

# YSS Safeguarding Policies

## 2025/26

These Safeguarding policies are written to inform and support good practice. All YSS Staff and Volunteers are expected to comply with them. They are updated on an annual basis.

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## **YSS Safeguarding Statement**

YSS is committed to ensuring that children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with YSS staff and volunteers are treated with respect, and are free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment. We are also committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities, and have the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and maintain the welfare and safety of those with whom they come into contact ensuring multiagency approach to all safeguarding arrangements. Our Trustees recognise their responsibility for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, YSS, are not harmed in any way through contact with it.

YSS have comprehensive safeguarding policies which are reviewed annually.

The designated member of staff responsible for safeguarding is -

Lia Palios-Hayden, Director of Operations – [lia.palios-hayden@yss.org.uk](mailto:lia.palios-hayden@yss.org.uk)

### Deputy DSLs

Eleanor Nugent, Service Manager – [eleanor.nugent@yss.org.uk](mailto:eleanor.nugent@yss.org.uk)

Laura Fullelove, Team Manager – [laura.fullelove@yss.org.uk](mailto:laura.fullelove@yss.org.uk)

## **SAFEGUARDING CONTACT DETAILS**

### **CHILDREN:**

<b>YSS Child Protection Coordinator</b>	Lia Palios-Hayden, Director of Operations	07704 170855
<b>YSS Senior Management Team Safeguarding Lead</b>	Lia Palios-Hayden, Director of Operations	07704 170855



## **HEREFORDSHIRE**

Working hours **01432260800**

Out of hours **01905 768020**

Website: <https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk>

## **SHROPSHIRE**

Working hours **0345 6789021**

Out of hours **0345 6789040**

Website: <https://www.shropshiresafeguardingcommunitypartnership.co.uk/>

## **TELFORD**

Working hours **01952 385385**

Out of hours **01952 676500**

Website <https://www.telfordsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/site/index.php>

## **WORCESTERSHIRE**

Working hours **01905 822 666**

Out of hours **01905 768020**

Website <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/childrens-social-care/refer-childrens-social-care>

NSPCC Helpline number: **0808 800 5000**

**All local authorities with responsibilities for safeguarding children have signed up to the West Midlands Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures**

<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>



**ADULTS:**

**Lead Trustee for Safeguarding**

Susanna McFarlane [Susanna.McFarlane@yss.org.uk](mailto:Susanna.McFarlane@yss.org.uk)

**YSS Adult Protection Coordinator** Lia Palios-Hayden, Operations Manager, 07704 170855

**Adult Safeguarding Senior Management Team Lead** Lia Palios-Hayden, Operations Manager, 07704 170855

**HEREFORDSHIRE**

Working hours **01432 260715**

Out of hours **0330 1239309**

Website <https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/report-a-concern-about-adult-abuse/>

**SHROPSHIRE**

Working hours **0345 678 9021**

Out of hours **0345 678 9040**

Website: <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/concerned-about-someone/>

**TELFORD**

Tel: 01952 385385

Website

[https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20086/adult\\_social\\_care/3682/adult\\_safeguarding/2](https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20086/adult_social_care/3682/adult_safeguarding/2)

**WORCESTERSHIRE**

Tel: **01905 768053**

Website <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/wsab>

**All local authorities with responsibilities for safeguarding adults have signed up to the West Midlands Adult Safeguarding Policy and procedures**



### Senior Management Team Contact Details

Managing Director	Debb Grantham	<b>07989 304695</b>
Resources Director	Stuart McCulloch	<b>07719 964588</b>
Director of Operations <b>07704170855</b>	Lia	Palios-Hayden

In the absence of the Senior Lead for safeguarding through annual leave/sickness, another member of the Senior Management Team will be identified to act as senior safeguarding lead and all staff will be notified.



## Safeguarding Policy

### (Children and Adults)

**Date of Statement: 1 October 2006**

**Date of last review: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Date for next review: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

Related Policies: Child Protection, Safeguarding Adults at risk, Health and Safety, Recruitment and Selection, Staff Code of Conduct, Help Us Get it Right, EDI, Staff Discipline and Whistle Blowing, Allegations against staff and volunteers, Prevent policies (children and adults)

YSS is committed to the welfare and safety of all children, young people and adults it comes into contact with. YSS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all those people it works with are kept safe from all forms of harm or abuse. We will promote good practice and manage services in a way which promotes safety and reduces the risk of harm or abuse occurring. We will ensure that any allegations, disclosures of abuse or suspicions are dealt with appropriately and the child or adult at risk is supported.

YSS will ensure that:

- All trustees, staff, volunteers and service users are familiar with this policy.
- We will work with other agencies within the Safeguarding Framework for both children and adults.
- We will work within our confidentiality policy and will usually gain permission from service users before sharing information about them with another agency (unless it is the referring agency), unless we are required by law to share it, or, unless the service user will come to harm if we do not share it.
- All staff and volunteers are suitable to undertake work with children, young people and adults and that all reasonable steps are taken not to appoint someone who is disqualified from working with one of the above groups. (see Recruitment and Selection Policy) This will be done by the securing of two references and enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service checks which will be renewed every three years as a minimum. YSS Staff are required to join the DBS Update Service where we undertake an annual check.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of the relevant policies relating to all aspects of safety, through initial induction and on-going relevant training.

- All staff and volunteers should have appropriate training in relation to safeguarding both children and adults as defined by the local safeguarding boards.
- All staff and volunteers are aware of their obligations to report concerns of safety or inappropriate behaviour and the process they should follow in the event of a concern.
- All staff and volunteers are aware that they are expected to show understanding and respect and that they will adhere to the code of conduct at all times.
- All staff and volunteers have the appropriate levels of support and supervision.
- Trustees and senior management will receive regular safeguarding reports to ensure effective management of services.

The organisation responds appropriately to any changes of legislation.

## **YSS Procedure for children at possible risk of abuse**

These procedures are designed to support all staff and volunteers to recognise and respond to the safeguarding needs of children. These procedures are based on the West Midlands regional safeguarding procedures.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 changed the legislation so that Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) would move towards new safeguarding partnership arrangements. Responsibility for children's strategic safeguarding arrangements now lie jointly and equally with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Police and the Local Authority. Although there have been changes to the governance for Safeguarding children the procedures for reporting significant harm to children and young people remain the same.

This procedure applies to any paid member of staff, volunteer or Trustee, who may be concerned about the safety and protection of a child. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child has been abused or when there is a suspicion that a child has been abused. Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the child. If the complainant is the child, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for any subsequent investigation and or court proceedings.

A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information using the occurrence form.

Remember that you are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. **YSS staff and volunteers are not responsible for investigating an allegation** that is the responsibility of the local authority child protection team following on from a referral.

### **Purpose and aim of this procedure**

We aim to ensure those children who attend YSS and any other children who may come to the attention of YSS, receive the protection and support they need if they are at risk of abuse.

This procedure provides clear direction to staff and volunteers at YSS if they have concerns that a child is in need of protection.

### **A child-centred approach to safeguarding**

A child centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

All practitioners should follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 - that state that the welfare of children is paramount and that they are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary.

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever

the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

**PHYSICAL ABUSE** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of physical abuse:**

- Children with frequent injuries;
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones; and
- Children with unexplained: bruises or cuts; burns or scalds; or bite marks.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. Although the effects of emotional abuse might take a long time to be recognisable, practitioners will be in a position to observe it, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of emotional abuse:**

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong;
- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder';
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child; and
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

### **SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION**

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. You should be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong. Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on mental health.

Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and

touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual abuse:**

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age;
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge that you wouldn't expect them to have;
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games; and
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.

**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION** is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:**

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education.

**NEGLECT** is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse. It is important that practitioners remain alert and do not miss opportunities to take timely action. However, while you may be concerned about a child, neglect is not always straightforward to identify.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

**Some of the following signs may be indicators of neglect:**

- Children who are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe;
- Children who are left hungry or dirty;
- Children who are left without adequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat;
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence;

- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm;
- Children who fail to receive basic health care;
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans. Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic violence and abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target.

It should also be noted that the age group of 16- and 17-year-olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic violence in their peer relationships. The Home Office definition of Domestic violence and abuse was updated in March 2013 as:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality.

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

### **Contextual safeguarding**

In 2018, the Department for Education circulated a new draft of Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (**revised in 2023**) which says as well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. The risks arising from situations outside the family interact with a wide range of needs such as social exclusion, poor physical and emotional health, barriers to learning, and SEND. The growing sense that the current system of protection is not effective in meeting diverse needs and reducing risks is accompanied by an increase in understanding about adolescent development.

We should understand that risk can exist within peer groups and social networks as well as within families;

We should avoid harmful assumptions about adolescent choices e.g. don't minimise the significance of adolescent choices, nor perceive them as adult 'lifestyle' choices;

We should recognise and address the challenges involved in reducing adolescent risk and breaking cycles e.g. the challenge to engage adolescents in interventions and to support the full range of adolescent needs.

You can read more about Contextual Safeguarding here <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

### **Children affected by gang activity and youth violence**

It is important to understand the definitions of:

- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Gangs
- Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)
- County Lines
- Cuckooing

This will enable you to be aware of the safeguarding complexities surrounding criminal exploitation, gang affiliation and organised criminality affecting children (0 to 18 year olds), young people (18 to 25 year olds) and vulnerable adults (over 25 year olds).

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

Child Criminal Exploitation has been defined within the Home Office Serious Violence Crime Strategy (2018) where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

***Modern Day Slavery Act 2018 places a duty on local authorities, including services that are commissioned to give due regard to support people who are drawn into modern slavery in which people are exploited for criminal gain.***

Practitioners need to be mindful that children who are criminally exploited should be seen as victims and not treated as criminals. They should also be treated through the lens of modern slavery and child safeguarding legislation and practice.

It is important to remember that children, young people or adults being criminally exploited may be trafficked, especially if they are having their travel arranged or facilitated for the purpose of them being exploited.

