

Youth Focus North East - Safeguarding Policy

Scope

Youth Focus North East works with children, young people and adults as part of its activities. These activities include personal and social development, group work, one to one support and youth participation. As we work with both children/young people and adults our safeguarding policy incorporates the safeguarding of adults and the safeguarding of children/young people.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Youth Focus North East, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Definitions

Worker All Staff and volunteers (paid and unpaid)

Adult A person 18 years or over.

Child/Young Person A person under the age of 18. (It is recognised that there are specific issues affecting 16 – 17 year olds which need to be considered within safeguarding/child protection procedures e.g. young people living independently, or still within the care system.)

Child Protection Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

Safeguarding Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the person's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances. (Care & Support Statutory Guidance July 2018)

Abuse Abuse of a person may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks. It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual.

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Purpose

- To prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect for the children/young people and adults who receive a service from Youth Focus North East.
- To provide staff, volunteers and external partners with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection.

Principles

The guidance provides six key principles that underpin all safeguarding activity:

- Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”
- Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”
- Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
“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** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
“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** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
“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** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.
“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Legal and Advisory Framework

Our safeguarding policy works within the legal and advisory frameworks required to ensure the safety and safeguarding of children/young people and adults including:

- Children Act 1989 – revised in 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999 and revised in 2004
- Information sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers DCSF 2008
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015- revised in 2023
- The Care Act 2014

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- Children and Social Care Act 2017
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- The Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2018
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Online Safety Act 2023

Abuse

Our understanding of abuse includes the following areas:

Physical abuse	including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions
County Lines	where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs. The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs.
Domestic violence	including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence
Sexual abuse	including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting
Sexual exploitation	any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another
Grooming	The action by a paedophile of preparing a child for a meeting, especially via an internet chat room, with the intention of committing a sexual offence.
Psychological abuse	including emotional abuse, 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 supportive networks
Financial or material abuse	including theft, fraud, internet scamming, 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

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Discriminatory abuse	including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion
Organisational abuse	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 one'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
Neglect and acts of omission	including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
Self-neglect	this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna. Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is dangerous and a criminal offence
Extremism	it is recognised that children/young people or adults may be the victims or perpetrators of extremism behaviour. Extremism is defined as 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

Safe Recruitment

Youth Focus North East recognises that appropriate recruitment and selection procedures are a vital part in developing and maintaining a safe environment for children and young people. The following procedures are in place to ensure that only suitable applicants are accepted as volunteers or staff of Youth Focus North East:

- All applicants (staff and volunteers) will be asked to complete an application form or CV and personal statement.
- All successful applicants (paid positions) will be asked to provide two suitable references including, for paid positions, a reference from the applicant's previous employer.
- All suitable applicants (paid and unpaid positions) will be asked to attend an interview or an informal meeting depending on the post they have applied for.
- Newly appointed staff and volunteers will all be provided with an organisational handbook/policies before they undertake any duties and take part in an induction.

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- Enhanced DBS checks are carried out so that successful applicants can declare and discuss any convictions (and their context) with the organisation.

Training

All newly appointed workers at Youth Focus North East will receive training, support, information and guidance to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding and Child Protection. This will include:

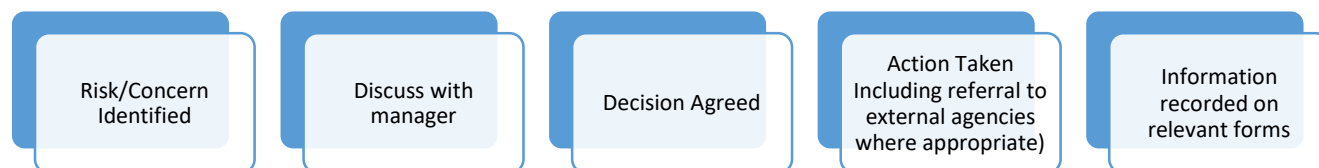
- Organisational induction including policies and procedures, guidelines, roles and responsibilities.
- Training in safeguarding and child protection for staff (paid and unpaid) working directly with children/young people and adults.
- All staff will be provided with a copy of the NYA “Safeguarding Standards for the Youth Sector” as part of their induction to the organisation.

