A To access *Committed to Care* at www.epcni.co.uk/POCVA, study and apply it under the direction of the leader-in-charge to all the duties specified.
- B To carry out all required duties under the supervision of the organisation's leader-in-charge and in accordance with the policy.

2.9 Helper Responsibilities

Sessions may appoint helpers to assist with its organisations. They must be 16 or over. Helpers must be EPC members, or adherents who are involved in EPC life and approved by session. Helpers must never be left in charge of any group or organisation. Those of a younger age from within the congregation may be encouraged to help in areas where no serious responsibilities are involved.

2.10 Youth Committee

The youth committee and its sub-committees run youth events, eg, rallies, annual summer camps, reunions and week-ends. (*Committed to Care* Section 3, Part 3) Camp documentation, standardised across the camps as far as workable, is available as supplements to *Committed to Care*.

2.11 Staffing Ratios

- A There must be a minimum of two leaders or helpers present,. When both girls and boys are present every effort should be made to have both male and female leaders. Care must be taken at the beginning and end of activities that supervision does not become inadequate. Do not begin if this is the case, and finish early if it threatens to be the case. Leader attendance management by the

leader-in-charge is very important.

- B** Staffing ratios also apply to transport in minibuses and cars.

Standard recommended supervision ratios for indoor children's activities are

- 0-2 years 1 staff member to 3 children
- 2-3 years 1 staff member to 4 children
- 3-7 years 1 staff member to 8 children
- 8 years + 2 staff members to 20 children
1 additional staff member is required for every 10 extra children

For outdoor activities

- 3-7 years 1 staff member to 6 children
- 8-13 years 2 staff members to 15 children
1 additional staff member is required for every 8 extra children
- 13 years+ 2 staff members to 20 persons
1 additional staff member is required for every 10 extra persons

2.12 Selection and Recruitment Policy

To ensure the suitability of all involved in work with children and vulnerable adults a formal selection and recruitment policy must be followed for all new appointments. This includes anyone who has potential for regular contact with children and vulnerable adults as defined in 4.1. The 'Regulated Persons List' can include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Presbytery Members | Leaders-in-Charge |
| Session Members | Leaders and Helpers |
| Board and Committee Members | Organists |
| Students for the Ministry | Caretakers and Cleaners |
| POCVA Co-ordinator | |

Each regulated person must be appointed by the session of the congregation in which they worship.

2.13 Appointment Procedure—New Applicants

Appendix 5 - Online and Electronic Facilities for procedural options for documentation. The electronic facility is usually more efficient and cost-free. Electronic records should be deleted when they have served their purpose.

- A** *Procedure.* CC 04 Appointment Procedure for Sessions—summarises and records each step of the process.
- B** *Application Forms.* Each potential candidate must complete the Regulated Persons Application Form (CC 05). The form incorporates a declaration regarding any past criminal offences, any pending cases, and any investigation of complaints relating to children or vulnerable adults. From March 2020 AccessNI will filter out from standard and enhanced certificates old and minor convictions and non-court disposals in accordance with its

revised Filtering Scheme in NI arrangements.

- C** *Referees.* The names of two referees must be given and written references obtained from them (CC 06). One should be acquainted with the applicant's work with Children/Vulnerable Adults, one should be from outside the applicant's congregation, and neither should be a member of the applicant's family. Where an applicant is a member of the appointing congregation one reference is sufficient provided it is outside the congregation.
- D** *Interview.* Session must appoint two interviewers one of them a member of session. They should have a set of prepared questions to assess the applicant's suitability; they should outline the requirements of *Committed to Care* to the applicant.
- E** *Identification.* A key element of the AccessNI checking process is the establishment of an applicant's ID. Form CC 07 A - ID Validation requests the applicant to provide selected items of ID for the POCVA Co-ordinator. On receipt, the POCVA Co-ordinator should complete form CC 07 C - ID Verification.
- F** *Barred List Checks.* These are required for unsupervised activity. (See 1.3 Disclosure & Barring Service and 1.4 Regulated Activity)
- EPC normally treats leaders-in-charge as unsupervised.
 - The particular unsupervised role will determine which barred list(s) the applicant will be checked against. For example, leaders-in-charge of a youth organisation will normally just be checked against the children's barred list.
 - Form CC 07 E - Barred List(s) Procedure should be sent to an applicant after session confirms the appointment, subject to AccessNI clearance.
- G** *Recommendation.* The interviewers will make a recommendation to the session on CC 04.
- H** *Submission to POCVA Board.* When session approves the application, the POCVA Co-ordinator must send the following completed documents to the Board for approval
- AccessNI ID Verification Form (CC 07 C), page 1.
 - Written Barred List(s) permission for 'unsupervised' applicants (See CC 07 E)
- I** *AccessNI Disclosure Application Procedure*
- When the documents have been sent to the Board's Counter Signatory as in 2.13 H above the POCVA Co-ordinator should send form CC 07 D - Online Application to the applicant.
 - When the applicant submits the online application it appears in the Counter Signatory's inbox for examination and approval
 - The Counter Signatory will advise the POCVA Co-ordinator of AccessNI's certificate statement.
- The Applicant should not be asked to make an online application until all the documents have been sent to the Counter Signatory - 2.13 H.*
- J** *Recruitment Document Retention and Audit*
- The data protection guidance for the retention of application

papers is that it should be no longer than necessary for the purpose for which they were processed. This gives room for discretion. A workable norm is retention for one year or until the next Board audit, whichever comes second.

- AccessNI now requires retention of copies of inspected ID documents for new applicants and re-checks for 90 days during which period they can require to inspect them. Please retain these copies or phone photographs for 90 days; do not send them to the Counter-Signatory. CC 07 C, page 1, is the only document the C-S requires.

K *Applications to AccessNI.* All applications must now be online. For applicants with no online access someone else can provide it, but the applicant must create a personal account. 2.13 L

L *3rd Party Applications.* The AccessNI system does facilitate 3rd Party Applications - where someone uses an existing AccessNI account to make an application on behalf of someone else - but since this raises potential data protection and other issues, AccessNI strongly recommends that Regulated Bodies desist from the practice. The EPC position is that our regulated persons must not facilitate 3rd party applications in any way.

M *Session Decision.*

- Only the applicant receives a Disclosure Certificate from AccessNI. It is usually an electronic version and can be shared electronically where required
- If nothing to disclose, AccessNI inserts (N) in the tracking; Counter Signatory will inform the POCVA Co-ordinator
- In cases not coded (N) the session should request sight of the Disclosure Certificate from the applicant. If the certificate was issued electronically it must be shared electronically. (It has an authenticating watermark that does not print)
- Session should not make an appointment until the contents of the disclosure certificate are known

2.14 Appointment Procedure—Re-Checks

A The POCVA Board will normally re-check all regulated persons with AccessNI every five years. The Board initiates these re-checks through POCVA Co-ordinators.

B The POCVA Co-ordinator should send form CC 07 B AccessNI - ID Validation to the regulated person being re-checked. On receipt the POCVA Co-ordinator should

- Give form CC 07 D - AccessNI Online Application to the regulated person being re-checked
- Send to the Counter Signatory
 - ◆ CC 07 C - ID Verification, page 1.
 - ◆ CC 07 E, Barred Lists permission, if applicable

2.15 Regulated Persons Database

- A** The Board will maintain a database of regulated persons in 3 sections - Current, Re-Checks, Ceased. It contains names of regulated persons, congregation, dates of successive AccessNI checks, supervised/unsupervised status, barred list checks, dates of cessation and relevant notes including description of duties.
- B** The database will calculate and diary the re-check dates.
- C** The Board will update each congregation's 3 section database to the POCVA Co-ordinator who should advise the Board of any changes.

2.16 Cross Denominational Appointments

- A** Appointments made in one EPC congregation are valid in principle for another EPC congregation or for EPC denominational functions such as Camp or YPA leadership on the following conditions
 - The regulated person has been appointed by the donor session in accordance with the appointment procedure (2.12-2.14)
 - The receptor session, or denominational activity such as camps, makes their need known to the donor session and obtain that session's approval prior to approaching the prospective leader.
 - The donor session is kept informed of the performance of the person
- B** When leaders-in-charge need to supplement their teams they must not approach a potential candidate directly but ask the session concerned to implement the selection-recruitment procedure (2.12-2.14). It is sessions who are responsible for selection and recruitment.
- C** POCVA Co-ordinators should record cross-denominational appointments involving their own congregation.

2.17 Absence of Regulated Persons

- A** When a regulated person is away from the home congregation for any continuous period of 12 months or more session must lapse that regulated person's appointment and advise the Board.
- B** If re-appointment is to be made on the person's return the Appointment Procedure—New Applicants (2.12-2.13) must be followed again in its entirety.
- C** General non-attendance at the home congregation or absence from POCVA duties are matters for the particular sessions. The Board must be informed of any changes to appointment status.

2.18 Training and Competency

- A** The POCVA Board will arrange all training for EPC regulated persons including any specialised training it deems necessary.

- B** EPC is required to use accredited training agencies who provide relevant training such as first aid, resources, and advice on protection procedures. The POCVA Board will assess the course suitability and practicality for EPC needs.
- C** Receipt of all training (excluding EPC in-house training) must be recorded and kept, including the signatures of those who have received it on Receipt of Training Form (CC 10).
- D** Sessions must keep a database register of all training received and when refresher training is due on the Training Register (CC 11).
- E** The POCVA Board will build our own internal standards through an EPC in-house training programme. The key text book will be *Committed to Care*. The course will consist of a single session and will be delivered triennially.
- F** Before the organisations begin each September, Sessions must provide local training for all its regulated persons to apply the requirements of its premises and activities risk assessments. (3.2.4)

Section 3

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Section 3–Part 1 Interacting with Children and Vulnerable Adults

3.1.1 Abuse

There are various categories of abuse, with some of the signs and symptoms:

Physical Abuse occurs when bodily injury is inflicted through physical assault, or by the administration of harmful substances. Symptoms may include

- A Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns.
- B Improbable excuses or refusal to reveal and explain injuries.
- C Aggressive and self-destructive tendencies.
- D Fear of physical contact or help, a shrinking back if touched.

Emotional-Psychological Abuse occurs when someone speaks or acts in such a way as to make a child or vulnerable person feel unloved, unwanted, and rejected. Symptoms may include

- A Delays in physical, mental, and emotional development.
- B Continual self-belittling.
- C Over-reaction to mistakes.
- D Sudden speech disorders and neurotic behaviour.
- E Extreme fear of new situations.
- F Inappropriate response to pain and a tendency to inflict self injuries.

Online Abuse can occur through the web, social media, online games or mobile phones. It can take the form of grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse or cyberbullying. It may happen only online or in association with other forms of abuse. It can be from people whom the victims know or from strangers and it can be very difficult to escape from it since media such as mobile phones are used.

Bullying occurs when a child or vulnerable adult is being persecuted physically, morally or verbally; being harassed, oppressed, ridiculed, or teased excessively. It is an extension of physical and emotional abuse. Symptoms may include

- A Appearing frightened and uneasy.
- B Unexplained or poorly explained bruises or injuries indicative of kicking or hitting.
- C Expressing feelings of worthlessness and self-hatred.
- D Tendency to withdraw and reluctance to be involved in activities with others.

Neglect occurs when a child or vulnerable adult is denied such basic care as nutritional and hygienic necessities, medical care, and human companionship. Symptoms can include

- A Persistent hunger and inadequate clothing.
- B Constant tiredness and poor personal hygiene.
- C Untreated medical conditions.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable person is drawn into any physical contact that is sexually orientated, or shown sexually explicit materials, eg, pornographic pictures or videos. Symptoms may include

- A** Sexual preoccupation that can include the drawing of sexually explicit pictures or use of related language.
- B** Being over-affectionate in an inappropriate sexual way.
- C** Regression to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking in the case of children.
- D** Personality changes shown in clinging, insecurity, or withdrawal.
- E** Self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia.
- F** Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating.

3.1.2 Recognising the Symptoms of Abuse

Children under our care may have been abused elsewhere. In our society, many children and vulnerable persons are induced into experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Some have witnessed domestic violence and disorder with damaging effects in their lives. Others have been exploited through media channels – the internet in particular. We must be alert to signs of distress and symptoms of mistreatment, and if we have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse, then it must be brought to the attention of the appropriate Statutory Protection Agency.

3.1.3 Contact with Children and Vulnerable Adults

Leaders must be aware of their own vulnerability.

- A** It is advisable not to make unnecessary physical contact with young people, and to exercise common sense when offering comfort and reassurance to a child.
- B** A leader or helper must not be alone with a child or vulnerable adult on any occasion or invite such persons to their home alone. Contact issues with children or vulnerable adults extends to communication though the internet, social media and mobile phones. (Appendix 7 - Social Media Guidelines)
- C** If a child should wish to talk confidentially to a leader, another leader must know what is taking place, and, if possible, they must remain visible to others.
- D** No behaviour is permitted which could be construed as having sexual overtones, e.g. children must be sent (not taken) to the toilet. There may be exceptional circumstances when very young or disabled children require help with toileting, but this must be done only with parental consent where possible and two leaders must be in attendance.
- E** Children and vulnerable adults often need someone to whom they feel they can speak in confidence. It is important that details concerning personal or family life that have been confided in leaders and helpers must not be passed on. But at the same time we must not allow considerations of confidentiality to override the right of children and vulnerable persons to be protected from harm. (3.1.6 Incidents, Complaints, Statutory Referral)

3.1.4 Code of Conduct

The Code expresses our required standards of behaviour. This helps the smooth running of the organisation and the exercise of discipline, especially when the co-operation of the young people and parents is obtained in advance.

Sufficient copies of the Code must be displayed in the premises and discussed with the children of each organisation at the beginning of each semester. It must be implemented consistently and firmly. Participants must agree that they will

- A Respect the authority of the leaders and helpers.
- B Respect the views and feelings of other participants.
- C Respect the personal privacy and property of others.
- D Show due care and responsibility for the equipment and property of the organisation.
- E Regard the use of nicotine, alcohol, drugs, or other stimulants is unacceptable.
- F Regard bad language and verbal abuse of others is unacceptable.
- G Regard bullying, quarrelling and physical abuse of others is unacceptable.
- H Accept the exercise of discipline when the Code of Conduct is violated.
- I Accept that minibus rules, eg wearing of seat belts, must obeyed.

