



CARI

Celebrating **25 Years** of
Shining a Light for Children

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CARI Forensic Accompaniment Officer Volunteer Induction Pack

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CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

CARI is committed to practice protecting children from harm. Management and staff in this organisation recognise that the welfare of children is paramount and our service endeavour to safeguard children by:

- Having a reporting procedure to respond to concerns around children's welfare and safety
- Having a confidentiality statement
- Having a code of behaviour for staff and volunteers/students
- Having a safe recruitment procedure
- Having a procedure to respond to accidents
- Having a procedure to respond to complaints

As part of the policy CARI:

- Have a Designated Liaison Officer and a Child Protection Officer.
- Provide induction training around CARI's child protection policy
- Provide supervision and support for staff and volunteers in contact with children
- Share information about the child protection policy and good practices with families and children
- Review CARI's child protection policy and practices on a regular basis

We aim to create a safe and healthy environment for the young people with whom we work and we are committed at all times to ensure the safety and welfare of children. This Child Protection Policy is based on "Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" and "Child Protection and Welfare Handbook". In accordance with these documents, it is good practice for all organisations, which have contact with children and young people to introduce a child protection policy. This policy also helps to provide safeguards and support for staff when they are working with children and young people. The National Children First Guidance detail that organisations in contact with, or providing services to children have an overall responsibility to safeguard children. CARI operates within the National Children's First Guidance by the following means:

1. Promoting the general welfare, health, development and safety of children; The welfare of children is of paramount importance.
2. Adopting and consistently applying a safe and clearly defined method of recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers.
3. Developing guidance and procedures for staff and volunteers who may have reasonable grounds for concern about the safety and welfare of children involved with the organisation. These procedures should not

- deviate from the current Children First: National Guidance, but could offer further elaboration to ensure local relevance and applicability. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors or Management to ensure that such policies and procedures are in place and are operating effectively
4. Identifying a designated liaison person to act as a liaison, with outside agencies and a resource person to any staff member who has child protection and welfare concerns. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or concerns of child abuse to Tusla, Child and Family Agency or to An Garda Síochána;
 5. Ensuring that the organisation has clear written procedures on the action to be taken if allegations of abuse against employees/volunteers are received
 6. Raising awareness within the organisation about potential risks to children's safety and welfare.
 7. Developing effective procedures for responding to accidents and complaints.
 8. Ensuring that clear procedures in relation to record-keeping of child protection and welfare concerns are in place and are operating effectively, taking appropriate account of the need to ensure that such records are kept securely. Organisations that administer services through a number of individual units should standardize recording procedures in cases of children at risk. All agencies dealing with children must have a policy of cooperating with Tusla, Child and Family Agency on the sharing of their records where a child welfare or protection issue arises.

CARI CHARTER

1. CARI's primary aim is to provide therapy for children and young people who have been affected by child sexual abuse. C.A.R.I. also provides information, support and counseling to non-abusing parents, carers and siblings as appropriate.

2. CARI's secondary aims are:

- A. To increase public and professional awareness of the existence of, and dynamics of, child sexual abuse.
- B. To prevent child sexual abuse by providing information, support and training to adults, thus equipping them to better protect children.
- C. To contribute to change in the responses made, and resources available, to children and families affected by sexual abuse.
- D. To undertake research about child sexual abuse.

3) To achieve our aims C.A.R.I. must obtain adequate funding. Fundraising methods will never be allowed to exploit our clients or staff, or to compromise their situation or reputation.

4) Our Code of Ethics reflects our philosophies regarding our work and our clients and will guide all our work. We will respect and value our staff and volunteers.

5) We recognise that the nature of our work may lead to stress for staff and volunteers. We aim to ensure that appropriate support is offered to all who work for C.A.R.I.

6) Our primary aim will never be compromised by any of our other aims or objectives.

CARI's ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Introduction / Purpose

This policy has been drawn up to ensure that CARI acts at all times for the protection of children in keeping with the principals of the Children First National Guidance. It will also act to prevent abuse of any kind occurring within the organisation and to take effective action in response to allegations or disclosures of abuse within the service or by members of staff or any allegations that come to our attention.

Responsibility

The responsibility to up hold this policy and all policies is that of the Board of Directors. They, through their nominees, implement this policy and ensure its application throughout the organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers working with CARI. All staff are supplied with a copy of this document.

Duty of Staff and volunteers to report

All staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers have a duty to report concerns or disclosures of abuse that they receive in the course of their duties to CARI's Designated Liaison Officer or, in exceptional circumstances, the Child Protection Officer. We recognize that this sometimes may be difficult but failure to do so is a failure in duty to care and can lead to disciplinary action.

Training and Support

All staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers are introduced to CARI's child protection policy on the prevention and reporting of abuse when employed. They are also carefully trained on how to use it by our own team of psychotherapists. Staff will be supported by our in house support system through line management and by our team of psychotherapists. The Designated Liaison Officer acts as a resource person to staff members who have any child protection concerns. Therapist's supports include external supervision and case management weekly.

Designated people for reporting and investigation of abuse.

