
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion implications of this policy	This policy is likely to impact anyone under 18 years old who is at risk of harm; some particular groups may be more at risk, e.g. those in groups who are deemed more vulnerable due to their age, faith/religion, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or race/ethnicity or beliefs. This policy is designed to help keep them safe.
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1.0 Statement – Safeguarding Children

Yateley Industries for the Disabled Limited (YIFTD) provides accommodation, employment, training and social activities to disabled adults. We also provide a Community Hub, with Community Pantry, Community Café and have spaces available to hire which will include services to children, young people and families. We take the welfare seriously of all children and young people who are involved in YIFTD services and activities.

It is the responsibility of all YIFTD members of staff (and all volunteers including trustees) to seek to prevent the physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of children and young people. They must report any incident or behaviour that causes concern with regard to the welfare of the child or young person. More information can be found at [Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton \(HIPS\) Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual](#)

YIFTD also has in place a number of relevant policies and procedures that complement safeguarding children and young people. These include:

- Case Notes Guidance
- CCTV Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection and Information Handling Policy
- Declaration of Conflict of Interest Form
- Driving at Work
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Learning and Development Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

We will implement, maintain and regularly review these policies and procedures to prevent and be alert to abuse.

These procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of their race, religion, first language or culture; age; gender or sexuality; health or disability; location or placement; political or immigration status or involvement in criminal behaviour, or contribution to society. Children and young people can be more at risk of harm due to particular characteristics e.g. disabled people; those living away from home; those in the family home living with parental ill health, mental illness or substance misuse or domestic abuse; children from black, global majority, ethnic groups or those whose first language is not English, and unaccompanied asylum seekers. Risks may also stem from contextual safeguarding influences whereby children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation.

Every child and young person has a legal right to be safe from harm and has an equal right to protection.

YIFTD recognises our obligations under the following legislation, guidance and public bodies:

- Children Act 1989
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
- The Human Rights Act 1998 & 2000
- Leaving Care Act 2000
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act s. 11 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Munro Report 2011
- Education Act 2002 and 2011
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 2014
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017 (intended to improve support for LAC and Care Leavers / promotes the welfare and safeguarding of children).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs)
- 'Revised Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education (2019)' as well as the 2024 update, that takes into account the 'Coronavirus outbreak'.
- The Care Act 2014 (Adults). S42 is the protective nature of this Act, which is based upon "self-determination"; but as in the Children Act 1989, consent can be breached in various circumstances.

2.0 Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff: employees and volunteers (including Trustees and volunteer counsellors) and is available on our [website](#).

2.1 Review

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (see section 3.2) and the Internal Affairs Committee have responsibility for reviewing this policy every year. This policy will be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

2.2 Aims of the policy

We aim to:

- welcome children and young people to safe environments and services through our safeguarding framework
- provide protection for children and young people who receive services from YIFTD, including children of staff, adult members and service users
- provide clear information on roles and responsibilities within the Staff Team

- provide staff and volunteers with training and guidance on procedures that they should follow in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be subjected to, or be at risk of, harm

3.0 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Designated Safeguarding Officer

YIFTD has a **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**. This function holds responsibility and oversight for ensuring good practice at an organisational and strategic level. The DSO is responsible for the Head of Safeguarding (see below).

The Safeguarding Team is led by the CEO. Additional safeguarding cover is provided by the Operations Manager.

The Safeguarding Leads enable the weekday provision for staff of advice and consultation regarding safeguarding risk and are responsible for the operational processing of responses to safeguarding queries and alerts recorded.

All staff are advised of who to contact for each weekday and in case of the absences of both the Designated Safeguarding Leads, the safeguarding advisory role will be covered by other Managers and the team will be advised in advance of whom to liaise with. Out of hours and weekend cover is provided the CEO and Operations Manager.

