



**Camphill Communities
of Ireland**



Say No to Abuse!

**What to do if you are
concerned about the
welfare of a vulnerable
adult or child**

What is abuse?

Abuse is complicated and can take different forms but usually it consists of one or more of the following.

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| Neglect: | Where a vulnerable adult's or child's needs for food, warmth, shelter, nurturance and safety are not provided, to the extent that the vulnerable adult or child suffers significant harm. |
| Emotional abuse: | Where a vulnerable adult's or child's needs for affection, approval and security are not being met and have not been met for some time by their carer or parent. |
| Physical abuse: | Where a vulnerable adult or child is assaulted or injured in some way that is deliberate. |
| Sexual abuse: | Where a vulnerable adult or child is used for the sexual gratification of another. |
| Financial abuse: | Where a vulnerable adult's or child's money or personal belongings are taken or used deliberately and against their interest. |
| Institutional abuse: | Where the vulnerable adult's or child's rights and civil liberties are limited by institutional rigidity and malpractice. |

What should I do if I suspect that a vulnerable adult or a child in Camphill Communities of Ireland is abused?

Before you act there are some steps to consider. Sometimes it can be difficult to know whether or not your suspicions about abuse are founded. You might need to consider whether there are alternative explanations that (might exist and) influence or inform the situation of which you have become aware of.

- Is there any other reason why the person with a disability might be behaving in a particular way?
- Is there a pattern to this type of occurrence?
- Did you or anyone else see what was happening?
- Has the person with a disability said anything to indicate that he or she is being harmed?
- Could injuries or signs have been caused another way?

If you have considered these questions and you are still concerned, it is likely that you have reasonable grounds to take action.

It is important to remember that everyone has a duty to protect vulnerable adults and children and cooperate with professionals as necessary.

What action should I take?

If you think that an adult with disabilities or child is being abused or is at risk voice your concern to any coworker of your trust in the community concerned.

This person will forward the matter to the Person In Charge or Safeguarding Officers.

This person will inform the National Case Management Team of Camphill Communities of Ireland (NCMT). This specialist team is experienced in dealing with allegations of abuse and in cooperation with the Health Service Executive (HSE) they will oversee the screening and investigation of your concern.

Alternatively you may prefer to contact the HSE directly. If it is an emergency and outside office hours you should report your concern to An Garda Síochana.

What if I am mistaken?

Don't worry – if in doubt raise your concern anyway and it will be thoroughly considered. Under the law nobody will be penalised for making an allegation of abuse as long as the report was made in good faith.

Can I report suspected abuse without giving my name?

All reports of abuse received will receive attention. However, experience shows that it can be more difficult to verify allegations when they are made anonymously or through a third party. It is much more useful if you telephone, or better still go to see a relevant person of your trust personally. Whilst confidentiality can only be upheld to the extent practicable the names

of members of the public reporting suspected abuse are generally only revealed with permission.

What should I do if I am an employee of Camphill Communities of Ireland and I become concerned for the welfare of a vulnerable person?

Each Camphill Community has several designated persons acting as Complaints and Safeguarding Officers. Report your concerns to them, the Person in Charge or directly to the NCMT or alternatively to the authorised person for protected disclosure of the HSE . Under law you cannot be penalised if you report a workplace concern in good faith.

Which procedures will be followed in dealing with my concern?

If you are a vulnerable person you can get someone else to tell us what you think. We will ensure each person has access to an advocate when raising a concern. Support in making a complaint could also be through a friend or family member, as long as you give consent for them to contact us on your behalf.