In cases of criminal exploitation and gang affiliation we know that powerful, adult gang members recruit and arrange or facilitate the travel of children, young people (and vulnerable adults) for the purpose of them selling drugs, firearms or sex on their behalf. This is exploitation and can fall under the Modern Slavery Act's definitions of exploitation as:

- Sexual exploitation
- Securing services etc. by force, threats or deception
- Securing services etc. from children and vulnerable persons

It is important to note that perpetrators of criminal exploitation may themselves be children, young people or vulnerable adults who are criminally exploited and the victims of criminal exploitation may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators.

## **Gangs**

### **Peer Groups**

It is common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise. Crime and violence is not intrinsic to the identity or practice of peer groups. Although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased anti-social behaviour and youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence or criminal activity (such as drug dealing) of a street gang, or criminal activities or an organised crime group.

### **Street Gangs**

A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but it can include an illegal economy territory), where they are in conflict with other similar gangs. These gangs have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, and propensity to violence or older sibling rank. Street gangs are loosely organised, and may be affiliated to older criminals who are members of organised crime groups. Criminal exploitation and gang affiliation is likely to occur in street gangs. To become a gang member there may be certain rites a person will have to complete in order to become accepted as part of the gang. This may involve anti-social or criminal behaviour, substance misuse, sexual abuse/exploitation and/or violence.

### **Organised Crime Group (OCG)**

An OCG is a group of individuals normally led by adults. Many of these groups are often loose networks of criminals that come together for a specific criminal activity, acting in different roles depending on their skills and expertise. This involves serious and organised criminality, where organised crime can be defined as serious crime planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. OCG structures vary. Successful OCGs often consist of a durable core of key individuals. Around them is a cluster of subordinates, specialists, and other more transient members, plus an extended network of associates. Many groups are often loose networks of criminals. Collaboration is often reinforced by shared experiences (such as prison), or recommendation from trusted individuals. Others are bonded by family or cultural ties – some 'crime families' are precisely that.

Street gangs and OCGs are a socially and intentionally constructed group of individuals with attitudes, thinking and behaviours geared towards criminality. They will use violence and intimidation, social media and weapons as 'tools of power' to violate, challenge and disrespect other gangs. They will also use this level of violence and intimidation against a child that refuses to do particular criminal activities. This may result in threats being made

against a child's family, including threats towards siblings and wider family members, to coerce someone into criminal activity.

### **County Lines**

Both street gangs and OCGs criminally exploit children, young people and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Gangs dealing drugs is not a new issue but the extent to which criminal exploitation (often organised) of children and vulnerable adults, as well as the increasing use of violence, has become an inherent part of 'County Lines'.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Police Forces across England and Wales have reported a significant increase in violent crime connected to County Lines. The violence includes; murder, rape, stabbings and kidnapping. It is likely that violence is underreported.

Violence and the threat of violence, is a way for gang members to gain recognition and respect by asserting their power and authority. Knives, baseball bats, ammonia / corrosives and other weapons are used to enforce threats. There is also notable evidence of firearms being seen or used to threaten in connection to county lines activity. Social media is also increasingly being used as a tool to encourage and threaten violence.

Children, young people and vulnerable adults can be exploited to be both consumer and runner. They may begin to consume the drugs they are asked to run, or begin running in order to maintain their drug usage or those of their peers. This places them 'in debt' to the gang and so they are expected to either pay back by 'working' or else accumulate debt. There are occasions where gangs stage a robbery on one of their 'runners', where they lose the drugs and become indebted to the gang. The more debt the more control the gang has. If the child/young person/vulnerable adult appears to be 'going ops' (going oppositional to the gang) then they are made to evidence that they will correct their behaviour quickly e.g. spend more time with the gang or not attend school, college or work. If the gang become concerned that child/young person/vulnerable adult appears to be 'going ops' then there is an explicit threat of being 'banged'. This can vary from threats to be beaten or in more extreme cases stabbed. There can also be indirect threats to harm family members too.

### **Cuckooing**

Gangs will establish a base when they are involved in County Lines in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as "cuckooing". Some of the cuckooing signs to look out for include but are not limited to the following:

It usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property

It is important to be aware that victims of cuckooing may disengage with support services, and be unwilling to discuss what is happening at their property when the subject is raised with them. There is also the risk that babies and very young children may be living in properties that are being used by gangs which presents significant safeguarding risks.

Risks

The risk or potential risk of harm to the child may be as a victim, a perpetrator or both – in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in or attached to their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment or mental health problems.

The particular risks that young people face because of gang involvement will vary from area to area and over time, but they may include: retaliatory violence, territorial disputes with other gangs, harm suffered whilst committing a crime, use of violence to assert authority in the local area, sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

A child who is affected by gang activity or serious youth violence can be at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Girls may be particularly at risk of sexual exploitation.

The specific risks for males and females may be quite different. There is a higher risk of sexual abuse for females and they are more likely to have been coerced into involvement with a gang through peer pressure than their male counterparts.

Gang members often groom girls at school using drugs and alcohol, which act as disinhibitors, create dependency, and encourage/coerce them to recruit other girls through school and other social networks.

There are links between gang involvement and young people going missing from home or care. Some of the factors which can draw gang-involved young people away from home or care into going missing can come through the drugs markets and 'drugs lines' activity, There may be gang-associated child sexual exploitation and relationships which can be strong pull factors for girls. Exploitation is at the heart of this activity, with overt coercion taking place alongside the pull factors of money, status, affection and belonging.

### **Trafficked Children**

Children may be trafficked into the UK from a number of different countries for a variety of different reasons. They can be trafficked a number of times and be subject to multiple forms of exploitation during their journey and once in the UK. Factors which can make children vulnerable to trafficking are varied and include such things as poverty, lack of education, discrimination and disadvantage, political conflict and economic transition and inadequate local laws and regulations.

Children of both UK and other citizenships are being trafficked internally within the UK for similar reasons to those outlined above, such as sexual and criminal exploitation. This can include unaccompanied asylum seeking children, who may appear to have entered the UK through legal channels but for whom this may have been part of their trafficking journey and will be exploited once within the UK.

### **Ways that abuse might be brought to your attention**

- a child might make a direct disclosure about him or herself
- a child might make a direct disclosure about another child
- a child might offer information that is worrying but not a direct disclosure
- a member of staff might be concerned about a child's appearance or behaviour or about the behaviour of a parent or carer towards a child
- a parent or carer might make a disclosure about abuse that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering
- a parent might offer information about a child that is worrying but not a direct disclosure.

### **Responding to a child who has told you that he/she or another child is being abused**

- Stay Calm
- Listen carefully to what is said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets
- Tell the child that the matter will only be disclosed to those who need to know about it
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer (leading questions)
- Reassure the child that telling someone about it was the right thing to do.
- Tell him/her that you now have to do what you can to keep him/her (or the child who is the subject of the allegation) safe.
- Let the child know what you are going to do next and who else needs to know about it.
- Let the child tell his or her whole story. Don't try to investigate or quiz the child, but make sure that you are clear as to what he/she is saying.
- Ask the child what he/she would like to happen as a result of what he/she has said, but don't make or infer promises you can't keep.
- Record in writing as soon as possible what was said, using the child's own words. Include the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that it is signed and dated

### **Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention**

- If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If he/she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
- You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.

A decision will need to be made about who should inform the child's family and the local authority children's social care department, and when they should be informed. If you have involved the police and/or the health services, they should be part of this decision. Consider the welfare of the child in your decision making as the highest priority.

Issues that will need to be taken into account are:

- the child's wishes and feelings
- the parent's right to know (unless this would place the child or someone else in danger, or would interfere with a criminal investigation)
- the impact of telling or not telling the parent
- the current assessment of the risk to the child and the source of that risk
- any risk management plans that currently exist.

The reporting form should be signed and dated by all those involved in its completion and kept confidentially on the child's file. The name of the person making the notes should be written alongside each entry.

### **Reporting child protection concerns**

If a child is in need of emergency medical attention or in immediate danger, follow the procedure outlined above on helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention.

You should then take the steps set out on the next page to ensure the concern is dealt with.

Once any immediate danger or emergency medical need has been dealt with, follow the steps set out at the end of this document. Local contact details for Child Protection teams are included within these policy and procedures. All staff and volunteers should also be issued with the 'child protection' card during induction

All staff should discuss any concerns with their line manager. In the absence of their line manager then staff should contact one of the YSS child protection lead officers or coordinator and if none of these are available then any member of the senior management team. All contacts details are available within these policies and procedures.

### **Keeping a record of your concerns**

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law;
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury;
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions;

- Record if carer/others have been informed of the concerns, their responses and or if they have not been informed, why you felt this was an appropriate course of action.

Use the occurrence reporting form to record the concern and how it is dealt with. It must be signed and dated

### **Role of line managers**

The role of the line manager is to support the member of staff, trustee or volunteer involved with the incident and to ensure the correct procedures are followed. The line manager should ensure that the YSS child protection lead officer is aware of the incident. In the absence of the YSS child protection lead officer another member of the Senior Management Team will assume responsibility during the period of absence. All staff will be notified of the arrangements.

The line manager should ensure that all staff within their team are familiar with these procedures and ensure that all staff undertake appropriate child protection training

### **What to do if a member of staff has concerns about a child's safety or welfare**

Member of staff makes notes of their concerns using the occurrence reporting form, and discusses them with their supervisor/manager. The line manager may wish to involve a YSS child protection lead officer or coordinator at this stage for advice.

If the child's family does not already know about the concern, the member of staff or manager discusses it with them **unless**:

- a family member might be responsible for abusing the child
- someone may be put in danger by the family being informed
- informing the family might interfere with a criminal investigation.

If any of these circumstances apply, discussions with the family should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children's social care department.

If there is still uncertainty about the concerns, then the staff member/line manager can discuss with children's social care department without disclosing the identity of the child/family.

**Concerned** referral to local authority children's social care department and confirms in writing within 48 hours. Complete occurrence reporting form and forward copy to YSS child protection lead, HR and corporate support officer and line manager. Once you have made a referral, a social worker should respond within one working day telling you what further action they have decided to take.

