

# 1. CHILD PROTECTION

## 1.1 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Purpose

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CHILDEVISION is committed to protecting the rights of children and young adults, particularly those with whom ChildVision works. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18, who is not, or has never been, married. Although this policy is entitled 'Child Protection' it must also be read to encompass general principles which also apply to those young people availing of services in or from ChildVision who have attained the legal age of majority but who, by virtue of a cognitive, developmental or other life circumstance, may be considered vulnerable. In respect of young vulnerable adults ChildVision's policy on Protecting Vulnerable Adults is also applicable. This Policy should also be read in conjunction with ChildVision's Policy on Allegations Made against Staff.

It is the intention of ChildVision to protect the rights of children and young adults by ensuring their safety and wellbeing while they are using ChildVision's services. A culture of listening to young people and a culture of respect and vigilance are central to how we do our work, underpinned by ensuring appropriate reporting procedures are in place to deal with complaints and allegations.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all employees of ChildVision and to all those volunteers, placement students, contractors, and others who might find themselves working on the campus or any of its houses in the community or taking part in external activities (within or outside of the Republic of Ireland). It is the responsibility of line managers to bring the existence of this policy to the notice of such people. All staff members, volunteers, placement students, contractors and others working on the ChildVision campus or any of its houses in the community or external activities will be required to provide the appropriate Garda vetting documentation and to sign a declaration that they have read this policy and agree to be bound by it. Visitors to the Centre or any of its constituent parts or external activities are also required to adhere to this policy and in so far as it is reasonably practicable to bring its main provisions to their notice, this will be done. However, it is envisaged that such visitors will be accompanied by staff for the duration of their visit to ChildVision or its external activities, obviating the need for them to be fully acquainted with the policy or to sign the declaration.

Signed declarations will be stored on file in the HR department.

## **General Statement**

This policy (and the accompanying procedures) has been developed in line with *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011) and *Our Duty to Care* (Dept. of Health and Children, 2001). A copy of this policy (and the accompanying procedures) has been lodged with the HSE, North East (HQ, Ballymun) and it is available on the ChildVision website at [www.childvision.ie](http://www.childvision.ie). This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Child Protection guidelines issued by St. Joseph's Primary School for Children with a Visual Impairment, Pobalscoil Rosmini and with ChildVision's Intimate Care Policy and ChildVision's Behaviour Support Policy.

## **Designated Person**

The role of the Designated Person for Child Protection is:

- to receive and evaluate all Child Protection concerns
- to maintain a file on each Child Protection issue raised
- to contact the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and An Garda Síochána as necessary where objectively serious concern is deemed to exist
- to maintain on-going links with the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and An Garda Síochána and to ensure all relevant information is passed to them
- to advise the Board, CEO and Management Team of ChildVision on all matters relating to good Child Protection practice, including general, non-specific, information on the nature of all complaints or allegations made and their on-going status
- to ensure and monitor the provision and adequacy of Child Protection training to all ChildVision staff and volunteers.

The Designated Person will maintain his/her training and awareness of Child Protection issues and ensure he/she is updated on pertinent developments.

### **The Designated Person for ChildVision is:**

- James Forbes, Head of Care

He is available at 01- 837 3635

### **The Co-Designated Person is:**

- Mary Leonard, Deputy CEO

She is available at 01 – 837 3635

The Designated Person is the first person to whom a concern in respect of a Child Protection issue should be addressed. In the absence of the Designated Person, due to illness or annual leave, the Co-Designated Person will be available.

In cases where it may be deemed inappropriate for the Designated Person to investigate a Child Protection concern, the role of Designated Person will be taken on by the Co-Designated Person, supported by the CEO.

REVIEW

# 1.2 POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON DISCLOSURES OR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE CONCERNING CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE AVAILING OF SERVICES FROM CHILDVISION

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## **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework within which disclosures or allegations of abuse made by children or young people availing of services provided by ChildVision can be received in circumstances which seek to lessen the distress involved and which clearly delineate the professional process which must then be followed to minimise the likelihood of further abuse occurring.

## **Scope:**

All staff

## **Definitions**

Abuse is categorised under four main headings:

- **Neglect** occurs when a child or young person suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults or medical care.
- **Emotional Abuse** occurs when a child's or young person's needs for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met.
- **Physical Abuse** includes any form of non-accidental injury or injury which results from wilful or neglectful failure to protect a child or young person.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child or young person is used by another person for that person's sexual gratification or arousal or for the gratification or arousal of others.

