

YOUNG SOLUTIONS WORCESTERSHIRE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

DECEMBER 2014

1. SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Young Solutions are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect. This applies to all the children and young people, with whom we work, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality or country of origin.

Workers, including volunteers and the trustees, will at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of the children and young people involved with Young Solutions and the organisations with whom it works.

This will be done by:

- Ensuring that all our paid staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised;
- Carefully assessing the risks that children and young people may encounter and taking all necessary steps to minimise and manage them;
- Letting member organisations, parents, children and young people know how to voice concerns or complaints about anything that they may not be happy with; and
- Giving member organisations, parents, children, young people and workers information about what we do and what can be expected from us.

To this end Young Solutions has in place:

- A Child Protection Policy
- A Health and Safety Policy (including Risk Assessments)
- A Disciplinary Policy
- A Complaints Procedure
- A Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- A Whistle Blowing Policy
- A Confidentiality Policy

We will ensure that staff, volunteers and trustees know how to recognise and respond to concerns that a child or young person may be abused or neglected.

The Trustees have appointed, from within its membership, a Champion for Safeguarding. He/she will report annually to the Executive on any safeguarding and/or child protection issues which may have arisen over the previous twelve months. They will ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually; they will also ensure safe recruitment policies and procedures for handling allegations against paid staff and volunteers are in place.

2. CHILD PROTECTION STATEMENT

We believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognize our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people. We will be alert to indications of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse in the children and young people with whom we work and will respond to their needs.

We value and respect every child and young person and will endeavour always to listen to them.

We will provide staff and volunteers with guidance to follow when they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing or at risk of harm.

We will adhere rigorously to our Procedures and Code of Conduct.

The Designated Child Protection Person is Phil Street – Young Solutions Manager

The alternate Designated Child Protection Person is Michael Hunter – Young Solutions Chairman of Trustees

When there is a concern about a child or young person, every adult in our organisation/group is expected to share those concerns with the designated Child Protection Person.

The legislation that shapes Young Solutions Safeguarding Policy is:

The Children Act 1989 s 47

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Data Protection of Data Act 1998

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)

The next review of our policies and procedures will be held in December 2015.

3. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PRACTICE

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Section 47 Children Act 1989 states that a local authority has a duty to make enquiries when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.' It must make such enquiries as it considers necessary in order to decide whether any action is needed to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Significant harm is defined in section 31(9) of 1989 Act and is identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DoH, HO, DfEE,2000) as resulting from physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. For the purpose

of this policy the term 'significant harm' is used to refer to all child protection concerns. Further information is contained in the Guidance Document.

The Children Act imposes a duty on statutory agencies to assist the local authority with its enquiries where called upon to do so although they are not obliged to do so 'where it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances of the case'.

There is no legal requirement for voluntary agencies to assist the local authority in meeting its child protection responsibilities. "Working Together", however, stresses that voluntary organisations need to have clear guidance and procedures in place to ensure appropriate referrals and co-operation with statutory agencies procedures.

Unresolved concerns about harm to a child may lead to their becoming subject to child protection procedures (see "Working Together"). This may lead to an initial child protection conference and a child protection plan will be drawn up involving relevant agencies, the family and the child or young person. Substantiated concerns may lead to the court making a care order as a result of an application made under section 31 of the Children Act.

The response of Young Solutions to child protection concerns will be determined in accordance with the policy set out below. Developed with reference to the Thresholds Guidance for Practitioners: responding to the needs of children and young people in Worcestershire produced by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board 2014

Identification of abuse

There are different types of abuse, which may include:

Physical abuse

Actual or risk of physical injury to a child or young person or failure to prevent physical injury to a child including deliberate poisoning or suffocation.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a child or young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, resulting in the significant impairment of the young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive (i.e. not due to illness).

Sexual abuse

Actual or risk of sexual exploitation of a child or young person.

Emotional abuse

Actual or risk of severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment.

Signs and symptoms

There is no clear dividing line between one type of abuse and another.

The following section is divided into four areas to help categorise what may be seen or heard. Children and young people may show symptoms from one or all of the categories.