The Designated Liaison Officer is responsible for the reporting of child abuse concerns. The Designated Liaison Officer acts as a liaison person with outside agencies and also as a resource person to staff members or volunteers who have any child protection concerns. CARI's Board of Directors, are responsible for the appointment of the organisation's Child Protection Officer who is responsible for coordinating child protection policies.

Monitoring

The Designated Liaison Persons in each centre ensure that detailed records are kept of all child protection issues brought to their attention. The records include details of all action taken, including reporting to external agencies and our Child Protection Officer. The Board of Directors will regularly monitor all aspects of this policy.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF, THERAPISTS, BOARD MEMBERS, FUNDRAISERS AND VOLUNTEERS, CARI'S PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Putting in place good procedures in recruitment and training practice is a central element in ensuring the safety and welfare of all adults and young people involved in the organisation.

Introduction

To detail the precautions that CARI takes to ensure that all employees and volunteers are properly interviewed and their suitability assessed, before they begin working for CARI

Application Form

All those seeking to carry out paid or volunteer work i.e. therapists, board members and fundraisers for CARI must provide a full CV, a covering letter and details of at least two referees that CARI can contact.

Staff and volunteers appointment

Only nominees of the Board of Directors have the authority to appoint staff and volunteers based on recommendations from the interview panel.

Interviews

All appointed staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers are interviewed by at least three people and told there is an expectation to disclose any convictions or if they have been given the benefit of the Probation Act.

References

All relevant professional qualifications are validated by awarding and/or registering bodies.

References are taken up and no one is appointed to a post without written references. Open testimonials are not accepted as references

Investigations and checks

All career breaks, sudden job changes and dismissals are investigated by the Designated Liaison Person.

The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for vetting of all staff and volunteers. Employment does not commence without vetting.

Employment and Agreements

All CARI Forensic Unit Volunteers will be given a Job Description (Appendix A). And a CARI Conditions of Volunteer Form (Appendix B). CARI Volunteer Agreement Form (Appendix C). CARI Confidentiality Statement (D). CARI Condition of Supervision Form (E)

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

“Key principles of best practice in child protection and welfare

The key principles that should inform best practice in child protection and welfare are:

- *The welfare of children is of paramount importance.*
- *Early intervention and support should be available to promote the welfare of children and families, particularly where they are vulnerable or at risk of not receiving adequate care or protection. Family support should form the basis of early intervention and preventative interventions.*
- *A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents/carers and families. Where there is conflict, the child’s welfare must come first.*
- *Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives. Where there are concerns about a child’s welfare, there should be opportunities provided for their views to be heard independently of their parents/carers.*
- *Parents/carers have a right to respect and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their family.*
- *Factors such as the child’s family circumstances, gender, age, stage of development, religion, culture and race should be considered when taking protective action. Intervention should not deal with the child in isolation; the child’s circumstances must be understood within a family context.*
- *The criminal dimension of any action must not be ignored.*
- *Children should only be separate from parents/carers when alternative means of protecting them have been exhausted. Re-union should be considered in the context of planning for the child’s future.*
- *The prevention, detection and treatment of child abuse or neglect requires a coordinated multidisciplinary approach, effective management, clarity of responsibility and training of personnel in organisations working with children.*
- *Professionals and agencies working with adults who for a range of reasons may have serious difficulties meeting their children’s basic needs for safety and security should always consider the impact of their adult client/patient’s behaviour on a child and act in the child’s best interests.”*
(Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011).

Safe practice is essential in our work and we are committed to following the procedures to govern our work with children and young people:

CONFIDENTIALITY

Statement of CARI's confidentiality policy

All CARI staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement (Appendix D). All CARI staff must keep confidential all information regarding all CARI's clients. They must respect the client's right to privacy and anonymity inside and outside of the CARI Centres.

Therapist and staff have a professional and legal responsibility with regard to confidentiality and the exchange of information. Any information with child protection implications will be shared with relevant individuals/agencies on a need to know basis in the best interest of the child/ren.

No undertaking of secrecy can be given and this is made clear to all family members. Clients and families are provided with a confidentiality form explaining the limits to confidentiality. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for ethical (protection issues) and legal reasons (notes subpoenaed by court). Parents/carers also sign, consent to exchange information for the purpose of post assessment therapy.

Ethical and statutory codes concerned with confidentiality and data protection provide general guidance.

Information gathered for one purpose must not be used for another without consulting the person who provided that information. Any research or evaluation cannot be done without clients consent.

The area of confidentiality is part of the training provided for all staff, volunteers, therapists, board members and fundraisers.

Issues of confidentiality are explicitly dealt with in the CARI Code of Ethics.

DEFINITION AND RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE

Introduction

This section outlines the different types of child abuse. It is designed as a training tool for all CARI staff and volunteers to provide guidance on recognising abuse.

A “child means a person under the age of 18 years, excluding a person who is or has been married”. (Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011)

Recognising Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time.

Child abuse can often be difficult to identify and may present in many forms.

Neglect: Where a child’s need for food warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided, to the extent that the child suffers significant harm.

Emotional abuse: Where a child’s needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by their parent or carer.

Physical abuse: Where a child is assaulted, or injured in some way that is deliberate.

Sexual abuse: Where a child is used for the sexual gratification of another.