Safeguarding Procedures: General

It is critically important to respond appropriately and responsibly to a safeguarding concern or suspicion/allegation of abuse. Staff should consider the following broad principles:

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stay calm ● Listen and take the allegation seriously ● Reassure ● Intervene early ● Treat information seriously ● Listen carefully ● Use TED – “Tell me, Explain, Describe” ● Share the information with others ● Preserve evidence wherever possible ● Record the information ● Look after yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promise to keep it a secret ● Judge ● Confront the alleged abuser ● Ask leading questions ● Take anything personally

In safeguarding both children/young people and adults at Youth Focus North East, the following process will be used:



Disclosure/Suspicion of Abuse

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether it has occurred. Staff need to follow the above Do's

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and Don'ts and make a written record of the incident, allegation or concern, and fill in a safeguarding concern form. The incident/concern should be discussed with a senior worker or line manager as soon as possible.

Recording

An accurate record should be made at the time of the disclosure or discovery giving details of the incident and/or the grounds for suspecting abuse. This must include:

- The date and time of the incident
- What the child/young person or adult at risk said about the abuse and how it occurred or what has been reported to you
- The appearance and behaviour of the victim, including any injuries
- The use of speech marks to indicate speech recorded verbatim
- A record of the questions asked. This is important in the context of possible claims that victims have been led and evidence contaminated.

If at any stage of this process the worker is unsure/unclear how to proceed they should speak to the relevant manager to confirm the action they should be taking.

Informing line manager or other senior worker

All concerns, suspicions or allegations that a child/young person or adult is at risk of abuse or is experiencing abuse should be discussed with the line manager or other senior worker as soon as possible, definitely within 24 hours. The more serious the alert the more urgency there will be to report.

Involving individuals

It is critical that the person at risk of or experiencing abuse is listened to and their wishes taken into account throughout the process. At all stages, people should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent, making sure that the person's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that people sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances. Record keeping should include an account of the outcomes the person wants.

Interactions with young people online

- Virtual meetings with young people (e.g. via Zoom) –
 - Parents/Guardians to give consent for young people under the age of 16.
 - Where appropriate each virtual session will have two staff member from Youth Focus North East hosting to monitor the group.
 - When only one member of staff is present for group meetings, a recording of the meeting will take place, with the permission of the group.
 - Groups will be password protected to allow only those part of the group the opportunity to be part of these sessions.
 - When communicating 1-2-1 with a young person online, a written record of the conversation needs to be taken and logged.
- Communications with young people online should only be Youth Focus North East related.
- Do not identify young people you work with.

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- Refrain from communicating one-to-one with a young person online, where this does happen, this should be done through chat/messaging so evidence can be collated if needed.
- Closed social media platform groups to be used to send messages to young people involved in their projects.
- If a staff member sees something on a young person's profile that raises concern, it is their duty to flag this up with their line manager.

Local Authority Procedures

Each local authority area will have its own procedures and process. Youth Focus North East works across 12 different local authority areas and will cooperate and implement the relevant process set out by the relevant local authority area for reporting any incident/concern. All services must keep a copy of the local authority procedure and process with this Safeguarding Policy. Managers must ensure that staff understand the interaction between the organisational and local authority process.

Information Sharing

Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children/young people or adults. The following principles for sharing information are as follows:

- Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation, is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
- Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

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Workers Accused of Abuse

If a staff member is accused of abuse the Chief Executive needs to be informed immediately. If the Chief Executive is not available or the accusation is made against the Chief Executive then the Chair of the Board of Trustees needs to be informed. Where it is deemed a safeguarding incident, the staff member will immediately be suspended without prejudice pending investigation, asked to leave the premises of the project and not make contact with other staff members.

The Chief Executive must also consider whether the allegations against a worker may place their family or other members of the public at risk and report this to the relevant bodies, this may include the police and Adult or Children's Safeguarding.

Suspension does not imply wrongdoing but offers protection to both the worker and the people we work with whilst an investigation takes place. The Senior Management Team and Chair of the Board of Trustees will lead the investigation internally and, if relevant, the alert will also be reported to the relevant external authorities.