3.1.5 Discipline and Control

Co-operation and cultivation of harmonious relationships lessen the need for disciplinary measures. When it becomes necessary, discipline must be exercised in a controlled, sensitive and caring manner. There must always be clearly defined lines of accountability.

Physical Force. Striking, smacking, or manhandling must be avoided at all times. In exceptional circumstances where a child or adult has become violent or obstructive, physical restraint may be necessary to prevent them from harming themselves, injuring others, or causing damage to property. A second leader must always be involved, and care taken to apply only minimum force to bring the situation under control.

Verbal Exchange. Words can be as harmful as a heavy hand, and here too care is needed. Yelling at the unruly usually invites a reply in kind. Angry words cannot be recalled, and frequently give the impression of 'put down', humiliation, or rejection. Avoid comparing and contrasting the behaviour of others, and concentrate on securing co-operation again. Rebukes are better administered in a more private context with another leader present or at least nearby to observe.

Family Involvement. There may be times when it is necessary to notify parents or family members of anti-Code-of-Conduct behaviour. Their co-operation may help to bring about a resolution of the problem. Close consultation with family is vital if persistent unacceptable behaviour leads to expulsion from the organisation as the only solution.

Spiritual Priorities. At all times the spiritual good of those to whom we minister must be uppermost in our minds. This will be our strength when difficulties arise, and discipline needs to be exercised. We must set a good example of working together and encouraging one another. We must work for the highest good of each one present, even the unruly, praying for them and asking God for wisdom and understanding in handling every situation.

3.1.6 Incidents, Complaints, Statutory Referrals

- A** An incident book must be kept on the premises in a location known to the leaders of each organisation and accessible to them.
- B** Details of accidents, injuries, complaints, or accusations, however trivial, must be recorded as soon after the incident or report as is possible.
- C** Details should include date and time, names of those involved, statements, first aid treatment and discipline exercised.
- D** The entry must be signed by the leader-in-charge or leader who can verify the facts.

Incidents Considered to be Minor

- A** These should be recorded in the Incident Book (see 3.1.6).
- B** A complaint of a minor or general nature about the running of the organisation must be referred to the Leader-in-Charge.
- C** Where a follow-up becomes necessary or advisable the Leaders who made the entry in the Incident Book should complete CC 15 Incident Report Form.
- D** The Leader-in-Charge should discuss further action with the Session.

More Serious Cases with Statutory Potential

- A** In cases of or suspicion of abuse or neglect, of unacceptable behaviour by a regulated person or where confidentiality or follow-up with a statutory agency may be necessary, a more detailed account of the incident must be recorded on form CC 16 Concern/Complaint Report Form and given to the session.
- B** Such cases, with related documentation, must be kept securely for a minimum of 25 years. (I cannot verify the 25 year duration)
- C** Act upon such cases immediately; the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- D** Ensure that the complainant, or the person providing the information, is freed from fear of recrimination; give re-assure that reporting is the proper course.
- E** Leaders receiving a complaint must never promise to keep secrets. Confidentiality must not override the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- F** Leaders should listen sympathetically and be concerned to get all the facts. At the earliest possible opportunity they should make written notes covering the context in which the report was given, what was reported, and what was said in reply. They should retain these notes securely even after their use to write a report.

- G Leaders, on receiving a complaint, should record it on CC 16 Concern-Complaint Report Form and notify the leader-in-charge and the session.
- H The session should complete the CC 17 Report Acknowledgement Form and give it to the persons who completed CC 16.
- I If anyone in the complaints procedure is in any way the subject of the complaint there is a conflict of interest and that person should withdraw from the investigating role. Advice from the Statutory Protection Agency on the point may be appropriate.

Referral to Statutory Protection Agencies

- A We have a responsibility as a voluntary organisation to refer a child/young person to the appropriate branch of social services if we believe or suspect that the child/young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- B The session have responsibility for all statutory referral decisions.
- C Session, leader-in-charge and POCVA Co-ordinator must consult and agree on the course of action. Presbytery and the POCVA Board must be kept abreast of developments.
- D The procedures and implications of statutory referrals can be complex so it is best to first seek advice from the Gateway Service who will guide as to best practice for all aspects of the case. Contact numbers are recorded on form CC 18 - Statutory Contact Details, displayed on the POCVA Notice Board.
- E In cases of emergency, after consultation as in B and C above, refer directly to PSNI. Contact numbers are recorded on form CC 18 - Statutory Contact Details, displayed on the POCVA Notice Board.

3.1.7 Offender Management

The rehabilitation of offenders is complex and controversial. The following procedure should be followed in the event of a Risk to Children Offender beginning to attend any activities in a congregation:

- A The session should establish, by the proper procedures, the offence and the legal status of the offender, eg in relation to barred lists (see section 1.3) and regulated activity (see 1.4 and 1.7).
- B The session should contact the Gateway Service for advice on best practice. Contact numbers are recorded on form CC 18 - Statutory Contact Details, displayed on the POCVA Notice Board.
- C The session should use the Gateway advice to further understanding of the basic principles involved.
- D Following Gateway advice, given in the light of the offence and offender status, the session should define boundaries, with the commitment of the offender to comply with them, to protect the children and youth in the congregation, and to clarify for the congregation and the offender what relationships and engagements are permissible.
- E Session may consider appointing a contact-mentor for the person.
- F The congregation should extend normal friendship and support to the offender in the light of C and D above.

Section 3—Part 2 Local Church Activities

3.2.1 Activities Programme

- A Teaching.** The primary objective of our work is to teach the Word of God and to communicate the Gospel. It is the responsibility of the leader-in-charge to plan this programme for each semester in conjunction with the session, leaders and helpers and to review the programme by May each year to help future planning.
- B Enjoyment.** We must show that a Christian environment is not just fully compatible with enjoyment and recreation but the best environment for it. Aim for a good balance of time between activities.
- C Games.**
- ◆ There is a risk of physical injury in most games, especially where sports equipment is used (e.g. hockey sticks or bats). Every care must be taken to reduce risk to a minimum
 - ◆ Proper supervision and instruction in the rules of games is essential, and the playing area cleared of all items likely to cause injury. Leaders participating in games must be especially careful, avoiding horseplay and abrupt or forceful contact with children.
 - ◆ Some 'high-risk' activities may require trained instructors and therefore may not be covered by normal church insurance policies. Leaders must check before arranging anything deemed to be high-risk (CC 21). In such circumstances special permission from parents will be required on Trip-Outing Consent Form, CC 13

3.2.2 Record Maintenance

- A** All records are confidential. Recruitment documents, attendance and transport registers, incident records and completed CC Forms, must be kept on site in a secure unit, eg safe or a fire-proof cabinet.
- B** It is the responsibility of the POCVA Co-ordinator to ensure the proper keeping, security and archiving of records in the congregation.
- C** Record keeping must comply with GDPR regulations and with the EPC POCVA Privacy Statement which is abbreviated on certain CC forms.
- D** The attendance register must record the names of all children and leaders present at each meeting. Entries must be verified by the signatures of the leader-in-charge and one leader.
- E** Particular retention periods apply to recruitment and ID categories - see 2.13 J.
- F** Records must be retained on site for one year beyond the end of the second semester and remain secure and accessible thereafter. After the period of local retention, records may be transferred to the Presbytery archive when it is set up and its procedures established.
- G** All records must be kept up to date and in a permanent state of audit-readiness in the following heads in binders

