



# The Club and County Designated Person

## Dealing with Allegations of Abuse

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# THE CLUB AND COUNTY DESIGNATED PERSON

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All Clubs and County Boards shall appoint a Designated Person who on behalf of the Club or County shall be responsible at an initial stage for dealing with any concerns relating to the possible abuse of children as reported or made known to them.

These appointments form an essential part of the GAA Child Welfare and Protection strategy to ensure that in so far as is practically possible we provide a safe environment for children, young people and also for the adults who assist our underage members at Gaelic Games and other Association activities.

The GAA is committed to taking appropriate action where allegations or suspicions of abuse are made known to us and to sharing such information with the relevant statutory authorities in accordance with legislation and relevant guidelines.

In our work with children and young people we are directed by appropriate legislation within the jurisdiction in which we operate. Within the GAA our Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport act as further guidance in all such matters.

While the appointment of a Designated Person at both Club and County level is a key and essential requirement when promoting and delivering good

practice, such appointments are also mandatory in accordance with GAA policy and practice.

This leaflet outlines the roles and responsibilities of GAA Designated Persons so as to be of assistance to those who undertake such key child welfare and protection roles in the Association.

Designated Persons must have the ability to approach child welfare and protection matters in a sensible, balanced, facilitative and non threatening manner and shall be required to have good communication skills, shall be approachable and open minded and shall have an in-depth knowledge of the Association's Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and our Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport. GAA Designated Persons are required to be fully aware of their responsibilities so as to enable them deal with any allegations of abuse or suspicions of abuse that they may become aware of or are reported to them by members of the Association or by others.

When a Club or County appoints their Designated Person it is equally important to select a Deputy Designated Person who may in the absence of the Designated Person be called upon to fulfil this role. Relevant training should also be made available to Deputy Designated Persons so as to ensure they are familiar with their roles and responsibilities.

## The Club Designated Person

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The Club Designated Person may, as circumstances dictate, be the initial conduit on behalf of the Association who receives allegations of abuse or is made aware of suspicions of abuse at Club level. The person chosen to fulfil this role shall as a prerequisite be knowledgeable as to relevant Legislation and Guidelines on the Reporting of Allegations of Abuse pertinent to the jurisdiction in which they operate and must be fully aware as to the GAA policy and procedures on all such matters.

## THE CLUB DESIGNATED PERSON SHALL HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF:

- The GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse
- The GAA Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport and the Code of Behaviour
- The Code of Ethics Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sports Council and SportNI) and the Standard for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport (NSPCC UK)
- Protecting Children: A Guide for Sportspeople (Coachwise UK)
- Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept of Health and Children)
- Our Duty to Care - The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (Dept of Health and Children)
- Our Duty to Care – Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (Volunteer Development Agency)

## KEY ROLE

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The key role of the Club Designated Person is to ensure that all allegations of abuse or suspicions that merit reasonable concern are dealt with as a matter of priority in a sensitive, caring and confidential manner and that this work is carried out on behalf of the Club in association with the appointed County Designated Person.

The Club Designated Person is responsible for referring all allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the County Designated Person. It is however the County Designated person, having consulted with their Club counterpart, and having established reasonable grounds for concern, who will duly report such concerns to the Health Service Executive (ROI) or relevant Health and Social Care Trusts and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland or Police Services in other jurisdictions. It is the County Designated Person who shall on behalf of the Association issue debarment orders, following consultations with their Club counterparts and with the National Designated Person.

This process has been adopted as a means by which we may support those at club level who have agreed to take on the Designated Person role. The Designated Person at club level still retains the right, as does any member, to report directly to statutory authorities, e.g Health Service Executive/ Garda Síochána/Health and Social Care Trusts/Police, and should they choose to do so they must keep the County Designated Person and the GAA National Designated Person informed for further possible consideration and monitoring within the Association. In the absence of the County Designated Person it is most important that no delay should occur when liaising with the statutory authorities. Advice on how to proceed will be available in such circumstances from the GAA National Designated Person.

In accordance with GAA procedures all referrals from Club Designated Person to County Designated Persons, whether reported thereafter to the statutory authorities or not, must be reported to the GAA National Designated Person for the purpose of further possible consideration within the Association.

## KEY TASKS

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- Refer reports and allegations of abuse to their County Designated Person and may consult informally with statutory authorities and the Provincial/National Designated Persons if deemed necessary
- Make any such reports or referrals in line with GAA agreed procedures
- Have knowledge of statutory guidelines and relevant legislation as they relate to child protection and welfare of young people in their jurisdiction
- Have knowledge of definitions, categorisation and indicators of abuse
- Undertake, in accordance with the

- jurisdiction in which they operate, relevant Child Protection in Sport Awareness training (ISC/SportNI) or Safeguarding and Protecting Children (Sportscoach UK) training as promoted by the GAA and any other training deemed relevant to their role
- Be familiar with and be able to carry out reporting procedures as outlined in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse
  - Assist with and identify the need for Child Protection in Sport Awareness training within the Club and other appropriate training in consultation with their Club Children's Officer
  - Be aware of local contacts and support services that may assist in developing and delivering their role
  - Advise, as appropriate, Club administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection
  - Ensure that all individual case records are maintained, that all actions taken are recorded and that such records are kept in a secure and confidential place
  - Communicate with parents and external agencies as appropriate

## The County Designated Person

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A County Designated Person shall be selected by each County Board to act on their behalf. It is the County Designated Person, having consulted with their Club counterpart, and having established reasonable grounds for concern, who will duly report such concerns to the relevant Health Service Executive (ROI) and/or Health and Social Care Trusts and/or An Garda Síochána/Police Service of Northern Ireland or Police Services in other jurisdictions. It is the County Designated Person who shall on behalf of the Association issue debarment orders, following consultations with their Club counterparts and the National Designated Person.

The person chosen to fulfil this role shall as a prerequisite be knowledgeable as to Legislation and Guidelines on the Reporting of Allegations of Abuse procedures pertinent to the jurisdiction in which they operate and must be fully aware as to the GAA policy and procedures on all such matters.

This includes:

- The GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse
- The GAA Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport and the Code of Behaviour
- The Code of Ethics Good Practice for Children's Sport (Irish Sports Council and SportNI) and the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport (NSPCC UK)
- Protecting Children: A Guide for Sportspeople (Coachwise UK)
- Children First – National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Dept of Health and Children)
- Our Duty to Care - The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People (Dept of Health and Children)
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# The County Designated Person

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## KEY ROLE

The County Designated Person shall facilitate and support Club Designated Persons as they deal with allegations or suspicions of abuse and as appropriate how to liaise with the relevant statutory authorities within their own jurisdiction. All such matters shall be determined following an appraisal of any allegations received and where reasonable grounds for concern exist, following such appraisals, such matters shall be reported without delay to the relevant statutory authorities and to the GAA National Designated Person as appropriate.

## KEY TASKS

- Ensure that all Clubs have appointed a Designated Person and that they are fully aware of their responsibilities and of the contents of the GAA Code of Best Practice for Youth Sport and the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse and other relevant guidance as provided by their statutory authorities
- Liaise with Club Designated Persons on all matters relating to child welfare and protection in their club
- Act as the formal liaison person between the County Board and statutory authorities on all matters related to allegations of child abuse and shall similarly liaise with the GAA National Designated Person on all such matters
- Formally report allegations of abuse to the statutory authorities, on behalf of clubs in their county, having established that reasonable grounds for concern exist
- Make any such reports or referrals in line with GAA agreed procedures
- Have knowledge of statutory guidelines and relevant legislation as they relate to child protection and welfare of young people in their jurisdiction
- Have knowledge of definitions, categorisation and indicators of abuse
- Undertake, in accordance with the jurisdiction in which they operate, relevant Child Protection in Sport Awareness training (ISC/SportNI) or Safeguarding and Protecting Children (Sportscoach UK) training, as promoted by the GAA and any other training deemed relevant to their role
- Communicate with parents and external agencies as appropriate
- Assist with and identify the need for relevant Child Protection training within the County through their liaison with Club Designated Persons and Children's Officers at Club and County level
- Be aware of local contacts and support services that may assist in developing and delivering their role
- Advise, as appropriate, Club and County administrators on issues of confidentiality, record keeping and data protection
- Ensure that all individual case records are maintained, that all actions taken are recorded and that such records are kept in a secure and confidential place

**A debarment order, once communicated in writing to an individual, comes into effect immediately, and the conditions of the debarment order remain in place until removed or otherwise amended. A debarment order may only be removed by the GAA Child Welfare and Protection Appeals Panel.**

Should a GAA Designated Person, or other member of the Association, be made aware of a complaint or allegation of abuse against a person who is not in membership or in the employment of any unit of the Association, this matter should be referred by the Designated Person or member of the Association to the relevant statutory authority in the jurisdiction in which they reside.

## The Provincial Designated Person

A Provincial Designated Person may be appointed by the relevant Provincial Council as the need for such a role is identified and agreed.

### KEY ROLE

The person appointed shall ensure that each County in their Province has appointed a County Designated Person and that such persons are fully aware as to their roles and responsibilities.

### KEY TASKS

- Have comprehensive and detailed knowledge and experience of child welfare and protection and the reporting procedures in the jurisdictions in which they operate
- Promote the role of Club and County Designated Persons and provide information and advice so as to assist them to fulfil their role
- Promote the use of: The GAA Code of Best Practise in Youth Sport, the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegation of Abuse and relevant guidelines and legislation pertaining to child welfare and protection in their jurisdiction
- Liaise and consult with statutory authorities and other relevant agencies on child welfare and protection matters as appropriate
- In consultation with the National Designated Persons and County Designated Persons, represent the GAA on matters relating to the reporting of child abuse allegations, if so required
- Assist in the risk assessment of relevant information returned from the vetting of individuals in different jurisdictions
- Be available to advise Club and County Designated Persons on matters relating to allegations or suspicions of abuse

In the event of an allegation of abuse being made or reported at a Provincial event it is the Provincial Designated Person who shall act as a Designated Person for such matters and shall follow the GAA Reporting of Allegations of Abuse Procedures as outlined elsewhere in the GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegation of Abuse.

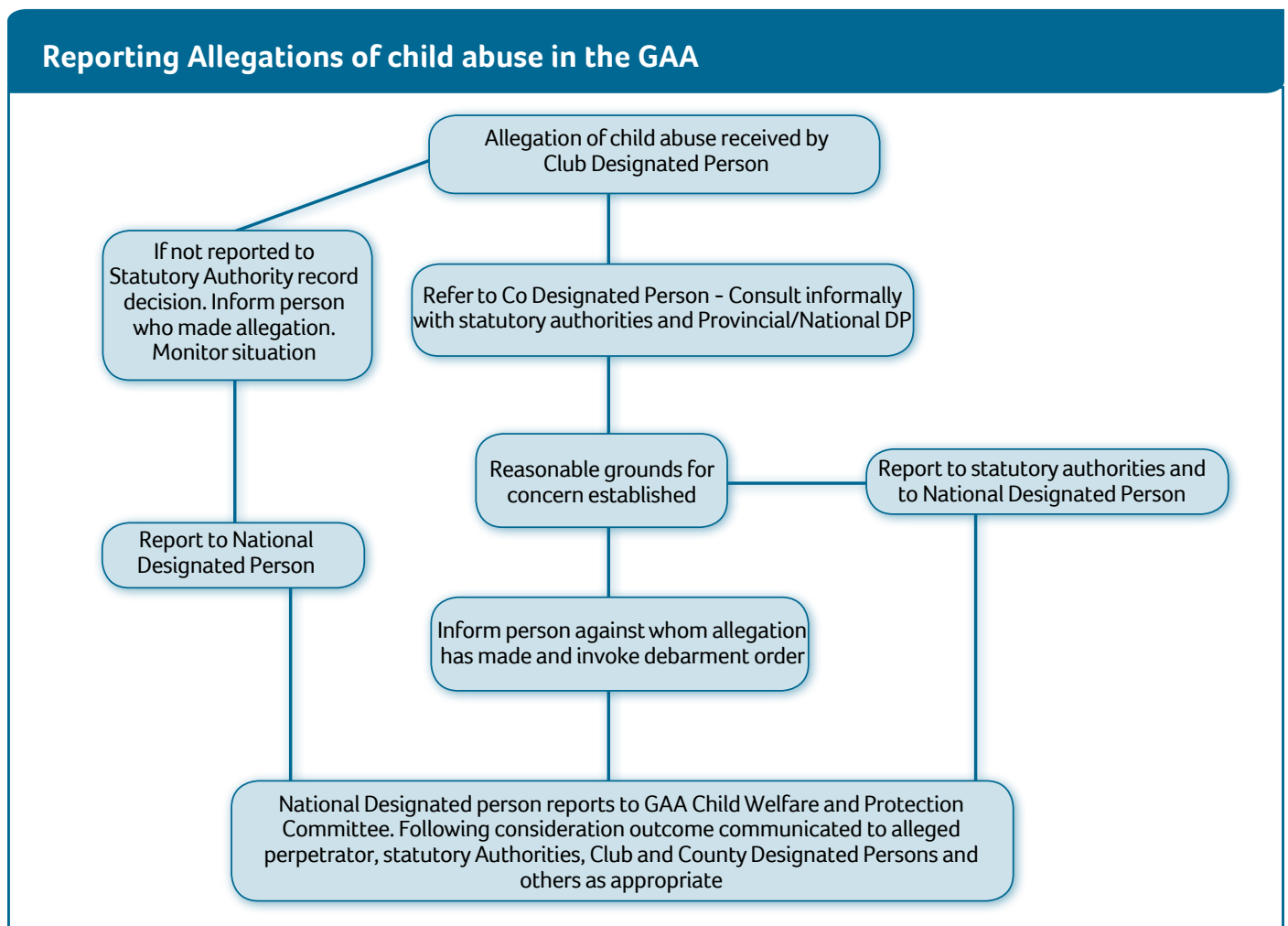
The Provincial Designated Person may be required in situations to lead on child welfare and protection matters in a knowledgeable, sensible, balanced, facilitative and non threatening manner and should be aware of the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil on behalf of their Province and the GAA.

# The National Designated Person

The GAA National Designated Person (NDP) shall be appointed by the Association to oversee the reporting as appropriate of allegations of abuse to the relevant authorities, and to act on behalf of the Association, as deemed appropriate, in all such matters.

The person chosen by the GAA to fulfil this role shall have comprehensive and detailed knowledge and experience of child welfare, child protection and relevant reporting procedures and be familiar with all such procedures in all jurisdictions in which the Association operates. The NDP shall make the Association and its subsidiary units aware as to their child protection and welfare responsibilities and shall, in consultation with County/Provincial Designated Persons, represent the GAA on matters relating to the reporting of child abuse allegations, where such representations may be required. The assistance of County, Provincial and Club Designated Persons, when called upon by the NDP, shall be forthcoming.

The National Designated Person shall inform and update the GAA Coiste Bainistí and the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee on all cases reported to statutory authorities. Additionally, cases not reported to the statutory authorities, which have been brought to the attention of the National Designated Person, shall be reported to the National Child Welfare and Protection Committee for further possible consideration.



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This leaflet is published and promoted by the Gaelic Athletic Association.

Further information available in the  
GAA Guidelines for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse booklet.

Tá leagan Gaeilge den bhileog seo ar fáil ar [www.gaa.ie/clubzone](http://www.gaa.ie/clubzone)