Further Guidance in relation to definitions of the different types of child abuse and potential signs and symptoms is presented within CARI’s Child Protection Training Document. It is important to stress that no one indicator should be conclusive in itself of abuse; it may indeed indicate conditions other than child abuse.

CARI's policy on domestic violence is to always consider the child's immediate safety first.

During the assessment if it comes to our attention that a child/ren are witnessing domestic violence, then therapy is not appropriate or in the best interest of the child. Safety is a prerequisite for therapy. Therapy cannot provide a protective function; protection must always come before therapy. Domestic Violence is a child protection issue and needs to be reported to the Tusla, Child and Family Agency. Before therapy can commence, child protective measures need to be implemented and living arrangements need to be stabilised.

Research findings show that prolonged or regular exposure to domestic violence can have serious impact on a child's development and emotional well being.

Tusla's policy on Domestic Violence refers to the 3 R's:

1. Recognise: know the signs.
2. Respond: Know how to deal with the situation.
3. Refer: Make an appropriate referral.

A child who asks for help may be at increased risk because of disclosing the domestic violence.

Early detection is important. Statutory Child Protection agencies examine all signs and symptoms in the total context of the child's situation and family circumstances. CARI staff/volunteers must share any concerns about child protection or welfare with the Designated Liaison Officer who reaches a decision as to whether sufficient grounds exist to make a report to the appropriate external agencies.

Tusla, Family and Child Agency have overall responsibility for the assessment and management of child protection concerns. The Garda Síochána have responsibility for the investigation of alleged offences.

Guidelines for Recognition

"The ability to recognise child abuse depends as much on a person's willingness to accept the possibility of its existence as it does on their knowledge and information. There are commonly three stages in the identification of child abuse. These are:

- (i) Considering the possibility*
- (ii) Being alert to signs of abuse*
- (iii) Recording of information" (Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011)*

Stage One: Considering the Possibility

The possibility of child abuse should be considered if a child appears to have suffered a suspicious injury for which no reasonable explanation can be offered. It should also be considered if the child seems distressed without obvious reason or displays persistent or new behavioural problems. The possibility of child abuse should also be considered if the child displays unusual or fearful responses to parents/ carers.

Stage Two: Being alert to Signs of Abuse

Signs of abuse can be of a physical, behavioural, or developmental nature. They can exist in the relationships between children and parents/ carers or between children and other family members. A group or pattern of signs is likely to be more indicative of abuse. Children who are being abused may hint that they are being harmed and sometimes make direct disclosures. **Disclosures should always be believed, and reported to the Designated Liaison Officer.** Less obvious signs and concerns should be noted and discussed with the Designated Liaison Officer. Play situations such as drawing or story telling may reveal information. It is important not to directly question a child as a way of exploring your own concerns.

Some signs are more indicative of abuse than others. These include:

- (i) Disclosure of abuse and neglect by a child or young person;
- (ii) Age-inappropriate or abnormal sexual play or knowledge;
- (iii) Specific injuries or patterns of injuries;
- (iv) Absconding from home or a care situation;
- (v) Attempted suicide;
- (vi) Under-age pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease;
- (vii) Signs in one or more categories at the same time. For example, signs of developmental delay, physical injury and behavioural signs may together indicate a pattern of abuse.

Most signs are non-specific and must be considered in the child's social, developmental and family context. It is important to always be open to alternative explanations for physical or behavioural signs of abuse. Sometimes, a specialist for Family and Child Agency may be required to clarify if particular concerns indicate abuse.

Stage Three: Recording of Information

If abuse is suspected, the Designated Liaison officer needs to pass on as much detailed information as possible. Observations should be accurately recorded and should include dates, times, names, locations, context and any other information that may be relevant.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS TO THE DESIGNATED PERSON

Introduction

This section;

- Informs staff and volunteers, of the procedures to follow if they, on CARI's behalf, receive a disclosure or report of child abuse.
- Outlines the standard reporting procedure, to be used in passing information to the Designated Liaison Officer about child protection concerns.

Overview

Allegations and/or disclosures of child abuse of any kind may come to CARI through many sources. All will be dealt with in a similar way through the Designated Liaison Officer in each Centre. Allegations and/or disclosures may come from:

- Clients engaged in therapy with CARI
- Members of the public in person or on the help-line
- Members of CARI staff and volunteers

CARI offers a service to parents and concerned adults to allow them to explore, in anonymity if they choose, their concerns regarding any child or children. The aim of this is to support them in taking any necessary steps towards reporting reasonable concerns to the statutory services. It is our experience that families feel less threatened and better able to work in partnership Tusla, Family and Child Agency and An Garda Síochána for the protection of their children when they have made the initial contact themselves.

Children in therapy may make disclosures of previously unreported abuse and these are explored in the therapeutic context and referred to Tusla for investigation.

By the nature of CARI's work any of our staff and volunteers, both therapists and non-therapists alike, may come in contact with individuals (children and adults) who have child protection concerns.

Members of CARI staff and volunteers who may be concerned or who suspect that children are being harmed or at risk of harm should discuss this concern with the Designated Liaison Officer.

Concerns that a CARI staff member or volunteer has abused a child will be reported in the same way as other child protection concerns. Additional procedures also apply and are discussed in this document.