- Regulated Person Applications
- Annual Agreement Forms
- Training Register
- Committed to Care Acknowledgement Forms
- Parental Consent Forms
- Trip-Outing Consent Forms
- Attendance Registers
- Transport

3.2.3 Transport: Appendix 3—Transport for Detailed Statement

Minibuses

- A** Drivers must be over 21 years of age but the Insurer may have a higher minimum age.
- B** Drivers share the responsibility for ensuring that
- ◆ All current legislation for transporting passengers is complied with
 - ◆ Driving licence is valid (A PCV licence will always be required for a vehicle with more than 16 passenger seats, and for vehicles with 9-16 seats unless the exemption applies (Appendix 3))
 - ◆ Insurance cover is in order (some policies are on a named driver basis and may have a minimum driver age)
 - ◆ The vehicle is road-worthy
 - ◆ Each person has a personal forward-facing seat
 - ◆ Each passenger wears a seat belt throughout the journey
 - ◆ Each passenger must fix own seat belt
- C** When children are being carried, a leader/helper must be on board and in a position to control the access door. The leader/helper must not be alone with passengers in a separate passenger compartment.
- D** Church minibuses must carry a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. They must be checked regularly for functionality and supplies.
- E** Register. The helper must record
- ◆ Date and time of journey
 - ◆ Pick-up and drop-off places.
 - ◆ Names of driver and helper(s)
 - ◆ Names of passengers
 - ◆ Total numbers of passengers on each journey
- F** Drivers must know and follow normal legal procedures for a breakdown or accident; the priority to the well-being of passengers.

Private Cars

- A** Drivers are responsible to ensure that
- ◆ Insurance cover is adequate
 - ◆ Overloading does not take place (it may invalidate insurance)
 - ◆ Seat belts are worn by all passengers however short the journey
- B** Drivers must always be accompanied by a leader or helper. It is imperative that no leader or helper is left alone with a child-children

when driving, unless the child-children are family members.

- C The driver must record the date, time, names of driver, helper and passengers and have it filed with the transport records.

3.2.4 Premises and Activities Risks

Safety is a priority at all times. This is the responsibility of every leader or helper. Each must be trained in awareness of potential dangers and good procedure.

- A *Risk Assessment.* A written risk assessment for the premises, including COVID-related risks, in which organisations meet, and for the planned activities, must be provided and updated annually in readiness for September and more often if change or experience prompts it. (2.5 P).
- B *Disabled Persons.* There must be compliance with the general health and safety regulations governing public buildings, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requiring buildings and facilities to be open and accessible to all.
- C *Evacuation.* The leaders of all organisations must have a fire drill at the beginning of each semester. Fire exits must be clearly marked and maintained free from obstacles (CC 20 - Appendix 2).
- D *Fire Extinguishing Appliances.* The leaders of all organisations must have training in the use of fire extinguishers and know the location of each appliance (CC 20 - Appendix 2).
- E *Kitchen Area.* This is a high-risk area in any building. Children must not be allowed into the kitchen other than supervised transit through it. A fire blanket must always be available (CC 20 - Appendix 2).
- F *Car Park.* Special care must be taken with moving vehicles, particularly before and after meetings, when children are about – and at pick-up and drop-off places. The ground must be kept clear of obstructions and trip-slip hazards, eg leaves, algae, fungi, frost and ice.
- G *Telephone.* Always establish telephone access for emergency use.

3.2.5 First Aid

- A An adequate first aid kit must be available on the premises at all times, at a location known to all leaders.
- B It must be re-stocked at the beginning of each semester and checked regularly during each semester. One or more qualified first aiders should be formally appointed to do this.
- C There must be at least one trained first aider available on the premises on each occasion that an organisation meets. (2.18)
- D All leaders must be familiar with basic first aid procedures, and able to treat minor and superficial injuries. Some guidelines for treating minor conditions are available (CC 19 and Appendix 1). All other injuries must be referred to the person's GP or a local A & E.
- E Leaders must be aware from parental consent forms of those with medical conditions and their medication. This medication must not

be administered without the consent of parents or doctors.

- F At least two leaders must be present when treatment is given. A leader must inform parents of the injury, however minor.
- G All injuries and treatments must be recorded in the incident book.

3.2.6 Parental Awareness and Consent

Good co-operation with parents is needed, and it is important that they be informed of the nature of activities in which children are to be involved.

- A Parental Consent Form (CC 12) must be completed at the start of each year. One form covers all organisations with which the child is involved. The form must be accompanied by contact details for the organisation(s) and the Code of Conduct (CC 14) requesting parents' help in achieving its standards. (3.1.4)
- B The completed consent forms must be locked secured on the premises and accessible to each leader-in-charge for relevant information.
- C Trip-Outing Consent Form (CC 13) is necessary for away activities. The child may not attend the away activity without the completed form.

3.2.7 Day Outing Events—Local and Denominational

- A Use the Trip-Outing Consent Form (CC 13) to inform parents or guardians of the purpose, activities, cost, means of transport, times of departure and return and for their signed consent with contact information. Any alteration to plans must be notified and agreed before the event takes place.
- B Children cannot be taken if the procedure in 3.2.7 A has not been followed.
- C All children being taken on the outing must be listed on a separate sheet for ready checking and counting.
- D The set of CC 13 forms and the list should be returned to the POCVA Co-ordinator for filing.
- E Produce a written risk assessment to ensure that the venue and event is suitable for those being taken, particularly those with special needs. Have an alternative plan in case of emergency.
- F Ensure that insurance cover is in place for intended activities.
- G Ensure that the leaders-children staffing ratio is adequate (2.11) and that leaders know their responsibilities.

3.2.8 Holiday Bible Clubs

- A Holiday Bible Clubs are normally regulated activity (see 1.4 and 1.7), so the events are governed by *Committed to Care*.
- B Parental consent is therefore required for children to attend but because of the short-term nature of these events it is usually more difficult to obtain it.
- C A parental consent form (following the wording of CC 12 and its privacy statement) should be included in the advertising brochure with a highlight that it is necessary and that children should bring it

- on the first day.
- D On-line registration, explained in the brochure, is an effective means of obtaining parental consent.
- E The parents of those who do not bring consent on their first day should be contacted.
- F Attendance should be recorded daily in the attendance register by name of child.
- G Church transport records (3.2.3) should be kept daily, collated and given to the POCVA Co-ordinator for filing.
- H Parental consent forms should be collated and given to the POCVA Co-ordinator for filing.

Section 3–Part 3 Residential Events

Committed to Care applies in its totality to the appointment and training of leaders and to everything that takes place in connection with all EPC residential events. Section 3, Part 3 applies to all residential events with specific references being made where appropriate, eg to camps.

3.3.1 Training for Leaders in Residential Aspects

- A Specific training should deal with preparation for the particular event and location-related matters.
- B All leaders should give key attention to personal spiritual preparation.

