

Belfast Photo Imaging Club

Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk

Adopted 7th May 2026

1. Policy Statement

Belfast Photo Imaging Club (BPIC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of **children** and **adults at risk** in accordance with **Northern Ireland legislation and guidance**.

BPIC recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming environment for all participants in club activities.

This policy applies to all members, committee members, volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of BPIC.

2. Legal Framework – Northern Ireland

This policy is informed by and complies with the following **Northern Ireland-specific legislation and guidance**, alongside UK-wide safeguarding law:

- **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995** – the primary legislation governing the protection and welfare of children in Northern Ireland
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007** and the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** – including vetting and barring arrangements
- **Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017)** – statutory guidance for safeguarding practice
- **Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (2015)** – safeguarding framework for adults at risk in Northern Ireland
- **Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967**, Section 5 – duty to report certain serious offences
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR**

BPIC will act in line with guidance issued by **Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)**, and local safeguarding partnerships.

3. Definitions (Northern Ireland)

- **Child:** Any person under the age of 18
 - **Adult at risk:** A person aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, abuse, or exploitation due to care or support needs
 - **Safeguarding:** The protection of children and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and the promotion of wellbeing
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4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All BPIC-organised activities, whether formal or informal
 - Activities held in person, online, or in public spaces
 - Events involving photography, training, exhibitions, competitions, outings, or social activities
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5. Types of Abuse

Members should be aware that abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- **Neglect** – failure to provide appropriate care or protection
- **Physical abuse** – causing physical injury or harm
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity without informed consent
- **Emotional abuse** – persistent emotional harm or coercive behaviour
- **Bullying or harassment** – including verbal, physical, online, or discriminatory behaviour

Abuse may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour and often involves an imbalance of power.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Belfast Photo Imaging Club will:

- Promote a strong safeguarding culture
- Ensure members are aware of this policy and follow it
- Appoint a committee member with responsibility for safeguarding
- Respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns

- Share information with statutory agencies where required

Members must:

- Follow this policy and the Code of Behaviour
 - Act in a way that prioritises safety, dignity, and respect
 - Report safeguarding concerns without delay
 - Cooperate with safeguarding procedures
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7. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns (Northern Ireland)

Any concern, suspicion, or disclosure relating to a child or adult at risk **must be taken seriously**.

Members must:

- **Not** investigate concerns themselves
- Record factual information accurately
- Report concerns immediately to the BPIC safeguarding leads – Chairperson or Club Secretary

Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to:

- The relevant **HSC Trust Gateway Team**
- **PSNI**, if a criminal offence may have occurred
- Emergency services, if there is immediate risk of harm

BPIC recognises its responsibility under Northern Ireland law to share information where necessary to protect individuals from harm.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in line with changes in legislation or guidance.

Appendix A – Code of Behaviour

(Northern Ireland version)

A1. Professional Boundaries

Members must:

- Treat children and adults at risk with dignity and respect
 - Maintain clear personal and professional boundaries
 - Avoid behaviour that could be misinterpreted or cause distress
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A2. One-to-One Contact

Members must:

- Avoid being alone with a child or adult at risk where possible
 - Ensure activities take place in open or observable settings
 - Inform another responsible adult if one-to-one contact is unavoidable
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A3. Transport

Members must not transport a child or adult at risk alone in their own vehicle.

Where transport is unavoidable:

- Another responsible adult must be present **or**
- Prior consent must be obtained from a parent, guardian, or carer
- Appropriate insurance must be in place

In emergencies, parents/guardians or carers must be informed as soon as possible.

A4. Physical Contact

Members must never:

- Engage in rough play or physical games
- Use inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact

Any physical contact must:

- Be necessary, proportionate, and appropriate
 - Take account of the person's age, capacity, and wishes
 - Take place with consent wherever possible
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A5. Personal Care and Toileting

Members must not:

- Provide personal care that individuals can manage themselves
- Accompany a child or adult at risk to a toilet alone

Another responsible adult must be present or made aware.

A6. Photography and Images

Members must never:

- Photograph a child or adult at risk without **written consent**
- Take photographs without a parent/guardian or carer present where required
- Take images that are intrusive, exploitative, or inappropriate

All images must be stored, used, and shared responsibly and lawfully.

A7. Language and Conduct

Members must never:

- Use sexualised, offensive, intimidating, or discriminatory language
 - Make suggestive comments or jokes
 - Behave in a way that could humiliate or distress others
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A8. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention must only be used:

- To prevent immediate harm to the person or others

Any intervention must be reasonable, proportionate, and recorded. Excessive force may constitute assault.

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the BPIC committee and updated to reflect:

- Changes in Northern Ireland legislation or guidance
 - Learning from safeguarding incidents or best practice
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