

## **YMCA Cornwall**

### **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY AND PROTECTION PROCEDURE**

#### **Policy Statement**

As one of its major activities, YMCA Cornwall seeks to serve the needs of young people, promoting holistic development. In doing so, YMCA Cornwall takes seriously the welfare of all young people, children and vulnerable adults who come onto its premises or who are involved in our activities.

YMCA Cornwall aims to ensure that they are welcomed into a safe, caring, Christian environment with a happy and friendly atmosphere.

YMCA Cornwall recognises that it is the responsibility of each one of its staff, paid and voluntary, to prevent the abuse of any kind of young people, children and vulnerable adults and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

YMCA Cornwall recognises its responsibility to implement, maintain and regularly review procedures, which are designed to prevent and be alert to such abuse.

YMCA Cornwall is committed to supporting, resourcing and training those who work with young people, children and vulnerable adults and to providing supervision and is committed to maintaining good links with the relevant statutory authorities.

#### **Procedure**

- 1. Plan the work of the Association / Unit so as to minimise situations where the abuse of young people and / or children and / or vulnerable adults may occur.**
  - 1.1 Arrange that, as far as possible, an adult is not left alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open. This good practice can be as much benefit to the adult as to the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
  - 1.2 Ensure that all workers with children, young people and vulnerable adults do not meet a child or young person or vulnerable adult off YMCA premises without a parent or other adult being present.
  - 1.3 Always have at least two adults present with a group. Particularly when it is the only activity taking place on YMCA premises.

- 1.4 Always ensure appropriate ratios of leadership to children/young people/vulnerable adults are observed according to age and gender.
- 1.5 Never take a group off premises with fewer than two adults. More may be required based on the numbers and activity being carried out.
- 1.6 Think about the use of premises. For example, do not expect children or young people or vulnerable adults to have to walk along a dark unsupervised path in order to enter YMCA premises.
- 1.7 A record must be kept of each activity/session. This record should include a register of attendees and staff and details of any significant incidents.
- 1.8 Where children, young people or vulnerable adults have to be transported by car or minibus, arrange as far as possible, to have more than one passenger in the vehicle and that children are seated in the back seats of the vehicle.
- 1.9 Ensure that children leaving the premises do so only in the presence of adults known to have permission to do so.
- 1.10 There may be occasions when a worker has to work individually with a child/young person/vulnerable adult. Guidelines for workers can be found in the Everyone Shares Drive.

## **2. Have policies and procedures on the management and supervision of all activities and provide training on the implementation of them.**

- 2.1 Ensure that clear management guidelines exist for each activity and that appropriate training is provided.
- 2.2 Consent must always be sought when photos are being taken during an activity and the following guidelines must be followed:
  - There must be a written consent from a parent/guardian or carer for under 18's, and over 18's, if they are not capable of giving permission themselves, for the photo to be taken;
  - If the photo is printed the young person must not be named without the express permission of the parent or guardian;
  - All young people/vulnerable adults being photographed must be appropriately dressed;
  - The photo should focus on the activity not the young person/vulnerable adult;
  - Photos printed must represent a broad range of young people/vulnerable adults;
  - All people taking photos or recording footage must organise this through a line manager;

- All concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the appropriate line manager.
- 2.3 Ensure that a risk assessment is developed for each activity, which addresses child/vulnerable adult protection as well as other safety issues.
- 2.4 Ensure that working links are maintained with local Social Services and Area Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Committees.
- 2.5 Appoint a Safeguarding Officer within the Local Association / Unit. It is recommended that staff members with positions of authority and relevant experience should be appointed as Safeguarding Officers. These people will be given responsibility for overseeing the policy and the way it is put into practice. These people will also be responsible for ensuring that protection issues are reported to the relevant authorities. The named officers are included as an Appendix to this document.
- 2.6 Appoint Safeguarding Officers:
- Safeguarding Officers should be appointed from within the Association to have responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of the Associations' Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 2.7 Guidelines for the appointment of Safeguarding Officers:
- The appointments should be ratified by the HR Committee.
- The Officer should be a senior member of staff or senior lay person with experience of working in children/youth/social services context.
- The Officer should be capable of being sympathetic to young people/vulnerable adults but objective in the pursuance of their task – with an ability to cope with the shock and upset abuse allegations may produce.
- The Officer must be able to act confidentially, speedily and decisively, relating well to statutory authorities, parents/carers etc.
- The Officer must be willing to undergo training in procedures and be prepared to brief staff and the Board, on appropriate local policies, procedure development and review their effectiveness.
- The Officer must have clear lines of accountability to the Board and CEO, and have clear links with other staff.
- The Officer must have freedom to act when dealing with abuse cases.

