

ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT POLICY STATEMENT

The Ulster Unionist Party is aware it has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure that it provides the highest professional standard of care when elected representatives, members and staff are in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. To provide the best service possible to children, young people and vulnerable adults, all elected representatives, members and staff need to be well informed, trained and supported. With this service, elected representatives, members and staff are less likely to become involved in actions which can lead to harm, or can be misunderstood.

The protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility. There is a moral and legal obligation on anyone who is involved with children, young people and vulnerable adults to provide them with the highest possible standard of care and consideration.

The purpose of this policy is to help protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who either visit Ulster Unionist Party premises, or other places of work, or when elected representatives, members and staff come into contact with them in outside locations.

The Ulster Unionist Party is committed to the practice and promotion of this policy, which protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

DEFINITIONS

The term children or young person is used to refer to anyone **under the age of 18 years**. The term also refers to vulnerable adults (defined under The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Definitions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 are also relevant.

All children, young people and vulnerable adults irrespective of their age, class, religion, culture, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, family, dependency, or marital status have the right to protection from abuse.

The term parent is used to represent parents, carers and guardians.

The terms elected representatives, members and staff are used to refer to elected representatives at all levels of the Ulster Unionist Party, employees, members, volunteers or anyone working on behalf and or representing the Ulster Unionist Party.

Forms of Abuse

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. These definitions are based on those from Co-Operating to Safeguard Children (2003) (Northern Ireland) (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety).

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening.

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time.

Financial Abuse

There is no statutory definition of financial abuse. However, statutory guidance published by the Department of Health entitled 'No Secrets' defines financial abuse as follows: 'Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Whilst Financial Abuse could arise in relation to children under 18, it is more likely that it will arise with vulnerable adults.

The Ulster Unionist Party recognizes that **all children, young people and vulnerable adults should be treated with respect. This includes:**

- Language used towards them
- When possible they should be included in decisions
- They are offered the time to explain their actions/thoughts etc
- They are listened to with courtesy
- Their views/ opinions are valued and not ridiculed.

However Ulster Unionist Party elected representatives, members and staff need to follow good practice rules:

- Elected representatives, members and staff should not spend excessive time alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult away from others. Meeting with an individual young person should take place as openly as possible. If privacy is needed, the door should be left open and other adults informed. These informed adults should periodically check in the room.
- Ulster Unionist Party elected representatives, members and staff should not make unnecessary physical contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Elected representatives, members and staff should avoid taking a child, young person or vulnerable adult in their car without a third person present.

REPORTING CONCERNS

This is an area, which requires a high level of confidentiality and strict 'need to know' inclusion of information. It is also an area where the 'Paramount Principle' applies in law i.e. the consideration of confidentiality should not be allowed to override the rights of children, young people or vulnerable adults to be protected from harm. Any concerns should be assessed promptly and carefully. They should be reported to the Designated Child Protection Officer within 24 hours, or on the next working day following receipt of a report.

A concern may come from a number of sources:

- A child, young person or vulnerable adult may disclose information.
- Another person may pass on information regarding what a child, young person or vulnerable adult has told them.

- Signs/symptoms are observed by elected representatives, members and staff e.g. bruising/burns/behavior etc.

In case of a child, young person or vulnerable adult disclosing abuse it is important to the following guidelines are designed to assist in responding in an appropriate manner:

- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Ask questions for clarification – do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
- Offer reassurance without promises.
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is very likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing all the details that you are aware of and what was said using the child's own words, as soon as possible.
- Report to and inform the Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible
- The Designated Child Protection Officer informs the relevant persons, i.e. Social Services and/or the Police if appropriate.

The above should be followed when responding to a child, young person or vulnerable adult making an allegation. The above should also be followed if an allegation is made against an elected representative, member or member of staff or against any other person, e.g. a parent.

Confidentiality and Sharing of Information

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only, e.g. Designated Child Protection Officers, Social Services, Police, child, parents and appropriate staff. It is important that allegations or concerns are not discussed.

Informing the parents of a child, young person or vulnerable adult requires sensitivity and should be done in consultation with Social Services and will be done in an open and transparent manner.

All recorded information must be stored in a secure place in line with data protection legislation.

If any enquires are received e.g. media, public or parents; elected representatives, members or staff should reply 'no comment' at all times.

We will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

1. Adopting and promoting this policy within the Ulster Unionist Party to elected representatives, members and staff.
2. Having effective procedures for reporting child protection concerns within the Ulster Unionist Party.
3. Sharing information about the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults and good practice internally.
4. Providing effective management for all through supervision, support and training.
5. The Ulster Unionist Party will appoint three designated Child Protection Officers to ensure that the procedures outlined in this document are implemented, and who will also be responsible for an annual review of this policy. Designated Child Protection Officers will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their specific roles.

As outlined above, the procedures for this policy statement will be reviewed at regular intervals, at least on a yearly basis.

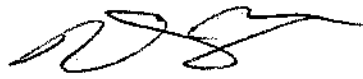
Child Protection Officer (1) **John Moore, Head of Press and Policy**

Child Protection Officer (2) **Sandra Overend, Party Officer**

Child Protection Officer (3) **Philip Smith, Party Officer**

SIGNED:

Party Leader



DATE: 12/1/18

SIGNED:

Party Chairman



DATE: 12.1.2018