Statement on child protection concerns

CARI is committed to reporting allegations and incidences of child abuse that come to our attention.

Allegations of abuse may come to our attention during the course of therapy, during processing of referrals to our service, via the help-line or in the course of our outreach work in schools and community settings.

CARI staff, are liable to receive disclosures and reports even when off duty, simply because of their involvement with CARI.

Staff and volunteers may have concerns regarding a child or situation in the same way as the general public.

The safety and welfare of children is our first and paramount consideration following any allegation of child abuse.

Receiving Disclosures of child abuse

It should at all times be remembered that the process of disclosure is painful, requiring very considerable courage.

Procedure for receiving a disclosure or allegation from a child/young person

Staff are trained to use as much of the following procedure as is possible and appropriate in responding to a child's or young person's disclosure or allegation:

- Listen carefully and attentively
- Do not promise secrecy – explain your duty to report if you have identifying information
- Stay calm
- Take everything you are told seriously
- Allow the child set the pace
- Ask no leading questions
- Check to ensure that what has been heard and understood accords with what was actually said – using the same words that the child used
- If the child is anxious reassure them, let them know that they had a right to be kept safe and they are not to blame for what happened
- Thank the child for telling you, letting them know that telling is the right thing to do.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept
- Explain what will happen next, discussing details, of who else needs to know and how they will be told

- Respond to any questions that the child/young person asks. If you do not have the answer, attempt to find it.
- Consider the child's wishes as regards their involvement in telling the others who need to know, e.g. – Do they want you to tell their parent/s for them, in their presence? Or do they want to tell them themselves in your presence?
- Accompany the child to his or her parent or guardian
- Tell the parent or guardian exactly what the child has said
- Explain to the parent or guardian CARI's procedure for dealing with allegations of abuse including the policy on reporting to Tusla.
- Notify the Designated Liaison Officer, of what has occurred and provide them with a precise written record.

Procedure for receiving a disclosure or allegation from an adult

CARI staff are trained to respond appropriately to adult disclosures or allegations in relation to a child. It is important to:

- Listen carefully and attentively
- Do not promise secrecy
- Stay calm
- Ask no leading questions
- Check to ensure that what has been heard and understood accords with what has actually been said
- Make no promises that cannot be kept
- Explain CARI's policy on reporting reasonable knowledge or suspicions of child abuse to Tusla if any current child protection risk is deemed to exist. In these situations it is essential that consideration be given to the potential risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser.
- Answer any questions in relation to confidentiality. Explain what will happen next, including details of whom else needs to know and how they will be told.
- Consider their wishes as regards their involvement in bringing the complaint to the Designated Liaison Officer.
- Offer information, regarding the external agencies to which they can report.
- Make a careful written record of what the complainant has alleged.
- Notify the Designated Liaison officer of what has occurred and provide them with a precise written record.

Responsibility to Report Concerns of Child Abuse to Designated Liaison Officer

The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse may be summarised as follows:

- (i) The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority.
- (ii) Reports should be made without delay to the Designated Liaison Officer.
- (iii) While the basis for concern must be established as comprehensively as possible, children or parents should not be interviewed in detail about the suspected abuse.
- (iv) Any reasonable suspicion of abuse, must be acted on. Ignoring the signals or failing to intervene may result in ongoing or further harm to the child or young person.

If a member of CARI staff or volunteer has misgivings about the safety of a child and would find it helpful to discuss their concerns with a professional, they should contact the local Designated Liaison Officer who will meet them without delay.

Procedure for bringing concerns to the Designated Liaison Officer

CARI staff and volunteers have a duty to report disclosures or allegations of abuse, which they receive in the course of their duties, to the Designated Liaison Officer.

The Designated Liaison Officer is available to discuss any child protection issue, or concern, with staff/volunteers at their request. ***In crisis situations, for example if a person raising an immediate concern is on the premises or on the telephone, the staff member or volunteer who is engaging with them may seek their permission to involve the Designated Liaison Officer..***

The staff member/volunteer should, without delay, fill in the Concern for Child Form as completely as possible and place it in a sealed envelope marked **URGENT** in the IN TRAY for the Designated Liaison Officer.

The staff member/volunteer should check the Therapy Department Roster to see when the Designated Liaison Officer will be likely to receive the form. If there is likely to be a delay in this the staff member/volunteer may telephone the Designated Liaison Officer or discuss the delay, and any potential child protection risk, with a senior member of Therapy Department staff who may assist them to contact the Designated Liaison Officer in another CARI Centre or the CARI Child Protection Officer as necessary or appropriate.

In case of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, the Duty Social Worker and/or An Garda Síochána should be contacted by any of the above.

The staff member/volunteer should prepare a written account, to present to the Designated Liaison Officer, detailing the grounds for concern they have in relation to the child. This should include details of any disclosures, allegations, reports or concerns, which have been brought to their attention by any other person.

