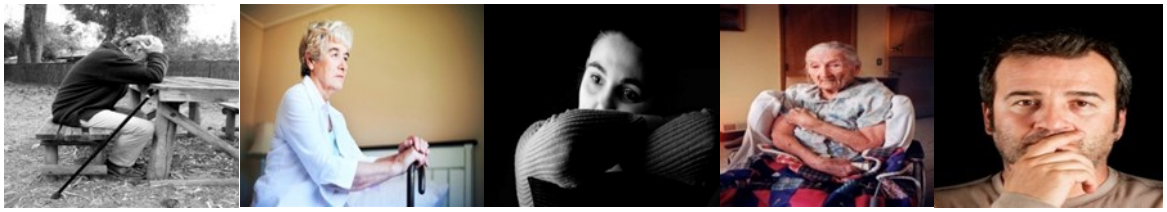
Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership



Operational Handbook

June 2017

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NIASP OPERATIONAL MANUAL

The Northern Ireland Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NIASP) was established in 2010 following publication of Adult Safeguarding in Northern Ireland: Regional and Local Partnership Arrangements (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Ireland Office).

1. Purpose of NIASP:

The role of NIASP is to determine the strategy for safeguarding adults, develop and disseminate guidance and operational policies and procedures, monitor trend and outcomes and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of partnership arrangements.

2. Responsibilities:

Its specific responsibilities are:

Leadership and Strategy

a) To determine, in conjunction with Local Adult Safeguarding Partnerships, the strategy for safeguarding adults, identify agreed objectives and priorities for its work, set out in a 3-5 year Strategic Safeguarding Plan for Northern Ireland. The Strategic Safeguarding Plan will be supported by annual Safeguarding Work Plans;

b) To promote activity that raises awareness of adult abuse and the need to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and which highlights the contribution that individuals, carers, families, communities and the wider public can make to safeguarding;

c) To seek continuous improvement in preventive and early intervention services and in services designed to support victims and their carers and families when abuse occurs;

d) To develop, agree, disseminate and keep under review guidance, operational policies and procedures for multi-disciplinary, interagency work to safeguard adults, including time frames for action;

e) To improve outcomes for adults by setting objectives, performance indicators and, where appropriate, establishing appropriate thresholds for intervention taking account of multi-professional, organisation and other contributions to

safeguarding and the views of service users, families, carers and the wider public;

f) To ensure that equality of opportunity is central to the development of safeguarding policies and procedures and to guarantee that an equality perspective is incorporated in safeguarding policy at all levels and all stages;

g) To communicate clearly to partner organisations, individual services and professional groups and the wider public a shared responsibility for safeguarding adults and to explain how that responsibility can be fulfilled;

h) To bring to the attention of each organisation's board/executive body their responsibilities for safeguarding adults and developments needed in the arena, including resource requirements or changes needed in practice or service provision and how the NIASP Strategic Safeguarding Plan and annual Safeguarding Work Plans will address these;

i) To monitor and evaluate on a regular and continuing basis how well services work individually and collectively to safeguard adults and how well the partnerships are working;

j) To ensure that each partner organisation has a clear, well-publicised policy of "Zero Tolerance" of neglect, exploitation of abuse wherever they occur;

k) To develop and secure delivery of an inter-agency/interdisciplinary training and development strategy with the aim of improving the quality of safeguarding work and of interagency/interdisciplinary working having identified the training needs of those involved in safeguarding work across Northern Ireland. The strategy should take account of how training partnerships with LASPs can be developed;

l) To ensure that each partner organisation has effective training arrangements for its personnel ranging from awareness training for front line staff to the more in-depth training required to discharge specialist functions;

Linkages and Relationships

m) To develop and maintain strong links between NIASP and LASPs and equivalent child protection structures in Northern Ireland; and to:

- Facilitate better information sharing between them for the purposes of shared learning;
- Secure effective co-working where this is required; and
- Make sure that young people, particularly around the ages of 16-19, do not fall through gaps in processes and practice because of any uncertainty about

which professionals and bodies have safeguarding responsibility, particularly if there is a safeguarding concern which lasts some time and covers the transition from children to adult services;

n) To ensure that there are strong and effective links between NIASP and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs); Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI); the United Kingdom Human trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA);
o) To forge effective links with bodies outside Northern Ireland that impact on the lives and well-being of adults here, e.g. the approach to track and manage sex offenders in the Republic of Ireland;
p) To properly integrate adult safeguarding strategies with other relevant strategies and procedures, e.g. child protection; domestic violence; sexual violence and abuse; human trafficking; and the assessment and management of individuals who may be a risk to themselves due to mental disorder;