If a worker is removed by being either dismissed or redeployed from their role following a safeguarding incident, or a person leaves their role (resignation, retirement) to avoid a disciplinary hearing following a safeguarding incident and the employer/volunteer organisation feels they would have dismissed the person based on the information they hold, Youth Focus North East has a legal duty to, and will, report this to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Where it is not deemed to be a safeguarding incident the complaint process will be followed.

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Safeguarding: Child Protection

The Safeguarding: Child Protection policy and procedures document are to be read and used in conjunction with the general safeguarding policy for Youth Focus North East.

Statement

Youth Focus North East is committed to providing a safe environment for young people. This Safeguarding Policy reflects this commitment and aims to ensure that all concerns about the care and protection of children and young people are effectively managed.

The Chief Executive and Chair of the Board of Trustees are responsible for developing and reviewing the organisation's safeguarding children/young people procedures and other care and protection policies and guidelines. However, all workers (paid or unpaid) for Youth Focus North East are required to implement the child protection procedures.

Youth Focus North East recognises its duty of care for the children and young people we work with. We understand the responsibility of a person who is 16 or over and who has care and control of a child under 16, to do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's health, development and welfare. Youth Focus North East also recognises that all children and young people have the right to freedom from abuse as outlined in the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. Youth Focus North East will constantly strive to provide a safe environment, free from any forms of abuse, for all the young people in its care. Youth Focus North East understanding of abuse can be found in the full Safeguarding Policy.

Youth Focus North East has a commitment to children's rights, notably their right to be protected from harm, abuse and exploitation and to be involved in any decisions which directly affect them.

Principles

In addition to the principles outlined in our safeguarding policy, we have listed principles for safeguarding children and young people.

- Valuing, listening and respecting children/young people
- Children and young people should not be subjected to abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- The welfare of the child/or young person is paramount
- All children/young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children/young people are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

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- Appointing a nominated child protection/safeguarding lead, a deputy child protection/safeguarding lead and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Developing child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice
- Issuing our safeguarding procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- Implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Recording and storing information professionally and securely.

Procedures: Child Protection

Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

Members of staff (paid and unpaid) have a duty to report any suspicions, allegations or disclosures to the line manager, and the Chief Executive. However, the first concern must be the reassurance of the child or young person and their protection from any potential risk. During the reporting process the young person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in the allegation.

As a worker or volunteer your role in child protection is not to investigate or decide if abuse has taken place. Your role is to observe, record and report. The following steps should be followed in response to suspicion or allegation of abuse:

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<p>Are you concerned about the safety of a child or young person?</p>	<p>For example, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A child/young person has alleged that they are being abused • You see or suspect abuse • The organisation has received a third party report that a child/young person is being abused/neglected • There are signs and indicators which could point to abuse/neglect
<p>Take Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your concerns with either the Trustees or Chief Executive as soon as possible. If the allegation is about the Chief Executive contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees. These steps should be taken as soon as possible. • Discussions should focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of concerns; Risks to the child or young person Action and next steps to be taken
<p>Considerations</p>	<p>In following the procedures below please bear in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not investigate - Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation any further or interview the child or young person regarding the situation. • CONFIDENTIALITY - Details of suspicion, allegations or disclosures should only be passed on to the Chief Executive. If responding to an allegation from a young person you must not promise to keep the information they disclose confidential.
<p>Record Information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed written records should be made of all events and what the young person or other individuals have said (where this applies). • Relevant safeguarding forms are supplied to ensure information is recorded accurately. • The information collected can also be used to inform Social Services or the Police of the events that have occurred. • Above and beyond the facts, any opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented can be recorded but it should be clear they are opinions, rather than facts. • Records should be signed and stored in the appropriate secure place in each of the organisational offices.
<p>Seek advice and, if needed refer to the appropriate agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Executive should contact the local Social Services Department and/or the Police if a formal referral is required. Once a formal referral has been made, the organisation will work within the local authority or police procedures for child protection/safeguarding.

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Considerations for Workers

Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse

It is likely that a child or young person who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that workers and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

Stay calm

Remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor. Do not promise to keep the information secret; you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that you believe them.

Listen and take the allegation seriously

Listen to what the child or young person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace. You should not investigate, ask leading questions or ask specific or explicit questions. You should only clarify what they are willing to tell you in their own words. Whilst it's important to respect the young person's privacy it should not be at the expense of other child protection measures.