3.2 Contact details for Safeguarding Team

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

Sheldon McMullan

CEO

Mill Lane, Yateley

GU46 7TF

Mobile: 07421 262670

Email: sheldonm@yateleyindustries.net

Jo Higginbotham

Operations Manager

Mill Lane, Yateley

GU46 7TF

Mobile: 07587 638267

Email: joh@yateleyindustries.net

3.3 Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and Head of Safeguarding

- Drive the strategic direction of YIFTD's safeguarding activity to develop as culture of safeguarding and consistent good practice
- Work with the Internal Affairs Committee to oversee and review the Safeguarding policies
- Report quarterly to the YIFTD Board of Trustees
- Record all Child and Adult Protection Reports and referrals

- To work closely with the staff team on the reporting of serious incidents internally, externally and to auditors/regulators as required

3.4 Additional responsibilities of the DSOs

- Liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) and support any investigation of any allegations, concerns, conduct made against staff, volunteers or trustees of YIFTD.
- Report any concerns to [Hampshire Safeguarding Childrens Partnership](#)
- Maintain the Allegations Data Base.

4.0 Safer Recruitment Practices

YIFTD follows best practice in safer recruitment for all roles. Please refer to Safer Recruitment Policy, processes include:

- an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service ([DBS](#)) check
- use of only original documents to check proof of ID, right to work, and qualifications
- two independent references for applicants that will be verified. These should be professional references where applicable and should include the most recent employer
- gaps and inconsistencies will be identified by comparing the application with information provided by referees
- applicants will be asked if their employment history and datelines are comprehensive; seeking to identify voluntary or additional work that may have been undertaken yet is absent in their application process
- should concerns arise from a criminal record check, or an allegation, we will carry out a risk assessment, which must be signed off by the CEO. This should include any recommended safeguards to minimise risk; the risk assessment may also conclude that the offer of employment to the applicant should be withdrawn if risk cannot be adequately mitigated These processes will be completed before unsupervised work with children and young people can commence
- all interview panels must have one member who is Safer Recruitment trained

It is expected that the HR department and the responsible manager will work in partnership ensuring that recruitment adheres to organisational policies and process relating to employment.

4.1 Code of Conduct

All staff are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct when they start and are expected to meet the Code's expectations. The following document sits alongside the Code.

The Code of Conduct includes guidance on: professional boundaries; personal relationships with service users and ex-service users; physical contact including touching; all new staff receive training on the Code of Conduct during their induction period. Guidance on avoidance of touching and hugging service users is contained in the Code of Conduct.

5.0 Learning and Development Programme (Staff Training)

All managers and staff working with children and young people must complete safeguarding training sessions; new staff must complete essential safeguarding training during their induction period **before** they work alone with service users, including indicators of child abuse, contextual safeguarding and exploitation, and the safeguarding policy and alerts process, how training is provided, and the time periods for refresher training.

6.0 Definitions

6.1 Child

The Children Act 2004 defines children and young people to mean those aged 0-18 but also includes those:

- over 18 who are receiving services as Care Leavers under Section 23c to 24d of the Children Act 1989
- over 18 but under 25 with learning difficulties within the meaning of Section 13 of the Learning & Skills Act 2000 who are receiving services under that Act

6.2 Significant Harm

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'significant harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. The Local Authority is under a statutory duty to initiate enquiries where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47 the Children Act 1989). Where Section 47 enquiries are made the assessment should concentrate on the harm that has occurred or is likely to occur to the child as a result of maltreatment in order to determine intervention required. The Act is based upon the 'balance of probability'.

6.3 Types of Abuse

Traditionally types of abuse are fall into four categories.

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

These can also be grouped into intra-familial (see 6.4) or extra-familial (see 6.5) below.

6.4 Intra-familial, or 'within the family'

Intra-familial abuse is a term that relates to abuse that happens *within the family*.

6.5 Extra-familial, or Contextual Safeguarding

Extra-familial, also called contextual safeguarding, relates to significant harm *external to, or beyond* the family environment. Contextual safeguarding focusses on time that children/young people spend outside the home and the influence of peers and others on young people's development and safety.

