

IWA Responding to Historical Abuse Policy - Summary Guide



Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) takes any concern of possible historical abuse that may have happened in the Association very seriously. This Summary Guide outlines the key principles that we are committed to upholding and the steps that may be taken if we receive a concern of possible historical abuse.

When referring to historical abuse we are referring to the main categories including sexual, physical, psychological, neglect, discriminatory and institutional abuse. Historical abuse concerns consist of harmful conduct by a person who is or was working for or on behalf of IWA in a paid or voluntary capacity or who is or may have been availing of a service or activity provided by IWA.

Our Commitment

We are committed to the following principles and values when responding to historical abuse concerns in IWA.

- We are prepared to apologise for any hurt that may have been caused.
- Accountability to the relevant statutory authorities and ensuring that there is no cover up.
- Each Survivor is treated as an individual.
- Empowerment of each Survivor so that they can make decisions that are in their best interest.
- Create an environment where each Survivor feels that they are heard and that their concerns are taken seriously.
- Support each Survivor to decide the direction that a process might take.
- The highest level of confidentiality is maintained.
- A fair process that upholds the rights of all persons who may be affected.
- Appropriate actions are taken avoiding any unnecessary delays.

Our Response

- The CEO and National Safeguarding Officer (NSO) will lead the process for responding to any concern of historical abuse in IWA.
- The welfare of each Survivor is a primary focus.
- Each Survivor will be supported to share their information with us in a manner that is sensitive to their circumstances.
- A lead person will be assigned to be the main contact with the Survivor throughout the process. This person will be agreed with the Survivor to ensure that they are satisfied with this approach.
- We will liaise with specialised services that may be required to ensure that our response is appropriate.
- We will ensure that any person who is accused of an alleged abuse is treated fairly and that their rights are upheld throughout the process.
- We will consult with An Garda Síochána if we know or have a suspicion that a crime has been committed.
- We will take any protective actions that may be required depending on the circumstances.
- We will follow the procedures as set out in the IWA Responding to Historical Abuse Policy to ensure that all aspects of the process are fully completed.

IWA is committed to implementing a restorative approach.

Getting Help

Please contact the IWA National Safeguarding Officer to raise any concerns of Historical Abuse in IWA. Daragh Kennedy can be contacted on daragh.kennedy@iwa.ie or call 087 997 5444.

We are committed to supporting anyone who may have been impacted by childhood sexual abuse in their life. We can support a person to seek professional advice and support by partnering with the relevant agencies that provide help and specialised services.

For convenience there are some contact numbers available below.

One in Four - <https://www.oneinfour.ie/why-one-in-four> Tel: 01 662 4070

HSE National Counselling Service - <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling-service/childhood-abuse--for-adults.html>