



## **Children's Officers /Designated Persons – Roles and Responsibilities**

### **National Designated Person / Club Designated Person**

Designated persons are responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The Designated Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to Health Services Executive or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI. Every club should appoint a Designated Person even if the club does not have a youth section. Children's Officers should review current policies in relation to young people, check that all activities are safe and fun, and inform adults of how to deal with any concerns that may arise in relation to the protection of young people. While it is recommended that each organisation/club appoints a Children's Officer and a Designated Person, if a club is unable to recruit suitable individuals for both posts, one person can be appointed to take on the role of Club Children's Officer and Club Designated Person provided they understand and agree to take on the responsibilities attached to both positions.

### **Club Children's Officers**

The appointment of Club Children's Officers is an essential element in the creation of a quality atmosphere for young people in any club. They act as a resource to members with regard to children's issues and also ensure that children have a voice in the running of the club and can talk freely about their experiences.

Government guidelines advise that a children's officer should be appointed by all clubs and this should be done in accordance with recommended selection and recruitment procedures. The appointment of this person should be carried out in consultation with juvenile members and their parents/guardians. The Children's Officer should be on the Management Committee or have access to the Management Committee.

The Children's Officer should have the following functions:

- To promote the Code of Ethics & Good Practice
- To familiarise with *Children First* and *Our Duty to Care* to ensure they can act as an information source to other members of the organisation
- To influence policy and practice and prioritise children's needs
- To ensure that children know how and whom they can report their concerns to within the club. Information disclosed by a child should be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines in the Code of Ethics for Hockey for Young People
- To encourage the participation of parents/guardians in club activities



- To co-operate with parents to ensure that each child enjoys his/her participation in hockey
- To act as a resource with regard to best practice in children's hockey
- To report regularly to the club management committee
- To monitor changes in membership and follow up on any unusual drop-out, absenteeism or club transfers by children or coaches/volunteers

**Club Designated Person should:**

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and Statutory guidelines.
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse.
- Be prepared to undertake training in relation to child protection.
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as set out in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport and in Hockey's Code of Conduct for Young People.
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate.
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of clubs child protection training needs.
- Be aware of local contacts and services in relation to child protection – contact list included in Hockey's Code of Conduct for Hockey for Young People.
- Inform local duty social worker in the Health Services Executive Local Area Board/local Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using Standard Report Form (for ROI only)
- Advise Club Administrators on strategies to deal with poor practice and bullying concerns
- Advise Club Administrators on issues of confidentiality/record keeping/data protection.
- The Designated Person of affiliated clubs and groups should report suspected abuse in relation to Sports Leaders or persistent poor practice to the National Designated Person who will then have the responsibility of advising the organisation of ways to ensure that other clubs are protected from re-occurrence of situations of abuse.

**National Children's Officer**

**The role of National Children's Officer involves:**

- Familiarisation with Children First, Our Duty to Care, and the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport so as to act as an information source to members of Irish Hockey Association.
- Commitment to attendance at appropriate training as required in order to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs.
- Co-ordinating training for others.
- The promotion of the values, attitudes and structures, which make sport enjoyable for children (Section 2.8.3 Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport).



- Circulation of all relevant information and resource materials, on children's sport to all groups affiliated to the IHA.
- Communication with Club Children's Officers to ensure the distribution of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport and of Hockey's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport and promotion of related education programmes, materials and events.
- Where necessary advising club Children's Officers on creating a child centred club and on implementation of Hockey's Code.
- Advising clubs on the necessity of appropriate record keeping and confidentiality, which allows for appropriate information to be passed to relevant authorities where necessary.
- Ensuring that the IHA continues to update the Code of Conduct for Hockey for Young People.

### **National Designated Person**

#### **The National Designated should:**

- Have knowledge of the Code of Ethics and Statutory Guidelines
- Have a knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse.
- Be prepared to undertake training in relation to child protection.
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the organisation's child protection training needs.
- Provide information and advice on child protection within Hockey.
- Together with the National Children's Officer advise the organisation on child protection training needs
- Be familiar with and able to carry out reporting procedures as set out in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's Sport and Hockey's Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate.
- Be aware of national and local services responsible for child protection i.e. principal and duty social workers etc.
- Inform Health Services Executive/Social Services and/or An Garda Síochána/PSNI of relevant concerns about individual children, using the Standard Reporting Form (for ROI only). A copy of this form should be retained.
- Ensure that an acknowledgement of receipt of form is received.
- Ensure appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing, and kept under confidential cover.
- Liaise with Statutory Authorities and other agencies as appropriate.
- Organise the implementation of procedures designed to deal with concerns regarding poor practice within the sport.
- Ensure Sports Leaders(s) are aware of allegations against them.
- Ensure that an individual case record is maintained of the action taken by IHA, the liaison with other agencies and the outcome.



- Ensure records are kept in confidence in a secure location and access is on a 'need to know' basis.
- Affiliated clubs and groups should report suspected abuse in relation to Sports Leaders or persistent poor practice to the National Designated Person who will then have the responsibility of advising the organisation of ways to ensure that other clubs are protected from re-occurrence of situations of abuse.
- The Designated Person and the Children's Officer will assist the organisation on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection.

**Children's Officers/Designated Officers do not have the responsibility of investigating or validating child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role. This responsibility lies with the Health Services and the Gardai/Police.**

For contact details of National and Branch Children's Officers and Designated Persons, click on [http://www.hockey.ie/contentPage/133025/contact\\_details](http://www.hockey.ie/contentPage/133025/contact_details)