Young people's experiences are not only influenced by their family, but also by peer networks, wider

community and neighbourhoods and society in general. Examples include:

- criminal/ sexual exploitation/online abuse
- risks associated with gangs or radicalisation
- trafficking and/or modern slavery

6.6 Transitional Safeguarding

'Transitional safeguarding' is a safeguarding response required to address the specific developmental, social and contextual needs of adolescents and young adults aged between 15 and 25 years old. Currently young people entering adulthood can experience difficulties accessing service support, often because of the different thresholds which govern children and adult safeguarding responses and eligibility. We must consider how we develop an approach which not only **protects**, but also **prepares** young people for their adulthood.

Transitional safeguarding approaches can also be applied to any significant transitions within a child's/young person's/young adult's life, including moving house, moving school, moving to new services, etc.

7.0 Safe Spaces

At YIFTD we have safe spaces where children and/or young people impacted by a safeguarding intervention can:

- reflect on the events that led up to the intervention
- give their version of what has happened
- say what they want to happen in future
- feel listened to
- understand what is happening and what will happen next and in the future.

Safe spaces must be private, and accessible.

8.0 Information for staff who have a concern

Staff are required to report all safeguarding concerns to their line manager.

Where the concern is of a level considered to need intervention from a statutory service, an external report is also made to the relevant service (children/adult's social care, police, ambulance or children/adult mental health services). External reports are submitted to the Safeguarding Team via a **Safeguarding Report**.

Staff must gain advice from the Safeguarding Team on all referrals. If the decision is to monitor the situation, the staff member must submit a **Safeguarding Report**, to the Safeguarding team and follow advice given by the team.

The YIFTD **Tracker System** ensures that case discussion takes place on a regular basis. The Tracker is a business-critical tool that enables escalation or de-escalation of decisions to be tracked appropriately and in a timely fashion.

Staff can make a referral to the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) if they have a concern.

9.0 Information for parents/carers who suspect abuse

Parents and carers may suspect or have knowledge of the abuse of a child or young person. Where this is the case, parents can contact:

- the member of staff providing the service, or leading an event or group, or YIFTD Designated Safeguarding Team
- The DSO directly at poly@yateleyindustries.net
- Hampshire Police - for non emergencies phone 101
- NSPCC - phone 0808 800 5000
- Crimestoppers can be contacted anonymously with any information about crime - phone 0800 555 111
- Childline - phone 0800 1111
- Local Safeguarding Children's Board
- [Hampshire Children's Services](#) - phone 0300 555 1384
- NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or via the website at www.nspcc.org.uk or www.childline.org.uk

Any parent or carer who has concerns specifically about a staff member or volunteer as the perpetrator of the abuse may take the same actions as set out above.

10.0 Information for children and young people who suspect abuse

Children and young people may suspect or have knowledge of potential or actual abuse of a child or young person who uses our services. Where this is the case the child or young person may:

- contact the member of staff supporting them, leading an event or group or any other member of staff on duty
- contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Operations Manager
- contact the [Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) or equivalent within their Local Authority
- contact the NSPCC Child Line Service on 0800 1111 or via their Childline website www.childline.org.uk
- contact the Police

11.0 Sharing concerns, consent and confidentiality

All staff must complete mandatory data protection training in line with YIFTD's Data Protection and Information Handling Policy. YIFTD also has an Information Sharing policy which sets out that sharing information is vital for early intervention to ensure that children and young people with additional needs get the service that they require. It is also essential to protect children and young people from suffering harm. It is good practice to explain to children, young people and families at the start of any intervention

how information will, or could be, shared and why, and to seek their consent (if safe to do so). It is also essential that information sharing discussions take place on a regular basis, and/or at the beginning of defined processes (counselling, key work etc). It is not sufficient to rely on a 'one off' explanation at the start of an intervention journey with the child or young person.

When there is a safeguarding concern, staff should consider the age and understanding of the child / young person as well as the exposed risk of harm that could be caused by seeking their consent. In these rare circumstances, consent is not essential before reporting (this must be a management decision in conjunction with the safeguarding team).

11.1 Record Retention

In line with our Data Protection and Information Handling Policy and The Data Protection Act 2018, safeguarding records will be kept securely, and with restricted access, for a period of 35 years after which they will be securely deleted/destroyed.