This should not be used as a checklist: Young Solutions staff and volunteers should be aware of anything unusual displayed by the young person.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Bruises in places that are not usually harmed in normal play
- Bruise or marks consistent with either straps or slaps
- Undue fear of adults
- Aggression towards others
- Unexplained injuries or burns – particularly if they are recurrent

PHYSICAL NEGLECT

- Exposure to danger/lack of supervision
- Inadequate/inappropriate clothing
- Constant hunger
- Poor standard of hygiene
- Untreated illnesses

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Overly withdrawn child or young person
- Overly aggressive child or young person
- Constant wetting or soiling
- Frequent vomiting
- Persistent rocking movement
- Very poor language development
- Inability to relate to peers or adults

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Language and drawing inappropriate for their age
- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age
- Wariness on being approached
- Soreness in the genital area
- Unexplained rashes or marks in the genital areas
- Pain on urination
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Stained or bloody underclothes
- Recurrent tummy pains or headaches
- Bruises on inner thigh or buttocks

Remember

Signs and symptoms often appear in a cluster, but also many of the indicators above may be caused by other factors

4. Safe Recruitment

- a. YOUNG SOLUTIONS manager will present a job description and person specification to the Chairman that includes skills and necessary to carry out the tasks;
 - Make sure the job descriptions include reference to Young Solutions safeguarding policy for children / young people and the protection procedures;
 - Mention within any adverts, conversations or documents used for recruitment and selection that working at Young Solutions will be subject to a disclosure and barring check;
 - Candidates including volunteers, must complete an application form.
 - Always have two representatives of the trustees or their appointees to interview the candidates, this includes volunteers;
 - Use the interview to explore the career history, including the reasons for any gaps in their career;
 - When attending for interview, request each candidate, including volunteers, bring a form of photographic identification with them;
 - Explain to applicants or volunteers that before they start work at Young Solutions they must produce two satisfactory references and complete a DBS application. They should not start work with Young Solutions until the DBS certificate has been shown to the manager or in the case of appointing the manager the chairman;
 - Young Solutions always conducts its own DBS checks – certificates from elsewhere may not be accepted unless as part of the DBS Update Service;
 - A reference should be from someone who knows the candidate (in a professional capacity) and be able to comment on their suitability of working with children and young people – reference will not be acceptable from friends, neighbours or family members;
 - Young Solutions has a probation period which allows a period of time to see if the person is suitable to work in the organisation;
 - All staff will receive a copy of the safeguarding policy and will sign to say they have received this document;
 - All staff will complete the Universal safeguarding training and will receive induction that includes safeguarding;
 - All Young Solutions staff will undertake a revised DBS check every three years.

5. YOUNG SOLUTIONS SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Young Solutions staff must explain on first contact with the child or young person that they cannot give guarantees about maintaining confidentiality if there are issues relating to safeguarding their welfare or the welfare of other children. Young Solutions staff will need to refer to Young Solutions Confidentiality Policy.

Young Solutions confidentiality policy can be found in its staff handbook, but essentially Young Solutions believe that the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount. This means that the considerations of confidentiality

which might apply to other situations in the organisation should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned particularly when a disclosure or an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

It is the responsibility of all Young Solutions staff to be alert to the possibility of child protection and children in need issues and to know the signs to look for. If significant harm is suspected the concern should be recorded, discussed and reported to the worker's Line Manager immediately. It will be the decision of the manager or in his or her absence, the Chairman of Young Solutions whether to make a referral to Children's Social Care. Advice may be sought from the Access Centre Children's Services on 01905 768054. Such decisions must be clearly recorded.

Children and young people with a disability may attend a Young Solutions member organisation/group or may be involved in a Young Solutions project. Staff have to be aware that some children and young people, because of their learning or physical disability, are vulnerable and may find it more difficult to recognise and report abuse. Their disability may mean that:

- Their life experiences are limited, creating difficulty recognising inappropriate behaviour.
- They are afraid of challenging people, concerned that they will anger an authority figure or get into trouble.
- Communication difficulties make it hard to report abuse.
- They may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation.
- They receive intimate physical care and, therefore, the abuse may seem 'normal'.
- Their self-esteem and self-image are poor.
- They might not be aware to whom they can report abuse.
- Authority figures are unwilling to believe that anyone would abuse a disabled child or young person.

Young Solutions staff must take particular care, therefore, when working with children and young people with disabilities.

If a child protection allegation is made against a Young Solutions staff or trustee it should be reported immediately to the Young Solutions manager or to the Young Solutions Chair if the allegation is against the manager. He or she will act in accordance with Young Solutions disciplinary procedures and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board child protection procedures.

Young Solutions complaints procedure can be invoked if a child, young person, parent / carer or some other involved person wishes to make a complaint about the behaviour, language or actions of a member of Young Solutions staff or board of trustees. Young Solutions complaints procedure can be found in its staff handbook.

If a child or young person makes any child protection disclosure to a Young Solutions staff he/she must always be informed that Young Solutions is passing information to the appropriate authority.

6. PRACTICE FOR YOUNG SOLUTIONS STAFF

Child protection issues must be addressed. If a worker suspects that a child (or young person) is suffering, or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or a child in need these concerns must be discussed with their line manager immediately. If she or he is unavailable the Chairman of Young Solutions must be contacted.