Reassure

Reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that you know it is not their fault. You should also give them some indication of what you will do next with the information that they have given you.

Confidentiality

Reiterate that you cannot promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously. Details of the disclosure should only be passed on to the Chief Executive, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities. Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child or young person in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

Record

If you are able to, make brief notes during the initial disclosure, explaining to the young person why you are doing it. If it's not possible to do so at the time, record the details as soon as possible after the disclosure with as many facts as possible (dates, times, actual words used).

Look after yourself

Being trusted with a disclosure of abuse directly from a young person can be emotionally draining, worrying and very stressful. Whilst it's essential that confidentiality is maintained at all times, it's important that you consider your own emotional feelings and discuss any anxieties you have with the Chief Executive. If appropriate, the Chief Executive will arrange additional support for you.

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Contact Details for Key Personnel

Designated Safeguarding Lead –

Kevin Franks, kevin@youthfocusne.org.uk Tel: 0785 826 5592

Safeguarding Lead/Board of Trustees –

Robert Laycock – robert@youthfocusne.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Gateshead: Dave McCreedy, dave@youthfocusne.org.uk

Teesside: Laura Bush, laurab@youthfocusne.org.uk

National Helpline NSPCC – 0808 800 5000

Review of Safeguarding policy and procedures

This policy and procedures document will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Board of Trustees and all staff and volunteers will be notified of any changes.

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Appendix 1

Safeguarding Report Form

A report should be made by the person who has initial concerns about a person/s welfare using this pro forma. The report should be handed to the Chief Executive in order to add any follow up action taken. The form should then be stored in a secure location. Where appropriate, the Chief Executive may contact the appropriate Social Services Department/Police/Other Support Service, at this stage, giving them a copy of this form if requested

Name:

Date:

Who is putting the person/s at risk? (eg staff member, family member)

Name and contact details of the person/s your concern relates to:

Outline your reasons for concern:

Brief outline of any action you have already taken to protect the person/s:

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Signature:
Job Title:
Date:

Follow up action taken by Chief Executive:

Signature:
Job Title:
Date:

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Appendix 2

Code of Conduct for Workers

The following are a guide to helping create a safe and protective culture for young people, staff and volunteers. For full guidance in relation to safeguarding procedures please refer to the Youth Focus North East Safeguarding Policy.

Practice to be encouraged:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity
- Involve young people in the decisions that affect them
- Always work in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with young people (e.g. not sharing tents, shower facilities or having an inappropriate or intimate relationship)
- When organising events and meetings for children and young people, or their attendance at events/meetings, the following information/documentation should be requested by Youth Focus North East workers in relation to each child or young person attending the event/meeting:
 - A Consent Form for all events or specific activities;
 - Contact details for the family/guardians, including emergency contact numbers;
 - Information relating to any special issues, needs or requirements (e.g. medical, health, diet, language assistance)
- Use a reporting form to keep a clear note of any incidents or concerns
- If physical contact is necessary (e.g. in an emergency), tell the young person clearly what you are doing and why, seek their permission and give choices where possible. If possible, have another worker present.
- Where appropriate activities, events or sessions should be risk assessed to maintain the safety of young people
- When working with a mixed gender group, wherever possible, there should be workers of both genders to manage all activities

Practice to be avoided:

- Workers should not give lifts in their car to individual children or young people or travel alone with young people. Where not doing this would compromise Youth Focus North East Health and Safety Policy (e.g. leaving a young person alone at a venue) you should attempt to phone the parent/guardian of the young person to confirm what you will be doing. You should also ask the young person to sit in the back seat.
- Workers should not take young people to their home or that of another worker
- Workers should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer

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- Workers should not use their own 'personal' electronic communications (e.g. mobile phones, social networking sites) for contacting young people, unless agreed by the Chief Executive.