Communication:

q) To develop a public communication strategy and to ensure its implementation in conjunction with LASPs to raise awareness within the wider community of adult abuse, the need to safeguard adults at risk of harm from neglect, exploitation and abuse, and to highlight the contribution to safeguarding that individuals, carers, families communities and the wider public can make;
r) To develop and deliver an information strategy aimed at adults at risk, carers and families to enable them to understand safeguarding adult processes, particularly those involved in them;
s) To provide information and advice to practitioners, organisations, service providers and the wider public;
t) To continually review local ways of working, identifying and promoting what works well, taking account of best practice and evidence-based knowledge gained through research and international, national and local experience to bring about service and practice improvements with regard to safeguarding adults;
u) To establish an internet presence to act as a repository of information relevant to the work of NIASP, LASPs and safeguarding more generally;
v) To provide information on a regular basis to the board/executive bodies of partner organisations and relevant government departments, particularly in relation to statutory functions; and advise on the development of information systems to

facilitate data capture, management and analysis. As a minimum, information should cover safeguarding and protection activity, trends, support provided and outcomes for adults at risk involved in safeguarding processes and how well the partnership is working so as to inform performance management, quality assessments and policy development;

w) To produce an annual report to provide an update on progress against objectives set out in the Strategic Safeguarding Plan and annual safeguarding Work Plans; to ensure that the annual report addresses, in particular, safeguarding activity, trends, outcomes for adults at risk involved in safeguarding processes and how well the partnership is working, and to ensure that reporting on safeguarding activity is reflected in the annual report of each partner organisation.

3. Relationship with LASPs:

The purpose of the LASPs is to facilitate practice, including engagement with service users, families and carers and the wider public, at a local level. LASPs will provide regular updates in their progress to NIASP.

4. Accountability:

NIASP and its Chair are accountable, in the first instance, to the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board. NIASP members are also, however, accountable to the organisations that they represent which, in turn, are responsible for taking any action properly falling within their respective remits. NIASP works to agreed written terms of reference which set out its remit, including the level of decision-making which can be agreed by partner organisations' representatives without referral back to the individual member organisation.

Each partner organisation must accept that it is responsible for the contribution made by its own representative. Each representative is responsible for ensuring that the issues applicable to their organisation for safeguarding adults are given proper consideration by NIASP. Each partner organisation must have a mechanism in place for considering and responding to the policy, planning and resource implications of issues brought to the attention of the organisation by its NIASP representative.

The HSC Board, through the Director of Social Care and Children's Services, takes lead responsibility for the establishment and effective working of NIASP. The Director of Social Care and Children's Services, with relevant members of NIASP, has in place a mechanism which ensures that ownership of safeguarding issues is promoted within all partner organisations and across all professional groups and service delivery settings in health and social care. They also ensure that safeguarding issues of general or particular relevance to professional groups and service areas are brought to the attention of the relevant Directors in the HSC Board and the Public Health Agency (PHA) or successor organsiations, in line with the established governance arrangements within each of those bodies.

In non-HSC bodies, the lead at board/executive level ensures that safeguarding issues of a general or particular nature are dealt with in line with their organisation's established governance arrangements. All partner organisations are responsible for contributing fully and effectively to the work of NIASP.

NIASP contributes to, and works within, the framework of the planning, commissioning and performance framework established by the HSC Board in partnership with the PHA and has regard to the requirements of partner organisations. Within this framework, different organisations work together in different forums to plan co-ordinated action.

5. Membership:

Membership of NIASP comprises a Chair and approximately 24 members.

NIASP is made up of members from the main statutory and voluntary and community organisations involved in adult safeguarding work across the region; and includes representation from service providers and service users. Some NIASP members may carry a dual role, e.g. they may chair a LASP and represent a professional group or lead in an area of service delivery. Contributing to the work of the NIASP is an important responsibility for partner organisations.

Each partner organisation should ensure active participation and representation at a sufficiently senior level. Where possible, representation should be set at not less than 3rd level in the organisation, so that NIASP can effectively influence the

development of guidance, policy and practice with regard to safeguarding adults. Where 3rd level representation is problematic, partner organisations should appoint an individual, who is sufficiently senior to represent the organisation's views and to make decisions on behalf of the organisation.