These definitions are non-exhaustive and are for summary purposes only. Additional examples and further explanation can be found in Children First (2011).

## **Policy Statement**

The policy covering this area is to be found in the Child Protection Statement contained in the ChildVision Child Protection Policy, which itself is informed by the national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children, as found in Children First (2011).

Training in Children First (2011) is mandatory for all of ChildVision's social care staff and for all others working directly with children or young adults or in a managerial role within the organisation.

## **Procedure**

If a child or young person makes a disclosure or allegation of abuse to a member of staff, he/she will

- manage the environment to minimise the distress involved to the child or young person
- inform the child or young person that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and that child protection practice requires that others be informed
- offer reassurance that the child or young person is doing the right thing in making the disclosure
- avoid any appearance of shock or personal distress and avoid any signs which might appear judgemental about any act or person referred to in the disclosure
- avoid closed or leading questions and gather only the information required to refer the matter to the Centre's Designated Person for Child Protection or the Co-Designated Person
- record the alleged facts only, using the exact words used by the child or young person
- consult with the Designated Person or, if this is not possible, with the Co-Designated Person as a matter of urgency.

The Designated Person or Co-Designated Person for Child Protection will comply with the reporting procedure detailed in ChildVision Child Protection Policy.

Particular attention is drawn to the organisation's imperative to

- minimise the likelihood of any further abuse occurring
- avoid any member of staff or management saying or doing anything which may affect any investigation or potential legal proceedings
- to ensure that ChildVision's response to disclosure's or allegations of abuse is professional and non-judgemental
- ensure that any potential gaps in ChildVision's response to the disclosure or allegation do not occur
- recognise the importance of maintaining professional records and reports, being especially cognisant that these may be central to any subsequent investigation or legal proceedings.

## **Responsibility to Report Suspected or Actual Abuse**

Child abuse is a difficult subject, and it is understandable that people may be reluctant to acknowledge that it can happen. Adults may also be worried that they are seeing something that might not be there or are personally vulnerable if they make a misjudgement. For these and other reasons it is potentially useful for staff to raise concerns with the Designated Person so that these can be shared and evaluated objectively. That said, however, it must be asserted that reporting serious concerns of child abuse is everybody's responsibility, not least because if a child is suffering or in danger the earliest possible intervention is crucial.

Any person who suspects that a child is being abused has a duty of care to report their suspicions to the relevant authorities either directly or via the Designated Person. The *Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998* provides immunity from civil liability for reporting child protection concerns to an appropriate person subject to the proviso that the person reporting the suspicion does so reasonably and in good faith (S.3).

## **Reporting**

Concerns about a child or young person's safety or wellbeing can come from a number of sources including:

- the child or young person may make a disclosure to a member of staff
- another child or young person may disclose something said to them or something they have overheard or noticed about a fellow child or young person
- staff may notice signs of abuse or neglect or be concerned about a child or young person's welfare
- a concerned adult may contact ChildVision and voice their suspicions
- staff may be concerned about the behaviour of another member of staff.

Objectively reasonable grounds for concern for the welfare of a child or young person will trigger the reporting procedures contained in this document.

Examples of objectively reasonable grounds for concern may include:

- disclosure
- physical signs or behaviour which is consistent with abuse and for which other explanations are unlikely
- eye witness testimony
- consistent signs of physical or emotional neglect.

A suspicion which is not supported by an objective indication of abuse or neglect may not constitute a reasonable ground for concern. However, All concerns will be noted. As per section 3.2.2 of Children First (2011) all reasonable concerns will be notified to the Child and Family Service (TUSLA).

## **Reporting Procedure; Designated Person**

Concerns about the welfare or safety of a young person should be reported to the Designated Person.

The Designated Person does not have and should not assume an investigatory role. This function rests with the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and An Garda Síochána. If, in the view of the Designated Person, objectively reasonable grounds for concern exists the Designated Person will provide a report to the Intake Social Worker of the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), Dublin North East area. If an Intake Social Worker is not available and it is deemed that there is an immediate risk to the young person the Designated Person will contact An Garda Síochána.

The CEO and Management Team of ChildVision will be informed of a decision to inform the authorities and updated, in non-specific terms, on all developments arising from the process.

A file note will be kept of all aspects of the process, updated as the Designated Person is made aware of them.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of a decision to refer a concern to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and/or An Garda Síochána, unless doing so might be reasonably thought to endanger the young person.

