

Child Protection Policy

RESPONSIBLE PERSON

Name Fariha Thomas

Position within Organisation / Title YCSA Manager

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In absence of responsible person, please contact

YCSA enquiries – enquiries@ycsa.org.uk

**To report concerns to Social Work, phone Social Care Direct 0141 287 0555
Out with Office Hours Phone 0300 343 1505**

Introduction

Youth Community Support Agency is committed to the protection of children and regards the safeguarding and promoting of the interests and wellbeing of children as of paramount concern. We are also committed to the protection of vulnerable children from exploitative relationships.

It is the duty of all those employed or involved with the organisation, to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of all children with whom they come into contact, including reporting any abuse discovered or suspected.

Staff and volunteers will receive appropriate training on Child Protection and this will be refreshed at least every 3 years. It is a requirement that all staff and volunteers who work with young people at YCSA must have a clean PVG check.

The YCSA Child Protection Policy falls into two parts:

The Child Protection Reporting Policy which defines child abuse/neglect and the actions to be taken when this is suspected; and the Code of Good Practice and

Internal Child Protection Policy which relate to the work undertaken by YCSA to ensure young people are kept safe during their participation in YCSA activities.

This Policy also links to other policies that keep our service user's safe e.g. Health and Safety policy, Service User IT policy; Volunteer policy; Recruitment and Selection policy, Training Policy, Data Protection policy and associated Privacy Notice.

Who does Child Protection apply to?

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines a "child" as someone who has not attained the age of 18. This is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore YCSA will view all children and young people up to the age of 18 as a child in relation to this Child Protection Policy.

YCSA is aware that the individual young person's circumstances and age will dictate what legal measures can be applied. For example, in some circumstances the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 can be applied to over-16s, rather than the Children's Hearing system. This may impact on the way we provide support to a young person, but not to the need to implement the Child Protection policy.

What is child abuse and child neglect?

Child abuse and neglect are linked to the concept of harm/ significant harm to the child/young person. "Harm" means the ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child, including, for example, impairment suffered as a result of seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. In this context, "development" can mean physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development and "health" can mean physical or mental health.

Whether the harm suffered, or likely to be suffered, by a child or young person is "significant" is determined by comparing the child's health and development with what might be reasonably expected of a similar child.¹

There are five primary categories of child abuse or neglect:²

Physical Abuse: Any deliberate act of physical harm to a child or young person by the person having care or charge over the child.

This could also include a deliberate failure to protect a child from physical danger.³

Emotional Abuse:⁴ Persistent and/or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child or young person. This may include degrading name-calling, complete absence

1 The National Guidelines for Child Protection 2014 p.13 pt. 42

2 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional setting by those known to the, or more rarely, by a stranger. Assessments will need to consider whether abuse has occurred or is likely to occur. National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. 2014

3 Physical Abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child/young person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after. National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. 2014

of affection towards the child, or unrealistic demands for achievement being placed on a child and being intimidated by threats. This is often the most difficult to recognise, but it can have a profound effect on children and young people.

Neglect:⁵ Failure to provide care or exposure of a child to danger that seriously affects his or her health and/or development. This could include starvation and prolonged exposure to cold.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child⁶ in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented.⁷ This may include activities that children do not fully understand and cannot give their consent to; and/or they have been coerced into participating against their will. Sexual abuse includes a wide range of actions including people indecently exposing themselves to children, asking children to touch their genitals, viewing pornography and penetrative sex.

Non-Organic Failure to Thrive: Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones – physical growth, weight gain, social and intellectual development – and there is no reasonable medical or organic explanation for this.

There are, in addition, a number of specific activities that are defined as child abuse and which may not be so obviously linked to the primary categories.