Retrospective Disclosures by Adults

Investigation of disclosures by adult victims of past abuse frequently uncovers current incidences of abuse and is therefore an effective means of stopping the cycle of abuse. In recent years there have been increasing numbers of disclosures by adults of abuse that took place during their childhood. These revelations may come to light in the context of the family attending CARI. **In these situations consideration must be given to the current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser.** If any risk is deemed to exist the therapist involved will encourage the adult to report the allegation to the Tusla and will support the client in this regard. The therapist involved will follow agreed procedures in reporting child protection concerns to the Designated Liaison Officer.

If the client is unable or unwilling to make the report themselves and;

- If identifying information has been received,
- A risk, is deemed to exist
- The alleged offender, has not previously been identified to Tusla Family and Child Agency

The therapist will report the allegation to the Designated Liaison Officer without delay. The Designated Liaison Officer will follow the standard procedures for dealing with child protection concerns.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE TO THE STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

Introduction

This section;

- Outlines procedures for the Designated Liaison Officer to follow in evaluating concerns for child safety.
- Outlines the standard procedure to be used by the Designated Liaison Officer for the further reporting of the concern to the statutory bodies, as necessary.

Relevant Legislation

The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides immunity from civil liability to persons who report child abuse “reasonably and in good faith” to designated officers from Tusla or any member of An Garda Síochána. This means that, even if a reported suspicion of child abuse proves unfounded, a plaintiff who took an action would have to prove that the reporter had not acted reasonably and in good faith in making the report.

General Procedure in response to receiving a Concern For Child Form

Upon receipt of a Concern for Child Form the Designated Liaison Officer must arrange an appointment to meet with the signatory without delay.

The Designated Liaison Officer must ensure that the Concern for Child Form has been completed in sufficient detail. If gaps have been left these must be addressed in the context of the meeting, and relevant information must be added if supplied.

The agenda for the meeting is to begin to explore the grounds for concern in as much detail as possible with a view to establishing if current grounds reach the criteria of ‘reasonable grounds’ as defined by the National Guidelines. A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern.

Decisions taken at this meeting are recorded on the Concern for Child form, which will be signed by those present at the meeting.

A confidential file will be made and stored in a secure location to protect the identity of all concerned.

The Designated Liaison Officer may consult with another Designated Liaison Officer and/or the Child Protection Officer if this will assist them in any way.

Decisions taken at any meetings, or in consequence of any consultations, in relation to the concern will be recorded and stored in the confidential file.

The Designated Liaison Officer acts as a liaison with outside agencies and is responsible for ensuring that reports of allegations or suspicions of child abuse are passed to a Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

In a case where the Designated Liaison Officer decides not to refer concerns to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the individual staff member or volunteer who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why this action is not being taken. The Designated Liaison Officer can ring the Duty Social Worker to discuss the case. The Staff member or volunteer will be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free to consult with or report to, Tusla or An Garda Síochána. They will be further advised that the provisions of the Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 apply once they report “reasonably and in good faith”.

Designated Liaison Officer’s contact with adult members of a family alleging child abuse by CARI staff member/volunteer

Where an allegation of abuse is made against an employee of CARI, the following will put in place:

- The reporting procedure in respect of the child;
- The procedure for dealing with the employee.

In the case of the allegation being against an employee of CARI, the same person will not deal with both the young person and the alleged abuser. Employment/contractual issues will be dealt with separately. The Child Liaison Officer will follow the normal reporting procedures of CARI. It will be the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to deal with a staff member against whom an allegation has been made. If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Child Liaison Officer, the Child Protection Officer will deal with all aspects of the case, including the reporting procedure. If there is an allegation or suspicion in relation to the Child Protection Officer this will be dealt with by the CEO and the Board of Directors.

The safety of the child is always the first priority of CARI and all necessary measures will be taken to ensure that the child is safe. The measures taken will be proportionate to the level of risk.

- CARI will ensure that no other children/young people are at risk during this period
- The measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of children and young people can include the following: suspension of duties of the person accused, re-assignment of duties where the accused will not have contact with children/young people, working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation or other measures as deemed appropriate.
- If a formal report is being made the employer will notify the employee that an allegation has been made and what the nature of the allegation is. The employee has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained.
- CARI will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.

It should at all times be remembered that the process of disclosure is painful, requiring very considerable courage.

In so far as is practicable, a support person (possibly a therapist) should be available to provide assistance and information to the complainant.

The Designated Liaison Officer, on meeting the complainant, will explain the procedure of CARI for responding to complaints of child abuse against staff/volunteers and, in particular, point out that:

- The family, should give consideration to reporting the complaint to the Gardai and Tusla.
- Every effort will be made, to safeguard confidentiality so that only people who need to know will receive information about the complaint. However, no guarantee of complete confidentiality can be given.
- CARI procedure for dealing with employment issues in relation to the accused staff member will involve CARI in seeking the future co-operation of the complainant in so far as it may be necessary. Care will be taken to ensure that such a procedure will not interfere with or be prejudicial to the administration of justice in any state criminal investigation or civil suit.
- CARI operates a policy of reporting reasonable knowledge of child abuse to Tusla.

The Designated Liaison Officer will ask the complainant to provide a detailed account of the wrongful acts alleged and their background and circumstances. The Designated Liaison Officer will carefully record what is said, and check with the complainant the accuracy of what has been recorded. Ample time will be allowed for this.