Parents/Guardians will be informed of any records being kept in respect of their young person arising from a concern referred to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and/or An Garda Síochána, unless doing so might be reasonably thought to endanger the young person.

All concerns relating to a young person will be recorded on the Internal Standard Reporting Form (Appendix 1) and kept securely by the Designated Person. Any subsequent file will also be kept securely by the Designated Person.

Access to reports arising from a child protection issue will only be shared on a strictly need to know basis, meaning that while secrecy can never be promised in relation to an assessment of child abuse or neglect, the information in the reports will only be shared with those who have a legitimate need to be aware of it.

The principle of confidentiality in use will be that those able to access the reports will only disclose their content to others with a legitimate professional need to know the information and only then when the welfare of the young person requires it.

## **Choosing not to make a report to the statutory authorities**

As per section 3.8 of Children First (2011) if the Designated Person decides not to forward a concern to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or An Garda Síochána the staff member or volunteer who raised the concern will be given a clear written statement of the reasons why such action is not being taken. This statement will also advise that should the staff member or volunteer remain concerned about the situation they are free to contact the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and/or An Garda Síochána.

## **Protected Disclosures and additional legal information**

This Policy should be read in the light of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, and ChildVision's Protected Disclosures policy. Staff are also reminded that The Protection of Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act 1998 shields persons from civil liability who have communicated allegations of child abuse to designated officers of the HSE or to An Garda Síochána once they have done so 'reasonably and in good faith'. Common Law and the defence of qualified privilege may also provide additional protection for a person who makes a report in good faith and in a child's best interests.

Attention is also drawn to Section 176 of the Criminal Justice Act 2006 and the criminal charge of 'reckless endangerment of a child'. Section 176 states:

'A person, having authority or control over a child or abuser, who intentionally or recklessly endangers a child by

- (a) causing or permitting any child to be placed or left in a situation which creates a substantial risk to the child of being a victim of serious harm or sexual abuse, or
- (b) failing to take reasonable steps to protect a child from such a risk while knowing that the child is in such a situation

is guilty of an offence'.

## **Complaints Procedure**

If a staff member or other person who raised a concern with the Designated Person is unhappy with the response from the Designated Person or believe that the concern has not been handled appropriately or forwarded to the relevant authorities they are encouraged to exercise their right to contact the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) or An Garda Síochána directly.



# CHILDIVISION

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I have read **CHILDIVISION'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** and I agree to be bound by it.

I further assert that there is no reason why I would be considered unsuitable to work with, or in the vicinity of children or young people.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Review**

This Child Protection Policy, as well as related procedures and practices will be reviewed annually by the Designated Person. The Designated Person will be required to report on an annual basis to the CEO and the Management Team in respect of this review.

# 1.3 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST ANY EMPLOYEE OF CHILDVISION

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In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against an employee of ChildVision, ChildVision's CEO and Senior Management Team will, through a designated Senior Manager,

- ensure that all aspects of the procedure for managing a disclosure or allegation of abuse have been followed
- obtain, if appropriate, in consultation with the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA), any witness statements
- arrange a meeting to notify the employee against whom the allegation has been made that the matter has been referred to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) for investigation, advising the employee of his/her right to be accompanied by a colleague or union representative to this meeting (subject only to the requirement that the colleague not be named as a potential witness in any investigation into the allegation which might ensue)
- ensure that the employee is provided with details of the allegation in keeping with the principles of natural justice
- ensure the employee is offered any emotional support which is deemed appropriate
- ensure that – the Human Resources Manager having been informed of the allegation - that the employee is clear that only this manager can be approached for any information regarding the progress of the investigation and not the employee's line manager, or other colleague at ChildVision
- carry out an immediate risk assessment to determine what protective measures are necessary to ensure that the child or young person is not exposed to unnecessary risk, considering each of the following protective measures:
  - a) placing the employee on leave with pay pending the outcome of the investigation, or
  - b) reassigning the employee to other duties, or
  - c) providing a chaperone to the employee, or
  - d) providing appropriate levels of supervision for the employee

Measures (b), (c) and (d) being conditional on what is reasonably practicable in the circumstances for the organisation and (a) being understood as carrying, no implication of prejudicing or otherwise pre-empting the investigation's outcome