These are:

- **Organised abuse**, for example, children involved in prostitution and ritual abuse
- **Munchausen's syndrome by proxy**/ fabrication or induction of illness in a child by a carer
- **Foetal abuse**, for example, through maternal abuse of alcohol or drugs leading to foetal damage
- **Domestic abuse** (primarily of mothers) which causes physical or emotional abuse of children
- Children affected by **parental drug and/or alcohol abuse**
- **Racial abuse**

4 Emotional Abuse may involve the imposition of age-or- developmentally – inappropriate expectations on a child. It may involve causing the child to feel frightened or in danger, exploiting or corrupting children. National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

5 Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from “non –organic failure to thrive” , where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth or development milestones and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological need., likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

6 The age of consent for sexual activity is 16 in Scotland.

7 National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014

- **Female genital mutilation** (circumcision)
- **Forced marriage**
- **Self harm**, children who need protecting from harming themselves, through self inflicted injuries, reckless behaviour, or subject to child exploitation.

Child Protection Reporting Policy

Confidentiality

If a child or young person may be at risk of harm, this will always override a professional or organisational requirement to keep information confidential. Those employed or involved with the organisation have a responsibility to act to make sure that a child whose safety or welfare may be at risk is protected from harm. Children, young people and their parents must always be told this.

What to do if you think a child or young person is at risk of abuse/ neglect?

- Be supportive to the child or young person. Listen with care, but do not ask questions other than to set the child at ease. Take what the child or young person is saying seriously, do not be judgemental; and advise them you will have to pass the information on, reminding them of the limits to confidentiality i.e. Social Work/Police may need to be informed ;
- Ensure that the child is in a safe place and that there is another person caring for the child while you write up and speak to your manager
- Write down the nature of your concern and anything the child or young person may have told you using, so far as possible, the words used by the child or young person. Remember to sign and date the notes taken;
- Remember you are not being asked to carry out a Child Protection assessment – this will be for trained statutory staff to undertake. Your role is to report concerns as accurately as possible to ensure the child is safe
- Immediately report the grounds of your concern to the **YCSA Manager (Fariha Thomas)** who will take steps to pass the information on to the appropriate person or organisation who will investigate the concerns. **Do not delay in reporting your concerns. Wherever possible, advice Fariha Thomas on the same day the concern arises. Fariha can be contacted outwith her working hours on 07949 653 845 for issues of Child Protection;** and

If you have concerns that the response from the YCSA Manager is inadequate, you should contact Social Work Services Office or out of hours service and outline your concerns and the basis for them.

To report concerns to Social Work, phone Social Care Direct 0141 287 0555. Out with Office Hours Phone 0300 343 1505

Action to be taken by the responsible person

- All cases of suspected or alleged abuse must be treated seriously and the local Social Work Services should be contacted immediately via Social Care Direct. The concerns should be clearly stated including the basis for them. All telephone calls should be followed up in writing within 48 hours.

Social Care Direct Glasgow

Office Hours: 0141 287 0555

Outwith Office Hours: 0300 343 1505

- If you have outstanding concerns following the response from Social Work Services, you can contact the local Police Office or the Reporter to the Children's Panel and outline your concerns to them.

What happens next?

It is the duty of Social Work Services to investigate matters of concern in relation to the protection of the child or young person. Where it is alleged a crime has been committed against a child, the matter is likely to be investigated jointly with the Police.

The investigating Social Worker / Police Officer may require to speak to the person with whom the concerns originated. You should co-operate fully with any future enquiries.

What if it is someone within the organisation that you are concerned about?

If you have observed a member of the organisation acting in a way that has caused you to be concerned, and feel the matter needs to be investigated you should contact the **YCSA Manager (Fariha Thomas)** outlining your concerns and the basis for them. She will take your concerns seriously and decide on an appropriate course of action. This may involve the use of the organisations disciplinary procedures and/or a referral to Social Work Services/Police. Concerns should be recorded in writing, signed and dated

If the concerns involve the YCSA Manager, this should be reported to the Chair of YCSA or if urgent and unable to contact to Social Work Services/Police.