### **No longer concerned**

No further child protection action needed. Staff member and supervisor/manager decide whether to discuss the initial concern with other services (eg school) to ensure that the child's needs are being met elsewhere eg through Early Help (see YSS Early Help policy)

**Note:** Any young person age 16 years or over is presumed by law to be competent and to have capacity (as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005) and therefore has the right to give or withhold consent to treatment or sharing of information independent of their parents' views. However 16–18-year-olds are still deemed to be children for the purposes of safeguarding and these procedures should be followed and advice taken from line manager and or designated safeguarding lead.

### **Staff and Volunteer Training**

Child protection training will be included in all Staff and Volunteer induction. Staff and volunteers will be made aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary, All staff will be required to read and confirm that they agree to work in line with the policy. All Staff and volunteers will have updated safeguarding training appropriate to their role. The Child Protection lead will ensure that all child protection officers will receive regular updates recognising that policies and best practice change and develop regularly.

Information on Regional Safeguarding procedures can be found at <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/page/contents>

County lines exploitation

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf)

### **ONLINE SAFEGUARDING**

This policy should be read alongside YSS policies and procedures on child protection and safeguarding.

**The purpose of this policy statement is to:**

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- Ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers,

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England including reference to NSPCC

**We believe that:**

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- Children should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

**We recognise that:**

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all children, young people and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children and young people safe online, whether or not they are using YSS's network and devices
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare and in helping young people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

**We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:**

- Appointing an online safety coordinator
- Providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our behaviour code for adults

- Supporting and encouraging the young people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- Supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- Developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person
- Reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- Ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- Ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- Ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- Providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- Examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

**If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:**

- Having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- Reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

**What is online abuse?**

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet, facilitated through technology like computers, tablets, mobile phones and other internet-enabled devices (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; Welsh Assembly Government, 2018).

It can happen anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as:

- social networks
- text messages and messaging apps
- email and private messaging
- online chats
- comments on live streaming sites
- voice chat in games.

**Children and young people may experience several types of abuse online:**

- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Emotional abuse (this includes emotional blackmail, for example pressuring children and young people to comply with sexual requests via technology)
- Sexting (pressure or coercion to create sexual images)
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation.

Children and young people can also be groomed online: perpetrators may use online platforms to build a trusting relationship with the child in order to abuse them. This abuse may happen online or the perpetrator may arrange to meet the child in person with the intention of abusing them.

**Impact of online abuse**

Whether abuse happens online or offline it can have a long-lasting impact on a child's overall wellbeing. Online abuse can lead to:

- anxiety
- self-harm
- eating disorders
- suicidal thoughts

(HM Government, 2017).

However, experiencing abuse online and/or using technology can cause additional effects:

- young people may be afraid of sexual images being shared online or being viewed in the future, particularly if the perpetrator has made threats about sharing sexual images in order to blackmail the young person into complying with further abuse

- being filmed can lead some young people to feel uncomfortable around cameras
- young people who have been in constant contact with the person who abused them via digital technology can become very fatigued – especially if they were in contact during the night. They may also feel powerless and frightened.
- some young people who were abused online feel that this made them more vulnerable to further abuse by sexualising them, leading them to drink heavily or take risks or reducing their sense of self-worth and confidence

(Hamilton-Giachritsis et al, 2017).

A child or young person may be reluctant to speak out about the abuse they've experienced online.

They may:

- not understand that they are being abused
- feel dirty and ashamed
- be too embarrassed to share the sexual details of what's happening to them
- be afraid because of threats of violence from the abuser
- have been told by the abuser that they won't be taken seriously
- have established an emotional attachment with the abuser and don't want to get them into trouble

(NSPCC and O2, 2016).

They may also blame themselves for the abuse and not expect to get any support. This might especially be the case if they have experienced unsupportive approaches from school, peers and family (Hamilton-Giachritsis et al, 2017).

Their abuser may also have threatened to share sexual images of them if they tell anyone about the abuse. This means they might be frightened to speak out.

### **Responding to online abuse**

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns with your line manager and follow the guidance in YSS procedures for children at possible risk of abuse

If your concern is about online sexual abuse, you can make a report to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

## Reporting online child abuse images

It's against the law to produce or share images of child abuse, even if the image was self-created. This includes sharing images and videos over social media.

If you see a video or image that shows a child being abused:

- Don't comment, like or share the video or image, as this will distribute it further.
- Report it to the website you've seen it on.
- Report it to the police.

If the image or video involves the sexual abuse of a child, report it to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) <https://www.iwf.org.uk> who will take steps to get it removed from the internet.

If a child has taken a sexual picture of themselves and lost control of it, they can contact Childline <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/sexting/report-nude-image-online/> who will work with the IWF to get it taken down.

Some images and videos may appear old but it's still important to report them. You can help prevent the video being shared further by alerting the person sharing the video that it's been reported to the authorities.

Useful websites for more information

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/>

## EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

### What is it?

YSS understands that some children, young people and their families require additional assistance if they are to achieve their full potential. Early Help can make a difference when provided at the right time.

Children and young people can have different needs, which require different levels of response. These can change. Intervention and/or support may be provided by either one agency or a number of agencies working together.

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges. As part of your area's local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements there will be processes in place around the assessment of children who may benefit from early help. In *Working Together to Safeguard Children revised guidance 2023* it says that practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a range of children including

- young carers,
- is disabled and has specific additional needs,
- has special educational needs,
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour,
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home,
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation,
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited,
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse,
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves,
- has returned home to their family from care,
- is a privately fostered child".

An early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who should provide support to the child and family, act as an advocate on their behalf and coordinate the delivery of support services. Any frontline practitioner from any agency working with children, young people and families, including the voluntary and community sector, can undertake an early help assessment.

You might, therefore, act as the lead professional for an early help assessment, or be asked to participate in such an assessment. Whatever the case, you will need to work closely with other practitioners to decide whether the child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency.

Local agencies should have in place effective ways to identify emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individual children and families. This requires all professionals,

including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, to understand their role in identifying emerging problems and to share information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

Early help relies upon local agencies working together to provide services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child

Early Help is Consent driven, working alongside parents to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people and/or direct work with children and young people.

### **What you should do**

Discuss your concerns with your line manager. **Note that if they include a concern that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect, then child protection procedures need to be referred to immediately.**

If you and your manager agree that early help may be the appropriate route for this child, young person or family, make an arrangement to discuss this as a possibility with the most appropriate person in the family. Sometimes this may involve several discussions eg with the young person first of all, and then with their parent/carer. The discussion at this point should cover the following points:

You have noticed that there seem to be some issues at the moment which are making the child/young person unsettled or unhappy or unable to get on with their life. Does the child/young person/family (whoever you are talking to) agree that this is the situation? How would you and they describe the issues?

Are there things that are going on already that are helping? What are they?

What would they like to happen? What would improvement look like?

Is there a role for YSS in helping to make things better?

One option might be to consider an early help assessment. Explain what this is, and that it can only happen with the consent of the relevant people ie child/young person if of sufficient understanding, and parent or someone with parental responsibility. Outline the possible benefits of such an assessment.

Check out whether the child/young person or family is aware of this having been done previously. If so, ask for details.



Check out which other agencies are involved with the child/young person and family.

Agree next steps with the child/young person and family

Make a record of your conversations and discuss them with your line manager so that a way forward can be planned.

Early Help Advice can be accessed at

**Herefordshire**

[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200207/family\\_support/614/being\\_a\\_parent/6](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200207/family_support/614/being_a_parent/6)

**Shropshire** <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help/>

**Telford**

[https://www.telfordsend.org.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?categoryID=1&documentID=13&pageNumber=2](https://www.telfordsend.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=1&documentID=13&pageNumber=2)

**Worcestershire** <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/eha>

County lines exploitation

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf)

## **YSS Safeguarding Adults at risk Procedures**

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of YSS

### **The Purpose of this Policy**

YSS is committed to providing greater protection to adults at risk, victims of adult abuse and those people who voice their concerns and suspect incidents of abuse. All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation

This Adult Protection Policy reflects the high priority that YSS gives to the prevention of abuse of adults at risk, and the need for a consistent, effective and immediate response to any circumstances giving ground for concern. The primary aim of the policy is to prevent abuse and to effectively deal with incidents of abuse.

The Policy has been developed in accordance with The Care Act 2014 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of adults at risk. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

### **The Care Act 2014**

Under the Care Act 2014 Part 1, changes to safeguarding adults came into effect from April 2015. They include

- The No Secrets guidance is replaced by the Care Act
- Safeguarding Adults Boards and safeguarding adult enquiries become a statutory duty
- 'Adult at risk' is the new terminology replacing 'vulnerable adult'
- The Care Act applies to adults aged 18 and over, including those who have children's services until they are 19 or 25 years old
- There is a new definition of adult abuse and neglect
- The term adult at risk is now used to replace vulnerable adult because the term vulnerable adult may wrongly imply that some of the fault for the abuse lies with the adult abused.

Two of the catch phrases that are often used about safeguarding are 'safeguarding is everybody's business' and 'safeguarding is personal'.

'Safeguarding is everybody's business' refers to the importance 'of everyone being alert to possible signs of abuse or neglect and acting on their concerns. 'Safeguarding is personal', is intended to emphasise the importance of adults at risk being as involved as possible in any safeguarding process.

### **The Mental Capacity Act 2005**

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) is designed to protect and empower individuals who may lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions about their care and treatment. It is a law that applies to individuals aged 16 and over.

Examples of people who may lack capacity include those with: dementia, a severe learning disability, a brain injury, a mental health condition, a stroke, or unconsciousness caused by an anaesthetic or sudden accident. However, just because a person has one of these conditions does not necessarily mean they lack the capacity to make a specific decision.

For more information on the MCA please see <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/pages/mental-capacity.aspx>

### **What is adult abuse and neglect?**

The Care Act 2014 includes the definitions of abuse and neglect already in use and expands the definition significantly. For safeguarding enquiries to take place there does not need to be an 'alleged perpetrator' and there's no longer a 'significant harm' threshold.