- implement the agreed appropriate protective measure
- inform the relevant staff team of the allegation and the proposed protective measure, again giving no specific details of the allegation that are not consistent with fair procedures and necessary for the effective, fair implementation of the protective measure
- remind staff of their professional duty of confidentiality and of HR's function in respect of the employee against whom the allegation has been made
- review the implemented measures
- ensure that the child or young person and the parents/guardians are supported throughout the process providing any specialist support as necessary
- ensure that the employee is supported throughout the process, providing any specialist support as necessary
- ensure that the staff team is supported throughout the process, providing any specialist support as necessary
- liaise with the HSE, the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) and other appropriate people and authorities
- provide feedback on the investigation to the child or young person the parents/guardians as appropriate
- provide feedback on the investigation to the relevant staff team as appropriate.

## **1.4 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST ANOTHER CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON AVAILING OF A RESIDENTIAL SERVICE**

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In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a child or young person living in one of the ChildVision's residential houses the relevant staff team(s) will, in consultation with ChildVision's Designated Person or Co-Designated Person:

- carry out a risk assessment to respond to any concerns about each individual child or young person's safety and welfare, taking whatever action is deemed appropriate to minimise the likelihood of further abuse or allegations of abuse arising. This action may include:
- removal of the individual young person against whom the allegation is made
- increased supervision of the individual young person against whom the allegation is made
- complete a separate notification of a child protection concern form for each child or young person involved and forward it to the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA)
- inform parents/guardians and the HSE and/or Garda Síochána as appropriate.

# 1.5 POLICY ON BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

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## **Purpose**

To ensure staff understand the nature of bullying and harassment and the appropriate responses which are made to it.

## **Scope**

All staff.

## **Definition**

Bullying and harassment may be defined as persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious behaviour or abuse of power, conducted by an individual or a group against others, which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

## **Policy Statement**

ChildVision takes the issue of bullying very seriously and under no circumstances will it be tolerated. Bullying can be (non exhaustive list)

- Verbal
- Non verbal
- Physical
- Cyber based/electronically communicated

Incidences of bullying will be dealt with according to ChildVision's procedures.

## **Bullying and Harassment Procedure**

- A written report is to be kept on all bullying incidents.
- Young people involved in perpetrating bullying will be warned to stop. Parents or guardians will be informed.
- It is important that the young person being bullied is assured that the problem lies with the alleged perpetrator and not with him/her. The parents/guardians of the person being bullied are to be informed.
- If bullying does not stop sanctions may be used (see sanctions policy). Parents/guardians and any other relevant persons in the young person's life will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.
- Sanctions will always be age appropriate and agreed with the child or young person
- Young people will be closely monitored following incidents and reoccurrence may result in further action.

# 1.6 UNPROFESSIONAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS AND OTHER SERVICE USERS OF CHILDEVISION

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## **Purpose**

To promote best practice in respect of contact between children/young people and staff

## **Scope**

All Staff

## **Definition**

This policy defines unprofessional contact with students or other ChildVision's service users as:

- (1) Any contact which occurs outside of a staff member's working time (other than accidental contact) and which is not a bona fide aspect of the staff member's work;
- (2) Any contact which occurs within a staff member's working time but which is not a bona fide aspect of the staff member's work.

## **Policy Statement**

Unprofessional contact may include (but is not excluded to) meetings and/or contact by phone, text or e-mail or social networking sites. Unprofessional contact is a serious matter which breaches the norms and conventions of good practice. As such, it may result in a staff member being the subject of a complaint and it may result in disciplinary action being taken by ChildVision.

As an addendum to this policy good practice requires that where reasonably practicable all contact which occurs between students/service users and staff (including accidental contact) be recorded in an appropriate entry in the student's log or when no student log exists in a note to the staff member's line manager for inclusion in the Department diary.

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# 1.7 POLICY ON CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

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## **Introduction**

The welfare of the children and young people who avail of services provided by ChildVision is paramount. Central to this welfare is the recognition that children and young people have the same fundamental rights as all human beings regardless of age or legal status.

ChildVision will take all reasonable practicable steps to make children and young people aware of their rights and, at all levels, the organisation will show respect for and endeavour to promote these rights.

## **Purpose:**

To contribute to shaping and sustaining an organisational culture which promotes children's and young people's rights at the heart of all its activity.

## **Scope:**

All Staff

ChildVision recognises that, although not itself a piece of legislation, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is enshrined in modern Irish law in respect of the care and protection of children and young people. In particular, four core principles are derived from the UN Convention.