Consideration should also be given at the outset to identifying an officer to deputise for the lead manager, should this prove necessary. A deputising officer should only be appointed on the basis of authority to represent and make decisions on behalf of the organisation. The name of the deputising officer should be communicated in writing to the chair of NIASP. Representatives should attend regularly to ensure continuity from all partner interests. This includes membership of subcommittees or working groups.

Membership includes service users and carers' representative groups, and is drawn from senior staff with responsibility for policy development and implementation representing:

- relevant professional groups from the HSC Board and PHA, including social work, primary care, medicine, nursing and allied health professionals and training managers;
- Chairs of LASPs to represent the view and contribution of all its members
- the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI);
- the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI);
- the Social Security Agency (SSA);
- the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and providers of sheltered housing;
- independent sector providers of health and social care services;
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Northern Ireland);
- the Patient and Client Council; and
- voluntary, community and private sector groups and faith communities working in the safeguarding adults arena or relevant service provision, including advocacy, victim support, 'appropriate adult' support and services meeting the needs of specific groups experiencing neglect, exploitation or abuse. Representation from the voluntary, community and faith sectors, and service users, carers or their representative groups also reflects the rich range of adult safeguarding interests

in Northern Ireland and are expected to make up one-third of the NIASP membership.

6. Membership Review:

The NIASP Chair will keep membership under review and, with the agreement of other partners, revise membership as necessary to reflect the changing nature of safeguarding work.

7. Nomination and Selection of New Members:

Any organisation wishing to become a member of NIASP should, in the first instance, write to the Chair of NIASP outlining:

- The nature of their involvement in adult safeguarding across Northern Ireland;
- How they will meet the requirements of membership as outlined above; and
- How they will ensure that information in relation to adult safeguarding is disseminated across their networks.

NIASP members will then consider the relevance of the proposed contribution paying due regard to new or emerging safeguarding priorities and ensuring there is no unnecessary duplication in membership.

NIASP's decision will be communicated to the organisation in writing.

8. NIASP Chairing Arrangements:

It is essential that the NIASP has a Chair with established authority who has a firm grasp of safeguarding issues across the region and is of sufficient standing and expertise to command the support and respect of all member organisations. Consequently, in the first instance, the Chair of NIASP will be the Director of Social Care and Children's Services in the HSC Board or a nominated representative. The PSNI will nominate a Vice Chair to share responsibility for chairing meetings and to deputise in the chair's absence.

The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that:

- NIASP meets on a regular basis;
- there is a clear strategic direction and associated workplan for NIASP;
- the agenda and any associated papers are circulated in advance to members;
- the meeting runs smoothly;
- an accurate record of the meeting and any related decisions is kept.

9. Secretariat and Support:

The HSC Board is responsible for providing the NIASP with a secretariat and other support services.

The Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer will provide professional advice and support to NIASP.

10. Decision-Making:

NIASP operates a system of decision-making by quorum. The meeting will be deemed to be quorate when a minimum of 50% of members are present **AND** the statutory (excluding the Chair), independent and voluntary sector are represented.

11. Frequency of NIASP meetings:

As a minimum, meeting of NIASP should occur on a quarterly basis. Regular attendance by partner members is critical for the continuity of business. In the event of an absence of any organisation for more than 2 successive meetings, the Chair will seek a fresh nomination from the organisation concerned.

12. Format for Meetings:

The agenda for each NIASP meeting will be agreed by the Chair and the Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer. At a minimum, each meeting will include consideration of the following:

- Apologies;
- Correspondence received;
- Minutes of the previous meeting;
- Progress in relation to the annual Workplan;
- Reports from each Working Group;
- Activity data and analysis; and

- Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer up-date report.

Members can raise any matter for inclusion in the Agenda in writing to the Chair no later than 2 weeks in advance of the next meeting.

The Agenda and relevant papers for each meeting will be circulated to members at least 3 working days before the meeting.

13. Annual Safeguarding Work Plans:

NIASP will, in conjunction with LASPs, set out its strategy for safeguarding vulnerable adults with agreed objectives and priorities for its work in a rolling 3-5 year Strategic Safeguarding Plan for Northern Ireland. The Strategic Safeguarding Plan will be supported by annual Safeguarding Work Plans. The annual Safeguarding Work Plan should set out a work programme for the forthcoming year and include measurable objectives. The NIASP's plan should both contribute to, and derive from, the framework for planning and commissioning health and social care services and their performance management. It should reflect the objectives of partner organisations and be endorsed by senior managers in each of the organisations.