The Officer will report cases to the Board and CEO for monitoring.

2.8 Give all workers, staff and volunteers clear roles:

2.8.1 Abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults is most easily concealed where there is confusion amongst adults about roles and responsibility for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Therefore the Safeguarding Officers should have clear job descriptions.

2.8.2 Volunteers should also have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Refer to the Volunteer Procedures.

2.8.3 All workers should be aware that their contact with young people, children and vulnerable adults within the YMCA puts them in a relationship of trust (i.e. in a position of power or influence over another by virtue of their work or the nature of the activity, both within and outside of working hours).

Staff guidelines should include directions on acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in "out of hours" situations stressing that no relationships should be encouraged in which either the young person/vulnerable adult or worker could be at risk, or which provides opportunity for ambiguity and misunderstanding or where the relationship / activity is unsupervised and contravenes good practice.

2.9 Carry out the full recruitment procedure for all workers – staff and volunteers

2.9.1 Application Form:

As part of the recruitment procedure all workers, paid or unpaid, should complete an application form. All situations that involve work with children and/or young people and/or vulnerable adults are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore all applicants should be asked to disclose information about criminal convictions. Applicants must give details of criminal convictions and they will be informed that the YMCA reserves the right to carry out a criminal background check. Failure to return this form will halt the application process.

2.9.2 Candidate's contacts with children, young people and vulnerable adults:

It is important that the nature of the candidates contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults are thoroughly explored at interview. These may be through previous work in the YMCA, through family contacts, through work with a voluntary organisation or in other ways. If there is any doubt about the

suitability of the staff member/volunteer this should be explored further through searching questions.

#### 2.9.2 References:

A determined abuser may well tell a lie. It is for this reason that a reference should be obtained. If the worker / volunteer has moved frequently from one organisation to another it would be advisable to find out why. References should be sought in writing and it must be made clear that the person is to work / volunteer with children / young people / vulnerable adults and that it is their views on the applicants suitability for this work which are being invited. If replies are vague or ambiguous it may be necessary for them to be followed up in person or by telephone. It is vital that equal opportunities are taken into consideration.

#### 2.9.3 Criminal background / suitability check:

A criminal background / suitability check will be carried out. No person must work alone with young people or children or vulnerable adults until their Disclosure and Barring Service Check has been completed satisfactorily.

#### 2.10 Use supervision as a means of protecting children and / or young people and / or vulnerable adults:

Regular opportunities should be made for workers to meet together to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children, young people and vulnerable adults. Special attention should be paid to any situation in which a child or young person or vulnerable adult is being either highly favoured or harshly treated, as these could be signs of abuse.

When possible, line managers should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work.

### **3. Establish a system whereby young people and / or children and / or vulnerable adults may talk with an independent person.**

3.1 Arrange for a person to be available for children, young people and vulnerable adults to talk to if they feel they have been abused in any way. The person should be totally independent of the activities the children, young people and vulnerable adults are participating in, but should be someone from either, a different branch of YMCA Cornwall or from another organisation.

3.2 If this is done the appointed person must be given clear, written guidelines as to what actions to take to stop abuse disclosed by a child or young person or vulnerable adult, otherwise they may unwittingly permit the abuse to continue. It is strongly

recommended that contacts should be by phone rather than face to face. Consider ways of letting the children, young people and vulnerable adults know that such a person is available for them to talk to.

- 3.3 Display the telephone number of Childline, Respond and other similar relevant organisations, on a notice board, which is regularly seen by children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- 3.4 Make sure that all adults working with children, young people and vulnerable adults know the name of a suitable person with whom they could put the child or young person in contact, or to whom they could turn for help.
- 3.5 In addition consider the need also to provide opportunities for workers to talk to independent people about any difficulties or anxieties in relation to their work.
- 3.6 Duty both to prevent abuse and to report abuse:

It is the YMCA’s duty both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. The normal rule of client confidentiality cannot be observed when abuse is discovered or suspected. When workers suspect, discover or are told/ learn about abuse occurring in or outside the YMCA setting, they should follow the reporting procedures outlined in the paragraph entitled Reporting Abuse – suspected, disclosed or discovered, in section 6.

All young and vulnerable people are given a copy of ‘Say No to Abuse’ booklet.