#### **Categories of abuse as before:**

Physical  
Financial  
Sexual  
Neglect  
Emotional

#### **Plus new categories of abuse:**

Self-neglect  
Modern Slavery  
Domestic Abuse  
Exploitation  
Discrimination  
Organisational (Institutional)

### **Adults at risk**

Under the Care Act 2014 safeguarding duties for local authorities apply to an adult aged 18 and over who:

- has needs for care and support even if they do not have care services
- and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse and neglect
- and as a result of their care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse and neglect

### **What is a "Care and Support Need"?**

*"The adult's needs arise from or are related to a physical or mental impairment or illness. Local authorities must consider...if the adult has a condition as a result of either physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive disabilities or illnesses, substance misuse or brain injury...a formal diagnosis of the condition should not be required"*

(Care Act statutory guidance)

### **Implications for organisations working with young people aged 18 to 25**

As the Care Act widens the definition of abuse and neglect and the adult at risk does not need to have services, more young people aged 18 and over are likely to be included in safeguarding adult enquiries.

Current policy on safeguarding emphasises empowering adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. There is a difficult balance to be struck by professionals in safeguarding cases between protecting people from harm and empowering people to make their own choices and remain in control of their own lives. Sometimes this means respecting a person's choice even though that choice puts them at risk of harm. All adults at risk are individuals in their own right and, if they are able/are assessed as having capacity must be allowed to exercise their right to choose the way in which they live their life. This can mean that some people may choose to remain in a situation, which others may consider to be inappropriate or harmful.

The overall policy aims of safeguarding as set out in the statutory guidance can be summarised as to:

- Stop abuse and neglect where possible.
- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live.
- Concentrate on improving life for the adult concerned.
- Raise public awareness so that communities play a role alongside professionals.
- Provide accessible information and support about how to stay safe and how to raise a concern.
- Address the cause of the abuse and neglect.

### **The statutory guidance also sets out 6 key principles:**

- Empowerment: "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."
- Prevention: "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."
- Proportionality: "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed."
- Protection: "I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."
- Partnership: "I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."

- Accountability: “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

#### **We will seek to keep Adults at Risk safe by**

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- Adopting adult protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Sharing information about adult protection and good practice with adults, carers, staff and volunteers
- Sharing concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving adults at risk appropriately
- We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually

#### **YSS Procedure for adults at possible risk of abuse**

This procedure applies to any member of staff, volunteer or Trustee, who may be concerned about the safety and protection of an adult at risk. This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that an adult at risk has been abused or when there is a suspicion that abuse may have occurred.

A full record should be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information using the occurrence reporting form. A copy of the occurrence reporting form should be forwarded to the YSS adult safeguarding lead officer, HR and corporate support officer, and line manager

Remember that you are not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. YSS staff and volunteers are not responsible for investigating an allegation; that is the responsibility of the local authority adult safeguarding team following on from a referral

#### **What is adult abuse?**

Abuse is mistreatment by any other person or persons that violates a person’s human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person’s quality of life, to causing actual physical suffering.

Abuse can happen anywhere – in a residential or nursing home, a hospital, in the workplace, at a day center or educational establishment, in supported housing, in a prison or in the street.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when an adult at risk is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she

has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

**Forms of abuse include:**

- Discriminatory

Including forms of harassment, bullying, slurs, isolation, neglect, denial of access to services or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, religion or because someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. This includes racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia or any other form of hate incident or crime.

- **Domestic abuse or violence** Including an incident or a pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, by someone who is, or has been, an intimate partner or family member regardless of gender or sexual orientation. This includes psychological/emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse; so called 'honour' based violence, forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

- **Financial or material** Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

- **Modern slavery** Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

- **Neglect and acts of omission** Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to access appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Organisational (sometimes referred to as institutional)** Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in a person's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

- **Physical** Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

- **Psychological (sometimes referred to as emotional)** Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation,

coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber-bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

- **Sexual** Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual assault, sexual acts, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. It also includes sexual exploitation which is exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the person receives “something” (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, mobile phones, cigarettes, gifts, money) or perceived friendship/relationship as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing sexual acts.
- **Self-neglect** Includes a person neglecting to care for their personal hygiene, health or surroundings; or an inability to provide essential food, clothing, shelter or medical care necessary to maintain their physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing and general safety. It includes behavior such as hoarding.

Any of these forms of abuse can be deliberate, the result of ignorance, or lack of training, knowledge or understanding. If a person is being abused in one way, they are often being abused in other ways.

#### **Who might be causing the abuse?**

The person who is responsible for the abuse is very often well known to the person abused and could be:

- A paid carer or volunteer
- A health worker, social care or other worker
- A relative, friend or neighbour
- Another resident or service user
- An occasional visitor or someone who is providing a service
- People who deliberately exploit vulnerable people

#### **Procedure in the event of a disclosure**

It is important that adults at risk are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that an adult at risk has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

### **Responding to an allegation**

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported your line manager as soon as possible. Following consultation staff/or their manager should telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report should be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 48 hours. The YSS adult safeguarding coordinator should also be informed of any incidents on the cause for concern form

### **Raising concerns**

Concerns about the welfare of an adult may come to your notice in a variety of ways but not all the signs necessarily indicate that an adult may be at risk. The wishes of the adult are very important, and they should 'experience the safeguarding process as empowering and supportive'

If abuse is suspected or disclosed, the relevant member of staff must let the person know that information will be passed to the nominated adult safeguarding officer or agency. All staff and volunteers must share their concerns with their line manager or lead adult safeguarding officer in the first instance.

### **Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse**

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

#### **DO**

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance

- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for

#### Support and guidance

- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

#### **DON'T**

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

**It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult safeguarding agencies, following a referral.**

The role of the YSS Adult Safeguarding Coordinator is to:-

- Ensure all staff are aware of these procedures, ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff
- Ensure that the Chief Executive is kept fully informed of any concerns
- Ensure the maintenance of effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns e.g. refer to Social Services or the Police
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual adults are kept in a secure place and marked "strictly confidential"
- Submit reports to, and attend, adult safeguarding conferences or to arrange for suitably trained and experienced staff to do so
- Ensure effective monitoring of adults who have been identified as 'at risk'

### **Support for staff**

Dealing with a disclosure from an adult at risk is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff/volunteer concerned, should consider seeking support for her/himself and discuss this with the designated Adult Safeguarding Officer/Line Manager.

### **Record keeping**

When a disclosure has been made, the member of staff or volunteer should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation;
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law;
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury;
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions;
- Record if carer/others have been informed of the concerns, their responses and or if they have not been informed, why you felt this was an appropriate course of action.

### **Allegations involving YSS volunteers or staff**

YSS has a procedure for enabling staff and volunteers to share, in confidence with a designated person, concerns that they may have about a colleague's behaviour. This is sometimes referred to as **whistle blowing**. Also see Procedure for dealing with allegations made against an employee/volunteer

This behaviour may not be linked adult abuse but it is beyond acceptable limits. Staff and volunteers are reminded that:

- You can't tell by looking at a person whether they are an abuser. They don't appear different from the rest of society
- Abusers come from all classes in society, all professions and all races
- Abuse of adults may sometimes be carried out by strangers but it is much more common that the abuser is known to the adult and is in a position of trust and/or authority

There may be staff or volunteers who:

- Are unable to provide consistent care
- Cause adults to suffer physical or emotional harm consistently behaving inappropriately towards them
- Manipulate themselves into positions of trust where they can exploit adults at risk, physically, emotionally or sexually.

YSS will provide support for whistle blowers. If you become aware of anything that makes you feel uncomfortable then we actively encourage you to discuss your concerns in confidence with any of the following: Chief Executive, Operations Director, YSS Trustee Lead for Safeguarding, YSS Safeguarding Coordinator or any YSS designated Safeguarding Officer (all contact details can be found on the "Safeguarding Contact Details" pages contained within this document). Please refer to Whistle Blowing policy for further information.

The Organisation supports and will provide protection for whistle blowers. If you become aware of anything that makes you feel uncomfortable then discuss the incident with the designated person. Training and supervision will be provided for staff and volunteers to recognise suitable and inappropriate behaviour.

The Adult Safeguarding coordinator/Chief Executive will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but he/she will assess whether it is necessary to refer the case to the local Social Services Department/Police in accordance with the local adult protection procedures.

### **Staff and Volunteer Training**

Adult protection awareness will be included in all Volunteer and Staff induction to the appropriate level. All staff will be required to read and confirm agreement to work in line with the policy.

The Adult Safeguarding Coordinator will ensure that all designated adult protection officers will receive updates recognising that policies and best practice change and develop regularly.

### **Confidentiality**

YSS is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around Safeguarding Adults issues should be shared only with those who need to know. For further information, please see YSS confidentiality policy.

All allegations/disclosures/concerns should be recorded on the cause for concern form. The information should be factual and not based on opinions, record what the person tells you, what you have seen and witnesses if appropriate.

The information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection.

**Link below to West Midlands Adult Safeguarding Policy and procedures which have been adopted by Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.**

**Telford**      <http://www.telfordsafeguardingadultsboard.org/sab/>

**Shropshire**    <https://shropshire.gov.uk/adult-social-care/where-can-i-get-help/concerned-about-someone/>

**Worcestershire** <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingadults>

**Herefordshire**      <https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board/for-professionals/policies-and-procedures>

County Lines exploitation guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741194/HOCountyLinesGuidanceSept2018.pdf)

### **YSS behaviour code for adults working with children**

This behaviour code outlines the conduct expected of staff and volunteers from YSS, and staff from other organisations who engage with children and young people through YSS and its activities.

It has been informed by the views of children and young people.

### **Purpose**

Following this code will help to protect children from abuse and inappropriate behaviour from adults. It will also help staff and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour

expected of them and will reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against them.