The Designated Liaison Officer will try to identify the wishes, intentions and expectations of the complainant, and will explain the role of CARI in regard to the complaint.

Basis for Reporting to Tusla Child and Family Agency

Tusla is always informed when a CARI Liaison Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a child may have been abused, or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse unless the designated statutory authorities have previously investigated that concern. Previously undisclosed abuse will automatically be reported. Such reporting is necessary to ensure that suitable interventions can be offered to the family concerned and so that the child and/or other children can be protected from the identified or alleged offender.

It is important that Designated Liaison Officer reporting suspected child abuse to Tusla should establish the basis for their concerns.

The following examples as constituting reasonable grounds for concern:

- (i) Specific indication from the child that (s)he was abused;
- (ii) An account by another person who saw the child being abused;
- (iii) Evidence, *such as an injury or behaviour* which is consistent with abuse and unlikely to be caused another way;
- (iv) An injury, or behaviour which is consistent both with abuse and with an innocent explanation but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse. An example of this would be a pattern of injuries, an implausible explanation, other indications of abuse, dysfunctional behaviour;
- (v) Consistent indication, over a period of time, which a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

Standard Reporting Procedure

If child abuse is suspected or alleged, identifying details have been obtained, and the criteria for making a report have been met, the Designated Liaison Officer in each Centre is responsible for ensuring that the investigation is initiated by the making of a report.

A report will be made to the appropriate to Child and Family Agency Social Worker.

Oral reports will be followed up in writing on the standard CARI Referral Report Form.

CARI aims to empower adult clients to report concerns or suspicions of child abuse to the appropriate authorities themselves. CARI may also report the concern on the basis of the information provided.

The Designated Liaison Officer, or a person nominated by them, will inform the parents/carers if a report is to be submitted to Tusla or An Garda Síochána unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.

In case of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and the Duty Social Worker is unavailable, the Designated Liaison Officer or his or her agent should contact An Garda Síochána. In the event of an allegation against a CARI staff member or volunteer, no child will be left at risk within CARI pending such a report or investigation.

Information required when a report is being made:

As much as possible of the following detail is recorded on the Standard CARI Referral Report Form:

- (i) Accurate identifying information as far as it is known. This should include the names, addresses and ages of the child and all children in the family as well as the parents'/ carers' names and address;
- (ii) Name and address of the person alleged to be causing harm to the child;
- (iii) A full account of what constitutes the grounds for concern about the welfare and protection of the child or children;
- (iv) The source of any information which is being discussed with Tusla;
- (v) Dates, when the concern arose, or a particular incident occurred;
- (vi) Circumstances in which the concern arose, or the incident occurred;
- (vii) Any explanation offered to account for the risk, injury or concern;
- (viii) The child's own statement, if relevant;
- (ix) Any other information regarding difficulties which the family may be experiencing. These may include illness, recent bereavement or separation, financial situation, addiction, disability, mental health problem;
- (x) Any factors which may be considered supportive or protective of the family. These may include helpful family members, neighbours, useful services or projects with whom they have contact;
- (xi) Name of child or children's school;
- (xii) Name of child and/or family's general practitioner;

- (xiii) The reporter's own involvement with the child and parents/carers;
- (xiv) Details of any action already taken about the risk or concern;
- (xv) Names and addresses of any agencies or key persons involved with the parents/carers;
- (xvi) Identity of reporters including name, address, telephone number, occupation, and relationship with the family.

The therapist who has received any of the above information will be asked to complete relevant sections of the referral report form.

ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE AGAINST EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS

Introduction / CARI Commitment to child safety

CARI is an organisation that provides direct services to children. We seek to ensure that none of the children in our care are at risk of harm from our employees or volunteers.

Each child client is given a leaflet detailing what CARI can offer him/her. This includes a comment/complaint form that they can fill in and send to CARI. They are also told about other people that they can go to if they want to make a complaint.

Adults that attend CARI's are given an explanatory leaflet detailing CARI's services and what they can expect. This leaflet outlines the internal complaints procedure and gives details of the external agencies to which they can complain.

CARI's Responsibility as an Employer to Report to Statutory Authorities

Where any member of staff or volunteer becomes aware of an allegation of abuse by an employee or volunteer the standard procedure for reporting allegations to the Designated Liaison Officer should be followed without delay.

If a member of CARI staff or volunteer has misgivings about the safety of a child within CARI and would find it helpful to discuss their concerns with a professional, they should contact the Designated Liaison Officer in that Centre. If they do not feel comfortable reporting it internally, they can contact someone in Tusla, such as a Social Worker or Public Health Nurse to discuss the matter. Suspicions of a criminal offence may be discussed with and/or reported to An Garda Síochána.

In any instance where it is known, or reasonable grounds exist to suspect, that a CARI employee or volunteer has abused a child, the matter will be reported to the civil authorities.

Action taken by CARI in formally reporting an allegation of child abuse against an employee or volunteer will be based on an opinion formed reasonably and in good faith.

Overview

There are 2 distinct procedures to be dealt with:

- (i) The child protection issues, including the reporting of concerns or allegations. These fall within the remit of the Designated Liaison Officer and the Child Protection Officer and are dealt with in this document.
- (ii) The employment issues. These fall within the remit of the management, CEO and Board of Directors and are dealt with in CARI's employment policies.

