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Info: All YF Staff, Learners and Visitors

**Safeguarding Lead:**

Carla Stuthridge

Office: 01273 776779

Mobile: 07392313342

Email: [carla.stuthridge@youthforce.co.uk](mailto:carla.stuthridge@youthforce.co.uk)

**Secondary Safeguarding Lead:**

Benn Chacksfield

Office: 01273 776779

Mobile: 07392313345

Email: [benn.chacksfield@youthforce.co.uk](mailto:benn.chacksfield@youthforce.co.uk)

**Local Authority Safeguarding Lead:**

Darrel Clews

Office: 01273 295643

Mobile: 07795335879

**References:** <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/england/>  
YOUTHFORCE

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## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

### Introduction

1. Youthforce is committed to the safeguarding and well-being of all of our learners and fully recognises its responsibilities for protecting vulnerable groups. Our policy applies to all staff, learners, contractors, visitors and working on behalf of or in conjunction with Youthforce Ltd.

2. Youthforce equips young people for life. We do this by educating, qualifying and enabling every young person to fulfil their potential and realise their dreams. It is the policy of Youthforce to promote the safety, health and well-being of all children, young people and vulnerable adults that the organisation works with – both directly and indirectly. We respect, value and listen to everyone as an individual.

3. Youthforce will do this through:

- Training
- Recruitment
- Reporting
- Reviewing
- Engaging
- Investigation

### Support

4. At Youthforce we are committed to:

- Operating practices in accordance with the legislation ensure we have a 'Safer Recruitment' trained member of staff.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding throughout the organisation and ensuring that staff are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to support learners effectively and help to keep them safe
- Raising awareness of safeguarding to all of our learners and ensuring that the learners who are most vulnerable are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to keep them safe
- Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases or suspected cases of e issues
- Establishing safe environments in which vulnerable groups can learn and develop

5. We recognise that because of the day to day contact with learners, our staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Youthforce Ltd will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where learners feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Include opportunities within our ongoing assessment process and classroom delivery for learners to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from any safeguarding issues

6. Youthforce recognises and adheres to the statutory requirements within the following important and relevant pieces of safeguarding legislation:

- “Duty of Care” as defined in the Children Act (1989)
- Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)
- Health & Safety First Aid Act (1981)
- Education Act (2002, 2011)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)
- Children’s Act (1989, 2004)
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act SVGA (2006 amended 2012)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice (2012)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Every Child Matters (2004)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Counter Terrorism Act (2008)

We adhere to good practice with guidance outlined by the NSPCC.

7. To support our commitment to the safeguarding and well-being of all of our learners and with regard to the above legislation we will:

- Ensure that we have a Designated Person for Safeguarding (Leanne Edwards – Operations Director) who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
  - Ensure we have a Local Authority Designated link person
- Ensure that all staff through induction and training are aware and understand their responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding and in being alert to the signs and indicators of any form of abuse and for referring any concerns directly to the Designated Person for safeguarding.

All staff are to be inducted and trained on Youthforce Safeguarding policy and procedures. This induction training will be revisited and reviewed every year.

8. All learners will be briefed on these procedures. They will undertake initial Safeguarding assessments or complete a whole unit on this during their course

9. Youthforce will:

- Ensure that effective Safeguarding procedures are developed, implemented and monitored to ensure their effectiveness. These procedures are based on the 5R’s approach of Recognition, Response, Record, Report, Refer
- Ensure the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are in place and kept

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- Ensure Safeguarding details are displayed in the office.
  - Ensure that we develop effective links with relevant external agencies, local safeguarding boards and co-operate with any requirements with any safeguarding referral matters
  - Ensure that we keep written records of safeguarding concerns, even when there is no need to refer the matter to the relevant agencies
  - Ensure all records are stored securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act

10. Youthforce Ltd recognises its responsibility with regard to the safeguarding of young and vulnerable learners from any form of abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care and is committed to responding in all cases where there is concern.

11. Due to the nature of our work Youthforce Ltd may be in the frontline of work with some children, young learners, vulnerable learners and vulnerable adults. This may mean that we are the first to know that a child, young or vulnerable learner or adult is at risk of or being abused or that we are concerned about a person's well-being. Everyone has an equal responsibility to ensure that the individual needs and welfare of the person are put first and to safeguard any person with whom we may come into contact.

12. We will ensure that our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they are still relevant and effective.

### **What is Safeguarding?**

13. Safeguarding is a proactive process of protecting and ensuring the safety and well-being of young and vulnerable learners. Safeguarding may involve instances in which a young or vulnerable learner is suffering or likely to suffer from harm. Safeguarding involves adopting safer recruitment practices to assist in identifying persons who are unsuitable to work with young or vulnerable learners.

A person trained in Safer Recruitment will be present during interviews.

### **What are the benefits of effective Safeguarding?**

14. Benefits of safeguarding:

- When learners feel safe and secure they can concentrate on learning.
- Learners can rely on those people in positions of trust.
- Staff are protected from malicious and misplaced allegations.
- Staff are clear about individual responsibilities, roles and boundaries.
- Learners are appropriately protected and all issues are dealt with effectively.
- Clear 'whistleblowing' procedure to raise concerns and report on any wrongdoing perpetrated by another employee

### **Definition and types of Safeguarding Concerns**

15. This section closely reflects the procedures and guidance in NSPCC Safeguarding definitions Board and the Home Office document "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2010. 'Child abuse

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and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of young and vulnerable learners, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the person's health or development. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a young or vulnerable learner. Somebody may abuse a young or vulnerable learner by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Young or vulnerable learners may be abused in the family or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults or another child or children may abuse them.