### **Upholding this code of behaviour**

All members of staff and volunteers are expected to report any breaches of this code to any of the following: Chief Executive, YSS Trustee Lead for Safeguarding, YSS Lead Safeguarding Officer or any YSS Designated Safeguarding Officer under the whistleblowing procedure or, if necessary, under child protection procedures. (see allegations against an employee procedures) Staff and volunteers who breach this code of behaviour may be subject to YSS's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving a volunteer or member of staff from another agency may result in them being asked to leave YSS.

Serious breaches may also result in a referral being made to a statutory agency such as the police, the local authority children's social care department and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

### **The role of staff and volunteers**

When working with children and young people for YSS all staff and volunteers are acting in a position of trust. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware that they may be seen as role models by children and young people and must act in an appropriate manner at all times.

When working with children and young people, it is important to:

- operate within YSS's principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- follow YSS's child protection policy and procedures at all times
- listen to and respect children at all times
- avoid favouritism
- treat children and young people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving children and young people in planning activities wherever possible
- ensure any contact with children and young people is appropriate and in relation to the work of the project

- always ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory
- always ensure equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- provide examples of good conduct you wish children and young people to follow
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations/suspicions of abuse
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people or if this isn't possible, that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.
- All lone working with children or young people should be within the context of a clear intervention plan and recorded appropriately
- be close to where others are working. If a child specifically asks for or needs some private time with you, ensure other staff should know where you and the child are
- respect a young person's right to personal privacy
- encourage young people and adults to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- recognise that special caution is required when you are discussing sensitive issues with children or young people.
- use online accounts that have been authorised by your organisation to communicate with children and young people (never use personal accounts)
- turn on privacy settings on accounts that are used to interact with children and young people
- use an organisational device to communicate with young people (if this isn't possible, senior managers should authorise individual staff and volunteers to use a personal device on a case-by-case basis and keep a record of this authorisation and who can see the communication)

- ensure all communications are relevant to the work of the project and organisation
- use age-appropriate language.

**You must not:**

- patronise or treat children and young people as if they are silly
- allow allegations to go unreported
- develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with children and young people that is not a part of the work of YSS or agreed with the manager or leader
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff or volunteer and a child or young person using the services of YSS represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member or volunteer and is not acceptable under any circumstances
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number or address)
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- rely on your reputation or that of the organisation to protect you

- take unnecessary risks when common sense, policy or practice suggests a more prudent approach
- adopt an attitude of complacency with regard to your own conduct.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

*Although this policy is primarily focused on children and young people below the age of 18, YSS also recognises that bullying can happen to anyone of any age and this policy applies to adult service users*

As an organisation YSS recognises that:

- Bullying is “behaviour, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group, physically or emotionally”. (*Safe from bullying in youth activities*, DCSF 2009).
- One person or a group can bully others. Bullying can occur either face to face between individuals or groups, or online, using information technology, such as computers or mobile phones.
- All staff, volunteers and service users have a right not to be bullied.
- Bullying is always unacceptable.
- The Organisation also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside the organisation which spills over into the organisation.

### **Bullying can include:**

- verbal teasing or making fun of someone.
- excluding children from games and conversations.
- pressurising other children not to be friends with the person who is being bullied.
- spreading hurtful rumours or passing round inappropriate photographs/images/drawings.
- shouting at or verbally abusing someone.
- stealing or damaging someone’s belongings.
- making threats.
- forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous.
- harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability.
- physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but very minor physical incidents constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance with child protection procedures).

Bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person’s health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm.

People are often targeted by bullies because they appear different from others.

We all have a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to bullying.

**The purpose of this policy is:**

- To prevent bullying from happening in our organisation, as much as possible.
- When bullying does happen, to make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and that those involved receive the support they need.
- To provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.
- To evidence that we take bullying very seriously and that our staff, volunteers, service users, their parents and carers are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**We will seek to prevent bullying by:**

- Developing a code of behaviour that sets out the “dos” and “don’ts” in terms of how everyone involved in YSS is expected to behave, both in face-to-face contact and online.
- Developing a plan that describes how we welcome new members and help them to settle in.
- Holding regular discussions with staff, volunteers, children, young people and families who use YSS to ensure that they understand our anti-bullying policy. These discussions will focus on:
  1. Group members’ responsibilities to look after one another and uphold the behaviour code.
  2. Practising skills such as listening to each other.
  3. Respecting the fact that we are all different.
  4. Making sure that no-one is without friends.
  5. Dealing with problems in a positive way.
  6. Checking that the anti-bullying measures are working well.
  7. Upholding the complaints policy and procedure.
  8. Making sure that staff, volunteers, children and young people, and parents and carers have clear information about our anti-bullying policy and procedures, cyber-bullying policy and procedures, complaints procedure and code of behaviour.

### **When bullying occurs, we will respond to it by:**

- Having a clear anti-bullying procedure in place.
- Providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying.
- Addressing the issue from the point of view of the person being bullied, the bully, any bystanders and YSS as a whole.
- Reviewing the plan developed to address the bullying, in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved.
- Avoiding any punishments that make the individuals concerned seem small, or look or feel foolish in front of others.

### **Anti-bullying procedures**

- Any incidents of actual or perceived incidents of bullying should be reported to a YSS member of staff.
- In cases of serious bullying the incidents will be reported to Line Managers, recorded on a YSS Occurrence form and logged with the YSS safeguarding lead.
- In serious cases parents/carers/case managers/other significant individuals will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly. A written record of the investigation will be undertaken by the responsible manager.
- Attempts will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

### **Outcomes**

- The bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologise and a restorative approach will be taken.
- In serious cases the perpetrator(s) may be excluded from YSS services or activities.
- If possible the perpetrator and target will be reconciled.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, procedures will be put in place to monitor the situation to prevent further incidents.
- After the incident/incidents a review of policy and practice will take place to ensure any learning outcomes are shared and good practice reviewed.

### **CYBER-BULLYING**

YSS understands the advantages of modern technology in terms of the, business, educational and the social benefits it brings, however the organisation is mindful of the potential for bullying to occur. Central to the organisation's anti-bullying policy is the belief that 'all staff and service users have a right not to be bullied' and that 'bullying is

always unacceptable'. The organisation also recognises that it must 'take note of bullying perpetrated outside the organisation which spills over into the organisation'.

### **DEFINITION OF CYBER-BULLYING**

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites (any web based attacks)
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms, to include Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, Youtube, AskFM , Snapchat, and any other social media sites or applications (apps)

### **LEGAL ISSUES**

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

### **POLICY**

YSS works with its staff and service users both in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying.

YSS will, through individual and group discussion sessions, continue to inform and educate its staff and service users in these fast changing areas.

YSS trains its staff to respond effectively to reports of cyber-bullying or harassment and has systems in place to respond to it. YSS endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no service user is allowed to work on the internet using YSS computer equipment, without a member of staff present. Where appropriate and responsible, YSS audits ICT communications and regularly reviews the security arrangements in place. YSS reserves the right to take action against those who take part in cyber-bullying.

All bullying is damaging but cyber-bullying and harassment can be invasive of privacy at all times. These acts may also be deemed as criminal acts. YSS aims to support victims and, when necessary, will work with the Police to detect those involved in criminal acts.

YSS will work proactively internally, and where appropriate externally with partner agencies, to identify, correct, or remove service users who bully or harass fellow service users or staff in this way, both in or out of service provision.

All members of the organisation are aware they have a duty to bring to the attention of their Line Manager any example of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

### **GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, they should follow the protocol outlined below:

#### **Mobile Phones**

- Ask the victim to show you the mobile phone.
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names.
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names.
- Tell the victim to save the message/image.
- Contact your Line Manager and Case Manager where appropriate.
- Complete a YSS Occurrence form.

#### **Computers**

- Ask the young person to get up on-screen the material in question.
- Ask the young person to save the material.
- Print off the offending material straight away.
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions. .
- Normal procedures will then be followed particularly if a child safeguarding issue is presented.
- Contact your Line Manager and Case Manager where appropriate.
- Complete a YSS Occurrence form.

### **GUIDANCE FOR SERVICE USERS**

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to a YSS member of staff or volunteer or any other significant adult (teacher, parents, guardian, carers etc) as soon as possible.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them.
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your YSS member of staff, volunteer or any other significant adult (teacher, parent, guardian, carer, etc). Even if it is

upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying.

- Do not give out personal IT details.
- Never reply to abusive e-mails.
- Never reply to someone you do not know.
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms.
- Never give out personal information online, whether in instant message profiles, chat rooms, blogs, or personal websites.
- Never tell anyone but your parents your password, even friends.
- If someone sends a mean or threatening message, don't respond. Save it or print it out and show it to an adult.
- Never open emails from someone you don't know or from someone you know is a bully.
- Don't put anything online that you wouldn't want your classmates to see, even in email.
- **Report any bullying content to the website it's hosted on.**
- Don't send messages when you're angry. Before clicking "send," ask yourself how you would feel if received the message.
- Help kids who are bullied online by not joining in and showing bullying messages to an adult.
- Always be as polite online as you are in person.

### **GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

It is vital that parents, carers and the organisation work together to ensure that all service users are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. At the initial induction meeting, YSS informs parents and carers of the cyber-bullying policy and the procedures in place to deal with cyber-bullying.

- Keep your home computer in a busy area of your house.
- Set up email and chat accounts with your children. Make sure that you know their screen names and passwords and that they don't include any personal information in their online profiles.
- Regularly go over their instant messenger "buddy list" with them. Ask who each person is and how your children know him or her.
- Discuss cyberbullying with your children and ask if they have ever experienced it or seen it happen to someone.
- Tell your children that you won't blame them if they are cyberbullied. Emphasise that you won't take away their computer privileges - this is the main reason kids don't tell adults when they are cyberbullied.

Parents and carers can help by making sure their child understands the organisation's policy and, above all, how seriously YSS takes incidents of cyber-bullying.

Parents and carers should also explain to the children in their care all the legal issues relating to cyber-bullying. If parents have any concerns about this, YSS staff and volunteers are very happy to support them around this.

If parents or carers believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving an offensive text on their or their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have all relevant information. It is recommended that they do not delete anything relating to the offence.