We aim to make sure that things are put right as soon as possible. Please turn to the following page for the procedure we will follow to do that.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse

Stage 1 – Preliminary Screening

1. Initially you should speak to a co-worker or member of staff regarding your concern. Each community has a Safeguarding Officer(s) to whom you can also speak directly. We recommend you talk face to face, however, it may be possible to ring or even email them.
2. Once your concern has been voiced the person you approached will record the allegation you made and forward it to the Safeguarding Officer. Alternatively you or a friend/supporter may put your concern in writing.
3. Your report of a concern will be acknowledged within 24 hours. We will always ask you what outcome you feel would resolve the situation. It is hoped that most complaints and concerns can be resolved quickly and informally.
4. The safeguarding officer will inform the NCMT about having received an allegation of abuse.
5. Under their guidance your situation will be made safe and a designated support person will be allocated to all persons concerned.
6. The NCMT will cooperate with the HSE and the community to appoint a screening team. This means that it will be established if an abusive action could have taken place or not.
7. The person/s against whom the allegation has been made will be informed of the fact and invited to a screening meeting and a screening report will be written.
8. You may expect to receive confirmation within 5 working days about how we will deal with your concern, letting you know the name and contact details of the person leading the preliminary screening. If we cannot deal with your concern we will advise you why and suggest what options are open to you.

Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse

Stage 2 – Investigation

If the screening showed that an abusive action may have taken place the NCMT will take over the investigation in cooperation with the HSE and in criminal cases An Garda Síochána will be informed. The safeguarding officer in the community will facilitate the investigation and will continue to make sure that the person at the centre of the investigation as well as others involved can feel safe whilst the investigation is on going.

All statements collected are confidential as far as practical for the investigation unless confidentiality would compromise the welfare and safety of others. The person/s against whom allegations have been made will be given copies of all relevant information.

The timeframe and scope of the investigation will be agreed at the onset. An investigation can be time-consuming.

1. We aim to finalise our investigation within 30 days, if we cannot do so we will write to let you know why, what we are doing to resolve the matter and the likely timescale to conclude the investigation.
2. We will keep you informed at least every 20 days until the investigation decision is reached.
3. We will advise you of the outcome of our investigation within 5 days of completing it.
4. If we cannot resolve your concern we will advise you why and suggest what options are open to you.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If you remain unhappy following an investigation into an allegation of abuse you may appeal the decision, within 30 days of being informed. Appeals should be made in writing to the *Health Service Executive (HSE), the Head of Consumer Affairs, HSE, Oak House Millennium Park, Naas, Co.Kildare or the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children HSE, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.*

What principles guide Camphill Communities in dealing with allegations of abuse?

Camphill is an intentional community guided by mutual respect, a culture of working together for the welfare, independence, safety and well being of all. We work in a person centred way and are committed to self-improvement. Our work complies with our legal requirements and regulatory responsibilities set out by Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA) and the HSE's "Children First" and "Trust in Care" policies.

Our safeguarding policy and procedure is guided by:

- Rights:** We uphold the right of people with disabilities to have their human rights for safety from abuse respected.
- Respect:** We take all allegations seriously and treat all parties to an allegation with dignity, sensitivity and courtesy. We ensure that any information that is provided to Camphill is not shared with any other person or agency without the person's permission unless we are legally obliged to do so.
- Fairness:** We seek to resolve concerns by having a fair process. We will communicate openly and honestly and listen carefully to what all parties have to say about the allegations of abuse received by Camphill. We will remain objective and unbiased in our approach, making sure that we have no conflict of interests. The decisions that Camphill makes about allegations of abuse will be based on verified information, rather than on speculation or suspicion.

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Camphill Communities of Ireland

- Camphill Communities of Ireland works to create sustainable communities where children and adults of all abilities, many with special needs, can live learn and work with others in healthy social relationships based on mutual care and respect.
- Most communities are a home for both people with special needs and volunteers. Members of the community share responsibility for the tasks and cultural activities of day to day life.
- Camphill is inspired by Christian ideals and the impulse of community building as articulated by Rudolf Steiner and is based on the acceptance of the spiritual uniqueness of each human being.

Camphill Community Safeguarding Officer

Contact Details:

National Case Management Team of Camphill Communities of Ireland (NCMT)

Contact Details: