

Al-Anon Safeguarding Children Policy Éire

Version Control

Version	Action
0.1	Overarching Children's Safeguarding Policy including Alateen Policies and Procedures. Approved by Al-Anon Family Groups CLG

Version	Date Approved	Date of next review	Approved by	Policy Name
2.0	July 2024	June 2027	Board of AFG CLG	Al-Anon Safeguarding Children Policy Éire
List of amendments		• Added Deputy DLP • Addition to glossary, General Service Board (GSB) explanation • Included screening flow chart • Changed to legal guardian • 'Setting up of Alateen Groups' 'The Area' included the Executive Committee and GSB to approve the Area Alateen Plan • Added consent form information		
Version	Date Approved	Date of next review	Approved by	Policy Name
3.0	1 st July 2026	July 2027	Board of AFG CLG	Al-Anon Safeguarding Children Policy Éire
List of amendments		• Replaced 'young people' with 'children' for clarity • Updated definition of a child • Updated definition of GSB • Included January 2019 and April 2025 to Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017 • Included Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 to the Age of Consent • Included Gardaí in reporting flow chart • Removed open meetings • Moved Appendix 9 Data Protection under Setting up of Alateen Groups		

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GLOSSARY/DEFINITIONS

Al-Anon: Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire offers understanding and support for families and friends of problem drinkers in an anonymous environment.

Alateen: is part of **Al-Anon** for members aged 12 to 17 years inclusive where they can seek help with problems that arise when alcoholism afflicts a parent or another close relative or friend.

Child: A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

Children with specific needs: This term is used to cover the specific or unique, out of the ordinary concerns created by the child's medical, physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. Additional services are usually needed to help a person in one or more of the following areas (among others): thinking communication, movement, getting along with others and taking care of oneself.

Complainant: This is the term used to describe a person who has made an allegation of abuse.

Contact with Children: Working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person: The persons appointed by Al-Anon Family Groups CLG to liaise with the statutory authorities regarding child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations.

General Service Board (GSB): The Board of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. The Trustees on the GSB are also Trustees of Family Groups Ltd.

General Service Office (GSO): The General Service Office, the clearing house of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire, located in London, is also the registered office of the Charity, Family Groups Ltd.

Personnel: Personnel are, employed by an organisation, engaged by an organisation on a subcontract basis, or engaged by an organisation on a voluntary or unpaid basis.

Respondent: This term is used for the person about whom child/vulnerable person safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations have been made.

Statutory Authorities: These include Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

Tusla: Child & Family Agency who are the statutory authority, responsible for improving well-being and outcomes for children.

Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor (ASGS): An Al-Anon member who has completed the screening and Garda vetting procedure and whose name has been included in the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.

Area Alateen Co-ordinator: A member of the Area Committee responsible for unifying Alateen services within the Area. The Area Alateen Co-ordinator must be an ASGS who is on the current Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO.

Safeguarding Children

Al-Anon is committed to best practice to Safeguard Children

All Al-Anon personnel (including volunteers) have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.



Here are the contact details if you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children,.

If you are concerned that someone is at risk of immediate serious harm, you should call the emergency services (by ringing 999/112) without delay.

Tusla – Tel: 082 188021

[insert local Tusla contact details here]

And report directly to:

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Designated Liaison Person for Eire is

Miriam MacGrath and Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Maureen McArdle

alateendlp@al-anonuk.org.uk

Policy Statement

Declaration of Guiding Principles

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of the relatives and friends of alcoholics who believing that alcoholism is a family disease share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. Al-Anon is a self-supporting fellowship whose programme is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous). Alateen (for members aged 12 to 17 inclusive) is part of the Al-Anon Family Groups programme. Al-Anon recognises that every child should be treated with dignity and respect. They have a right to freedom from all forms of exploitation and abuse. The safeguarding of children is of paramount importance. Al-Anon is committed to doing what it can to safeguard those children with whom it interacts directly.

Scope of the Declaration

- This document sets out Al-Anon's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. All ASGS and Board members are required to comply with the policy, procedures and practices set out in this document.
- Al-Anon is aware of the need to make explicit and visible our determination that our work and activities must promote the safety and security of children.
- Throughout the process of ensuring the safety and welfare of children, while recognising the equality of every person one should be aware of differing family patterns and lifestyles, not only due to different racial, ethnic and cultural groups but also issues of age, disability, gender, social background religion, language and sexual orientation.

Commitment

Al-Anon does not work directly with children but may do so through the Alateen programme. Al-Anon strongly believes all children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Al-Anon recognises that there are specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks that exist for children and is committed to make every effort to ensure children are safe and protected in Al-Anon's work and activities, especially in relation to Alateen.

Al-Anon's aim is to ensure that it operates best practice in terms of child safeguarding policies and recognises the legal guidelines governing safeguarding of children.

Al-Anon does not tolerate the abuse or exploitation of children committed by any of its ASGSs, Board members, or other third parties acting on behalf of the organisation. Allegations of child abuse will result in mandatory reporting of incidents to the relevant authorities and if founded may lead to disciplinary procedures up to and including dismissal. All ASGSs, and other third parties must comply with this policy and ensure all procedures regarding child safeguarding are implemented in full.

Context, guiding principles and policies

Our approach to child safeguarding work is guided by a number of key national and international principles and standards as set out in the following:

International law, policy and guidance:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). The UNCRC is ratified by the UN member states (except the United States). The four general principles of the UNCRC are:

- Survival and development
- Non-discrimination
- Child participation and the right to be heard
- Best interests of the child

Of the 54 articles contained within the UNCRC, the most relevant statements to the current policy are detailed below:

Article 2: Children have the right to protection against discrimination.

Article 3: All adults should always do what is best for a child.

Article 12: Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.

Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.

Republic of Ireland law, policy and guidance

- Children First Act, 2015
- National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012-2016
- Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences Against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act, 2010
- Criminal Justice Act, 2006
- Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998
- Child Care Act, 1991
- The Constitution of Ireland.

In the laws of the Republic of Ireland, where there is a conflict between the best interest of the child and the interests of other parties, the best interests of the child are considered paramount.

This policy and accompanying procedures describe the steps needed to become effective in keeping children safe. They have been drawn up and reflect national and international best practices with regard to Child Protection and Safeguarding and reflect where appropriate the *Children First Act 2015*.

Section 1

Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire provide an environment for children that is welcoming, nurturing and safe. We provide access to good role models whom the children, can trust, and who respect, protect and enhance their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

- **Recruitment and Selection;** we follow effective guidelines and legislative requirements in the recruitment of all personnel and in assessing their suitability to work with children.
- **Codes of Conduct;** we implement effective practice on the expected standards of adult behaviour towards children.
- **Complaints procedure;** we have a clearly written complaints procedure regarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse.
- **Protected disclosure;** we have in place procedures to support and assist personnel to raise concerns about possible dangerous or unethical conduct by others towards children.
- **Training;** we will ensure that all personnel are familiar with this policy and the legislation involved.
- **Communication;** we will ensure that all personnel working with children sign up to comply with this policy and are aware of the contact details for reporting. We will share our policies with the Alateen members and their legal guardian/s.

Section 2

Responding to Concerns and Allegations

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire have clear procedures and guidance on what to do when suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations arise regarding a child's safety or welfare that will ensure there is a prompt response. We will meet all national and international legal and practice requirements and guidance.

- **Recognising Abuse:** We will outline the definitions of abuse (Children's First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children, 2017).
- **Responding to an Allegation of Abuse:** We will have procedures in place on how to respond to a child making an allegation of abuse.
- **Reporting procedures:** We will have a clearly written procedure and access to personnel to implement them, if suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations are received about the abuse of a child. These procedures specify that suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to the statutory authorities will be reported.
- **Recording:** We will record all suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations and action taken that complies with relevant data protection legislation, statutory guidance on confidentiality and storage of information.
- **Information Sharing:** We will share information about child safeguarding suspicions, concerns, knowledge or allegations with those who need to know in order to keep children safe.
- **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person:** We will appoint a Designated Liaison Person and a Deputy Designated Liaison Person who will liaise on our behalf with the statutory authorities.

Definitions & Indicators of Child Abuse

There are four types of child abuse. They are defined in *Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017 (Department of Children & Youth Affairs) (as updated in January 2019 and April 2025)* as follows:

1. Neglect
2. Emotional abuse
3. Physical abuse
4. Sexual abuse

Bullying is not defined as a form of abuse in *Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017 (Department of Children & Youth Affairs) (as updated in January 2019 and April 2025)* but there is clear evidence that it is abusive and will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. It is generally defined in terms of omission of care, where a child's health, development or welfare is impaired by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, medical care, intellectual stimulation or supervision and safety.

The extent of the damage to the child's health, development or welfare is influenced by a range of factors. These factors include the extent, if any, of positive influence in the child's life as well as the age of the child and the frequency and consistency of neglect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and the child. One off and occasional difficulties between a legal guardian/carer and child are not considered emotional abuse.

Abuse occurs when a child's basic need for attention, affection, approval, consistency and security are not met, due to incapacity or indifference from their parent or caregiver. Emotional abuse can also occur when adults responsible for taking care of children are unaware of and unable (for a range of reasons) to meet their children's emotional and developmental needs.

Emotional abuse is not easy to recognise because the effects are not easily seen.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur on a single occasion or as a pattern of incidents.

A reasonable concern exists where the child's health and/or development is, may be, or has been damaged as a result of suspected physical abuse.

Physical abuse can include the following:

- Physical punishment
- Beating, slapping, hitting or kicking
- Pushing, shaking or throwing
- Pinching, biting, choking or hair pulling
- Use of excessive force in handling
- Deliberate poisoning
- Suffocation
- Fabricated/induced illness
- Female genital mutilation

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for their gratification or arousal, or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography.

Child sexual abuse may cover a wide spectrum of abusive activities. It rarely involves just a single incident and, in some instances, occurs even over a number of years.

Child sexual abuse most commonly happens within the family, including older siblings and extended family members.

Cases of sexual abuse mainly come to light through disclosure by the child or their siblings/friends, from the suspicions of an adult, and/or by physical symptoms.

It should be remembered that sexual activity involving a child may be sexual abuse even if the child concerned does not themselves recognise it as abusive.

Age of Consent

In relation to child sexual abuse, it should be noted that in criminal law the age of consent to sexual intercourse is 17 years for both boys and girls. Any sexual relationship where one or both parties are under the age of 17 is illegal. However, it may not necessarily be regarded as child sexual abuse. (*Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children, 2017 page 11*) (*Department of Children & Youth Affairs*) (*as updated in January 2019 and April 2025*).

For further details regarding the age of consent please refer to *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017*.

Please Note: All signs/indicators need careful assessment by professionals relative to the child's circumstances.

For further details regarding definitions/indicators of the above categories of abuse please refer to *Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children 2017* (*Department of Children & Youth Affairs*) (*as updated in January 2019 and April 2025*).

NEGLECT

Child neglect should be suspected in cases of:

- Children being left alone without adequate care and supervision;
- malnourishment, lacking food, unsuitable food or erratic feeding;
- non-organic failure to thrive, i.e., child not gaining weight due not only to malnutrition but also to emotional deprivation;
- failure to provide adequate care for the child's medical and developmental problems including intellectual stimulation;
- inadequate living conditions – unhygienic conditions, environmental issues, including lack of adequate heating and furniture;
- lack of adequate clothing;
- inattention to basic hygiene;
- lack of safeguarding and exposure to danger, including moral danger or lack of supervision appropriate to the child's age;
- persistent failure to attend school;
- abandonment or desertion.

EMOTIONAL

- rejection;
- lack of comfort and love;
- lack of attachment;
- lack of proper stimulation (e.g., fun and play);
- lack of continuity of care (e.g., frequent moves, particularly unplanned);
- continuous lack of praise and encouragement;
- persistent criticism, sarcasm, hostility or blaming of the child;
- bullying;
- conditional parenting in which care or affection of a child depends on their behaviour or actions;
- extreme over-protectiveness;
- inappropriate non-physical punishment (e.g., locking child in bedroom);
- ongoing family conflicts and family violence;
- seriously inappropriate expectations of a child relative to his/her age and stage of development.

PHYSICAL

Unsatisfactory explanations, varying explanations, frequency and clustering for the following events are high indices for concern regarding physical abuse:

- physical punishment;
- beating, slapping, hitting or kicking;
- pushing, shaking or throwing;
- abrasions/lacerations;
- haemorrhages (retinal, subdural);
- damage to body organs;
- poisonings – repeated (prescribed drugs, alcohol);
- failure to thrive;
- coma/unconsciousness;
- death.

SEXUAL

- overly affectionate behaviours;
- injuries to anal/genital areas, STDs, pregnancy;
- sexualised drawings or play;
- having unexplained sums of money;
- changes in usual demeanour;
- depression, self-mutilation, running away;
- fear of changing clothes in public;
- regressed behaviour patterns, such as thumb sucking recourse to old teddy bears etc.;
- promiscuity, provocative behaviours/acts;
- using sexualised language inappropriate to age.

Responding to a Disclosure

Responding to a child who discloses abuse

Remember, a child may disclose abuse to you as a trusted adult at any time during your engagement with them. It is important that you are aware and prepared for this:

- Be as calm and natural as possible
- Remember that you have been approached because you are trusted and possibly liked. Do not panic
- Be aware that disclosures can be very difficult for the child
- Remember, the child may initially be testing your reactions and may only fully open up over a period of time
- Listen to what the child has to say. Give them the time and opportunity to tell as much as they are able and wish to
- Do not pressurise the child. Allow them to disclose at their own pace and in their own language
- Conceal any signs of disgust, anger or disbelief
- Accept what the child has to say – false disclosures are very rare
- It is important to differentiate between the person who carried out the abuse and the act of abuse itself. The child quite possibly may love or strongly like the alleged abuser while also disliking what has been done to them. It is important therefore to avoid expressing any judgement on, or anger towards the alleged perpetrator while talking with the child
- It may be necessary to reassure the child that your feelings towards them have not been affected in a negative way as a result of what they have disclosed to you
- Reassure the child that they have taken the right action in talking to you

When asking questions

- Questions should be supportive and for the purpose of clarification only
- Avoid leading questions, such as asking whether a specific person carried out the abuse.
- Avoid asking about intimate details or suggestions that something else may have happened other than what you have been told. Such questions and suggestions could complicate the official investigation

Confidentiality – Do not promise to keep secrets

- You acknowledge that they have come to you because they trust you
- You will be sharing the information only with people who understand this area and who can help. There are secrets, which, are not helpful and should not be kept because they make matters worse. Such secrets hide things that need to be known if people are to be helped and protected from further on going hurt. By refusing to make a commitment to secrecy to the child, you do run the risk that they may not tell you everything (or, indeed, anything) there and then. However, it is better to do this than tell a lie and ruin the child's confidence in yet another adult. By being honest, it is more likely the child will return to you another time.

Think before you promise anything – do not make promises you cannot keep

At the earliest possible opportunity:

- Record in writing in a factual manner, what the child has said including, as far as possible, the exact words used by the child
- Inform the DLP immediately and agree measures to protect the child, e.g. report the matter directly to Tulsa and/or An Garda Síochána
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality

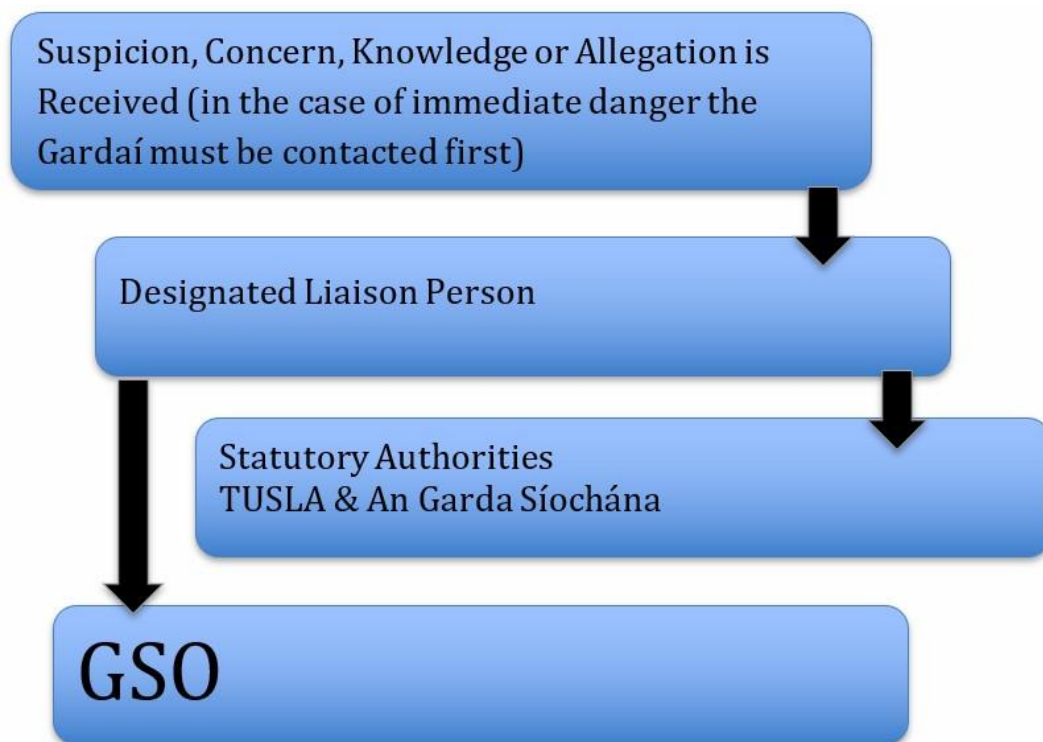
Responding to adults who disclose childhood abuse

There are an increasing number of adults disclosing abuse that took place during their childhood. Often such disclosures come to light when people attend counselling. They also sometimes arise in adult services and services which work with parents/legal guardians and families.

Where such a disclosure is made it is essential to establish whether there may be a current risk to any child who may be in contact with the alleged abuser revealed in the disclosure. This is important even where children about whom there may be a concern are still to be identified.

If any risk is deemed to exist to a child who may be in contact with an alleged abuser, you need to follow the reporting procedures, the DLP should report it to Tusla/An Garda Síochána without delay.

Reporting Flow Chart



Contact Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Designated Liaison Person, appointed by the Board of AI-Anon Family Groups CLG at alateendlp@al-anonuk.org.uk.

Reporting Procedures

Personnel who have concerns about child abuse or who have received a disclosure of child abuse should bring this to the **IMMEDIATE** attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person. Personnel who cover services other than Alateen bring concerns to the immediate attention of the General Secretary at the General Service Office.

Under no circumstances should a child be left in a situation that exposes them to harm or of risk to harm pending the intervention of the statutory authorities. In the event of an emergency where you think a child is in immediate danger and you cannot get in contact with Tusla (Child & Family Agency), you should contact *An Garda Síochána* on 999/112 or through any Garda Station.

Where the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person considers that a child safeguarding or welfare concern meets the reasonable grounds for concern criteria outlined below, then the DLP will report this to Tusla (Child & Family Agency). The DLP will report the allegation, concern or disclosure to the relevant authority (Tusla or An Garda Síochána).

Where the DLP remains uncertain they should contact Tusla (Child and Family Agency) for informal advice relating to the allegation, concern or disclosure.

The DLP will ensure that the legal guardian/s are informed (this will be following consultation and advice from the statutory authorities) that a report/referral had been made to Tusla. The DLP will make an appointment with the legal guardian/s to inform them that the report has been made to Tusla, unless to do so would be likely to endanger the child.

In those cases, where the DLP decides not to report concerns to Tusla or An Garda Síochána, the personnel who raised the concern should be given a clear written statement of the reasons why the DLP is not taking such action. The personnel should be advised that if they remain concerned about the situation, they are free as individuals to consult with, or report to, Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the DLP must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the child and that no child is ever left in a situation that could place them in **immediate danger**.

The DLP will report the suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of abuse to the General Secretary at GSO.

Responding to allegations of abuse made against an ASGS

An allegation of abuse may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to a child
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to the code of behaviour
- Behaved in a way that is contrary to professional practice guidelines

If an allegation is made against an ASGS Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire must ensure that everyone involved is dealt with appropriately and in accordance with the guiding principles of this policy, the rules of natural justice and any relevant legalisation. Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire have a dual responsibility in respect of both the child and the ASGS. There are two separate procedures to be followed:

- The reporting procedure to Tusla in respect of the child and the alleged abuser
- The internal personnel procedure for dealing with the ASGS

Where there is suspicion, concern, knowledge or allegation of immediate danger, the Gardaí must be contacted before the above procedures.

The priority is to protect the child while taking account of the ASGSs' right to due process. 'Protective measures' do not presume guilt.

It is recommended that the same person should not have responsibility for dealing with the child safeguarding reporting procedure and the personnel issue.

The reporting procedures will be followed by the DLP. The General Secretary will manage procedures relating to personnel issues (including the internal investigation).

Any action taken should consider the rules of natural justice, whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.

When an allegation made against a volunteer or ASGS a quick resolution should be sought for the benefit of all concerned.

All stages of the process will be recorded.

Care will be taken to ensure that any action or investigation within the organisation does not prejudice or compromise the statutory investigation or assessment.

Close liaison will be maintained between the organisation, Tusla and An Garda Síochána (where appropriate).

The procedure for dealing with the ASGS

The DLP and the General Secretary at GSO will work in close co-operation with each other and with Tusla and An Garda Síochána.

- a) If a formal report is being made, the General Secretary at GSO will notify the ASGS that an allegation has been made and the nature of the allegation. The ASGS has a right to respond to this and this response should be documented and retained.
- b) The ASGS will be made aware of Al-Anon's safeguarding policies and supporting documents. Furthermore, Al-Anon will ensure that the principle of 'natural justice' will apply whereby a person is considered innocent until proven otherwise.
- c) The General Secretary will suspend the ASGS. In the case where the ASGS is not suspended the level of supervision will be increased.
- d) The DLP in conjunction with the General Secretary, will liaise closely with Tusla (Child and Family Agency) and/or An Garda Síochána to ensure that the actions taken by Al-Anon will not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
- e) The protective measures which can be taken to ensure the safety of child can include the following:
 - suspension of duties of the person accused
 - working under increased supervision during the period of the investigation
 - other measures as deemed appropriate

In all cases the DLP will follow up to ensure the matter has been dealt with appropriately.

Contact list for statutory authorities/support groups.



TUSLA (Child & Family Agency)

Duty Social Work Department
Carnegie Centre
21-25 Lord Edward Street
Dublin 2
Telephone (01) 6486500
National out of hours 081880210
Crisis team Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm (086) 1735686



An Garda Síochána

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Investigation Unit
National Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Garda Headquarters
Harcourt Square
Dublin 2
Telephone (01) 6663430
Email: dvsaiu@garda.ie

The HSE National Counselling Service (NCS)

This is a professional, confidential counselling and psychotherapy service available free of charge in all regions of the Health Services Executive.
Free phone 1800 234 115.

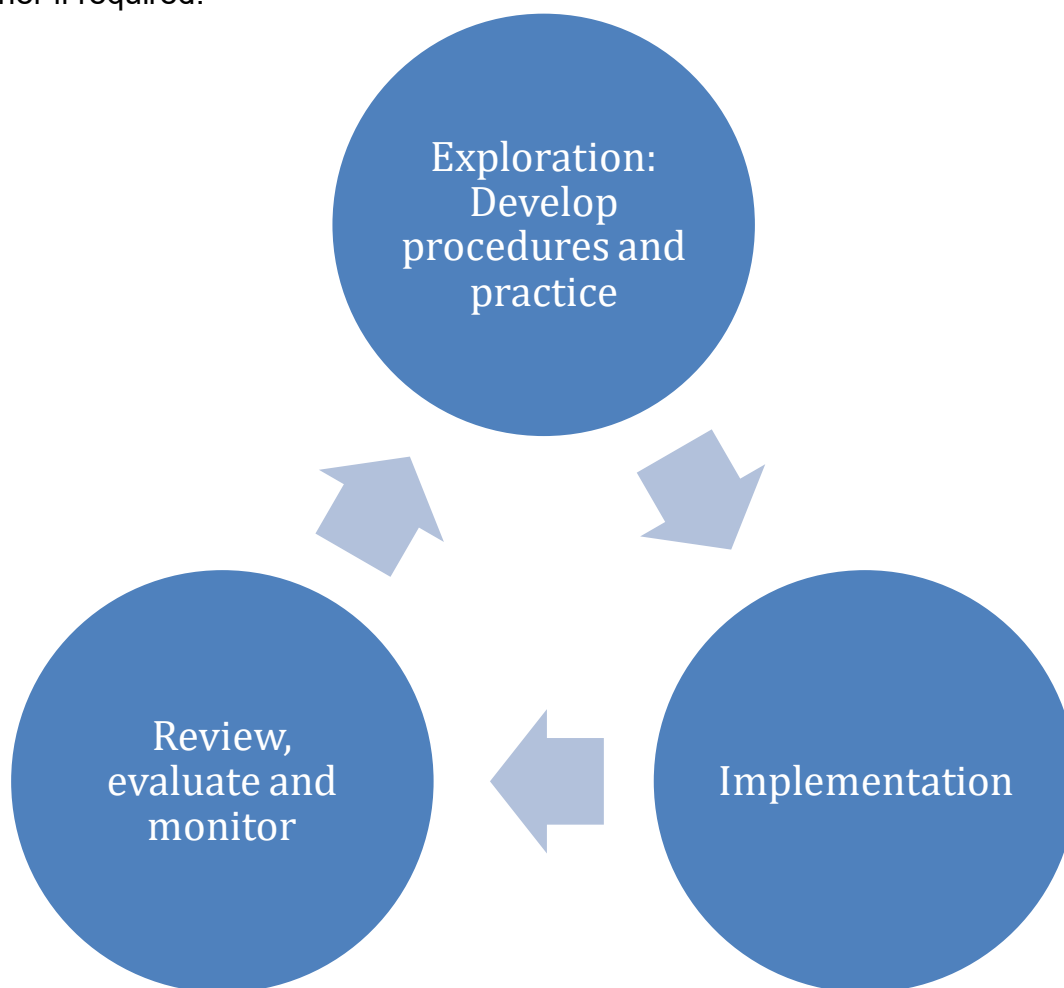
Connect

This is a free telephone counseling and support service for any adult who has experienced abuse, trauma or neglect in childhood. You can talk in confidence with a trained counselor who can listen or help with questions you have.

To speak to a counselor, call Free phone
Republic of Ireland: 1800 477 477
UK and Northern Ireland: 00800 477 477 77

Section 3 Quality Assurance

This sets out Al-Anon's approach to carrying out audits/monitoring to ensure continuous improvement and maintaining best practice. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.



Implementation

A plan will be put in place that will include actions to be taken in the introduction, development and implementation of the policy and procedures. It will also include how to monitor if these actions have been implemented.

Review, evaluate and monitor

This step provides an opportunity to reflect upon the overall implementation of the policy and procedures. On-going monitoring helps to ensure that practices are maintained throughout the Alateen Groups. Monitoring and reviewing promotes accountability, learning, feedback and knowledge sharing.

The monitoring will be using the following tools:

- Yearly Self-Audit of Alateen Group (Appendix 9)
- GSO/Area Alateen Co-ordinators/ASGSs liaising with Alateen Group members and legal guardian/s in relation to safeguarding practices
- Annual report developed by Area Alateen Co-ordinator, following collation of self-audits from Alateen Groups. This report will be sent to the General Secretary at GSO.

Al-Anon staff/ASGSs working with the Alateen Groups:

All staff/ASGSs are required to understand and comply with this policy. Failure to comply with this policy by an ASGS may lead to removal from the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.

Annex 1

List of Relevant and related Policy & Procedural Documents

- Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual
- Safeguarding Statement.

Annex 2

Alateen Practices & Procedures

Annex 2 sets out the practices of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. It explains the registration requirements of Alateen Groups, how they are supervised and the screening procedures for ASGSs.

In addition to complying with the law, our aims are:

- To provide a safe environment for Alateen members
- To provide support and ensure security for ASGSs
- To safeguard the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire and the charities Al-Anon Family Groups CLG and Family Groups Ltd.

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire is responsible only for formal Alateen meetings registered at the General Service Office (GSO).

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Setting up of Alateen Groups

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire need to ensure that children involved in the organisation are protected and kept safe from harm while they are attending meetings.

Al-Anon Family Groups do this by ensuring that in each Area where Alateen meetings occur, there is an Area Plan, an Area Alateen Co-ordinator and sufficient screened/vetted and trained ASGSs, to ensure two ASGSs can attend every Alateen meeting.

The Area:

In order for an Area to hold Alateen Group meetings it must:

- Confirm that the Area is committed to providing Alateen.
- Draw up an Area Plan to demonstrate how they will comply with this policy and its requirements.
- Obtain formal approval of the Area Plan at an Area Assembly. The plan will then have to be approved by the Executive Committee of Al-Anon Family Groups CLG and the General Service Board of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.
- Appoint an Area Alateen Co-ordinator to be responsible for the ongoing supervision and support of ASGSs. If there are no ASGSs in the Area already, one will need to be screened/vetted before becoming the Area Alateen Co-ordinator. In an Area that is starting Alateen and has no ASGSs the Area may need to “borrow” an Area Alateen Co-ordinator from another Area for the interview of the first ASGS.
- It is advisable for Areas to have an Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator, who will also be appointed at an Area Assembly. This Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator can carry out any of the duties of the Alateen Co-ordinator.
- New Alateen Groups should be set up only where an existing Al-Anon Group meets at the same day and time.
- It is mandatory that two ASGSs are present at each Alateen meeting so the Area should ensure it has sufficient ASGSs available to meet this requirement.

The Area Alateen Co-ordinator

The Area Alateen Co-ordinator and Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator can only be appointed if they are already an existing ASGS and are on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO.

In the event of an Area Alateen Co-ordinator being unable to continue the role, the Alternate becomes the official Area Alateen Co-ordinator until the next Area Assembly when a vote can take place to elect an Area Alateen Co-ordinator. If there is no appointed Alternate, a ASGS who is prepared to take on the responsibility, should take on the role until a new Area Alateen Co-ordinator can be elected at an Area Assembly.

The Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator

The Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator may carry out any of the duties of the Area Alateen Co-ordinator in their absence.

Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsors

To be an ASGS, Al-Anon members must meet all of the following criteria:

- at least 21 years old
- attended Al-Anon meetings frequently for at least three years
- have been through the screening procedure and garda vetting checks

Al-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous are not eligible to be ASGSs.

Members applying to be ASGSs must complete the recruitment process and be included on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO before they start their duties.

Training

As the qualification to be an ASGS is a minimum of three years frequent attendance at Al-Anon meetings, there is no need for a separate induction programme to give an overview of the fellowship.

All ASGSs will receive training covering Health & Safety, Safeguarding and the Roles and Responsibilities of ASGSs at a mandatory annual training session.

If an ASGS is unable to attend the annual Area training session then they are required to attend a training session in another Area (provision for this must be contained in the Area Plan and they must provide proof of attendance). If they fail to attend an annual training session, they may be removed from the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.

Provision of training is the responsibility of each Area and should be included in every Area's Alateen Plan. Training is organised and led by the Area Alateen Co-ordinator.

Individual Assessment

ASGSs will meet the Area Alateen Co-ordinator once a year for an annual review where they will be able to discuss their role, how they have fulfilled their duties and address any difficulties.

Records

A record of ASGSs attendance at training sessions, supervision and assessments by the Area Alateen Co-ordinator will be dated and signed by both the ASGS and the Area Alateen Co-ordinator. Each will retain a copy and a third sent to GSO.

The following documents need to be kept safe and secure

- Registration/Consent for each child
- Medical details, any individual special needs and emergency contact telephone number/s
- Attendance Book; (hardbacked book, pages numbered). At each meeting all members present will sign the attendance book, the ASGSs will also sign the book. Medical details, any individual special needs and emergency contact telephone/s may be kept in the back of the Attendance Book for ease of access. This book will be kept by a nominated ASGS who will bring it to each meeting. The attendance book will be returned to GSO each year along with the Group Annual Record Check form.
- Accidents/incidents (accidents records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to the Area Alateen-Co-ordinator)
- Any complaints or grievances (not of a safeguarding nature)

Recruitment and Garda Vetting

(A detailed explanation of this procedure is found later in this document).

Data Protection

All forms will be held on file, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated on the form. It may only be accessed by those with responsibility for managing records or group activities.

The secure handling, use, storage and retention of information held at GSO

The following practices will apply to all material relating to recruitment procedures, including the initial application form and any correspondence relating to the disclosure:

- Only essential information relevant to the recruitment process will be retained.
- The sharing of disclosed information will only be with those authorised to see it in the course of their duties.
- Disclosed information will be stored in a locked storage cabinet.
- Staff with access to disclosed information will be made aware of this practice.

Practices and Procedures for implementing the Policy

Alateen Meetings

There are a number of mandatory requirements as detailed in our policy that **MUST** be in place before any Alateen meeting can take place:

1. There must be a written, approved Area Plan.
2. There must be an Area Alateen Co-ordinator (or alternate) in post.
3. All ASGSs must be screened, garda vetted and on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO.
4. There must be two ASGSs present at every meeting.
5. If the Group does not have two current ASGSs, the meeting must be temporarily suspended, and Alateen members encouraged to attend the nearest Alateen Group until ASGSs are available.

Role of Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsors at Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Alateen members to lead the meetings. However, ASGSs may give guidance and provide direction at Alateen meetings to ensure that emphasis is placed on the Al-Anon programme of recovery and, to the best of their ability, maintain an atmosphere that will protect Alateen members from physical and emotional harm. ASGSs owe a duty of care to Alateen members.

For the safeguarding of both parties, it is inappropriate for ASGSs to sponsor an Alateen member individually.

Specifically, at weekly meetings ASGSs will:

- a) Encourage the Alateen members to keep reasonably good order among themselves and establish behavioural guidelines with them. Horseplay, fighting or the use of drugs or alcohol on the meeting's premises is prohibited.
- b) Make Alateen members aware that they must take personal responsibility for their actions and that, through their actions, they represent the fellowship as a whole.
- c) Read the Alateen Statement at each meeting: *If any Alateen member shares about personal abuse, the ASGS can give information on the agencies to contact, however they cannot promise secrecy.*

Attendance at Closed Alateen meetings

Members of Alateen are 12-17 years old inclusive, and must always have two ASGSs currently on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO in attendance.

Alateen activities away from registered meetings e.g., Al-Anon or AA workshops and conventions (in-person only)

It should be noted that members who take a direct part in organising the event owe a duty of care to the participating Alateen members.

Organising committees should, in the event that the legal guardian/s is/are not attending the convention, ensure that the Alateen member has photographic ID, get the consent form or written permission with the same information included, from the legal guardian/s for the Alateen member to attend the convention and are accompanied by a responsible adult who has appropriate ID.

It is the responsibility of the convention organisers to ensure that the ASGSs are pre-booked to attend, and check with GSO that they are on currently on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.

The organising committee should:

- a) Ensure two ASGSs attend each meeting.
- b) Provide guidelines for acceptable behaviour.
- c) Ensure that the ASGSs are always aware of the specific whereabouts of individual Alateen members during Alateen meetings and supervise them for the duration of their specific responsibility.
- d) Ensure that an Attendance Book (hardbacked book, pages numbered) is completed as per closed Alateen Meetings. This should be returned to the Area Alateen Co-ordinator (in the Area where the convention is held) or in the absence of an Area Alateen Co-ordinator to the Regional Trustee.

Alateen business activities away from registered meetings e.g., District meetings and Area Assemblies (in-person and online)

Alateen Groups should be encouraged to elect a Group Representative and take an active part in business affairs. Alateen members attending business meetings are required to provide a completed consent form. Two ASGSs must be in attendance at an in-person meeting and three for an online meeting.

Travel ASGSs do not make group travel arrangements for Alateen members to attend an event.

Holidays, holiday weekends, picnics or other social events

The Al-Anon and Alateen name must not be associated with events of this type as they do not form part of Alateen, and Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire is not responsible for them. Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire is responsible for registered Alateen meetings only.

Creating Safe Environments

Risk Assessment

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire implement effective practice for personnel on assessment of hazards when working with children.

When running activities with children, Al-Anon has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent personal injuries. A hazard assessment is a systematic way of thinking through the issues that can arise associated with a particular activity, in a particular location and with a specified group of people. A plan is then put in place to manage any of the potential hazards (this includes online meetings).

It is important to identify acceptable levels of hazards, as all risk cannot be removed.

Completing a risk assessment

Each element of the activity/equipment/venue needs to be thought through. Consideration must be given to the risks involved and the measures required to limit or avoid them. A risk assessment for an event or activity needs to include:

- The venue where the event will be held;
- The equipment that will be used;
- The people who will be attending.

Assessing risks

1. Identify the risk: look for risks in the nature of the activity, and in the place where the activity is being held.
2. Identify who is at risk: decide who may be harmed and how. Everyone, or perhaps only certain people, may be at risk. Some Alateen Groups may need special consideration as they may be more vulnerable to certain hazards.
3. Identify what the likelihood of harm may be.
4. Identify the consequences of injury or harm: the consequences could range from trivial to severe or even fatal. The most severe hazards need the most urgent attention.
5. Identify the controls that need to be put in place to limit the hazard.

These steps should be used to complete a risk assessment form (See sample risk assessment form, Appendix 3).

Review

Risks should be periodically reviewed, especially in circumstances when a venue changes or a new activity takes place.

Following completion of the risk assessment, the organisers will develop a safeguarding statement in line with Children First requirements.

Safeguarding Statement

As defined in the Children First Act 2015, means 'a written statement specifying the service being provided and the principles and procedures to be observed to ensure as far as practicable, that a

child, while availing of the service, is safe from harm'. It also includes an assessment of risk of 'harm' to a child while availing of your service and specifies the procedures in place to manage any identified risks.

The Alateen Group will develop the Safeguarding Statement using the template provide by Tusla (Guidance on Developing a Safeguarding Statement, www.tusla.ie) following completion of the risk assessment.

On completion of the statement, it will be circulated to all ASGSs. The Statement will be displayed publicly during the Alateen meetings and will be made available for the legal guardian/s, Tusla and members of the public upon request.

Recruitment Procedure

When a member wishes to become an ASGS, they contact GSO who will provides them with a copy of this document, an application form and a Vetting Invitation Form (NVB-1). The member completes the application and invitation form and returns them to GSO.

Safe recruitment and selection procedures help to:

- Identify those most suitable to fill a position.
- Screen out those unsuitable to work with children.

These procedures apply to new applicants for ASGSs.

Safe recruitment procedures involve:

Recruitment checklist	Appendix 1
Application Form/CV	Details of any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings which would not be filtered in line with current guidance.
References: Names and addresses of two-character referees unrelated to the applicant, both of whom must have known the applicant for at least three years and at least one of whom should be from outside Al-Anon.	If the application form is in order, GSO takes up the references. When satisfactory references are received, GSO then writes to the applicant and sends the Area Alateen Co-ordinator the Interview Sheet together with a list of documents required for identification purposes.
Announcements about the applicant's wish to become an ASGS must be made at both the applicant's home Group and at the next possible Area Assembly. The applicant must be present for both announcements. The announcements should be made by the Area Alateen Co-ordinator but if for any reason this is not possible, then the Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator.	These announcements should include the requirements for becoming an Alateen Group Sponsor: • at least 21 years old. • a minimum of 3 years' frequent attendance at Al-Anon meetings. • An Al-Anon member who is not a member of AA. • This is followed by a request that if anyone has information about why the candidate should not become an ASGSs, in safeguarding terms only they should within 28 days of the announcement, either write to the General Secretary at Family Groups Ltd, 57B Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BB,

	or email generalsecretary@al-anonuk.org.uk setting out their reasons and giving their name and address. No anonymous allegations will be considered. If GSO receives any allegations, they will inform the applicant. A note of the dates when the announcements were made must be included on the Interview Sheet.
An interview, with the inclusion of questions of a safeguarding/child protection nature.	The Area Alateen Co-ordinator makes the arrangements with the Regional Trustee and applicant to attend the interview. The Regional Trustee conducts the interview in conjunction with the Area Alateen Co-ordinator. The interview should follow the suggested format and be based on the Interview Sheet supplied by GSO. The interviewers should ensure that they are satisfied with the I.D. furnished by the applicant at the interview. After the interview has been satisfactorily completed, the interviewers sign the completed Interview Sheet and returns to GSO. If the Area Alateen Co-ordinator is unable to attend the interview the Alternate Area Alateen Co-ordinator may deputise. Should the candidate be rejected at the interview, the interviewers' reasons must be given on the Interview Sheet.
Positive identification check in compliance with requirements of National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons Act), 2012-2016	Contact the Garda Vetting Liaison Person at GSO who will make the application for Garda Vetting. Two forms of I.D. are required, one of photo I.D., i.e., passport/driving license and verification of current address.
Garda Vetting: See guidance below	Sample forms are not reproduced in this document as the form is completed online. Contact the Garda Vetting Liaison Person at GSO
NOTE: Please remember that Garda Vetting disclosures and other information received through a recruitment process is personal sensitive data. It should be gathered and stored in a manner that is compliant with data protection law.	

Screening Procedure for Applicants

This is a summary of the process. Please see the Practices & Procedures for full details.

Applicant phones GSO and is provided with →

Al-Anon's Safeguarding Children Policy Eire and an Application form

Applicant completes application form and returns it to GSO →

GSO takes up references.

If references are ok →

GSO writes to the applicant and sends a NVB-1 form
GSO sends the Alateen Co-ordinator an Interview and Screening Form

If the applicant has stated that they have a criminal conviction that is not spent →

GSO writes to the applicant with an explanation of Al-Anon's Decision Panel on Ex-offenders

WHEN THE APPLICANT HAS BEEN TOLD THAT THE REFERENCES ARE OK AND THE ALATEEN CO-ORDINATOR HAS THE INTERVIEW SHEET:

Alateen Co-ordinator or Alt Alateen Co-ordinator makes announcements with the applicant present



GROUP
ANNOUNCEMENT



AREA
ANNOUNCEMENT

The applicant is interviewed by the Regional Trustee with the Area Alateen Co-ordinator. If no objections are received by GSO within 28 days of the announcements the applicant's details are submitted to the vetting portal by the Vetting Liaison Person at GSO.



REGIONAL TRUSTEE AND AREA ALATEEN CO-ORDINATOR: Completes the Interview and Screening form, follows the interview procedure as detailed in the Interview Sheet. After the interview, if the applicant is successful, the Regional Trustee signs the Interview Sheet and NVB-1 and returns to GSO.



APPLICANT: successful applicant receives email from Dublin City Volunteer Centre with a link to the online Garda Vetting form. The applicant has 30 days to complete the form before the link expires. When check is complete, GSO will receive the disclosure.



GSO: If there are no disclosures received at GSO from Dublin City Volunteer Centre, the applicant's name is entered on The Register of Screened Group Sponsors. The General Secretary will then write to the applicant, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator, the Area Delegate and the Regional Trustee informing them that the applicant has been added to the Register of Screened Group Sponsors. On receipt of the letter from GSO the applicant officially becomes an ASGS.

Garda Vetting

In the Republic of Ireland, the National Vetting Bureau Act (2012-2016) provides a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out work with children and vulnerable adults. It is a criminal offence to allow anyone to engage in relevant work or activities with children or vulnerable persons, without first having them vetted.

The National Vetting Bureau (An Garda Síochána) issues vetting disclosures to organisations employing people who work in a full-time, part-time, voluntary or student placement basis with children and/or vulnerable persons. The National Vetting Bureau does not decide on the suitability of any person to work with children and vulnerable persons. Rather, in response to a written request for vetting, the National Vetting Bureau releases criminal history and other specified information on the person to be vetted to the prospective recruiting organisation.

When an Alateen Group is being set up, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator should in the first instance contact GSO for guidance, to ensure that appropriate Garda vetting procedures are fully adhered to.

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire will treat all applicants fairly and not discriminate against those who disclose cautions, warnings, reprimands or convictions. We will take into consideration the relevance, seriousness and length of time since the offence took place, whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour and whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence took place.

Although Garda vetting is crucial, it is only one of a range of recruitment procedures. The remainder of the recruitment tasks in the table above will allow GSO to systematically consider what is to be known about the applicant. GSO must be alert to times when an applicant was out of Ireland for a sustained period of time e.g., a year or more. Police checks may be required from other countries.

Garda Vetting Process

The applicant is given a Vetting Invitation Form (NVB1) to complete and return to the Vetting Liaison Person at GSO together with the required ID and current address verification documents. Once the details from the applicant are submitted to the Vetting portal by the Vetting Liaison Person at GSO the applicant will complete the process electronically (the applicant has one hour to complete, once the link is opened). If there are no disclosures received at GSO from Dublin City Volunteer Centre, the applicant's name is entered on The Register of Screened Group Sponsors. The General Secretary will then write to the applicant, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator, the Area Delegate and the Regional Trustee informing them that the applicant has been added to the Register of Screened Group Sponsors. On receipt of the letter from GSO the applicant officially becomes an ASGS. All documents pertaining to the application and vetting process will be stored according to the GDPR regulations and only those who need to will have access to the documents.

Annual Registration checks for existing Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsors

Each year every ASGS will receive a Screened Group Sponsor Record Check form, which must be completed by each ASGS and returned to GSO.

On receiving the Alateen Screened Group Sponsor Record Check Form, GSO will write to every ASGS confirming that they are included on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors for that year.

This letter is the Confirmation Letter that each ASGS uses as proof that they are on the current Register of Alateen Group Sponsors held at GSO. The Screened Group Sponsor Record Check form is in addition to the Alateen Group Record Check form and should not be confused with it.

If the Alateen Screened Group Sponsor Record Check form is not returned, the Alateen Group Sponsor's name will be removed from the Register and they can no longer Sponsor an Alateen Group. Notification of this will be sent to the ASGS, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator and the Regional Trustee.

ASGSs at each Alateen meeting are required to maintain an attendance book (hardbacked book, pages numbered) of all attendees, including ASGSs. Medical details, any individual special needs and emergency contact telephone/s of Alateen members are also recorded. The attendance book will be kept by a nominated ASGS who will make it available at each meeting. The book must be returned to GSO with the Alateen Group's Annual Record Check form each year.

Codes of Conduct

If an ASGS is unable to attend the annual Area training session then they are required to attend a training session in another Area (provision for this must be contained in the Area Plan and they must provide proof of attendance). If they fail to attend an annual training session, they may be removed from the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire implement effective practice on the expected standards of adults' behaviour towards children. We implement effective practice in encouraging children's positive behaviour.

It is important for all personnel to:

- Treat all children with respect and dignity
- Treat all children equally
- Model positive, appropriate behaviour to all children we come into contact with
- Be aware of the Al-Anon's Safeguarding Policies and supporting documents
- Challenge and report abusive and potentially abusive behaviour
- Develop a culture of openness, honesty and safety
- Develop a culture where children have permission to tell and to talk about any concerns or worries that they may have
- Respect each child's boundaries and support them to develop their own understanding and sense of their rights
- Be aware of their responsibility for the safety of all children in their care
- Work in open environments
- Help children to know what they can do if they have a problem

Adults must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse children
- Develop relationships with children that could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Act in any way that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Do things for a child of a personal nature that they can do themselves
- Condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Act in any way that is intended to intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation or political views
- Consume alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs while having responsibility for, or in the presence of children
- Develop sexual relationships with children

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Take children away or to your own home, especially where they will be alone with you
- Involve children in one-to-one contact; activities should usually be supervised by at least two adults. However, there may be two circumstances where one-to-one contact may occur:
 - In a reactive situation, for example when a child requests a one-to-one meeting with you without warning, or
 - where a child has had to be removed from an Alateen Group as part of a code of behaviour.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If an ASGS has a concern about the practice of a colleague which may constitute a breach of the “Code of Conduct”, this should be reported to the DLP or Area Alateen Co-ordinator. This would be the case, for example, if the concern related to poor practice rather than abusive behaviour. Abusive behaviour would be reported using the procedure for responding to allegations of abuse.

Behaviours by an Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor that may cause concern include when a Sponsor:

- Is secretive and evasive about their activities and time spent with children
- Creates opportunities to spend significant amounts of time away from other Sponsors and with a single child or children on a regular basis, e.g., invites child to their home
- Seeks out vulnerable children
- Has an unusual amount of physical contact with a child
- Touches a child or children in an inappropriate way
- Talks to a child or children in an inappropriate way
- Excludes a particular child or children from activities
- Disciplines a child or children inappropriately or punishes a child or children harshly
- Handles children roughly
- Teases, taunts, insults or makes derogatory remarks about or to a child
- Restrains a child as a way of punishment
- Sexually harasses or uses sexual innuendo
- Humiliates and/or embarrasses children
- Deprives children of their basic rights
- Inappropriately uses social media

- Bullies children

General Complaints Procedure:

For safeguarding concerns that are not allegations of abuse

A complaint is defined as a grievance and/or the raising of a concern about breaches of codes of conduct. Allegations or suspicions of child abuse do not fall into this category of general complaints and should always be dealt with in accordance with the procedures for allegations of abuse. This complaints procedure is not for use by personnel who would use the protected disclosure procedure to raise their complaint.

All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and confidentially. Efforts will be made to quickly and informally resolve complaints through discussion with the legal guardian/s, children and ASGSs as appropriate.

A copy of a complaints form is available (Appendix 6).

If a legal guardian/s, child is not satisfied with any aspect of the running of a particular activity, or the behaviour of any individual involved in that activity, the following steps should be taken:

First step

All complaints of this nature should be resolved using an open dialogue with the personnel involved. If resolution is not possible, the following step should be taken.

Second step

1. The Area Alateen Co-ordinator should be contacted by completing a complaints form. They have eight weeks to consider the complaint.
2. A letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint will be sent within seven calendar days, enclosing a copy of the Complaints Procedure.
3. All complaints will be thoroughly investigated.
4. The Area Alateen Co-ordinator may organise a meeting to discuss and hopefully resolve the complaint. This communication may also take place by telephone if a meeting is not possible. Unless exceptional circumstances, this will be done within fourteen calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to the complainant.
5. Within seven days of the meeting or discussion, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator will write to the complainant to confirm what took place and to set out any solutions that were agreed upon.
6. If a meeting is not agreeable or possible, the Area Alateen Co-ordinator will issue a detailed written reply to the complainant, setting out their suggestions for resolving the matter within twenty-one calendar days of sending the acknowledgement letter to them.
7. If the complainant is still not satisfied at this point, they should contact GSO or the Area Alateen Co-ordinator again.

GSO will review the complaint, if they consider it a breach of conduct, they may give a warning to the person the complaint was made against and request them to adhere to the policy and code of conduct. GSO may consider the possibility of support and supervision for the ASGS.

If there are further complaints or the initial complaint is of a serious nature GSO may remove the ASGS from the Alateen Sponsors Register held at GSO.

At the conclusion of this step, The General Secretary may decide to take further action on the complaint. If, however, no further action is taken, the process is complete.

Protected Disclosure Procedure

All AI-Anon and Alateen members and volunteers must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of their Area Alateen Co-ordinator and/or GSO.

Although this can be difficult to do, it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk. If you have a concern, do not let the fear of getting it wrong become a barrier to speaking to the appropriate person e.g., Area Alateen Co-ordinator/DLP/GSO. It is the responsibility of the person you report to, to inquire further and assess if there are grounds for action.

You may be the first to recognise a concern, but you may be unsure about whether and how to express your concerns. Listed below are some issues which stop people from making a disclosure. GSO recognise that such things as feeling disloyal to colleagues, or being fearful of harassment, are real concerns and GSO will ensure that you feel supported to make a disclosure. It is imperative that you come forward as the safeguarding and welfare of children is our priority. Remember, it is often the most vulnerable children who are targeted. These children need an advocate to safeguard their welfare.

Reasons for making a disclosure

Each individual has a responsibility to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour;

- to prevent the problem worsening or widening
- to protect or reduce risks to others
- to prevent yourself from becoming implicated

What stops people from making a disclosure

- fear of starting a chain of events that spirals out of control
- disrupting the work or project
- fear of getting it wrong
- fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern

ASGSs may want to make a disclosure about a range of concerns, not just child safeguarding.

It is important to:

- Voice any concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as possible. The earlier a concern is expressed the sooner and easier action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning and why.
- Approach your Area Alateen Co-ordinator.

If your concern is about your Area Alateen Co-ordinator, please contact your DLP or the General Secretary at GSO. Make sure a satisfactory response is secured – don't let matters rest. Ideally, concerns should be placed in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates, locations and any other relevant information. You are not expected to prove the truth of your complaint, but you need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for concern.

What happens next?

You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries resulting from your concern. Your Area Alateen Co-ordinator has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation. No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith. Malicious allegations will be considered a disciplinary offence. Follow up if the person to whom you reported has not responded within a reasonable period of time, and if that follow up is not acted upon, report the matter to the relevant statutory authorities.

Self-reporting

There may be occasions when an ASGS has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their competence to sponsor an Alateen Group. ASGSs have a duty of care to bring the matter to the attention of their Area Alateen Co-ordinator so that support can be offered to the person concerned. Whilst reporting will remain confidential, in most instances this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Safe Management of Activities

The following outline the issues that should be considered when planning and running activities to minimise opportunities for accidents or harm to children while in the group.

Keeping a register of Children

- Criteria for membership of the Alateen Group
- Registration/Consent for each child (Appendix 4)
- Record on each child including address and family contact numbers
- Keep medical details, any individual needs and emergency contact details accessible

Up-to-date records on the following:

- Attendance
- Consent Forms
- Accidents/incidents (accident records should be reviewed regularly and any unusual patterns reported to the Area Alateen Co-ordinator)
- Any complaints or grievances

Health & Safety Responsibilities

Alateen Groups should ensure that:

- any buildings being used are safe and meet required standards
- there is sufficient heating and ventilation
- toilets are to standard and meet the accessibility requirements of all members
- fire precautions are in place
- there is access to a phone
- equipment is checked regularly
- insurance cover is adequate

Consent Forms

To attend an Alateen meeting, an Alateen Consent Form (Appendix 4) must be completed and signed by the child and legal guardian. The legal guardian accompanies the child to their first meeting to give permission to attend. The permission is given before the meeting starts and only needs to be given once. The legal guardian does not stay at the meeting.

If attending an in-person Group, the form is given to the ASGS who will add their own name and the Group name to complete the form. If the child plans to attend other Alateen meetings the Group names can be included on the form. The form will then be passed on to the Area Alateen Co-ordinator. The Area Alateen Co-ordinator will forward the relevant information contained on the form to all the Groups the child plans to attend. The Area Alateen Co-ordinator will return the form to GSO with the Alateen Group's Annual Record Check form each year.

If attending an online Group, the child and legal guardian completes the form including the Alateen Group details and the name of the ASGS. If the child plans to attend other Alateen meetings the Group names can be included on the form. The legal guardian then sends the completed form to the General Service Office. GSO will provide the relevant information contained on the form to the Area Co-ordinators via the intranet to forward to all the Groups the child plans to attend.

Recording of Accidents and Incidents

An incident (other than a safeguarding incident) does not usually involve any casualty or the loss of life, while an accident will involve some form of injury.

There should be appropriate recording mechanisms in place to detail any accidents/incidents which may occur (Appendix 5). Incidents should be recorded separately from accidents as they may need to be referred to when considering suspected child abuse or neglect.

Safe supervision of children

Children are less likely to experience an accident/incident if they are supervised properly. Activities should be organised to maximise participation and fun in a way that minimises risk.

Ensure that:

- a work schedule is displayed so that everyone knows who is volunteering in an activity
- children are not left unattended
- adequate numbers of ASGSs are available to supervise the Alateen Group (best practise would indicate that there is a gender balance ASGSs present)
- volunteers know at all times where the children/ are and what they are doing
- dangerous behaviour is never allowed

Sharing safeguarding practices and procedures

Legal guardians should be made aware of the safeguarding practices and procedures on initial contact with the group.

When communicating with legal guardian/s, families and children you should be mindful of possible literacy issues, language barriers and communication differences.

To create a safer environment for children Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire will promote a practice culture amongst the ASGSs which enables and supports children to exercise their rights to speak out when they feel they are suffering harm or are at risk of suffering harm. When children feel included in decision making, respected and valued by ASGSs, they are much more likely to speak up about any abuse they might be experiencing.

Enabling and promoting the participation of children within your group has many benefits;

- providing you with the opportunity to check that what you are doing is actually what they want
- demonstrating your commitment to upholding the rights of children
- strengthening your commitment to safeguarding children within the Alateen Group
- building leadership skills of children
- enhancing the safety of children by identifying risks and danger

Anti-bullying policy

Part of empowering children is making sure that they are protected from bullying behaviour while attending the Alateen Group.

“Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it is verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environment’s such as schools. It includes behaviour such as physical aggression, cyberbullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion. Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.”

Children First: National Guidance for the protection and Welfare of Children

The Alateen Group in consultation with children should develop an anti-bullying policy.

Appendix 1 Recruitment of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors Checklist

<u>Contact with children</u>	Is the applicant aware that the position involves unsupervised contact with children which may include in-person, online, email, telephone?	
<u>Defining the role</u>	Have the tasks and skills necessary for the position been considered? Does the task description make reference to working with and having responsibility for children?	
<u>Key selection criteria</u>	Has a list of essential and desirable skills and experience been developed?	
<u>Written application</u>	Have all applicants been asked to supply information in writing, including personal details, past and current work/volunteering experience?	
<u>Interview</u>	Have at least two representatives been identified to meet with the applicant to explore information contained in their application? Has the applicant and application forms been carefully considered, highlighting points to raise at interview, including the applicant's attitudes towards working with children? Explore additional areas in more detail if deemed appropriate.	
<u>Declaration</u>	Has the successful applicant been asked to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they would be considered unsuitable to work with children? Has the successful applicant been asked to declare any past criminal convictions and cases pending against them?	
<u>Identification</u>	Have applicants been asked, where necessary, for photographic documentation to confirm their identity and place of residence? Will documentation relating to the applicant's identity and relevant qualifications be checked at the interview?	
<u>Vetting procedure</u>	Has the applicant been informed that they need to undergo screening/garda vetting before they take up the appointment? Does this applicant require a certificate of police clearance from other countries in which they have worked/volunteered?	
<u>Records</u>	Are details of the selection/induction process retained in the file of the successful applicant? Are references kept on file as part of the record of the recruitment process? Are applicants informed that information such as application and declaration forms are held on file?	
<u>Confidentiality</u>	Is information about the applicant only seen by those directly involved in the recruitment process? Are applicants reassured that information about them, including information about convictions, will be treated in confidence and not used against them unlawfully?	
<u>References</u>	Are applicants asked to supply the names of two referees who are not family members, or who are not involved in the	

	recruitment process, and ideally who have first-hand knowledge of the applicant's experience of work/contact with children? Are referees asked specifically to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children? Are all references provided in writing and verified by a follow-up telephone call?	
<u>Suggested questions for referees</u>	The post involves substantial access to children. Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Éire are committed to the welfare and safeguarding of children. Have you any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children? How long have you known this person? In what capacity? Would you have any hesitation in them taking up this position?	

Appendix 2 Agreement Form for Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsors

Declaration

As part of the recruitment process for the post of Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor,

I confirm that I:

- Am aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures
- Have been given an opportunity to have any questions addressed by the Area Alateen Co-ordinator or Regional Trustee
- Have read and understand the policies and procedures document
- Will abide by the requirements of the child safeguarding policy and procedures
- Will attend annual ASGS training which will include safeguarding information

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 Risk (Hazard) Assessment Form

Name of Alateen Group _____

Date of risk assessment _____

Person completing the risk assessment _____

Risk	Who is at risk?	Likelihood of harm	Consequences	Controls needed

Name: _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 4 Consent/Registration Form for Alateen Group/s

Alateen Group details:

Name of Alateen Group/s: _____

Name of Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor (ASGS): _____

Details of the child (to be completed by the legal guardian)

Name of child: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Date of birth _____

Gender (circle as appropriate) **Male** **Female** **Other**

Child's email/telephone number (for emergency use only) _____

Other relevant information

(Please mention any medical conditions, special needs or dietary requirements).

Please note that the ASGSs cannot administer any medication. Should your child require medication or intimate care, please discuss this with the ASGSs who will work with you to establish how your child can be accommodated, according to relevant policies and procedures.

Legal guardian/s contact details

Name: _____

Mobile No: _____

Home phone: _____

Email: _____

In cases of a medical emergency

In the event of illness or an accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered to my child, where considered necessary, by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible. In an emergency I can be contacted at the telephone numbers provided.

Name: _____

Signed _____

Child's Consent Form (to be completed by the legal guardian and child)

I _____ (insert full name) would like to take part in the Alateen Group listed on the previous page.

☐ I understand that during Alateen Group activities I will be appropriately supervised at all times.

Legal guardian's consent

I agree to allow the above-named child to attend this activity (which may include online/electronic activities) in accordance with the permission granted by _____ (insert name of child).

I understand that there will be suitable supervision while children are in the care of the Alateen Group/s.

I understand and agree that once the above named child leaves the Alateen meeting the ASGSs have no further duty of care to the child. I accept and agree that I am responsible for the child.

Signed: _____

(legal guardian/s)

Name (block letters): _____

Relationship to child: _____

Signed: _____ (Child)

Please return the completed form to the Alateen Screened Group Sponsor (if attending in-person) or the General Service Office by email alateen@al-anonuk.org.uk or post to 57b Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BB (if attending online).

Appendix 5 Accident/Incident Form

Group details

Name of Alateen Group: _____

Name of Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor: _____

Names of others present: _____

Accident/incident details

Date and time of accident/incident: _____

Name of person involved: _____

Date of birth of person involved: _____

Emergency contact details for the person involved (usually legal guardian/s)

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Please describe the accident/incident that occurred (continue on separate sheet if necessary).

Action taken during and following the accident/incident

People contacted (include dates and times):

If medical attention was required, please note the name and address of the medical facility and the people who treated the person involved in the accident/incident:

Please detail any follow-up action required:

Name of person completing this form (print name): _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 6 Complaints Form

If a complaint (with the exception of complaints about child abuse) arises during an activity an attempt should be made to resolve this by discussion between the parties involved. If this is not possible, this form should be completed and sent to the Area Alateen Co-ordinator.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

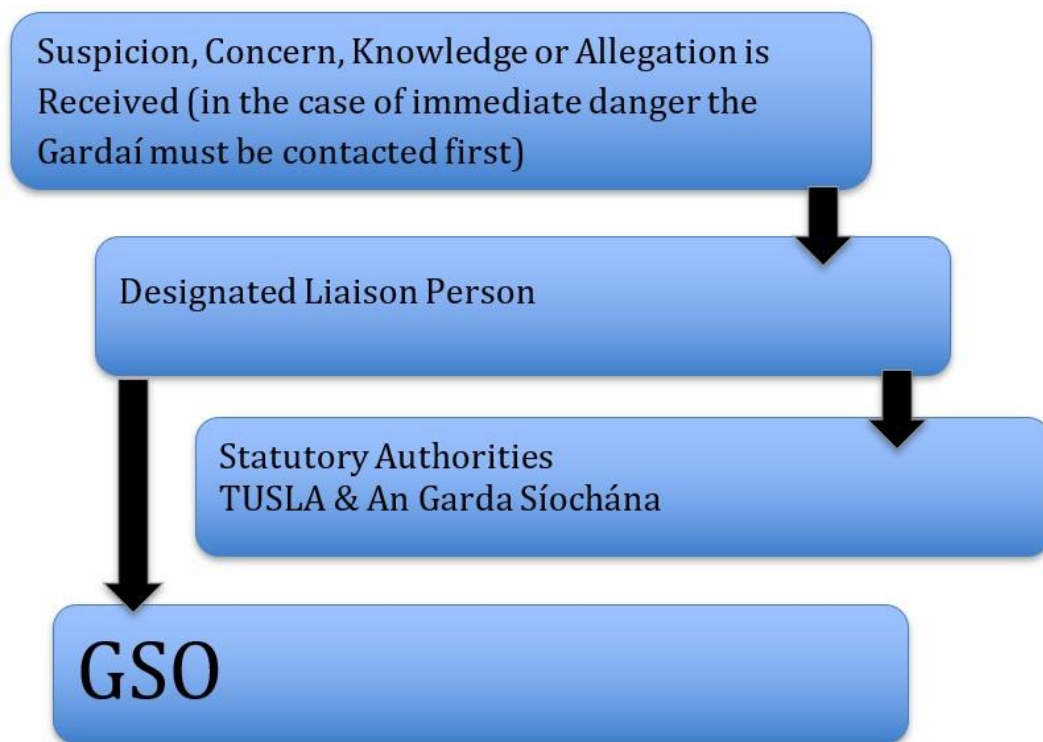
Telephone number: _____

Details of complaint (continue on separate sheet if necessary):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 7: Reporting Flow Chart



Contact Designated Liaison Person/Deputy Designated Liaison Person, appointed by the Board of Al-Anon Family Groups CLG at alateendlp@gmail.com.

Appendix 8 Tusla Reporting

Please see www.tusla.ie for information on reporting concerns about children. The Child Protection and Welfare Report Form is to be completed and submitted to Tusla for concerns about children

https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Child_Protection_and_Welfare_Report_Form_FINAL.pdf

Appendix 9 Alateen Group Self-Audit Form

This self-audit will be completed at the end of each year by the Alateen Screened/Vetted Group Sponsor and forwarded to the Area Alateen Co-ordinator.

Alateen Group's Self- Audit of Safeguarding Practices

Year: _____

Alateen Group:
ASGSs:
Area Alateen Co-ordinator:
Designated Liaison Person:
Deputy Designated Liaison Person:

A. Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle	Fully in place (working well)	Requires work (not working well)	Actions Required
Policies and procedures in place			
Policies and procedures available to ASGS, Alateen members, legal guardian/s			
Safeguarding Statement in place and available			

Comments/Remarks:

B. Safe Environments

Guiding Principle	Fully in place (working well)	Requires work (not working well)	Actions Required
Recruitment & Selection procedure in place and implemented with regard to ASGS			
Training has been provided based on training needs analysis. All ASGS have attended appropriate training			
Consent/Registration form has been received for all Alateen Group Members			
An Accident/Incident procedure is in place and is being followed			
Code of conduct for ASGS is in place and is being followed			
Supervision ratios are being adhered to			
Reporting responsibilities are known by all ASGS, and Alateen Group members			
Complaints and Disciplinary procedures are in place			

Comments/Remarks:

C. Reporting Procedures

Guiding Principle	Fully in place (working well)	Requires work (not working well)	Actions Required
Guidance on reporting procedures are available			
All ASGS, Alateen Group members are aware of the reporting procedure and who the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person are			

Comments/Remarks:

Are there any areas that need attention in the coming year?

Additional Information/Comments:

signature _____ Date: _____
ASGS (on behalf of all ASGSs who completed this form)

signature: _____ Date: _____
Area Alateen Co-ordinator/Alternate