If a child raises issues which cause concern the worker should listen carefully, giving the child time and undivided attention. The responsibility for undertaking the investigation lies with Children's Social Care. **It is most important that Young Solutions staff do not ask questions of the child since this raises the risk of being called to give evidence of their involvement in any court proceedings.**

Staff should make clear Young Solutions confidentiality policy at the first meeting with a child. Nevertheless some children will be fearful about the consequences of what they have said. They may need considerable help and reassurance to feel safe. If there is no immediate danger the worker may need to give time to enable the child or young person to disclose to the appropriate representative of the local authority. Such decisions should be made only by the manager or in his or her absence the Chair of Young Solutions.

Information concerning child protection concerns should be recorded immediately.

The record should include:

- The date and time of disclosure.
- The child or young person's account - in some circumstances the child / young person will be encouraged to write or dictate their own account and be given a copy;
- Any injuries noted;
- An assessment made by the worker concerned as to why the information given by the child/young person constitutes a child protection/child in need concern;
- Action taken by worker.

The record should be signed and dated. A copy should be sent to the line manager and Chairman immediately, but not later than 24 hours.

Any action to be taken will be determined by the urgency of the circumstances and the setting in which the child or young person is living.

If Children's Social Care does not consider the situation to merit further investigation, consideration may need to be given to referring the child/young person for legal advice. Such a referral to a solicitor for legal advice should be taken only by agreement with the Young Solutions Chair.

It is important to recognise the importance of giving feedback to the child or young person at the end of the process. This should include ensuring that they receive information from Children's Social Care concerning the outcome of the enquiries and informing them of their right to make a complaint if not satisfied with how the investigation was handled.

7. SAFEGUARDING CODE OF CONDUCT

Young Solutions staff, volunteers and trustees always treat everyone with respect

- Act as a good role model
- Provide opportunities and show understanding so that children and young people can talk about issues that are important to them
- Recognise a child/young person's right to privacy
- Respect an individual's faith and cultural traditions
- Risk assess situations to ensure potential dangers have been identified and the risk minimised
- Create an environment in which children and young people feel safe and deal with situations which might make the setting unsafe
- Ensure, whenever possible, that there is more than one adult present during an activity with children or young people or it takes place at least within the sight or hearing of others
- Avoid physical contact where possible, if it is needed, e.g. In demonstrating a skill or to assist a young person with a disability or, wanted by a child who is upset, use common sense, keep it impersonal and short

Young Solutions staff, volunteers and trustees should never:

- Permit or accept abuse or discriminatory behaviour e.g. bullying, taunting
- Engage in inappropriate behaviour, conduct or use inappropriate language
- Show favouritism for anyone
- Meet a child or young person away from the usual meeting place unless the parent/carer is aware of the arrangement
- Use alcohol or drugs when working or immediately prior to working
- Give personal money to anyone

CHECKLIST FOR HANDLING AND RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OR COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST A YOUNG SOLUTIONS STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER

1. Name and position of worker/volunteer who is subject of allegation/complaint:

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2. Is the complaint written or verbal? (*Delete as necessary*).....

3. Complaint made by:

Relationship to child:

4. Name of child/young person :

Age and date of birth:

5. Parent's/Carer's name(s) and address:

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6. Date of alleged incident/s:

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7. Did the child/young person attend on this/these date/s:

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8. Nature of complaint: (*attach if received in writing*)

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9. Other relevant information (*continue on separate sheet if necessary*)

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10. Children's Services contacted: Date:

11. Further Actions advised by Children's Services Department:

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Your name and position:

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Signature: **Today's date:**

GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING THE CHECKLIST

1. Record the name and position of member of worker/volunteer against whom the allegation or complaint has been made.
2. Verbal complaints should be backed up in writing by the complainant if appropriate; some may require immediate action that does not allow time for this to happen.
3. It is important to identify who made the complaint and whether it was received first hand or is a concern that is being passed on from somebody else. If this is the case it is better that you receive the information first hand.

If a parent, carer or a member of staff in your setting makes a complaint against you or your organisation, it will probably be made directly to Children's Services or the Police, in which case they agency concerned will contact you directly.

4. Record the full name, age and date of birth of the child/young person.
5. The address recorded should be the address at which the child/young person lives with the main carer.
6. If there are one or more alleged incidents, be as specific as possible able the dates that they are alleged to have occurred.

7. Check your daily sheet/register to see if the child/young person and the worker/volunteer were present that day. This will help to confirm the likelihood of the incident having taken place.
8. Summarise the complaint on the form. be useful if you can confirm things such as the level of contact that the worker/volunteer has with the child and any other minor concerns that have been raised previously. **Do not attempt to investigate the complaint yourself.**
9. If an allegation of abuse is made in your group you should discuss this with Children's Services