#### 4. Types of abuse

Workers will be given guidance on what constitutes abuse and how to recognise it at Induction and will be issued with the ‘Alerter’s Guide’.. Examples of abuse as listed in the Guide are as follows:

Physical	Being hit or slapped, being given the wrong medication on purpose, being locked-in or force fed.
Psychological	Being threatened, not being given choices, being bullied or isolated from other people.
Financial	Having money or property stolen, being pressured into giving people money or changing a will, misuse of benefits, not being allowed access to money.
Neglect	Ignoring medical or physical care needs, withholding food or drink, not allowing access to appropriate health or social services, being left in wet or dirty clothes.

Sexual	Being touched or kissed when it is not wanted, being made to touch or kiss someone else, being raped, being made to listen to sexual comments or forced to look at sexual acts, or materials.
Discrimination	Ignoring spiritual or religious beliefs, comments or jokes about a person's disability, age race, sexual orientation, or gender/gender identity, ignoring cultural needs, for example diet or clothing.
Institutional	Lack of individual care, no flexibility of bedtimes or waking, deprived environment and lack of stimulation.

## 5. Reacting to abuse.

You may suspect abuse, you may discover or witness abuse or someone may report abuse to you. However you become aware of abuse, it is important that you follow the following guidance:

- Do not delay.
- Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse.
- Record any observations and keep an account of what you have been told by staff or the child or young person or vulnerable adult. These records must be accurate and factual.
- It is not your role to investigate – concentrate on presenting information clearly. Do not push a young person/vulnerable adult for details nor make suggestions as to what they may want to say as this can contaminate the evidence for a Police case.
- Pass on your information to the appropriate person.
- Do not discuss with anyone other than the person to whom you should report the matter.

If a child or young person or vulnerable adult wants to talk about abuse:

- Accept what the child, young person or vulnerable adult says, keeping calm and looking at them directly.
- Ask a vulnerable adult what they would like to happen. This may not always be possible but their wishes should be acknowledged and acted upon wherever it is possible.
- Let them know that you need to tell someone else, do not promise confidentiality, even when a child, young person or vulnerable adult has broken a rule they are not to blame.
- Be aware that the child, young person or vulnerable adult may be being threatened.
- Never push for information.
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult they were right to tell you and you believe them.
- Let the child, young person or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next and you will let them know what happens.

- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record, even if these are subsequently typed up, for an indefinite period.
- If it is considered that the person making the disclosure is likely to be at risk by returning home, immediate contact should be made with the Social Services or the Police.

## **6. Reporting abuse – suspected, disclosed or discovered.**

All staff should be aware of the appropriate reporting procedure – this process is illustrated by the flowchart in the Appendices. All staff should also be aware of the YMCA Cornwall guidelines on Confidentiality and Information Sharing.

Workers should inform their line manager, or the Safeguarding Officer appointed within your YMCA or another appropriate person.

It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that cases of abuse are reported. It is normal procedure to contact the local Social Services team for a child and the Access Team for an Adult. If the child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the police should be contacted.

The NSPCC can be contacted for advice – the helpline is open 24 hours a day, the number is 0880 800 500. Also available for advice is the CCPAS (Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) – 01322 660011. For vulnerable adult protection call Respond on 0808 808 0700

**Any worker, staff or volunteer, can bypass the procedures and share concerns with an outside agency – Social Services, NSPCC, Respond – if they feel that their line manager or management team/committee are not dealing with their concern or are implemented in some way.**

In every area there are procedures for investigating cases where a child/vulnerable adult is at risk. The relevant Social Services Department has the main responsibility and will normally set up a case conference carried out by social workers and police. The YMCA may be asked to attend either to give information or to support the parent/family. It is important to clarify in what capacity the YMCA has been invited and how you want to be seen by the family, young person or vulnerable adult e.g. as a member of the conference or as a support.

Consideration should be given, on a case-by-case basis, to the support, which can be given to an abused child, young person or vulnerable adult, recognising that the support needs to be non-judgemental, appropriate and long term. External help, available through Social Services or other Counselling agencies, may be advisable.

## **7. Dealing with allegations or suspicions of abuse by YMCA workers – staff or volunteer.**

### **When a report is received it is important to react immediately.**

All complaints and allegations must be made to the Line Manager, the Chief Executive and the Safeguarding Officer and a detailed report recorded.

The Line Manager, Chief Executive, Safeguarding Officer should clarify the information received, by interviewing the informant and record the following information:

- Details of the child/vulnerable adult and family.
- Nature of the allegation and the alleged perpetrator.
- Dates and times of the incident.
- Anyone else involved.

The allegation should then be reported to the Social Services or the Access Team along with the details obtained.

If the person making the complaint is not the child's usual 'carer' (e.g. parent, guardian), they should be contacted by a senior member of staff – Chief Executive or Safeguarding Officer – with the consent of Social Services, to keep them informed of the situation.