In addition to relevant Social Work/Police referral, if a Child Protection concern relates to an issue within YCSA, an investigation will be undertaken, headed up by the YCSA Manager or a Board member as appropriate, to ascertain what action is required and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

Supporting the child or young person

The child or young person is likely to continue to be involved with the organisation following the reporting of the concerns. Links should be maintained with the Social Work Services office involved in any investigation, in order to ensure appropriate support to the child / family.

It remains important that employees and those involved with the child or young person act in a supportive manner. You should

- Continue to listen with care if the child wishes to talk further;
- Allow the child to take their time and stop as and when they need;
- Reassure the child or young person he / she was right to tell, if appropriate;
- Affirm the child or young person's feelings as expressed by them;
- Do not question / interrogate the child or young person;
- Do not show disbelief;
- Avoid being judgmental;
- Do not introduce personal or third party experiences of abuse; and
- Avoid displaying strong emotions.

Historical Abuse

Where a child or adult discloses historical abuse, this will be done in accordance with the child protection procedures. In addition to relevant Social Work/Police referral, if it relates to an issue within YCSA, an investigation will be undertaken, headed up by the YCSA Manager or a Board member as appropriate, to ascertain what action is required and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

Training and awareness

Employees/volunteers will be made aware of the existence of the Child Protection Policy, and their responsibilities in relation to the child protection process. YCSA provides training on Child Protection which is mandatory for all staff and volunteers and is repeated on at least a 3 year basis. A copy of the Child Protection policy is given to all new staff members and volunteers as part of their induction.

The policy is available at all times at the following locations: YCSA web site; and in hard copy on the wall opposite the photocopier.

Internal Child Protection Policy

It is the policy of YCSA to ensure that all participants in workshops, projects and other YCSA activities are protected from physical, sexual and emotional harm whilst taking part in YCSA activities.

In order to achieve these safeguards, YCSA requires that all tutors and other staff working with children and young people follow the Code of Good Practice set out below.

What to do

If you have any reason to suspect a child or young person in a YCSA workshop or event is being abused:

If you are a tutor/sessional worker/volunteer:

- Inform the YCSA Manager or another member of the core staff in the absence of the Manager
- Make a written, dated, record of all details of the facts known to you as soon as possible, and give a copy to the staff member to whom you have spoken.

If you are a YCSA core staff member:

- Inform the YCSA Manager
- Make a written, dated, record of all details of the facts known to you as soon as possible, and give a copy to the staff member to whom you have spoken.
- Follow the YCSA Child Protection Reporting Procedure

In addition to relevant Social Work/Police referral, if a Child Protection concern relates to an issue within YCSA, an investigation will be undertaken, headed up by the YCSA Manager or a Board member as appropriate, to ascertain what action is required and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the individual and others.

Code of Good Practice

This Code relates to the way our staff and volunteers work with children and young people

General Principles

You should:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Plan activities which involve more than one person being present, or ensure that other adults are within sight or hearing wherever possible, other than planned 1:1 support sessions and counselling.

- Respect everyone's right to privacy
- Be available to listen to the concerns of young participants, and to refer them to other sources of help where appropriate
- Try to ensure that your actions cannot be misunderstood or cause offence
- Encourage young participants to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes and behaviour they do not like
- Show understanding when dealing with sensitive issues and recognise that caution is required when discussing such issues
- Be aware that even caring physical contact with a child or young person can be misinterpreted. Be clear why you judge physical contact is appropriate in any situation e.g. an artist showing how to hold a brush or instrument, and record this and discuss with your manager, for your own protection.

You should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour e.g. bullying, taunting, racist behaviour
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children and young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without first checking facts
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour, such as tantrums
- Show favouritism to an individual
- Exaggerate or trivialise any child abuse issues
- Make suggestive remarks or actions, even in jest
- Deliberately place yourself or others in potentially compromising situations

Procedure revised January 2018