3.3.2 Event Preparation

1 *Advance Visit*

- A The leader-in-charge, with at least one leader and/or administrator, must visit the residential centre well in advance.
- B Obtain a copy of the centre regulations and ensure understanding, eg fire escapes, fire procedures, fire and intruder alarms, 'out of bounds' areas and whatever else arises from either side.
- C Confirm that the centre's premises, facilities and kitchens comply with health and safety standards.
- D List contact numbers for the centre person(s)-in-charge, doctors, hospitals, police and statutory agencies.
- E Write a report of the visit with sketch plans detailing facilities, issues eg those with special needs, contact numbers. Develop a preparation checklist for future use.
- F Produce a written risk assessment for the premises and activities.

2 Insurance

- A Confirm in writing with the Insurance Company or Broker that the EPC Liability Policy covers the entire residential programme.
- B The Insurers will require the risk assessment and full event programme details eg, activities, venues, durations, ages, supervision.
- C Check insurance of outside organisations being used.

3 Transport - Appendix 3

- A** Take account of emergency situations and the number of available drivers when making transport arrangements.
- B** Hire vehicles only from reputable companies. Confirm the insurance cover and the amount of excesses. Check driver age stipulations.

4 Event Programme

- A** Construct a detailed daily programme. Demonstrate the centrality of the spiritual side.
- B** Build in contingency plans to deal with weather and other eventualities.
- C** Take account of the age range, gender mix and aptitudes.
- D** Provide all leaders with a copy of the programme.
- E** Provide accredited training for leaders involved in specialist activities such as outdoor pursuits. Comply with outdoor centre regulations.

5 Incident Report Book

- A** Prepare in advance of event for the recording of all incidents including disagreements and disciplinary action. See 3.1.6.
- B** Specify its location to the leaders.

6 First Aid

- A** Ensure that at least one leader holds a current first aid child-related certificate.
- B** Appoint a certified first aider as medical officer.
- C** Consider joint medical officers or dividing the event between them.
- D** The MO(s) should provide a first aid kit adequately stocked for the whole week.
- E** The MO(s) should decide on the location of the First Aid kit.
- F** The FA kit should be robust and portable for transport to outings.
- G** Have any injuries which are more than minor or superficial treated by a local GP or A & E.
- H** Record all accidents, treatments and incidents in the incident report book.
- I** Copies of health forms, securely located, should be taken on trips.

7 Attendees and Parents

- A** Residential camp documentation shall be standardised as far as workable across all camps.
- B** The residential Parental Consent Form should include all relevant attendee details along with medical and dietary requirements.
- C** Provide all parents with a full written statement of event activities.
- D** Consider a Junior camp parents' night to discuss the event.
- E** Provide parents with a list of leader contact numbers—generally those of the leader-in-charge and two other leaders.

- F Provide all parents with a copy of the code of conduct.
- G List parent contact numbers from the Parental Consent Form - Camps and provide to each leader to maintain in ready access.
- H Each POCVA Co-ordinator should be given a list of local attendees.

3.3.3 At the Event

1 Health

- A Administer medication in accordance with the Parental Consent Form.
- B The Medical Officer should log all sicknesses or incidents requiring medical treatment, however minor and administration of tablets
- C As a priority, inform parents of each instance of sickness or injury.

2 Safety and Security

- A Display the relevant Centre house rules prominently.
- B By the first night
 - ◆ Acquaint attendees with the centre, rules and code of conduct
 - ◆ Explain fire precautions
 - ◆ Carry out a fire drill to establish all exit routes/assembly points
- C Leader-in-charge must ensure that the premises are securely locked at night and that all access doors are safety-controlled during the day.
- D Leaders should know the location of fire alarm points and fire extinguishing appliances and be able to use them.

3 Cash

- A Give consideration to the amount of cash kept on the premises—bank, tuck shop, book stalls and cash float all contribute.
- B Appoint a Banker(s) for Junior and Inters camps.
- C Ensure that attendees do not carry too much cash with them.

4 Leadership and Supervision

- A Hold leader meetings as the leader-in-charge appoints to pray and to review the programme and emerging issues.
- B Good preparation will reduce the need for meetings at the event.
- C Specified supervision levels must be maintained at all times, day and night, even during leader meetings.
- D Attendees should be allocated to specific leaders, usually by dorm.

5 Dorms

- A Provide separate sleeping accommodation for leaders and attendees and for males and females.
- B Arrangements for leaders sleeping in dorms must satisfy the demands of child care and the dangers of child abuse. Attendee ages and dorm sizes are factors affecting the arrangements. A leader should never sleep alone in a dorm with a child.
- C Ensure that the bunks or camp beds provided are of sound

construction, safely erected and laid out.

6 Mobile Phones and Cameras

- A** Mobile phones, ipods, tablets, cameras and similar items of equipment are not permitted at Junior or Inters camps.. Attendees who bring them must leave them with their leader until the end of the event.
- B** There may be exceptional situations at Junior-Inters Camp which require the replacement of this rule by another.
- C** At Senior camp the controlled use of mobile phones and electronic items is at the discretion of the leader-in-charge.

7 Discipline—In Addition to the Committed to Care Standard Policy

- A** If an attendee breaches the code of conduct, seek to resolve it by re-explanation and persuasion.
- B** Where behaviour problems persist the offending attendee(s) may be sent home. The leader-in-charge should first contact the parents.

8 Records

- A** Records are long-term documents. Accusations can arise years later.
- B** The leader-in-charge should maintain a record of the daily events.
- C** Record information clearly and keep all records securely during the event.
- D** Each leader-in-charge must arrange for the security of residential records, having them transferred to a defined facility each year.

9 Audit Procedures

- A** Starting in 2020 the Board will audit triennially the records for all residential events. The pattern will follow Appendix 4.

Section 4

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Ensuring Orderly Management ...

4.1 List of POCVA Forms

- CC 01 Session's Policy Commitment
- CC 02 Session's Appointments
- CC 03 Regulated Persons Database
- CC 04 Appointment Procedure for Sessions
- CC 05 Regulated Persons Application Form
- CC 06 Reference Request Form
- CC 07 A AccessNI - ID Validation Form (New Applicant)
- CC 07 B AccessNI - ID Validation Form (Re-Checks)
- CC 07 C AccessNI - ID Verification
- CC 07 D AccessNI - Online Application Instructions
- CC 07 E AccessNI - Barred List(s) Procedure
- CC 08 RP Commitment to Online *Committed to Care*
- CC 09 Annual Agreement Form
- CC 10 Receipt of Training Form
- CC 11 Training Register
- CC 12 Parental Consent Form
- CC 13 Trip-Outing Consent Form
- CC 14 Code of Conduct
- CC 15 Incident Report Form
- CC 16 Concern-Complaint Report Form
- CC 17 Concern-Complaint Report Acknowledgement Form
- CC 18 Statutory Protection Agency Contacts
- CC 19 Basic First Aid
- CC 20 In Case of Fire
- CC 21 Church Insurance
- CC 22 Session Checklist
- CC 23 Vehicle Roadworthiness Form—Owner
- CC 24 Vehicle Roadworthiness Form—User
- CC 25 Minibus Outing Form—Residential Events
- CC 26 Risk Assessment Template
- CC 27 Risk Assessment Template - COVID

4.2 CC Forms Availability

- A CC Forms will be made available electronically to POCVA Co-ordinators
- B CC 19 and CC 20 appear as Appendices 1 and 2 to *Committed to Care*.

4.3 Local Adaptation

Forms must be 'personalised' with the local Church address and a photograph of the Church building may be added. Otherwise they must not be altered.