If any person holding a position within the structure described here is himself or herself, accused of child abuse, steps will be taken to appoint a substitute or otherwise alter the procedures as appropriate.

If a staff member or volunteer does not feel comfortable discussing a child protection concern, involving a volunteer/staff member, with the Child Liaison Officer in their Centre, they should contact a Designated Liaison Officer from another Centre or the Child Protection Officer of the organisation.

Procedural Guidelines

As an employer, CARI has a dual role to support both the child and the employee/volunteer. All procedures will be transparent and fair, and any allegation of abuse will be dealt with sensitively. CARI will seek to promote the rights and dignity of all individuals concerned.

An appropriate response to other staff, volunteers, and the wider community will be provided, with due regard to the right of privacy of those directly involved, and to the administration of justice. Support will be provided for staff and volunteers, including counselling where necessary.

Positive steps will be taken to restore the good name and reputation of a staff member or volunteer who has been wrongly accused of child abuse.

Nature of Report

CARI may be made aware of abuse allegedly committed by a CARI staff member or volunteer by any of the following:

- A client – adult or child
- A CARI staff member or volunteer
- A member of the public
- A representative of a statutory body

Reports may allege that the person has abused a child either while working or during their time off. The report may concern suspected abuse in the present day or in the past. In this way a concern may be raised by an adult disclosure of past abuse.

Child Protection

Following any complaint, immediate consideration will be given to all child protection issues that arise. This will include the possible suspension from duties for the employee or volunteer involved until the relevant authorities reach a determination in relation to validity.

Suspension from any/all duties that bring the employee/volunteer into contact with children, members of the public, or any clients will be at the discretion of CARI management for the duration of any investigation. Acceptance of this condition is a pre-condition of employment with CARI.

Responding to a Report

When an allegation is received it will be assessed promptly and carefully in accordance with current legislation and relevant policy and procedures as outlined previously. The Designated Liaison Officer will consult with the Child Protection Officer in relation to deciding the appropriate action to take. The issue may be discussed with the Board of Directors and/or other relevant personnel (e.g. statutory bodies) as appropriate. When indicated the Designated Liaison Officer and/or the Child Protection Officer will follow the steps involved in making a formal report to the statutory bodies.

When an allegation of abuse has been made and passed on to the Designated Liaison Officer then it is their responsibility to carry out the following procedures to deal with the allegation. Action will be guided by the agreed procedures, the applicable employment contract - which stipulates agreement with these policies and procedures, and the rules of natural justice.

- The Designated Liaison Officer will inform the CEO and the Child Protection Officer that an allegation of abuse has been made.
- In consultation with AnGarda Síochána, Tusla and CARI Management, the appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the protection of children. The most extreme of these will be the suspension of the employee or volunteer's duties. Agreement to this sanction is a prior condition of employment.
- The Designated Liaison Officer and/or the Child Protection Officer will privately inform the employee or volunteer that;
- An allegation has been made
- The nature of the allegation.

- The employee, or volunteer will be offered the opportunity to respond to the allegations and all relevant information available to him/her including sources of legal advice. The employee or volunteer's response will be added to the report to Tusla.
- The child's carers will be made aware that a report is to be made.
- A formal report will be made to Tusla following CARI's standard procedure.
- In the event that the allegation of abuse is being made against the Designated Liaison Officer then that person should not be involved in the process. The person reporting or making the allegation should report it to another Designated Liaison Officer in the organisation or to the Child Protection Officer.
- The Centre Management will take legal advice and assess the matter internally. The staff member or volunteer against whom the allegation has been made will be suspended from their duties (with pay in the case of employees) pending the outcome of the internal assessment and/or the investigation by Tusla and Gardai. The paramount aim of the assessment is to ensure that any element of risk to children is eliminated. The assessment will follow the procedures in CARI's employment policies. This assessment will take place without prejudice to any subsequent Garda investigation.
- Subsequent to their assessment and upon consultation with the Designated Liaison Officer and the Child Protection Officer the Management team will make a full report to the Board of Directors of CARI.
 - i. All meetings, discussions or investigations made will be recorded in writing and witnessed by a member of the management team and the Designated Liaison Officer.
 - ii. The employee or volunteer against whom the allegation has been made will be invited to respond in writing to the findings of the investigation.
 - iii. Records of all correspondence relating to the allegation will be kept and made available to Tusla and Gardai.
- A person nominated by the Board of Directors of CARI will enact any employment or disciplinary decisions regarding the employee or volunteer that need to be taken. Final decisions in this regard may be made before or after the investigation by Tusla or Gardai depending on the nature of the allegation and the outcome of the internal management assessment. This may involve dismissal of the employee or volunteer. All of these decisions will be taken in full accordance with employment legislation.
- After the investigation it is shown that the allegation was unfounded CARI will actively seek to clear the name of the staff member or volunteer and provide support and further assistance to the adult or child that made the complaint/allegation.

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS, OTHER THAN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

CARI encourages children and adults who use our service to bring to our attention any complaints, compliments or comments that they have about the nature of the service or the actions of our employees or volunteers.