Parents should contact the relevant YSS member of staff as soon as possible. A meeting can then be arranged, which may involve other relevant members of YSS staff or partner agencies.

### **E-SAFETY AT HOME**

Several sites offer helpful advice to parents, particularly with respect to how they can best monitor their child's use of the computer at home. Important and useful information can be found on the following site:

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/>

Further support and guidance may be obtained from the following:

#### **Help Organisations/National Bodies:**

- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) - 0808 800 5793
- Children's Legal Centre - 0845 345 4345
- KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204  
<https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-parents-and-carers/internet-safety-and-addressing-online-risk/?gclid=CLaF9rWN2s4CFUQW0wodMe4NsA>
- CEOP Think you know <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- Parentline Plus - 0808 800 2222
- Youth Access - 020 8772 9900
- Bullying Online - [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)
- [www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk) for information on safeguarding learners
- [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- [www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)
- NSPCC [https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=Grant\\_shareaware2014&utm\\_term=nspcc\\_online\\_safety&gclid=CPjKzKSO2s4CFfQK0wodOHOoQ&gclsrc=aw.ds](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Grant_shareaware2014&utm_term=nspcc_online_safety&gclid=CPjKzKSO2s4CFfQK0wodOHOoQ&gclsrc=aw.ds)
- Internet Matters  
<https://www.internetmatters.org/?gclid=CJ2IIOKO2s4CFUe3GwodFzQORw>

## Information for families/service users

YSS is committed to ensuring that children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with YSS staff and volunteers are treated with respect, and are free from all forms of abuse or mistreatment. We will take all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. This applies to everyone we work with regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality or country of origin. We are also committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities, and have the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and maintain the welfare and safety of those with whom they come into contact.

YSS have comprehensive policies which are reviewed annually including

- Child Protection
- Adult Protection
- Health and Safety,
- Recruitment and Selection (staff, volunteers and ,trustees)
- Professional Relationships
- Compliments comments complaints policy
- Allegations made against an employee/volunteer

If you have any concerns about possible abuse or neglect by a YSS staff member or YSS volunteer, then please contact Lia Palios-Hayden on 07704 170855 who is the member of YSS staff responsible for safeguarding.

**Alternatively** If you wish to write to us in confidence: please contact Lia Palios-Hayden, YSS Head Office, Polysec House, Blackpole Trading Estate West, Hindlip Lane Worcester WR3 8TJ

YSS will deal with any allegation made against any YSS worker or YSS volunteer promptly in line with our procedures for allegations made against an employee/volunteer. YSS also has a separate Compliments, Complaints and Comments process, which you will have received information about.

All YSS Safeguarding Policies are available to view on our website.

## PARENTAL AND YOUNG PERSON CONSENT POLICY

### Dates

Date of Policy: August 2017  
Date of last policy review: March 2024  
Date of next policy review: March 2025

### Related Policies

Activity Health & Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Confidentiality Statement, Data Protection Policy and Company Handbook

At YSS we believe that children and young people's needs are best met when they are involved in making decisions that affect them, and when we work in partnership with their families. This policy describes how YSS seeks to play its part in this partnership.

This policy brings together our responsibilities to consult with and obtain the consent of children and young people, and to consult with and obtain the consent of parents in relation to our activities, events and information sharing.

The policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for YSS.

We recognise that: Children and young people have rights as listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified in the UK in 1991. They include the right for children to have their views respected and their opinions taken into account (Article 12), the right to freedom of expression (Article 13), and the right for children to access information about themselves (Article 13).

In accordance with Article 5 of the Convention, helping children to understand their rights does not mean pushing them into making choices about matters that they do not understand or with consequences that they lack the maturity to deal with. Parents are required to help their children make choices "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child". This is a principle to which YSS also subscribes.

Parents are the primary source of nurture and support to their children and should be supported in fulfilling this role.

YSS collects information about the children and young people with whom we work. Most of the time this information will not need to be shared outside the organisation. When, however, there are concerns about a child or young person YSS may be asked to share information with a statutory agency.

There are six key points to apply when considering sharing information.

1. Children, young people, parents/carers should be told, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and that their agreement will be asked. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at risk of significant harm, or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference

- with any potential investigation.
2. The safety and welfare of a child or young person must always be the over-riding consideration when making decisions on whether to share information about them.
  3. The wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information must, where possible, be respected. Information may still be shared, if in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need to over-ride that lack of consent. This decision should only ever be made after discussion with line manager as it is a complex and difficult decision to make
  4. Advice should be sought from the Designated Person for Safeguarding (Sue Green) or your line manager where you are in doubt, especially where your doubts relate to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
  5. It is necessary to ensure that the information shared is accurate and up to date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, shared only with those people who need to see it, and shared securely.
  6. The reasons for your decisions, whether it is to share information or not, should be recorded.

We will take the following steps to obtain consent, from both parents and children/young people, for children's participation in activities and trips/outings:

We will seek parental consent and support for a child/young person's participation in activities and trips, regardless of the age of the child/young person (up to the age of 18).

For all young people aged 12 and above, we will also seek their consent, unless our assessment is that the young person is not able to give informed consent (because of his/her level of learning ability or for some other reason).

In all cases, consent offered by young people will involve signing up to the behaviour code and the safety rules for the activity or trip.

If a child/young person is keen to take part in an activity that would be in his/her best interests to do so, but their parent/carer is not willing to consent, we will seek to address the matter with the parent/carer and to understand the reason for their objection. If, having spoken to the parent/carer, we feel that the objection is reasonable; we will support the parent in conveying this decision to the child/young person. If, however, we feel that the parent's objection is not reasonable, we will attempt to remove the barriers preventing the parent/carer from giving consent. However we have to respect parent/carers wishes if they chose not to give consent.

If a young person aged 16-18, with sufficient maturity to make his/her own decisions, lives separately from his/her parents and has little contact with them, we may consider allowing him/her to participate in an activity without the parent's consent. This will depend on the capacity of the young person concerned, our understanding of the reasons why the parents would not be consulted, and an assessment of any risks involved. In such circumstances, specialist advice will normally be sought prior to a decision being made. Any such decision should be clearly recorded.

## **Dealing with allegations made against an employee/volunteer**

This procedure primarily outlines what you should do if a child protection allegation is made against an adult working for or involved in YSS, however the principles contained within this document also apply where the allegation applies to adult protection.

The procedure should provide a clear direction to staff and trustees who are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations that may result from them.

The aims of this procedure are:

- to ensure that children who attend YSS and any other children who may come to our attention, are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by an adult from within YSS
- to ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations made, so that the risk posed to other children by an abusive individual is managed effectively
- to facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations, whether they are said to have taken place recently, at any time the person in question has been employed by/volunteered with YSS or prior to the person's involvement with YSS
- to ensure that YSS continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards members of staff, volunteers or trustees who may be subject to such investigations
- to ensure that individuals are able to continue in their role if they have been at the centre of allegations that are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

This procedure applies to:

any member of staff, volunteer or trustee to whom an allegation of abuse has been made, that involves another member of staff, volunteer or trustee

anyone in a managerial position (including the named person for child protection, line managers, supervisors and trustees) who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations that result from them.

**Ways that allegations might be made against an adult working for or involved with YSS include:**

- a child or parent/carer making a direct allegation against a member of staff or trustee
- a child or parent/carer expressing discomfort with the behaviour of a member of staff or trustee that falls short of a specific allegation
- another member of staff or volunteer directly observing behaviour that is a cause for concern

- YSS being informed by the police or another statutory authority that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee is the subject of an investigation
- information emerging from the renewal of a CRB check that suggests that a member of staff, volunteer or trustee may have committed an offence or been involved in an activity that could compromise the safety of the children they work with at YSS
- a staff member or trustee telling the organisation that they have been the subject of allegations, have actually harmed a child, or committed an offence against (or related to) a child.

**Is a child in immediate danger or does she/he need emergency medical attention?**

- If a child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him/her and call the police.
- If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
- If the child needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
- If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child. You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or named person for child protection to let them know what is happening.
- The member of staff or manager should also inform the child's family if the child is in need of emergency medical attention, and arrange to meet them at the hospital or medical centre. The parents/carers should be informed that an incident has occurred, that the child has been injured and that immediate steps have been taken to get help.

**Is the person at the centre of the allegation working with children now?**

If this is the case, the concern needs to be discussed immediately with a member of senior management and the coordinator for child protection. One of these (either the manager or coordinator) should then, in a sensitive manner, remove the staff member involved in the allegation from direct contact with children.

It should then be explained to the person, in private, that there has been a complaint made against him/her, although the details of the complaint should not be given at this stage. The person should be informed that further information will be provided as soon as possible but that, until consultation has taken place with the relevant agencies and within the organisation, they should not be working with children. It may be best, under the circumstances, for the person to return home on the understanding that the manager or named person will telephone him/her later in the day.

The information provided to him/her at this stage will need to be very limited. This is because discussions need to take place first with other agencies who may need to be

involved, such as the local authority children's social care department, the police or the local authority designated officer (LADO).

If the person is a member of a trades union or a professional organisation, he/she should be advised to make contact with that body. Arrangements should also be made for the member of staff or volunteer to receive ongoing support in line with the responsibilities YSS has towards his or her welfare.

#### Conducting an investigation

Once any urgent necessary steps have been taken, attention can be given to dealing with the full implications of the allegations.

There are up to three possible lines of enquiry when an allegation is made:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and an assessment by the local authority children's social care department about whether a child is in need of protection
- investigation by an employer and possible disciplinary action being taken against the person in question. This includes implementing a plan to manage any risk posed by the individual to children and young people in the workplace until the outcome of the other investigations and enquiries is known.

#### Reporting an allegation or concern

If the allegation is made by a child or family member to a member of staff, or if a member of staff observes concerning behaviour by a colleague at first hand, this should be reported immediately to the staff member's supervisor/manager and the named person for child protection; YSS lead on handling the allegation.

If a staff member has received an allegation or observed something of concern about their own manager, the staff member should report the allegation or concern to the person more senior to their manager.

