



Utopian Training Solutions

Child Safeguarding & Vulnerable Adults Policy

2025

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Section 10 – Safeguarding

10.1 Safeguarding of Children and Child Protection Policy.

10.1.1 Introduction

Utopian Training Solutions is committed to the safeguarding and protecting of children and Adults at Risk. It is the policy of the organisation to promote the best interests and welfare of children. This principle is enshrined in the Children Order (Northern Ireland) 1995, the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 and underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Utopian Training Solutions is dedicated to ensuring the full realisation of the rights of all children and adults at risk across Northern Ireland.

Utopian Training Solutions wants all adults to enjoy their involvement with us whether on a work experience placement or as a visitor to one of our properties. It may be that your area of work rarely, if ever, brings you into contact with adults at risk but, they are entitled to be safe with you and may look up to you as a role model. This policy is intended to help us all to honour that. **This policy was reviewed by an external auditor on 3rd April 2024** by the International Committee for the Red Cross.

While primarily intended to safeguard adults at Risks, our policy is also meant to protect staff – and others working with us including contractors and consultants – from any false allegation of improper conduct in that regard. With this purpose in mind, the guidance given here is intended to help you understand how the policy is meant to be applied in practice. We cannot cover every possible eventuality, but hopefully they do cover most situations that you are actually likely to encounter.

It is the policy of Utopian Training Solutions to safeguard the welfare of all children and adults at risk with whom we come into contact by attempting to protect them from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Utopian Training Solutions will safeguard children and adults at risk by adopting and implementing its Safeguarding Policy.

10.1.2 POLICY STATEMENT

We will endeavour to ensure that adults at risk are protected from harm while they visit our properties. We will do this by:

1. Making sure our staff, trainees and volunteers are carefully selected.
2. Provide appropriate training for staff, trainees, and volunteers in issues of adults at risk protection.
3. Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of any adult at risk in contact with Utopian Training Solutions.
4. Not physically, emotionally, or sexually abusing any adult at risk in contact with Utopian Training Solutions
5. Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, trainees volunteer, persons working for us or member of the public from putting any adult at risk in a situation in which there is an unreasonable risk to their health and safety.

6. Taking all reasonable steps to prevent any staff member, trainee and volunteer, persons working for us or member of the public from physically, emotionally, or sexually abusing any adult at risk.
7. Reporting to a Designated Officer any evidence or reasonable suspicion that an adult at risk has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused in contact with Utopian Training Solutions.
8. Referring to statutory authorities all incidents reported to Designated Officers.
9. Implementing this policy in conjunction with our Health and Safety guidelines already in place.
10. Ensuring that signage is displayed at Utopian Training Solutions and at all centres, indicating that Utopian Training Solutions has a policy for Safeguarding Adults at Risk, and where copies can be obtained.

10.1.3 Scope

This Safeguarding Policy is intended to cover all functions of the Utopian Training Solutions and applies to all Utopian Training Solutions staff/volunteers, especially those who work directly with children and adults at risk (regulated positions). The term employee includes anyone who works full-time, part-time, seasonally, on-call, on a student placement or as a volunteer.

This Safeguarding Policy is designed to provide a foundation for Safeguarding within Utopian Training Solutions Specific guidance may additionally be developed to meet the needs of particular functions/ or services, as required.

10.1.4 Definition of abuse

Defining abuse is a complex issue. All staff/volunteers should be made aware of what constitutes abuse:

- **NEGLECT** is the actual and persistent failure to meet the basic needs or important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the health or development, including failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing **OR** neglect of a child or adult at risks' emotional needs
- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** includes hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or adult at risk including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, an adult at risks' ill-health
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** is the actual and persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection resulting in severe adverse effects on the child or adult at risks' development. This may include conveying to a child or adult at risk that they are worthless, unloved and inadequate, or where impossible expectations are placed upon a child or adult at risk. It may also involve regularly exploiting, corrupting or frightening a child or adult at risk.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** involves forcing a child or adult at risk to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or adult at risk is aware of the activity or is involved in sexual activities that they are unable to give informed consent or that violate social taboos or family roles. **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** is a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires
- **FINANCIAL OR MATERIAL ABUSE** involves theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

- **DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE** involves abuse based on a person's race, gender, sexuality, disability, religious and/or political beliefs and can take the form of harassment, slurs or similar mistreatment
- **INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE.** This is repeated instances of poor care of individuals or groups of individuals. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of structures, policies, processes and practices within an organisation. While this in no way condones the abusive practice on the part of individuals, it recognises the powerful influence that organisational culture has on individual behaviour.