If the allegation is made against the Safeguarding Officer, it is not appropriate to follow an internal reporting route. An independent should be identified (e.g. Regional Executive Officer) to whom the allegation can be reported and an interview with informant recorded. The allegations should then be reported to the Social Services or the Access Team by the independent contact.

It should be normal practice to suspend the worker and you should inform the Social Services/Access Team/Police that you intend to take this action. This in no way implies blame but is a measure to protect the child/vulnerable adult and the staff/volunteer. This should be made clear at the point of suspension. For advice about the suspension process, contact the YMCA Cornwall Human Resources Officer.

## **8. Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation**

Currently, there is an elevated focus on the prevention of people being drawn into terrorism. Legislation states that Prevent Duty is a multi-agency responsibility and, as such, YMCA Cornwall has arrangements in place to work with the LCSB and provide training for all staff on the Prevent Duty to ensure they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them under this duty.

Whilst operating this policy, YMCA Cornwall uses the following accepted Government definition of extremism which 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; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.*

Radicalisation:

*Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.*

There is no place for extremist views of any kind within YMCA Cornwall and its housing, whether from our young people, staff or trustees/directors or any other external sources.

We recognise that extremism and exposure to extremist materials and influences can lead to poor outcomes for young people and so should be addressed as a safeguarding concern as set out in this Policy.

Extremists of all persuasions aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice and thereby limiting the life chances of young people.

In support of the Prevent duty, YMCA Cornwall:

- will raise awareness amongst its staff that young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views from an early age which emanate from a variety of sources and media, including via the internet, and at times young people may themselves reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language.
- will ensure that network/internet filtering is in place to protect all users from inappropriate material.
- will ensure that any prejudice, discrimination or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by young people (including staff) will always be challenged as per its policies.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities staff will be alert to:

- disclosures by young people of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of YMCA Cornwall, such through their friends or community groups and clubs, especially where young people have not actively sought these out.
- graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images.
- young people accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.
- reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
- young people voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives.

- the use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence.
- intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture.
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views.

## **Reporting Procedures**

All concerns should be reported immediately to one of YMCA Cornwall's Designated Safeguarding Persons (see Appendix 1).

YMCA Cornwall will closely follow any locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Authority and/or the Safeguarding Children Board's agreed processes and criteria for safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

## **9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

Vulnerable adult enquiries, investigations and conferences can only be successful if staff share and exchange all relevant information. That information must be treated as confidential at all times and staff will be bound by the ethical and statutory codes that cover confidentiality and data protection.

Problems around the disclosure of information can be avoided if the consent of the individual is obtained, preferably in writing, so long as they have mental capacity. However in certain circumstances disclosure may be necessary in the public interest where a failure to disclose information may expose themselves or others to significant risk of serious harm or to prevent criminal activity.

All those providing information should take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that, should any information exchange be challenged in respect of a breach of confidentiality or, for example, as a breach of the Human Rights Act, the information can be supported by evidence.

Concerns may arise within the YMCA as information comes to light about a person with whom the service is already in contact. Whilst professionals should seek in general to discuss any concerns with the individual and their carers and seek agreement to share the knowledge with other relevant agencies, this should not be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will jeopardise the safety of the individual, other individuals or the investigation.

Shared information must be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is held and must be held no longer than is necessary for that purpose.

YMCA Cornwall is responsible for maintaining their own records on work with safeguarding children and adults cases. Please refer to the Data Protection

Policy that states the purpose and format for keeping records and for their destruction.

Within this policy YMCA Cornwall seeks to set out the proper level and line of communication to be adhered to when any partner agency seeks to obtain from another agency confidential information concerning clients and records.

The policy will adhere to the principles within:

- The Data Protection Act.
- Human Rights Act.
- Freedom of Information Act
- Existing protocols for sharing information as set out in the YMCA Cornwall Confidentiality Policies and Data Protection Policy.
- A Multi-Agency Policy for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse and Neglect in Cornwall (No to Abuse).
- Safeguarding Adults – A National Framework of Standards for Good Practice and Outcomes in Adult Protection Work.
- The Care Act 2014

**APPENDIX 1**

**Named Safeguarding Officers**

**Pat Woodfield**

Chief Executive  
YMCA Cornwall  
Telephone: 01736 334820  
Mobile: 07973 728526

**Christine Stuart**

Housing Manager  
YMCA Cornwall  
Telephone 01736 334829  
Mobile: 07458 305286

**Kim Stuart**

Assistant Housing Manager  
YMCA Cornwall  
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Mobile: 07458 305285

**Penny Marns**

Trustee/Director YMCA Cornwall  
01736 334820

As at 11 February 2025