- The procedures for making such comments or complaints, are explained to all children and adults when they first attend our service.
- All comments, compliments and complaints, made by children and adults regarding the nature or quality of our service are welcomed and taken seriously.
- When relevant, the person making a complaint, or their parent – if appropriate, is given information regarding external agencies to which they can complain.
- Adults/children can address complaint/comments to whomever they feel is the appropriate recipient within the organisation.
- All comments/complaints, will be acknowledged, unless made anonymously.
- The Designated Liaison Officer will process any comments/complaints that comprise a child protection element.
- All other comments/complaints, will be discussed in the relevant department or at management team level and acted on promptly. Complaints will be responded to in writing within 30 days of the date it was acknowledged.
- The individual/s will be informed, of any decisions made in response to their comment/complaint. If they are dissatisfied with this outcome they will be invited to offer alternative solutions.

Appendix A



Job Description Forensic Accompaniment Officer

JOB DETAILS

Job Title: Forensic Accompaniment Officer

ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Forensic Accompaniment Team Leader: Grace Jordan
CASS and Helpline Manger: Eve Farrelly

SUMMARY OF ROLE

This role requires the post holder to work in partnership with criminal justice agencies; children and families teams; forensic physicians and designated and named child protection professionals and requires highly developed communication and mediation skills.

The post holder will be required to provide support and communication to children and families/carers

The post holder will prioritize, assess, plan, evaluate and deliver all relevant aspects of care to an agreed and expected high standard, work closely with the multi-disciplinary team and contribute to the clinical governance process.

JOB PURPOSE

The post holder will provide on call crisis support through initial examination

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff will be expected to undertake on call crisis worker duties and be able to attend the Centre within the determined time of the Forensic Unit Manager.

To engage with children, young people and their families/carers taking into account their needs, background, rights and current circumstances.

To contribute to the crisis worker on call rota, providing initial support through the examination process and telephone support.

To participate in case conference review when required.

To participate in regular supervision.

To participate in and promote the development of the service according to policies, protocols and guidelines as stated by the Management.

To work as part of a team of forensic physicians, pediatricians, counselors, crisis workers and support workers in the delivery of high standards of service.

To liaise with the multidisciplinary team in the provision of support services.

To follow Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

To adhere to all Trust and local policies.

TEAM BRIEFING

CARI Accompaniment operates a system of Team Briefing, which is based on the principles that people will be more committed to their work if they fully understand the reason behind what is happening in their organization and how it is performing.

Appendix B



CARI CONDITIONS OF VOLUNTEER FORM

Position: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No.: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____

I have read and understood the following documents:

Child Protection Policy:

CARI Policy Document:

Job Description:

Confidentiality Statement:

I agree that, if CARI employs me beyond the trial period, I will be bound by the conditions therein.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C



CARI VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

This Volunteer Agreement demonstrates how we value our volunteers. We want to assure you that we appreciate your contribution to our organisation. We are dedicated to ensuring that you have a quality volunteer experience which is both productive and rewarding.

We agree that volunteering services of: _____

Beginning on: _____

The volunteer agrees to volunteer for _____ hours on the following day/days

Mon Tues Wed Thur Fri Sat Sun

The Volunteer role is; _____ And the volunteer will be supervised by:

The CARI Foundation commits to the following:

- To provide adequate information and training so you may meet the expectations as described in your volunteer job description.
- To allow for a six week trial period.
- To explain what is required of you and to support and provide encouragement to help you achieve the desired results.
- To assign you with a named supervisor who will provide you with regular support and supervision meetings.
- To treat you with respect and courtesy at all times:
- To be receptive to any comments and feedback from all our volunteers.
- To value and recognise our volunteers as a significant resource in achieving goals.

The Volunteer commits to the following:

- To fulfil my role as outlined in the volunteer role description.
- To perform my volunteer role to the best of my ability.
- To follow the organisation's policies and procedures.
- To meet time and task commitments and to provide sufficient notice when not available.
- To act in a way that is in line with the aims and objectives of the CARI Foundation.

Agreed to by:

Organisation's Signature _____ Date _____

Volunteer Signature _____

This volunteer agreement is binding in honour only, and is not intended to be a legally binding contract between the volunteer and the organisation. Neither party intends any employment relationship to be created now or at any time in the future. This agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

Appendix D



CARI CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

All CARI Staff, Volunteers and Board Members must keep confidential all information regarding all CARI's clients. They must respect the client's right to privacy and anonymity inside and outside of the CARI Centres.

I, _____ the undersigned.
PLEASE PRINT

Of, _____

Have read and understand the confidentiality statement of CARI. I agree to be bound by the principles of this statement and I understand that any breach of confidentiality may be grounds for dismissal from my work with CARI.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____



I hereby give CARI [Children at Risk Ireland] consent to record, videotape and photograph my image and/or voice to be used in the following ways (check all that apply):

- On their website and all social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.
- In both printed advertisements including but not limited to local/national newspapers/ posters displayed in public spaces/ leaflets.
- Printed annual report
- Other _____

I further understand that no special compensation will be provided to me for use of my image and that I will be informed in advance of the specific use of my image.

Volunteer Name (Please Print)

Volunteer Signature

Date