These are:

- Non- discrimination
- Devotion to the best interests of the child or young person
- The right to life, survival and development
- Respect for the views of the child or young person

## **SUMMARY OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (RATIFIED BY IRELAND SEPTEMBER 1992)**

All children and young people have:

- the right to life (Article 6)
- the right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- the right to a name and nationality (Article 7)
- the right to have their best interest considered by people making decisions about them (Article 3)

- the right to be with their parents or those who will care for them best (Article 9)
- the right to have their say about things which affect them.(Article 12)
- the right to have their opinions treated with respect and taken seriously in a manner consistent with their age and maturity (Article12)
- the right to get the appropriate information they need (Article 17)
- the right to special care, educational and training (Articles 20 & 28)
- the right to health care (Article 24)
- the right to sufficient food and water (Article 24)
- the right to free education (Article 28)
- the right to play, recreation artistic expression (Article 31)
- the right to rest and leisure and to participate in culture (Article 31)
- the right to speak their own language (Article 29)
- the right to learn about and participate in their own culture (Article 29)
- the right not be used as cheap labour (Article 32)
- the right not to be used as soldiers in war (Article 38)
- the right to be protected from danger, including all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, negligent treatment, maltreatment (Article 29)
- the right to know their rights and responsibilities (Article 29)
- the right to have institutions services and facilities responsible for their care and protection conform to standards by competent authorities, particularly in areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision (Article 3)

The right of children with disabilities to experience dignity, inclusion and full participation “in a manner conducive to the child’s achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development” is expressly stated in Article 23. This right encompasses education, rehabilitation and vocation services and gives particular emphasis to promoting self- reliance and facilitating active participation in the community.

### **Policy:**

ChildVision will, with specific reference to the Residential Service:

- Ensure that children and young people are informed of their rights and responsibilities, and are assisted to understand them. Each house will have in place an appropriate mechanism for ensuring these rights and responsibilities are regularly reviewed with the children and young people.
- Ensure that the children and young people are informed of the ChildVision’s child protection policies and are assisted to understand how they can avail of them. Each house will have in place an appropriate mechanism for ensuring that this information is always available.



- Ensure that all members of ChildVision's staff team working in direct contact with children and young people are provided with training and updates on Children First (2011) and any other best practice guidelines and legislation which underpins Children's rights.
- Ensure that children and young people are given the opportunities to regularly express their views on all aspects of their lives in ChildVision. This includes house meetings, student representative meetings, individual meetings and attendance at reviews. It also encompasses meaningful involvement in menu choice and personal shopping. This is not an exhaustive list.
- Ensure children, young people and their families have access to a complaints system which is fair and equitable.
- Ensure in accordance with ChildVision's policy on access to information that, there is support in place for children and young people to access information held in relation to the service provided to them by ChildVision.
- Ensure that children and young people are provided with information on how to contact the Ombudsman for Children.
- Ensure that the rights and responsibilities of children and young people within the ChildVision are promoted at all levels of the organisation, and encourage a culture where awareness of children's and young people's rights is central to the ChildVision's work.

# 1.8 POLICY ON SAFE PRACTICE AND WORKING ALONE

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## **Purpose:**

To minimise the potential risk of abuse occurring and to minimise the likelihood of false allegations arising.

## **Scope:**

Social Care Staff

## **Definitions:**

### **Safe Practice:**

The implementation of appropriate safeguarding measures necessary for working with children and young people consistent with their right and need to live in as normal an environment as possible. Safe practice is at the centre of good child protection. While it cannot guarantee that abuse will not occur, safe practice is a vital component in creating and maintaining a culture of awareness which will reduce

- the opportunity for abuse to occur
- the potential risk of false allegations of abuse arising.

In these terms, safe practice is both a protective and preventative child protection strategy.

### **Working Alone:**

Refers to the various planned or unplanned circumstances in which a staff member is alone with a child or young person on a one to one basis, either within or outside the workplace.