The above list should not be considered an exclusive or even exhaustive list of the types of abuse which can be experienced by children and adults at risk and the majority of the above abuse can also happen online.

10.1.5 POLICY OBJECTIVES

- There is clear guidance for reporting safeguarding concerns that a child or adult at risk is, or may be, at risk of being harmed or in need of protection and how these will be responded to.
- To ensure effective selection, supervision and training of staff/volunteers in relation to safeguarding of children and adults at risk.
- To put in place appropriate and timely referral and reporting arrangements with statutory and other agencies dealing directly with safeguarding of child and adults at risk.
- To ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fully understood and complied with
- To ensure that all those working for, or representing the Utopian Training Solutions adhere to our Code of Good Behaviour for working with Children and Adults at risk.
- To serve as a model of good practice to the wider community.

10.1.6 Recruitment

In accordance with The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007,

Utopian Training Solutions will ensure that the relevant ACCESS NI (NI) check will be carried out before appointing anyone to a **regulated position** and comply with Vetting & Barring Scheme arrangements.

In defining a **regulated position**, the following criteria will be used:

- A position whose normal duties include the caring for, training, advising, counselling, supervising or being in sole charge of children
- A position whose normal duties include unsupervised contact with children under arrangements made by a responsible person
- A position whose normal duties include supervising or managing an individual in his work in a regulated position

Utopian Training Solutions will only request a check on the individual to whom a conditional offer of appointment has been made. Checks will not normally be requested on existing staff/volunteers, however, a check may be requested if:

- An individual takes up new duties in a regulated position with children, where this had not previously been the case
- Serious allegations have been made about an individual already working with children or new information comes to light.
- Information provided under ACCESS NI arrangements will be treated as highly sensitive and will be at all times treated as strictly confidential.

If Utopian Training Solutions becomes aware that an individual who is employed or who is a volunteer is subject to a Disqualification Order, or who is included in the DWC NA (NI) List then the

individual will be moved to a non-childcare position or have their employment/volunteer placement terminated.

Additionally, Utopian Training Solutions may refer names to the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust. (N.H.S.C.T.) This would occur where Utopian Training Solutions has dismissed an individual, the individual has resigned, retired or has been transferred to a position, which is not a regulated position.

No matter how good the recruitment and selection procedures may be, they are not 'foolproof. Best practice standards in management and supervision of staff/volunteers and volunteers after appointment is important.

10.1.7 Reporting Procedures

Elected members, members of staff, volunteers, coaches and other users have a duty of care to the child, young person or adult at risk to report anything deemed as suspicious.

It is not our responsibility to decide if a child or adult at risk is being abused. Our role is to act on any concerns.

All allegations or suspicions are to be treated seriously. No abuse is acceptable and some abuse is a criminal offence and must be reported to the PSNI as soon as possible.

Utopian Training Solutions will share any significant information about staff/volunteers' or others' behaviour deemed to be putting children at risk of harm with police and social services.

Staff/volunteers must fill in an Incident Report Forms Appendix 1 incidences or concerns to their line manager where:

- Staff/volunteers observe abuse occurring
- A child or adult at risk tells them that there is abuse occurring
- They have concerns over the propriety of activities
- They suspect that a child or adult at risk is suffering abuse • They accidentally hurt a child or cause distress in any manner.
- A child appears to respond in a sexual manner to staff/volunteers' actions, misunderstands or misinterprets something they have done.
- Information is provided by a third party (e.g. another child/adult at risk or worker)

10.1.8 Disclosure Guidelines

Children and adults at risk rarely discuss the subject spontaneously – it may take weeks or months for a child or adult at risk to talk about his/her experiences. Never promise to keep information a child or adult at risk is telling you a secret. If a child or adult at risk is telling you it is because he/she wants it to stop. Carefully explain that because of the nature of the disclosure you are required to pass this information on to the relevant agency.

Always let the child or adult at risk know who you are going to tell and the implications of telling them.

- Stay calm and reassuring
- Find a quiet place to talk, inform colleagues that this is occurring ensuring that actions cannot be mistaken for collusion
- Take seriously what the child or adult at risk is telling you
- Listen and do not press for information
- Do not ask leading questions

- Acknowledge the child/adult at risk's confused feelings stressing that it is not their fault
- Follow the procedures (outlined in this policy)
- Do not attempt to deal with the matter further on your own informing the child/adult at risk of your intended actions and reasons for them.

Discuss disclosure with a Safeguarding Officer at Utopian Training Solutions Sam White Email address

- It is important that timely and accurate records are kept about any safeguarding concerns about a child or adult at risk
- Staff must record information on the Safeguarding incident report and complete the checklist as soon as possible and no more than 24 hours after any issue concerning actual or suspected abuse against a child or adult at risk.
- All records must be signed, dated and timed. Records should be an account of factual information and any view/judgement expressed about these facts should be clearly qualified as such
- Records need to cover four specific areas:

- **Everything and everyone that was seen or observed** – including actual injuries, parents/carers experiencing difficulties in providing basic care or consistently negative behaviour towards a child or adult at risk.
- **Any allegations or disclosures made** by a child or adult at risk, carers or anyone else; if possible it is best practice to write down the actual words used to describe the abuse/harm
- **Any explanations** given for injuries or statements made by the child or adult at risk or others
- **All action taken** such as discussion with the Safeguarding Officer, contact with Statutory Social Services, relevant agencies, third party organisations
- All records must be kept in a secure place

10.1.9 Referral

The decision to refer or not to refer should be made by the Safeguarding officer and the relevant Management member.

When considering the decision as to whether to refer on to another agency (e.g. to PSNI, Social Services etc.) the following should be taken into account:

- The wishes of the child or adult at risk & their right to self-determination
- The mental capacity of the child or adult at risk
- Known indicators of abuse
- Level of risk to this individual
- The seriousness of the abuse
- The effect of the abuse on the individual
- Level of risk to others
- The effect of the abuse on others
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached
- The need for others to know

- The ability of others (e.g. PSNI, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation.

10.1.10 Allegations against staff

Staff/volunteers working with children and adults at risk may feel vulnerable to accusations of abuse of a child or adults at risk. Staff/volunteers and other users should refer to the Code of Behaviour in order to protect themselves and reduce any possibility for false allegations. Failure to adhere to this Code of Good Behaviour may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Any staff member or volunteer under supervision has the right to be notified about the cause of concern. This will be done in consultation with social services, the police and/or management committee, where appropriate. Any investigation will be implemented in accordance with Utopian Training Solutions. Complaints/Grievance Policy as necessary. If allegations are made, it is important to:

- Stay calm;
- Co-operate with the investigation;
- Seek advice and support from a manager/management committee or, if appropriate, a professional organisation, union, family or friends;
- Ensure that clear records are kept of any meetings attended, discussions or correspondence about the allegations;
- Avoid discussing the allegations with the person who made them.

Utopian Training Solutions will balance the right to confidentiality with the legal principle that the welfare of the child/adult at risk is paramount. It aims to protect both the rights of the child/adult at risk and of the alleged perpetrator by ensuring that only those who need to know are given the relevant information. It is essential that any concern in relation to safeguarding is treated as strictly confidential. A breach of confidentiality could be damaging for the child/adult at risk, their family and any safeguarding investigations that may follow.

A malicious allegation in relation to safeguarding is a very serious matter and will be treated in the same way as any other malicious allegation in Utopian Training Solutions. If a manager has reason to suspect that an allegation against another employee/volunteer is malicious he/she will investigate this. In the event that the suspicion is founded, the malicious allegation will be dealt with under Utopian Training Solutions existing disciplinary policy.

10.1.11 Responsibilities

Board

The Board will have overall responsibility for the Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Policy.

Safeguarding Officer

- Ensure that staff are supported when necessary to protect child and adults at risk
- Ensuring that staff/volunteers are aware of and follow the policy
- Monitoring and controlling situations where over friendliness of staff/volunteers could lead to misconceived allegations
- Gathering information on reports of Safeguarding incidents and referring these to the relevant management committee member.
- Co-ordinate and monitor the Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk Policy

- Ensure that all relevant staff/volunteers are fully trained in and understand Safeguarding issues
- Ensuring that external service providers, organisations that hire Utopian Training Solutions premises comply fully with the Safeguarding Policy
- Sharing any significant information about employee's or others' behaviour deemed to be putting children/adults at risk, at risk of harm with police and social services, as necessary.
- Advising on the disciplinary procedure that may result from an investigation by either the Safeguarding or management.
- Ensuring that all staff/volunteers of Utopian Training Solutions. who have substantial access to children or adults at risk have undergone a ACCESS NI check.

All Staff/volunteers

All staff/volunteers should familiarise themselves with this policy, procedures and guidance. Utopian Training Solutions is committed to providing a positive and supportive environment for children and adults at risk based on respect. Any coercive, disrespectful or negative behaviour by staff/volunteers or service users whilst using Utopian Training Solutions premises should be addressed/ reported as necessary.

10.1.12 Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

10.1.13 CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR STAFF/VOLUNTEERS

Utopian Training Solutions urges all staff/volunteers to be excellent role models in order to protect children and adults at risk to promote a positive culture and to avoid false allegations.

The duty to safeguard children and adults at risk in Utopian Training Solutions rests with all members of staff. All staff should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the Safeguarding of Children and Adults at risk Policy.

Do and Don'ts for working with Adults at Risk **DO:**

- Be respectful and professional
- Listen, communicate
- Use common sense; be caring, attentive and aware
- Act in an appropriate manner
- Be sympathetic to their needs
- Be aware of your responsibility
- Be aware of policy and procedures
- Know the appropriate contacts and act appropriately
- Be responsible – report and support
- Constantly review and update all parties – positively feed into policy/procedures **DO NOT:**

- Treat as children
- Be aggressive
- Physically restrain
- Do anything of a personal nature they can do for themselves
- Re-enforce negative emotions/behaviours

- Engage in inappropriate behaviour
- Place yourself in a vulnerable position

Fostering a Positive Culture

- Treat all service users equally, with respect and dignity Make sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, encouraging achievements rather than negative criticism
- Be watchful for bullying which may occur child to child, group to child or adult to child and report all concerns
- Recognise developmental needs and capacity
- Put welfare first, before winning or achieving goals Avoid excessive training or competition
- Do not push children and young people against their will
- In all circumstances the member of staff's professional judgement will be exercised and for most of this code of conduct will only serve to confirm what they have always done. However inappropriate actions in relation to any of the above may lead to staff disciplinary procedures being implemented.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned:

- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Never share a room/tent/changing room/bath or shower with a child/young person
- Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Never allow allegations made by a child/ adult at risk to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do not undertake personal care for children/young people/adult at risk.
- Do not invite or allow children/adult at risk to stay with you at your home
- Do not leave foul, sexualised or discriminatory language unchallenged
- Do not make sexually suggestive comments

Do not reduce a child/young person/adult at risk to tears as a form of control
Staff/volunteers should not transport a child/adult at risk alone.

Anyone wishing to record or take photographs of Utopian Training Solutions led activities should secure the written consent of the officer in charge of organising the event using Consent Forms. Utopian Training Solutions reserves the right to refuse permission.

Where Utopian Training Solutions officers intend to photograph or recording images of children, the prior consent of the parent/guardian of the child involved should be obtained using a Consent Form.

In order to minimise risks to children/adult at risk, staff/volunteers of Utopian Training Solutions will:

- Ask for parental permission to use their image.
- If the child is named, avoid using their photograph.
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child.
- Only use images of children/ athletes in suitable dress
- The photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child

Appendix 1 INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Name:	
Address:	
Tel No/ Email:	
Relationship with Organisation:	
Date of Incident:	
Place of Incident:	
Details of Incident:	Who what where when how
Signature:	
Date:	

All incidents reported will be treated in strictest confidence. Any significant information about employees'/volunteers' behaviour deemed to be putting children at risk of harm will be shared with police and social services. Every case will be decided on its own merits and a decision as to whether there is cause for concern will be based on the balance of probabilities, rather than conclusive proof. Decisions will be based on opinions formed reasonably and in good faith.