4.4 Local Document Production

The POCVA Co-ordinator must produce all local POCVA CC forms that the local organisations require.

Appendix 1 Basic First Aid

First aid materials should be available when and where any activity takes place. They should be regularly checked and replenished. Leaders should be familiar with basic procedures and be able to treat minor and superficial injuries. More serious injuries should be referred to the patient's GP or the local Casualty Department.

If treatment requires removal of clothing at least two leaders should be present, and all injuries should be recorded in the Incident Book. Leaders should also be aware of any present with special medical conditions, and of medication being taken. Medication must not be administered without the written consent of parents or doctors.

Burns

What to do

- A Remove the patient from the source of danger.
- B Reassure the patient - burns can be very painful and frightening.
- C Cool the affected area immediately. Hold it under cold running water for as long as the patient can bear - at least 10-20 minutes.
- D Cover the injury with a non-adhesive dressing (melolin).

What Not to do

- A Never put any fats, oils or lotions on a burn.
- B Never break a blister caused by a burn.
- C Never use plasters to cover a burn or cover it with anything fluffy.
- D Never try to remove clothing that is stuck fast to a burn.

Bleeding

Minor Injuries

- A Hold the affected area under a cold tap or wash with soap and water or antiseptic lotion.
- B Protect the injury with a small dressing or plaster.

Severe Bleeding

- A Press directly on to the wound with a clean pad, handkerchief, or your hand.
- B Elevate the affected part to slow down the blood flow.
- C Lay the patient down.
- D Place a sterile dressing over the cut and tie directly over the wound to apply pressure on it.
- E Get medical help – take the patient to an A & E.

Foreign body or Broken Bone

- A If something protrudes from the wound, DO NOT press directly on it.
- B Raise the affected part and press the area above and below the object or bone end.
- C Never remove a foreign body from the wound as it may be plugging it, preventing bleeding. To pull it out may cause more damage.
- D Take the patient to an A & E.

Epileptic Fits

There are two forms of seizure in epilepsy. They are now generally referred to as *Major Seizures* and *Absences*.

Recognizing the Symptoms

Major Seizures

Loss of consciousness
A 'stiff' phase lasting a minute or less
A series of rhythmic limb jerks
Clenching of teeth
Involuntary urination
Foaming or frothing at the mouth

Absences

No convulsions
Only 1-2 seconds unconsciousness
Glazed eyes
Appears to be daydreaming
Seems not to see-hear anything

What To Do

Major Seizures

- A Protect patient from injury by moving objects that may be hit by jerking limbs.
- B Loosen clothing around the neck and chest.
- C Stay with the patient until the seizure passes.
- D Never put anything in the patient's mouth, or try to hold clenched teeth apart.
- E As soon as violent movement ceases, turn the patient on their side.
- F If possible, clear the room of spectators.
- G The patient may feel embarrassed and slightly disorientated after the seizure, so be sensitive, calming, and reassuring.

Absences

- A Guide the patient to a safe environment if there is any risk of injury.
- B Stay with the patient until the seizure has passed.

Appendix 2 In Case of Fire

Fire protection measures are vital in any public building. Each session should ensure that there is ample fire-fighting equipment for the premises, and that there is a good awareness of where, when, how, and by whom it is to be operated. Evacuation procedures will vary according to the layout of the building. Detailed directions should be made clear, and if possible accompanied by an evacuation map. Leaders should also be acquainted with a plan for seeing that all persons in the building during any emergency are accounted for.

1 Fire Awareness

There are a number of things that should be rigorously observed in this respect

- A Fire-fighting equipment should be regularly checked by a competent engineer.
- B Smoke and heat alarms should be checked regularly.
- C Boilers, burners, and oil storage facilities should be serviced and checked regularly. No combustible material should be stored in the vicinity of these.
- D Leaders and helpers should be well acquainted with the location of fire extinguishers, blankets, buckets *etc.*, and instructed in their use.
- E Unauthorised persons should not be permitted to operate any equipment where there is the risk of fire or burning (*e.g.* boilers, heaters, cookers)
- F Kitchens are a high risk area. (See CC3.2.4.E)
- G All organisations should receive Fire Drill training at the start of each term.
- H Evacuation procedures should be displayed prominently on the premises.

2 Evacuation Procedures

These procedures will be greatly assisted by the use of a map clearly indicating the direction in which each room/hall should be evacuated. It is important in an emergency that everyone leaves the building as quietly, as quickly, and in as orderly a manner as possible. This will minimize the risk of confusion and panic.

- A Do not stop to look for belongings, to turn off appliances, or close windows.
- B When a room is evacuated, close the door behind you, but do not stop to lock it.

Insert HERE the key evacuation points of your own organization's premises

3 Checking Plan

The following points must be carefully noted

- A It is vital that no one leaves the area until a check has been made.
- B Assemble in an orderly manner with the others in the group you were with before the alarm.
- C Leaders-in-Charge should systematically check if all who were with their group are accounted for. A record should be made of the name of anyone who should be there but is not responding.
- D If anyone is missing the leader-in-charge should report it immediately to the session or any Fire Authority Officer present.
- E No one should return to the building until the 'all clear' has been given.

Appendix 3 Transport

1 Driving Licence

- A Drivers who passed their car driving test before 1st January 1997 will normally have a D1(101) - minibus, not for hire or reward - entitlement on their licence. It expires at age 70 or when removed by DVLA, usually for medical reasons.
- B Drivers of minibuses having 9-16 passenger seats will normally need to hold a PCV licence category D1, or a category D licence to drive larger buses. But holders of a full category B (car) driving licence may drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats, subject to the following conditions
 - ◆ the vehicle is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body but not for hire or reward
 - ◆ the driver is aged at least 21
 - ◆ the driver has held a car (category B) licence for at least two years
 - ◆ the driver is providing the service on a voluntary basis
 - ◆ the minibus permissible maximum laden weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes (excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of passengers with disabilities) and 4.25 tonnes otherwise.
- C Do not assume a minibus complies with the weight requirement. It may not!
- D Drivers of a minibus under these conditions may not receive any payment or consideration for doing so other than out-of-pocket expenses. It is not permitted to tow any size of trailer.
- E This Category B (car) licence permission to drive 9-16 seat minibuses applies only to the UK, but our understanding is that all entitlements on Northern Ireland licences will be accepted at face value during temporary visits to other EEA/EU countries - but not use for hire or reward in the case of minibuses.
- F Drivers aged 70 or over will need to make a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards.
- G It is important for sessions whose congregations own minibuses and for those sessions whose drivers borrow them to understand the regulations.

2 Insurance Cover

- A Sessions who own minibuses and sessions who borrow should both ensure that the insurance requirements for drivers are understood and implemented.
- B Owner, as well as driver, can be prosecuted for no insurance or invalid insurance. Fines can also apply. Minibus-lending sessions and/or the person(s) designated as responsible for control of the minibus can be involved in the prosecution if they are found to have lent out a vehicle without valid insurance. Person or persons will be made responsible. Insurance does not cover criminal offences.
- C Questions to be addressed
 - ◆ Is there a minimum driving age stipulation?
 - ◆ Do drivers have to be named?
 - ◆ Do drivers have to be registered by lodging an Additional Driver

Form with the Insurers or Brokers even if the policy is not on a named driver basis?

- ◆ Are there other driver stipulations?
- ◆ Does a vehicle insurance policy in the name of a particular Congregation permit lending the vehicle to another or to another function eg camps?

3 Vehicle Roadworthiness

- A The following CC Forms should be used
 - ◆ CC 23 Vehicle Roadworthiness - Owner
 - ◆ CC 24 Vehicle Outings - User
- B The vehicle owner should carry out and record the checks specified at the minimum frequency of one month. The driver should carry out and record the specified visual checks before moving off on any outing. The Vehicle Outings - User Form combines the roadworthiness elements applicable to the user with the passenger record.
- C The DVA website provides a more extensive checklist.
- D Remember, it is the driver who will be prosecuted for roadworthiness failures such as depth of tyre tread or defective lighting. The Police on the spot may give time for rectification for something like a blown lamp but this should not be assumed. If the driver has a roadworthiness-check record on board it can only help. Drivers should have a plan of action to be implemented when a pre-outing external visual check identifies a defect.
- E Vehicle owners should ensure not to place drivers in a vulnerable position.

4 Seat Belts in Minibuses

- A Passengers on a minibus, over the age of 3, must wear a seat belt if one is fitted (or a child restraint if available). For children who are under 14 it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that seat belts are worn.
- B There is currently no legal requirement to provide child restraints. If a child restraint is available it must be worn by passengers in the *rear* seats who are under 135 cm in height or under 12.
- C For children under 135 cm in height or under 12, travelling in the *front* seats, the appropriate child restraint must be provided. (Front seat belts can have a different mechanism).

5 Parent Transport of Children in Private Cars

- A Parents can make private arrangements between themselves for the transport of their children to and from our Church functions. The Church is not party to these private arrangements.

6 Church Use of Private Cars for Transport of Children

- A If the Church requests someone to transport children, with or without their own children, we would certainly be party to it. Such a request from us would require the application of *Committed to Care* to the situation - eg safety standards, parental permission, the presence of more than one leader and the keeping of a record. The use of child restraints could also apply. The Board's recommendation is that we

make such requests only where they are judged to be necessary and each is set up under *Committed to Care*.

- B Some insurers may construe such use as 'Church Business' and both Church and driver should check that the motor insurance covers it.

Appendix 4 Audit Procedures—Congregations

1 Objective

The Board seeks to implement the requirements of CC 2.4 D-E

- A To assist each session and youth committee to ensure the complete implementation of the Policy in congregation and youth events.
- B To audit the implementation of the Policy within congregations dealing with each unit in turn within a 2 year period before the next Presbytery review.

2 Administration

- A The Board will divide itself into audit teams to cover all congregations.
- B The team will contact the POCVA Co-ordinator of the congregation to arrange a date - Monday evenings are usually most free from regular meetings.
- C Attendance at Audit: session or its representatives, POCVA Co-ordinator.
- D Board Team will give an outline verbal report at the audit and follow it up with a detailed written version.
- E Audit procedures will be revised in the light of audit experience.

3 Questions to be Answered to the Board Team Two Weeks before Audit

Regulated Persons

- A Database: Since the last audit have you used any personnel who have not been listed on your database or used them before they were listed on your database? If so, details please.
- B CC online Access: Have the requirements of CC 1.8, 1.9 G, J, 2.5 G been complied with?
- C Annual Agreement Forms (CC 09): Are all complete for the current year starting 1 September and filed? Dates of the earliest and latest signatures?
- D 5 Year Re-Checks: are these up-to date in accordance with your database?
- E Are all personnel in the local categories listed in CC 2.12 on the Database?
- F Are all personnel who work in the Crèche POCVA checked?
- G Are all personnel who work in Mothers and Toddlers checked?
- H Are all personnel who work in Senior Citizens activities POCVA checked?
- I Have there been any absences of personnel during the past year? (CC 2.17)
- J Has any RP who has been moved from a supervised to an unsupervised role been re-checked with AccessNI, including the Barred List procedure? (CC 1.3)

Training

- A EPC POCVA Training Programmes: Please list the names of your personnel and current applicants who have not yet attended.
- B First Aid (CC 2.18 C, 3.2.5 B). Who are your trained First Aiders?

CC Forms

- A Are only the current CC Forms listed in *CC 4.1* in use?
- B Have you altered any Form? (*CC 4.3*)
- C Has the POCVA Co-ordinator produced all the CC Forms? (*CC 2.6 B, CC 4.4*)

Parental Documentation

- A Parental Consent Forms (*CC 12*): For how many of those listed on Attendance Registers were PC Forms not obtained? What percentage was this?
- B Trip-Outing Consent Forms (*CC 13*): Were there any who attended any outing for whom you did not obtain the specific Consent Form? Were all the names listed on a single sheet for quick reference? (*CC 3.2.7 E*)
- C Code of Conduct (*CC 14*): Did all parents receive a copy?
- D Contact Details: Do all parents have them? In what form were they issued?

POCVA-Youth Notice Board (CC 1.9 H)

- A Is the dedicated Notice Board in place?
- B Are the following CC Forms displayed on it? 01, 02, 18, 19, 20, 21
- C Are the details on *CC 18* correct for your location?

Record Maintenance (CC 3.2)

- A Are your records being maintained according to *CC 3.2.2*?
- B Are all records being kept on site, in a safe or fire-proof cabinet?

Transport (CC 3.2.3 and Appendix 3 - Transport)

- A Are these being fully complied with?
- B Do you ever use private cars? In what form are the records kept?

Premises and Activities

- A Risk Assessments (*CC 2.5 P, 2.18 G, 3.2.4 A, 3.2.7 B*): Have these been carried out, written up and personnel locally trained?
- B Statutory Checks (*CC 2.5 Q*): Up to date? Certificates on Notice Board?
- C Fire Drills: Give the dates when these were carried out. (*CC 3.2.4 C*)

Registers (CC 3.2.2)

- A Attendance Registers: Do the names of the attending leaders appear?
- B Is a Crèche Register (where applicable) being maintained?
- C Is a Mothers and Toddlers Register (where applicable) being maintained, although not regulated activity?
- D Is a Senior Citizens Register (where applicable) being maintained?

Vulnerable Adults (CC 1.7)

- A What form does work with this group take in your congregation?
- B What kind of issues do you face and how do you deal with them?

Staffing Ratios (CC 2.11)

- A Have there been any occasions when there was non-compliance?

Activities Programme Planning (CC 3.2.1)

- A What form did it take?

Online and Electronic Facilities (Appendix 5)

- A What are you doing under Current Electronic Options? Is all electronic information being deleted as required in the introduction to *CC 2.13*?

Session

- A When was Session Checklist (CC 22) implemented and issues addressed?
- B Have the Session Annual Reviews been documented each May since the last audit? Were any identified weaknesses addressed? (CC 1.9 I, 2.5 M)

POCVA Co-ordinator

- A What are the PC's normal activities in your congregation?
- B What additional duties have the session specified? (CC 2.6 C)

During the audit the Board Team will discuss issues arising from these answers.

4 Documents to be made available for examination at the Audit.

CC Forms

- A 01, 02, 03, 08, 09, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Recruitment Documents

- A All. (Part of the Board's audit of the recruitment procedure is through submission of application documents to the Counter Signatory. CC 2.13)

Documents: Since last audit

- A Attendance Registers including Crèche, Mothers-Toddlers, Senior Citizens.
- B Transport Registers including those of Private Cars.
- C Incident Records.
- D Parental Consent Forms.
- E Trip-Outing Consent Forms.
- F Session Annual Reviews of each May since last audit.

Appendix 5 Online and Electronic Procedures

1 AccessNI

- A AccessNI introduced online applications and online tracking in 2015. It is proving highly beneficial in terms of paper-postage costs, work and time.
- B The Disclosure Application Form must now be completed online. See CC 2.13 K.

2 EPC Online Facility

The POCVA Board will consider online facilities for our POCVA documentation through the denominational website or alternative. This is subject to a feasibility study and Presbytery approval. It will need substantial development work and testing.

3 Electronic Record Storage

The Board will study the feasibility of storing long-term POCVA records electronically including format, security, compliance. It will require definition of what has to be kept for how long, It would apply strictly throughout the Church.

4 Current Electronic Options—Optional at Local Discretion

CC Forms

- A The Board updates CC forms to POCVA co-ordinators on revision. The forms are in individual file format with MS Word and pdf versions
- B We recommend that POCVA Co-ordinators create two folders within a POCVA Directory - 'CC Forms YYYY' and 'CC Forms YYYYpdf' and save each set of CC forms to the appropriate folder.
- C Where CC Forms bear a local logo-address, the pdf version will need to be re-created. The Board will help with this where required.

References

- A The manual procedure is expensive, cumbersome and builds time into our application process. Each Application requires two References - the cost is 2nd class postal cost for each one (including the SAE for return), plus 2 envelopes, paper and printing.
- B The manual procedure will still be necessary for some referees.
- C For appropriate cases we can email a pdf version of the Reference Request Form (CC 06) with the following covering email note: "We will be grateful if you will print the attached Reference Request, complete it and [return a scanned copy to me by email] or [give it to me when we next meet]. We will acknowledge receipt, retain a confidential hard copy and delete your email along with its attachment. It will not be stored electronically. Thank you for helping with the application in this way."
- D The updated Regulated Persons Application Form (CC 05) requests email addresses for referees to facilitate email reference requests. Where an email address is provided for a referee the scanned email option is suggested. If in doubt ask the referee by email if willing to complete reference request electronically on the basis of paragraph C.

Other CC Forms

At local discretion, the pdf email version can be used to obtain Regulated Persons Application Form (CC 05), Annual Agreement Form (CC 09), Receipt of Training Form (CC 10) where this is more efficient. Again, do not store electronically.

Appendix 6 Notice Board Displays

1 *Committed to Care* Display Items

Committed to Care (1.9 H) requires the following items to be displayed on the POCVA Notice Board

- ◆ A statement that *Committed to Care* is now online
- ◆ Policy Commitment Statement (CC 01)
- ◆ Statutory Protection Agency Contacts (CC 18)
- ◆ Basic First Aid (CC 19 - Appendix 1)
- ◆ In Case of Fire (CC 20 - Appendix 2)
- ◆ Church Insurance (CC 21)

2 Additional Display Items

These are certainly POCVA-related but of more general application

- A Health & Safety Law in Northern Ireland Poster.
 - ◆ This Poster, available in A2 and A3 sizes
 - ◆ Both employed and volunteer staff have health and safety responsibilities. The NI Health and Safety Executive is happy to send a team of advisors to a Church to assess issues and give guidance. It is a free service
- B Details of First Aiders to relate to Basic First Aid (CC 19 above).
- C Employers Liability Certificates (Denominational and Local Congregation).
 - ◆ Strictly speaking the Certificates need no longer be displayed if the details are communicated to all employees by hard copy or electronically, but our policy is to display them

3 Optional Display Items

- A It may locally be considered advantageous to display these items although it is not a requirement to do so:
 - ◆ Fire Extinguishing Appliance (FEA) Certificate
 - ◆ Portable Appliance Test (PAT) Certificate
 - ◆ Fire Safety Risk Assessment
- B The Fire Risk Assessment Record should be retained at the premises but does not need to be displayed.
- C Further information and templates are available at
 - ◆ <http://www.nifrs.org/firesafe/>
- D Premises and Activities Risk Assessments (CC 3.2.4 A).
 - ◆ These assessments should be retained at the premises but do not need to be displayed.
- E “Record, Plan, Instruct, Inform and Train”.
 - ◆ This expression, from the NI Fire & Rescue Service website, summaries the risk assessment responsibility

Appendix 7 Social Media Guidelines

1 Introduction

- A Technological innovation and the rise of social media platforms have produced many new opportunities and methods of communicating. These have affected how many people, particularly the young, share information.
- B The Church, while not ignoring these changes in behaviour, must act carefully and thoughtfully to ensure that children and young people are not put at risk through the use and abuse of social media platforms by Church organisations or leaders. Leaders must be aware of their vulnerability in how they act online.
- C The variety of methods of communication and the speed of change can mean it is a struggle to keep guidance up to date; however we are seeking to raise some the issues involved and highlight principles which can be applied across a broad spectrum of areas.

2 Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this guidance we are defining social media as:

a group of internet based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content between individuals, communities and organisations. These include social networking sites (eg Facebook), blogs and microblogs (eg Twitter and Tumblr) and content sharing sites (eg YouTube and Flickr).

3 Guidelines

As stated in *Committed to Care* 3.1.3, “Leaders must be aware of their own vulnerability” in contact with children and vulnerable adults. This applies to any communication over social media, as much as anywhere else. Additionally we must be aware of the dangers these technologies can expose children to through their use and abuse.

The major risks from social media in this context are

- A The establishment of private conversations between a leader and child on a social networking site. This should be treated as equivalent to being left alone with a child and is to be avoided at all times.
- B ‘Befriending’ a child on an open forum or a social network may not carry the same risk, but leaders need to be aware that a child joining as a friend will then be exposed to the opinions and postings of all the other people on the leaders social network. These postings are outside of the control of the leader in question, but may be taken by a child to represent the leader’s views. This ‘befriending’ can also blur the lines for a child between the relationship of leader and of friend. If possible it is best to avoid the ‘befriending’ of children known only through the Church Organisations on social network sites.
- C In communication online many children and young people (and adults) are not aware of their own vulnerability and the ease of access others can gain to their personal information. For example sharing in an open

forum about attendance at particular events or being in particular places may open them to danger, from either strangers or estranged family members. Again leaders need to take extra care about how they involve themselves in communication with children on-line.

- D Posting information, particularly photos, online which could be used to identify a child should be avoided and must never be done without express permission from the parents or guardians of the children involved.
- E Leaders are required to report, through the leader-in-charge, to the POCVA Co-ordinator any instances of a child seeking to make private contact online.

4 Related issues

Mobile phone communication.

As well as telephone calls and SMS texting, this guidance also relates similar communication forms, such as *Skype*, *WhatsApp* and *FaceTime*.

- A Only a leader with a relevant requirement for the information should have a child's mobile phone number, and this detail should be treated with confidence.
- B Parental consent should be obtained before communicating with a child through their mobile phone.
- C Any communication should be relevant. If texting or emailing it is important that the leader only seeks to communicate what is needed, and not get drawn into a conversation (again this is effectively being left alone with a child and is to be avoided).