



# Protection of Minors & VOs

...our duty  
to keep  
them Safe!

## The Law

- The Protection of Minors Act was passed in the Maltese Parliament on the 20th January, 2012
- Scope - To provide for the registration of sexual offenders and other offenders who commit offences of serious violence.
- Employers and those responsible for religious or voluntary organisations are legally obliged to verify with the register whether or not a person they wish to engage (even on a voluntary basis) is on the register.
- If an organisation engages a listed individual, the organisation and the person responsible for engaging the individual will be deemed to be guilty of a criminal offence.
- It is also a criminal offence should an official within an organisation be aware that one of his or her employees/volunteers has committed a crime and fails to file a police report.
- These offences are punishable by a jail term between three months and four years and/or a fine of €2,500 to €50,000.

### Important Contacts

Police: 112

Appoġġ: 179

Commissioner for Children: 2148 5180

Commissioner for VOs: 2268 7266

Malta Council for the

Voluntary Sector: 2248 1110

## Protection of Minors and VOs

Voluntary Organisations (VOs) and service providers both play an important role in delivering services to children. Employees and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/minors. They should have response mechanisms with regards to child/minor protection concerns and they should be able to tap into referral mechanisms to the appropriate authority when and if necessary.

VOs should have in place frameworks (procedures/codes of practice) that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and minors in their daily activities, which include:

- A clear system of accountability whilst recruiting volunteers and during the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children/minors.
- A culture of listening to children and taking into account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services.
- Clear whistle blowing procedures which are suitably referenced in staff/volunteer training and codes of conduct, supporting a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/minors to be addressed.
- Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other authorities namely the Malta Police, Aġenzija Appoġġ, the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations..

**“Appropriate supervision and support for staff/volunteers, including undertaking safeguarding training from children/minors.”**

- Safe recruitment practices for the VO to recruit individuals to work regularly with children, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record check.
- Employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
- Staff/volunteers should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child/minors protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
- Clear policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:
  - behaved in a way that has harmed a child/minor, or may have harmed a child/minor;
  - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/minor; or
  - behaved towards a child/minor or children/minors in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.