If the person who is the subject of the concern is a named person for child protection, the matter should be reported to the named person's manager.

#### When to involve the local authority designated officer

The named person should report the allegation to the local authority designated officer (LADO) within one working day if the alleged behaviour suggests that the person in question:

- may have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child

- has behaved towards a child in a way that suggests that he/she may be unsuitable to work with children.

This should also happen if the individual has volunteered the information him/herself.

The LADO may be told of the allegation from another source. If this is the case, then the first information received by YSS may be when the LADO makes contact in order to explain the situation.

Whoever initiates the contact, there will be discussion between the LADO and YSS named person to share information about the nature and circumstances of the allegation, and to consider whether there is any evidence to suggest that it may be false or unfounded.

If there is any reason to suspect that a child has suffered, or be likely to suffer, significant harm and there are no obvious indications that the allegation is false, the LADO, in cooperation with YSS, will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care department to ask for a strategy discussion.

The LADO and named person will take part in the strategy discussion. The named person and any other representative from YSS should cooperate fully with this and any subsequent discussion with the children's social care department.

It should be asked from the outset that the children's social care department shares any information obtained during the course of their enquiries with YSS if it has any relevance to the person's employment.

### **Dealing with a criminal offence**

If there is reason to suspect that a criminal offence may have been committed (whether or not the threshold of 'significant harm' is reached), the LADO will contact the police and involve them in a similar strategy discussion, which will include the named person for child protection.

The named person and any other representative from YSS should cooperate fully with any discussion involving the police and should ask for similar cooperation from the police in terms of the sharing of information relevant to the person's employment.

Discussions with the police should also explore whether there are matters that can be acted on in a disciplinary process while the criminal investigation takes place, or whether disciplinary action must wait until the criminal process is completed.

Talking to parents about the allegation or concern

If the child's parents/carers do not already know about the allegation, the named person and the LADO need to discuss how they should be informed and by whom.

Talking to the person who is the subject of the allegation

The person at the centre of the allegation should be informed as soon as possible after the initial consultation with the LADO. However, if a strategy discussion with children's social care or the police is needed, this might have to take place before the person concerned can be spoken to in full. The police and children's social care department may have views on what information can be disclosed to the person.

Only limited information should be given to the person in question, unless the investigating authorities have indicated that they are happy for all information to be disclosed or unless there is no need for involvement from these statutory agencies.

The named person will need to keep in close communication with the LADO and the other agencies involved in order to manage the disclosure of information appropriately.

#### Taking disciplinary action

If the initial allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence, the named person and manager of the person at the centre of the allegation should still consider whether formal disciplinary action is needed.

If the local authority children's social care department has undertaken any enquiries to determine whether a child or children are in need of protection, the named person should take account of any relevant information from these enquiries when considering whether disciplinary action should be brought against the person at the centre of the allegations.

The following timings should be kept to wherever possible, depending on the nature of the investigation:

If formal disciplinary action is not needed, other appropriate action should be taken within three working days.

If disciplinary action is required, and can be progressed without further investigation, this should take place within 15 days.

If YSS decides that further investigation is needed in order to make a decision about formal disciplinary action, the named person for child protection should discuss with the LADO the possibility of this investigation being done by an independent person to ensure that the process is objective. Whether or not the investigation is handled internally or independently, the report should be presented to the named person within 10 working days.

Having received the report of the disciplinary investigation, the named person should decide within two working days whether a disciplinary hearing is needed.

If a hearing is needed, it should be held within 15 working days.

The named person should continue to liaise with the LADO during the course of any investigation or disciplinary proceedings, and should continue to use the LADO as a source of advice and support.

If a criminal investigation is required, it may not have been possible to make decisions about initiating disciplinary proceedings or about the person's future work arrangements until this is concluded. The police are required to complete their work as soon as reasonably possible and to set review dates, so the named person should either liaise with the police directly or via the LADO to check on the progress of the investigation and criminal process.

The police are also required to inform the employer straight away if the person is either convicted of an offence or acquitted or, alternatively, if a decision is made not to charge him/her with an offence or to administer a caution. In any eventuality, once the outcome is known, the named person should contact the LADO to discuss the issue of disciplinary proceedings.

If the allegation is substantiated and if, once the case is concluded, YSS dismisses the person or ceases to use their services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the named person should consult with the LADO about referral of the incident to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). This should take place within a month.

### **Reporting to Charity Commission**

A report should be made to the Charity Commission if any of the following things occur:

beneficiaries of your charity (adults or children) have been, or alleged to have been, abused or mistreated while under the care of the charity, or by someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer.

There has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated (alleged or actual) and this is connected with the activities of the charity

There has been a breach of procedures or policies at the charity which has put beneficiaries at risk, including failure to carry out checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law, under safeguarding legislation, from working with children or adults.

Safeguarding involves both children and adults at risk. An incident of abuse or mistreatment includes neglect. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

## **Managing risk and supporting the person at the centre of the allegation**

The first priority of YSS must always be the safety and welfare of children and young people. However, as an employee or volunteer, the person who is the subject of the allegation has a right to be treated in a fair, sensitive and non-judgemental manner and to have his or her privacy respected as far as this ensures the safety of the child and other children.

Information about the allegation must only be shared on a need to know basis with those directly responsible for supervising and managing the staff member or volunteer. Any other information (for example, explanations to other staff members as to why the person is not at work or working to different arrangements) should be agreed and negotiated with the individual concerned.

If the person is a member of a trades union or a professional organisation, he/she should be advised to make contact with that body as soon as possible after being informed that he/she is the subject of an allegation. Arrangements should also be made for him/her to receive ongoing support and information about the progress of the investigation.

The possible risk of harm to children and young people presented by the person who is the subject of an allegation needs to be carefully managed both during and after any conclusion to the investigation processes following the allegation. This means that YSS may need to consider suspending the person if there is cause to suspect that a child may be at risk of significant harm, or if the allegation is serious enough to warrant investigation by the police, or if it is so serious that it could lead to dismissal. However, a decision to suspend should not be taken automatically, as there may be other ways of managing any risk presented by the person.

The situation should be discussed fully between the named person, the individual's manager/supervisor and the LADO, who will seek the views of the police and the children's social care department on the question of possible suspension. The conclusions of the discussion should also be carefully documented. Grounds for suspension should be clearly set out if this is the conclusion. If suspension is not the conclusion, then a clear plan should be made as to how any possible risk posed by the individual is to be managed. This could involve, for example, changes to the person's duties so that they do not have direct contact with children, and/or increased levels of supervision whilst at work.

If it is decided, once the case has been concluded, that a person who has been suspended or who has taken sick leave due to the stress induced by the allegation, is able to return to work, the named person and the manager/supervisor of the person who has been the subject of the allegations should consider how best to support the individual in this process. A plan to facilitate a return should be drawn up in consultation with the individual him/herself, and should take into account the need to manage any remaining child

protection risks and also to support the person concerned after what will have been and will remain a very difficult experience.

If the decision is that the person cannot return to work and has to be dismissed or chooses to resign, the named person and the LADO should discuss the need for the matter to be referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and/or to any professional body to which the person may belong. YSS does not enter into compromise agreements with individuals who resign following the conclusion of investigations into allegations made against them, and will always comply with its statutory obligations to share information about the individual in the interests of protecting children and young people.

If the allegation is found to be without substance or fabricated, YSS will consider referring the child in question to the children's social care department for them to assess whether he/she is in need of services or whether he/she may have been abused by someone else. If it is felt that there has been malicious intent behind the allegation, YSS will discuss with the police whether there are grounds to pursue any action against the person responsible.

#### Keeping a record of the investigation

All those involved in dealing with the allegation should keep clear notes of the allegations made, how they were followed up, and any actions and decisions taken, together with the reasons for these.

These notes should be compiled gradually as the situation unfolds, with each entry being made as soon as possible after the event it describes. The notes should be signed and dated by the person making them, and the person's name should be printed alongside.

The notes should be kept confidentially on the file of the person who is the subject of the allegation. Discussion should take place with the LADO to determine whether any aspects of the notes may not be shared with the person concerned. If there are no reasons not to do so, a copy of the records should be given to the individual.

The notes should be held on file for a 10-year period, whether or not the person remains with YSS for this period.

## Prevent Policy - Children and Young People

### Prevent Policy Children and Young People

Date of Policy: November 2015

Date of last policy review: March 2024

Date of next policy review: March 2025

Related Policies: Safeguarding Policy and related documents, Confidentiality Statement, Staff Handbook, Professional Relationships Policy

### **Safeguarding Children and Young people against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism**

YSS recognises its responsibilities under the Prevent duty to safeguard Children and Young People against Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 specifies that Local Safeguarding Children Boards, local authorities and their partners should be commissioning and providing services for children who are likely to suffer, or may have suffered significant harm, due to radicalisation and extremism. (Chapter 1, Section 17).

From 1 July 2015 all schools and child care providers must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. An updated Prevent Toolkit was published in February 2024 [toolkit](#)

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults and/or the national security.

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

In addition, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT and S Act) set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of ‘Channel panels’ to provide support for people, children and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

## 1. Definition

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

“Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011)

Since the publication of the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been attempts to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to develop extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children should be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

## 2. Risks

Children and young people can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly, through the internet via Social media or other websites. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to lead to the child or young person suffering significant harm’.

This may take the form of a “grooming” process where the vulnerabilities of a young person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the young person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology. The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the child’s life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

On-line content in particular social media may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme; children can be trusting and may not necessarily appreciate bias, which can lead to being drawn into such groups and to adopt their extremist views.

Recent case evidence indicates that specific groups such as young Muslim women have been targeted for radicalisation and grooming, which has led to attempts to travel to the Middle East placing them at risk. Any information about a young person or child that raises

concerns should be discussed with their parents, schools, Children's Services and the police as part of the risk assessment.

### 3. Indicators

With regard to issues that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, these can include:

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;
- Personal Crisis - Family tensions; sense of isolation; adolescence; low self-esteem; disassociating from existing friendship group and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends; searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances - Migration; local community tensions; events affecting country or region of origin; alienation from UK values; having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
- Unmet aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values;
- Criminality - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups.