Unacceptable practice:

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing.
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Scape-goating or ridiculing a child or young person
- Allowing inappropriate, foul, sexualised or discriminatory language to remain unchallenged
- Any form of physical punishment
- Illegal use of drugs
- Use of alcohol during an event
- Bullying of any form, including name calling or constant criticism
- 'Picking on' a young person because of their family background, manner of dress or physical characteristic
- Discriminatory behaviour of any form (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.).
- Favouritism and exclusion - all young people should be equally supported and encouraged
- Abusive language or gestures

If any of the following occur, you must report it to your line manager or the Chief Executive:

- Any form of abuse
- A young person is hurt
- A young person seems extremely distressed in any manner
- A young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- A young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done
- An allegation is made about a member of staff

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Appendix 3

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

1. Obtaining Disclosure and Barring Certificates

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) exists to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. The DBS is responsible for:

- processing requests for criminal records checks
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- placing or removing people from the DBS children's barred list and adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

All trustees and workers employed by Youth Focus North East must be in possession of an Enhanced Check DBS Certificate before taking up their post. If a new trustee or employee already has a DBS Certificate, then they will grant permission for an Online Status Update. If the employee does not have a DBS Certificate on appointment, then they will apply for one through the Youth Focus North East application process.

Once the DBS Certificate is obtained, then it must be registered onto the Online Update Service, and the Certificate number provided to Youth Focus North East. The DBS status of employees and trustees will be subject to random checks.

Youth Focus North East will implement a policy to improve assurance during any application process. This assurance will focus on verifying references and Governance standards for the DBS report. The policy will also result in clarity of process and requirements surrounding key aspects of the application.

The focus for Youth Focus North East must be on how disclosed convictions, warnings and cautions are dealt with. Guidance on spent convictions aside (see "Is it spent" attached to this Appendix), the concern and focus must be on the fact that we are authorising the appointment of an adult to care for and act as a role model for other people's children. We must therefore err on the side of caution if we have any concerns about the suitability of an applicant to take charge of and influence young and often very impressionable children and teenagers.

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2. Disclosures on the DBS return

If there is any disclosure on the DBS return, the disclosure should be referenced against the Safeguarding and Vetting Decision Guidance.

If the disclosure is judged 'Red' (sections 1-5) against the Safeguarding and Vetting Decision Guidance, the applicant is automatically excluded from progressing with the selection process. In all other cases of disclosure, the applicant should be interviewed. The interview will result in a completed Safeguarding Risk Assessment Form to review the disclosures and produce the Risk Assessment. The outcome of this will determine whether the candidate should continue with the selection process. See examples of completed Safeguarding Risk Assessment Forms.

- a. Whilst any disclosure should be viewed with concern, some disclosures inevitably have a greater impact and question more significantly an applicant's underlying suitability.
- b. As detailed in the Safeguard and Vetting Decision Guidance, although each disclosure should be considered on a case by case basis, some will exclude applicants. Others will initiate an investigation and lead to an interview. All Safeguarding Risk Assessment Forms must include a review and recommendation.

Youth Focus North East - Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding and Vetting Decision Guidance

1. On Barred /Disqualified List

Applicant barred

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>)

Northern Ireland Order (<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/disclosure-and-barring-protecting-children-and-vulnerable-adults>)

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>)

EXCLUSION – NO APPEAL

2. Any offence perpetrated as an adult against a child demonstrating a sexual interest in children

A range of threshold applied by different courts. A finding of guilt made in a criminal court ('Beyond reasonable doubt') or in Civil Courts ('Balance of Probability'). This includes offences defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003 such as rape and other sexual assaults, indecent images of children, grooming, trafficking (children), voyeurism (children), and exposure of genitals with intent to distress or alarm (children).

http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/fact_sheets/sexual_offences/

This also includes sexual offences against children in another jurisdiction e.g. outside UK.

EXCLUSION – NO APPEAL

3. Other offences perpetrated by an adult against a child where the child suffered significant harm

A conviction in the criminal or judicial finding in another court defined in the link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-offences-against-children>

This should include the offence of child neglect where the adult was convicted in the criminal court or made an admission of guilt, accepted a Caution or a finding was made in the civil courts.

EXCLUSION – NO APPEAL

4. Adverse reference from a statutory agency or other professional source

A person may not have an involvement in Youth Focus North East where a current report from an appropriate professional or statutory source suggests that the individual is not an appropriate person. The source should be from a competent authority and listed on the Risk Assessment form.