16. The NSPCC Guidelines Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

## **Physical Abuse**

17. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness.

## **Emotional Abuse**

18. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to the person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed in them.

19. These may include interactions that are beyond the person's developmental capacity, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them participating in normal social interactions. It may involve serious bullying causing the person frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of persons. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a person, though it may occur alone. This also includes include E-safety.

## **Sexual Abuse**

20. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving them in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

## **Neglect**

21. Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a person's basic or physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a person from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a person's basic emotional needs.

22. Additional safeguarding concerns and unsafe activities which we recognise, and which have become more prevalent in recent times are:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Domestic Violence Alcohol and Drugs
- Crime
- Cyber-bullying

### **Signs and Indicators of Possible Abuse**

23. When considering whether there is enough information and evidence to suggest a young or vulnerable learner has been abused, there are a number of possible indicators. However there may also be a perfectly reasonable explanation so it is important to remain vigilant but not be overzealous nor jump to conclusions. There may also be no signs or indicators or abuse, however this does not necessarily mean that a report of abuse is false.

### **Signs Suggesting Physical Abuse**

24. Signs suggesting Physical Abuse may include but are not limited to:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that have occurred on parts of the body which are unusual and not indicative of a fall or because of playing a contact / rough sport etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, unkempt appearance, dirty clothes etc.
- Changes in routine

### **Signs Suggesting Sexual Abuse**

25. Signs suggesting Sexual Abuse may include but are not limited to:

- Any sexual allegation made by an individual
- Individuals with an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Individuals who are sexually provocative or seductive

- Severe sleeping disorders
- Eating disorders

## Signs Suggesting Emotional Abuse

26. Signs suggesting Emotional Abuse may include but are not limited to:

- Changes or regressions in mood or behaviour
- Nervousness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness

## Safer Recruitment

27. Youth Force Ltd will take all possible steps to prevent unsuitable persons working with young or vulnerable learners and in doing so will follow the good practice contained within the legislative document Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007) and the Safer Practice, Safer Learning document produced by NIACE.

### When interviewing potential staff we will ensure that:

- A member of the interview panel will hold a Safer Recruitment Certificate
- There is an open recruitment process
- There is a rigorous interview with specific questions relating to Safeguarding
- Applicant identity and claims to academic or vocational qualifications will be verified
- References will be taken up by direct contact with referees
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the applicant will be obtained
- Where appropriate, an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check will be conducted.
- Where a position requires an Enhanced DBS check this will be made clear on the job advert

### During interviews the panel will explore:

- The applicant's attitude and demeanour towards young or vulnerable learners
- The applicant's ability to support our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young or vulnerable learners
- Any gaps in the applicant's employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information obtained

## Post Appointment

28. All staff will take part in an induction programme which will vary dependent on the nature of the role. The purpose of this will be to:

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- Ensure individuals receive Safeguard training
  - Ensure that individuals are aware of reporting concerns and who the Designated Persons for Safeguarding are
  - Ensure that individuals are aware of other relevant policies and procedures; i.e. disciplinary procedure, E&D Policy, Procedure to undertake following a young or vulnerable learner confiding about or suspecting a case of abuse or neglect
  - Provide awareness and explanations of relevant policies and procedures
  - Provide support for the role in which they have been engaged
  - Provide opportunities for a new member of staff to ask questions or discuss concerns relating to their role or responsibilities
  - Enable individual line managers and colleagues to recognise any concerns about the person's ability or suitability from the outset and address them if deemed appropriate

29. Where a young or vulnerable learner seeks out a member of staff to confide in and share information about a safeguarding issue or talks spontaneously individually or in groups, our staff will:

- Listen carefully to them, and not directly question him/her
- Give them time and attention
- Allow the person to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a person who is freely recalling significant events
- Use the Safeguarding Reporting Form and make an accurate record of the information given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the person's presentation as well as what was said. Do not discard this as it may be later needed as evidence.
- Use the person's own words where possible
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.

### **Reassure the person:**

- That you are glad that they have told them
- That he / she has not done anything wrong
- What you are going to do next
- Explain that help will need to be sought if needed to keep them safe

30. The person should be asked NOT to repeat his/her accounts to anyone. The Designated Person for Safeguarding must be informed immediately, who will take appropriate action, all records of the investigation, will be kept strictly confidential and stored in a secure place. Outside agencies and Resources on Child Protection can and will be used to assist the company.

### **Procedure for Dealing with Allegations against Staff**

31. This applies should anyone have concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff where they have:-

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a learner

- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to learner
  - Behaved towards a learner in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with them
32. The Designated Person for safeguarding should be informed of the matter immediately. (Where the designated Person nominated for safeguarding is involved in the allegation, the most senior member of staff should be informed) If the most senior member of staff is involved, then the Local Authority Safeguarding Lead should be contacted.

**An investigation will take place which:**

- Will determine if the police need to be involved immediately to protect the person further
- Will record all details received and secure them safely
- Will ensure the alleged member of staff is fully conversant of the allegation, is supported where relevant and free from victimisation
- Will determine whether suspension is appropriate whilst undertaking the investigation

33. All allegations will be acted upon, however due to the variance in the risk levels, all allegations will be treated individually and the appropriate actions assigned on a case by case basis. The member of staff who has had an allegation made against them will be suspended pending the safeguarding investigation.

**Anonymous Allegations**

34. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective, and depending on the level of information, the matter may not be investigated at all.

The decision taken to investigate the matter further will depend upon:

- The seriousness of the matter
- Whether the concern is believable
- Whether an investigation can be carried out on the information provided