## **Policy on safe Practice:**

Members of ChildVision's social care staff will

- ensure that their interactions with children and young people are carried out in a manner appropriate to the needs of each individual child or young person.
- ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent these interactions being interpreted as offensive, disrespectful or abusive.
- ensure that they are dressed appropriately for their duties, including sleepovers
- ensure that interactions between the children and young people are monitored to be alert to signs of bullying or peer abuse

- ensure that interactions between staff, children and young people are monitored to be alert to signs of bullying or abuse
- ensure that other professionals and visitors interactions with children and young people are monitored to be alert to signs of bullying and abuse
- ensure that concerns about inappropriate interactions are reported to the designated person for child protection
- ensure that children and young people are taught appropriate self-care and self-protection skills
- ensure that time spent alone with children and young people is appropriately recorded in log entries

### **Policy on working Alone:**

Members of ChildVision's social care staff will

- confirm in advance with colleagues where they will be with the child or young person, what they will be doing and the approximate time likely to be involved
- record, subsequently, the details of the interaction in the students log, including that the required advance confirmations were given, and to whom, ensuring that any significant time discrepancies are accounted for.
- Where appropriate a working alone interaction will be periodically monitored by a colleague. Where working alone within a house, for example, common sense precautions, such as ensuring doors are left open, blinds parted and so forth, if appropriate, should be practised.

### **Exceptional Circumstances: Sleepovers**

ChildVision recognises that best practice in residential provision requires that sleepover shifts be staffed by two social care workers. To this end a panel of appropriately qualified and vetted people operates to help ensure that two staff will normally be available for sleepover duties, one of whom will always be a member of the staff team in the relevant house. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be impossible to find someone to fill a sleepover shift vacancy, necessitating consideration being given to authorising one person to sleepover on their own. The decision to authorise this exceptional circumstance will be taken by the Head of Care, in consultation with the relevant Team Leader. Relevant factors which must be taken into account will be child protection concerns, the disruption to students which might ensue from a decision not to authorise this exceptional circumstance and general social care best practice requirements related to, for example, the age, gender and mix of the young people involved and the availability of social care staff from adjacent houses to be present if required for part or all of the shift up to the students retiring for the night.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY ctd.**

### **External Monitor**

#### **Purpose:**

To provide additional support to ChildVision's residential service in discharging its child protection/ vulnerable adult protection responsibilities by facilitating direct access for students to an external advocate.

#### **Scope:**

ChildVision's residential service.

The protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse and the promotion of their welfare is always a collective activity and responsibility. At Board, Senior Management and practitioner levels ChildVision recognises its paramount responsibility is to provide a safe place for children, young people and vulnerable adults to live and thrive, wherein they can achieve their full potential supported by systems designed to show respect and promote individual dignity.

ChildVision's Residential Service discharges this collective responsibility in accordance with Children First (2011), the National Standards for Children's Residential Centres, the HIQA standards and relevant primary and secondary legislation.

In conformity with Statutory Instrument No. 259/1995 – Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations, ChildVision recognises the value of having an authorised person serve as an external monitor as an additional Child Protection and welfare support to the young people who avail of ChildVision's residential service.

Further to the National Standards for Children's Residential Centres the monitor will, at intervals

- meet the young people resident in ChildVision and enquire about their general welfare and happiness (Standard 3.4)
- review records of sanctions,
- review complaints and unauthorised absences and discuss these with the Head of Care (Standard 3.6)
- receive notification of all significant incidents (Standard 3.7).

All those young people who avail of ChildVision's residential service and their parents/guardians will have direct telephone access to the monitor and, as appropriate in the monitor's view, individual meetings with the monitor can be arranged.

#### **AIM**

The aim of the monitoring function is to

- support best practice and the provision of high standards of care within ChildVision
- assist ChildVision in its promotion of the rights and welfare of young people

- provide an independent person whom young people and parents/guardians can access in the event of a concern or complaint which they do not believe that they can bring to -or need help in bringing to – ChildVision staff
- act as an independent advocate in support of young people's rights
- act as an external child protection and welfare consultant.

#### APPOINTMENT

- The monitor will be a social care/social work professional of proven experience and integrity.
- The monitor will be appointed by the Head of Care but will be independent in the way he/she discharges the monitoring function.
- The monitor will not receive any remuneration from ChildVision for the role of monitor.
- No employer/employee relationship can arise in respect of the monitoring function between ChildVision and the monitor.

#### REPORTING STRUCTURE

- The monitor will report all concerns which are brought to him/her in the discharge of the monitoring function to the Head of Care unless for objective reasons the monitor feels that this would compromise the integrity of the monitoring function.
- The monitor will keep detailed notes in respect of any concerns which are brought to his/her attention.
- If a serious concern arises in respect of a child protection matter the monitor must always act in the best interest of the child and in accordance with Children First (2011).