However those closest to the individual may first notice the following changes of behaviour:

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy;
- Changes of friends and mode of dress;
- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;
- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

There an obvious difference between espousing radical and extreme views and acting on them and practitioners should ensure that assessments place behaviour in the family and social context of the young person and include information about the young person's peer group and conduct and behaviour at school. Holding radical or extreme views is not illegal, but inciting a person to commit an act in the name of any belief is in itself an offence.

*Some of the above indicators may be usual/normal teen behaviours, or indicators of other forms of abuse, which is why it is important to have a holistic assessment*

#### **4. Protection and Action to be Taken**

Any practitioner identifying concerns about the child or young person should discuss them with their line manager and report them to the designated YSS safeguarding lead, who will discuss these concerns with the police and follow the safeguarding referrals procedure. A multi-agency assessment meeting will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the family. Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting vulnerable children and young people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.

Consideration should be given to the possibility that sharing information with parents may increase the risk to the child and therefore may not be appropriate. However, experience has shown that parents are key in challenging radical views and extremist behaviour and should be included in interventions unless there are clear reasons why not.

Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision of the organisation working with other local agencies and partners. Responses could include curriculum provision, additional tutoring or mentoring, additional activities within and out of school and family support.

Where a higher level of targeted and multi-agency response is indicated a formal multi-agency assessment will be conducted. The assessment process may lead to a Strategy discussion, Section 47 Enquiry and an Initial Child Protection Conference, if there are concerns about the child or young person suffering significant harm.

Where there is an identified risk/potential risk that a child young person may be involved/potentially involved in supporting or following extremism, further investigation by the police will be required, prior to other assessments and interventions.

#### **5. Issues**

Protecting children and young people from radicalisation and extremism requires careful assessment and working collaboratively across agencies as initially concerns may be inconclusive and protecting child or young person against a potential risk can be dependent on a wider range of factors. Sharing information effectively and keeping the child and young person in focus should be the main aim of any interventions and services.

Any concerns about a child or young person should be discussed with your line manager and/or the YSS designated safeguarding lead.

#### **Useful Contacts**



The Police Prevent Team 01386 591835/591825/591917 or

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/t/prevent/prevent/>

Online training modules on Prevent and Channel are available at

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals>

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness>

## Prevent Policy- Adults

### Prevent Policy - Adults

Date of Policy: November 2015  
Date of last policy review: March 2024  
Date of next policy review: March 2025

Related Policies: Safeguarding Policy and related documents, Confidentiality Statement, Staff Handbook, Professional Relationships Policy.

The revised Prevent Strategy was launched in June 2011 and is an integral part of the Counter Terrorism Strategy and its aim is to stop people becoming drawn into, promoting or supporting terrorism.

Prevent will address all forms of terrorism but continue to prioritise according to the threat they pose to our national security. Preventing terrorism will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist's ideology. Prevent will also mean intervening to try to stop people moving from extremist groups or extremism into terrorist-related activity.

The three Prevent objectives are:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Supporting sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation

From 1 July 2015 all schools and child care providers and other partners must have regard to the statutory guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". An updated Prevent Toolkit was published in September 2018 and revised in February 2024 [toolkit](#)

This duty is known as the Prevent duty. The specified authorities are those judged to have a role in protecting vulnerable children, young people and adults and/or the national security.

There are other elements within the government's counter terrorism strategy which focus on pursuing and disrupting terrorists. This is not the role of Prevent, which operates in what is called the 'pre-criminal space', similar to other preventative initiatives that protect and safeguard vulnerable individuals at risk of being drawn into harm such as drugs, gang culture and gun and knife crime.

## **What support is available for people at risk of becoming involved in extremism?**

*Channel is a joint initiative that offers help and guidance to people who may be at risk of becoming involved in extremism. Extremist organisations sometimes try to recruit people who are susceptible or vulnerable, in person or through the internet. If the early signs are spotted and acted upon, it safeguards the person concerned and helps protect all of us..*

Concerns that an individual may be vulnerable to radicalisation do not mean that you think the person is a terrorist: it means that you are concerned that they are prone to being exploited by others.

It is important that staff trust their professional judgement – if they are concerned that someone is at risk of getting involved in extremism, they should in the first instance contact the YSS safeguarding lead who should, if required, contact their Channel coordinator. They will, in partnership with other safeguarding professionals, investigate further to assess the nature and extent of the risk and the Channel panel will develop the most appropriate support package for the individual concerned.

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of an overall counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

In addition, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CT and S Act) set out the duty on local authorities and partners to establish and cooperate with a local Channel programme of 'Channel panels' to provide support for people, children and adults, vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It is essential that Channel panel members, partners to local panels and other professionals ensure that children, young people and adults are protected from harm.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

### **1. Definition**

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

“Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011)

### **2. Risks**

People can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include through the influence of family members or friends and/or direct contact with extremist groups and organisations or, increasingly,

through the internet via Social media or other websites. This can put a person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity.

This may take the form of a “grooming” process where the vulnerabilities of a person are exploited to form an exclusive friendship which draws the person away from other influences that might challenge the radical ideology. The risk of radicalisation can develop over time and may relate to a number of factors in the person’s life. Identifying the risks require practitioners to exercise their professional judgement and to seek further advice as necessary. The risk may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified.

On-line content in particular social media may pose a specific risk in normalising radical views and promoting content that is shocking and extreme.

### **3. Indicators**

With regard to issues that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation, these can include:

- Identity Crisis - Distance from cultural / religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them;
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- Unmet aspirations - Perceptions of injustice; feeling of failure; rejection of community values;
- Criminality - Experiences of imprisonment; previous involvement with criminal groups.

However those closest to the individual may first notice the following changes of behaviour:

- General changes of mood, patterns of behaviour, secrecy;
- Changes of friends and mode of dress;
- Use of inappropriate language;
- Possession of violent extremist literature;
- The expression of extremist views;
- Advocating violent actions and means;

- Association with known extremists;
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology.

#### **4. Action to be Taken**

Any practitioner identifying concerns about the person should discuss them with their line manager and report them to the designated YSS safeguarding/Prevent lead, who will discuss these concerns with the police if appropriate.. A multi-agency assessment meeting will determine the appropriate response and level of support to the individual.. Consideration of referrals to the Channel programme may be appropriate in some cases. Response should be proportionate, with the emphasis on supporting people, unless there is evidence of more active involvement in extremist activities.

Wherever possible the response should be appropriately and proportionately provided from within the normal range of universal provision of the organisation working with other local agencies and partners..

Where there is an identified risk/ potential risk that a person may be involved/ potentially involved in supporting or following extremism, further investigation by the police will be required, prior to other assessments and interventions.

#### **Useful Contacts**

The Police Prevent Team 01386 591835/591825/591917

Online training modules on Prevent and Channel are available at

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals>

<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness>

Prevent duty guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance>

Occurrence Form

This form should be completed by any member of staff or volunteer involved in a safeguarding situation, reporting a serious occurrence, registering a concern or notifying the organisation of the death of a service user.

Staff should refer to the relevant guidelines around reporting an occurrence and completing this form.

Please identify the relevant category.

Safeguarding Adult*/Children*	
Serious Occurrence	
Operational Concern	
*Staff / *Volunteer involved in an *accident/*collision/*breakdown	
Death of a Service User *Active/*Inactive	

(\* delete as appropriate)

Details of Member of *staff/*volunteer completing form	
Project and Project Location	
Line Manager	
Date of Occurrence	
Time Occurrence started	
Time Occurrence finished	
Date and time Occurrence reported	
Who was the occurrence reported to? <i>(List everyone you spoke to/contacted)</i>	
What other agencies were involved?	
Were the Police called?	

Location of Occurrence (address/venue/etc)	
What happened?	

<i>(give as much detail as possible)</i>			
Who was involved? <i>(clients, agencies, members of the public etc)</i>			
Was anyone hurt? <i>(give as much detail as possible, including any medical assistance, hospital details etc)</i>			
What action was taken? <i>(YOS, EDT, OM etc informed. Give as much detail as possible)</i>  <i>(For Death of a Service User, please refer to policy)</i>			
What was the outcome? <i>(give as much detail as possible)</i>			
Signed by member of staff/volunteer		Date	
Date form emailed to Line Manager			

Line Manager's comments including:	
Action taken	
Learning outcomes	

Feedback linked to policy/practice			
Training Needs			
Does member of staff/volunteer require further support? What further support has been identified? (Westfield Health, debrief, counselling, other)			
Date staff debrief arranged			
Date of next staff supervision session:			
Signed by Line Manager		Date	
Date emailed to Senior Manager			

Senior Manager's comments			
Feedback/Action taken			

Signed by Senior Manager		Date:	
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## Examples of occurrences staff should report

This list is not exhaustive – you should report anything that causes you concern.

- Disclosure around criminal activity
- Disclosure around being abused in any form
- Disclosure around attraction to staff or volunteers
- Any occurrences where disclosures are made about guns, knives, weapons of any sort being carried, stored, used, etc
- Any occurrences where disclosures are made about drugs or illegal substances of any sort being carried, stored, used, etc
- Instances whereby thoughts or occasions of self-harm, suicide, are disclosed
- Disclosures of Domestic Violence
- Threats to YSS staff or volunteers
- Threats towards other agency's staff or volunteers
- Threats to individuals in the community
- Any instances where Safeguarding teams are involved
- Any instances where staff have had to inform YOS, EDT, Social Services, or OMs about an occurrence
- Any real or perceived harm to children
- Any instances where children, family members, friends of the client attend a meeting without prior agreement
- Any accident that staff member or volunteer and the client may be involved in
- Any car collision/breakdown staff member or volunteer and the client may be involved in
- Any instances where the police are called to the meeting/appointment
- Any instance where a staff member or volunteer's personal details are disclosed inappropriately
- Any accidental interaction with a client outside of work that you feel may have compromised you

## Reporting an occurrence and completing the form guidelines