14. Working Groups:

NIASP will set up Working Groups to:

a) carry out specific tasks (e.g. maintaining and updating guidance and operational procedures; developing and reviewing information sharing protocols; identifying interagency training needs and arranging appropriate training);
b) provide specialist advice (e.g. working with specific ethnic or cultural groups);
c) monitor activity and trends in adult protection work, including establishing core data sets to measure activity and outcomes; and
d) carry out audits and research, in conjunction with LASPs, to examine interagency safeguarding arrangements, identify good practice and highlight areas for improvement.

All groups working under the auspices of NIASP will be established by NIASP, chaired by a NIASP member, and should work to agreed terms of reference within

the framework of the Strategic Safeguarding Plan and annual Safeguarding Work Plans, and with explicit lines of communication and accountability to NIASP.

Groups may be established on a standing or time-limited basis. The continuing need for all groups should be kept under regular review by NIASP.

Membership of each Working Group will be determined by the Chair of that group. While it is anticipated that most groups will be made up of organisations that are already members of NIASP, it may be necessary for the Chairs of the various groups to invite organisations who are not members of NIASP but have a significant contribution to make to the issues under discussion, to join the Working Group. This decision should be communicated to the Chair of NIASP.

The Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer will meet the Chairs of Working Groups on a regular basis to agree the relevant objectives within the Annual Workplan.

Professional advice and support to each Working Group will be provided by a HSC Trust Adult Safeguarding Specialist practitioner.

15. Annual Reports:

The annual report presents an opportunity for the NIASP and LASPs to reflect on their roles, responsibilities and functioning. The reports also provide an opportunity to promote dialogue within and between organisations and to communicate with the wider public.

The reports should contain analysis, review and comment on NIASP and LASP processes and functioning, and on how well they are discharging their responsibilities. The reports should also include statements of progress against objectives for the previous year; indicate how well services work individually and collectively to safeguard vulnerable adults and how well the partnerships are working; set out developments in service and practice; actions for improvement still required and timeframe for delivery. Management information on adult protection activity and outcomes in the course of the previous year and objectives for the coming year should also be included.

As a minimum, NIASP's Annual Report should contain sections on:

a) membership, vision, roles and responsibilities and the principles underpinning safeguarding work with vulnerable adults;
b) the work of the NIASP in-year, including information about activity undertaken by sub-groups and partner organisations;
c) information on activity, trends, support provided and outcomes in relation to safeguarding and the protection of adults at risk; and audits undertaken;
d) information on training provided and community and public awareness work undertaken;
e) reports from the LASPs;
f) feedback on service user, family and carer experience of safeguarding activity;
g) audit, review and research activity undertaken;
h) its conclusions about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, how well organisations have worked together and the effectiveness of partnership arrangements and what, if anything, needs to be addressed, by whom and by when; and
i) its objectives for the coming year.

The draft Annual Report will be prepared by the Regional Adult Safeguarding officer and presented to NIASP for comment at the June meeting every year. The final draft will then be scrutinised by the Governance Committee of the HSCB prior to being submitted to the Departments of Health and Justice.

A copy of the Annual Report will be placed on the NIASP webpage of the HSCB website as soon as possible after this scrutiny process is complete.

16. NIASP Web Presence:

NIASP will have a separate section on the HSCB website.

The webpages will, at a minimum, include copies of the relevant policy and procedures; publications, including Annual Reports; material from the Annual Learning Events and conferences; copies of any publicity materials produced by NIASP; and information for providers.

Other information will be included as and when it becomes available. Material for inclusion should be sent to the Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer.

17. Publicity Materials:

NIASP will, from time to time, publish information and awareness-raising materials. These will also include a NIASP branding or logo.

Member organisations may wish to use the NIASP branding and logo to promote adult safeguarding within their own organisation or sector. Copies of any such materials should be sent to the Chair prior to publication or dissemination.

18. Annual Learning Events:

NIASP will run an annual inter-agency and multi-agency learning event. The purpose of the event is to identify and share learning, best practice and frontline responses to emerging safeguarding concerns.

The topic for each learning event will be developed from issues identified by front-line practitioners; HSC Trust and PSNI specialist professionals; LASP Chairs; NIASP members; the Regional Adult Safeguarding Officer and the Departments of Health and Justice.

Topics for consideration for the learning event should be sent, in writing, to the NIASP Chair.

The Regional Adult Safeguarding Lead will collate possible topics for the learning event and seek NIASP's views on the most relevant area for consideration.