EXCLUSION – NO APPEAL

5. Conviction for serious offences against the person (adult)

To include: murder, rape, crimes associated with organising sexual exploitation, serious crimes of violence including convictions for domestic abuse, abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable person. To also include drug, arms and people trafficking and sexual exploitation.

EXCLUSION – NO APPEAL

Youth Focus North East - Safeguarding Policy

6. Applicant under 18 at time of an offence that would otherwise attract national action

Consideration should be given to whether the applicant's youth or additional needs were directly relevant to their behaviour.

The decision makers must have a clear understanding that some childhood behaviours can become more embedded rather than dissipating with age e.g. some child-on-child sexual offending. Each case must be considered individually, informed by the best research.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

7. Offence which causes serious doubt about suitability

For example: offences against the person (including manslaughter) , threats of violence, supplying controlled substances, possession of Class A drugs in the recent past (last 2 years).

An allegation of a sexual offence (adult victim) not progressed to trial.

Low-level/minor sexual offence (adult victim) committed many years previously.

Some offences of indecent exposure where the intention was not to alarm or distress.

Offences between consenting adults in public areas.

Presumption of exclusion where the total information available about the applicant implies that their involvement may:

1. Adversely affect the health and welfare of young people
2. Adversely affect the reputation of Youth Focus North East
3. Adversely affect the welfare or other adults, Youth Focus North East operations or the individual concerned

FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

8. Offence which causes doubt about the individual's compatibility with Youth Focus North East values and Standards

Not an exhaustive list: harassment, blackmail, hate crime.

Presumption of exclusion where the total information available about the applicant implies that their involvement may:

1. Adversely affect the health and welfare of young people
2. Adversely affect the reputation of Youth Focus North East
3. Adversely affect the welfare or other adults, Youth Focus North East operations or the individual concerned

FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

9. Non-conviction information provided by other sources/held on Youth Focus North East confidential records

Presumption of exclusion where the total information available about the applicant implies that their involvement may:

1. Adversely affect the health and welfare of young people
2. Adversely affect the reputation of Youth Focus North East
3. Adversely affect the welfare or other adults, Youth Focus North East operations or the individual concerned

FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

10. Barred from Trusteeship or other financial appointments through conviction or Bankruptcy

Applies to applicants for roles providing trustee status where the applicant is disqualified by law from acting as a charity trustee (e.g. unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception).

Consideration may be given to other financial convictions and also any declared cases of bankruptcy. Whilst not an automatic bar consideration should be given to the applicant handling finance.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

Youth Focus North East - Safeguarding Policy

11. Minor and unrelated (to Youth Focus North East) offences

For example: minor motoring offences, minor thefts, and criminal damage.

Three or fewer offences committed more than ten years ago.

Consideration should include the culmination of a number of offences and the applicant's involvement may:

1. Adversely affect the health and welfare of young people
2. Adversely affect the reputation of Youth Focus North East
3. Adversely affect the welfare or other adults, Youth Focus North East operations or the individual concerned.

Consideration may be given to placing restrictions on the person should the recommendation be to become involved with Youth Focus North East

DISCLOSURE CONSIDERATION by CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD

12. Other conviction/caution

DISCLOSURE INFORMATION PASSED TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER/TRUSTEE BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION

Youth Focus North East - Safeguarding Policy

North East Local Authority Safeguarding Online Procedures and Policies

Statutory Guidance

1. Working Together to Safeguard Children: Statutory Framework HM Government 2023)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf
2. Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working (HM Government, July 2018)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf

Links to North East Local Authority Online Policies and Procedures

1. Darlington Borough Council: Darlington Safeguarding Board
<https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/>
2. Durham County Council: Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/durham/scb/>
3. North and South of Tyne Local Safeguarding Children Partnership
Gateshead Council
Newcastle City Council
Northumberland County Council
North Tyneside Council
South Tyneside Council (Safeguarding Children and Adults Partnership)
Sunderland City Council
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/index.html>
Updated Oct 2020 <https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/amendments.html>
4. Tees Safeguarding Children Partnerships
Hartlepool Borough Council
Stockon-on-Tees Borough Council
Middlesbrough Council
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
<https://www.teescpp.org.uk/>