YIFTD also has a process for ensuring client or staff records that are related to a safeguarding report, are kept securely for 35 years. This is to allow for subject access requests relating to historical abuse or allegations of abuse.

11.2 CCTV

CCTV is installed in YIFTD services covering entrances/exits, in order to:

- 11.2.1 help protect staff, residents, clients, customers and members of the public
- 11.2.2 assist in the prevention of crime on the premises

The use and management of CCTV equipment and images to ensure that we comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998 is set out in the organisation's CCTV Procedure. YIFTD has a separate CCTV procedure, part of the Data Protection and Information Handling policy.

11.3 Use of phones

Most staff are issued with work mobile phones and may use them to call or text service users; phone use is set out in the IT Security policy. This includes text messaging: staff may text service users provided their phone is only accessed by them. Sensitive and/or personal information will not be provided via text message.

Staff are prohibited from using their personal phones for contact with service users; if a staff member is found to have provided to a service user their personal phone number, then they may be subject to disciplinary action.

12.0 Allegations against staff

All YIFTD staff, trustees and or volunteers are in a position of trust. More information on how to manage allegations relating to adults in accordance with the 4LSAB Allegations Management Framework [Safeguarding Allegations Management Advisor (SAMA)] can be found [here](#).

Any allegation made against a member of staff, trustee or volunteer will be taken extremely seriously and investigated to ascertain circumstances. The Board of Trustees are informed of all referrals to the LADO. Investigations may lead to the instigation of disciplinary procedures and/or referrals to other statutory

services. e.g. Police, Local Authority, accrediting bodies etc. (As outlined by the organisation's Code of Conduct). We may also report the Charity Commission where people have come to harm or the organisation is brought into disrepute as a result of the allegation.

We not only consider if a child/young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, but also if the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to work with children or young people either in their present capacity or in rare cases, at any point in the future.

Once advised or notified of a concern, the manager or staff member must liaise with the Safeguarding Lead immediately i.e. within one hour, initially verbally and then via email. The YIFTD Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) with immediate effect i.e. ideally within one hour, verbally and by email, but no later than within 24 hours.

The organisation recognises that close working relationships, or management hierarchy may be a disincentive to report and will endeavour to ensure that investigations are managed sensitively and supportively to reduce any negative impact on professional relationships, or fear of future reprisal.

Please refer to YIFTD's Whistleblowing Policy.

There may be therefore up to three strands in consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by the Local Authority about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- where an employer may have carried out or investigated an allegation that could have resulted in disciplinary action

At the end of the investigation appropriate allegations will also be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and where required other regulatory bodies.

Where appropriate and on the advice of the LADO/Police, YIFTD will allocate a Human Resources staff member to keep the subject of the allegations updated with the progress of the case and provide appropriate support while the case is on-going. This will require frequent communication between HR and Safeguarding.

In cases where there is a concern of significant harm to a child or children, the individual will be suspended for the duration of the investigation. YIFTD will ensure that HR keep the person updated and provide on-going support. This may include direction to the organisation's telephone counselling service.

Every effort will be made to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that confidentiality of the case is adhered to. YIFTD will not provide information to the media which could identify the individual concerned.

At the conclusion of a case YIFTD will review the circumstances and determine whether there are any organisational improvements to be considered to help prevent similar events in the future.

More information can also be found in the HIPS safeguarding children procedures manual under [Allegations against staff or volunteers](#).

12.1 Resignation whilst under investigation

If the staff member resigns or their contract terminates, or in the case of a volunteer, ceases to make their services available, YIFTD will continue the investigation to completion in accordance with policy (see Policy and Flow Chart).

In cases of allegation of harm or potential harm to children and young people there can be no 'compromise agreement' between YIFTD and the employee or volunteer. YIFTD has a statutory duty to make a referral to the DBS. In addition, any such agreement would not prevent a police investigation where appropriate.

12.2 Allegations against staff that are not substantiated

If the allegation is not substantiated YIFTD will support the staff member in their return to work. This may include the provision of additional support through a mentor and discussions on how contact with the child/young person who made the allegation might be managed.

If an allegation against a member of staff is determined to be unfounded YIFTD will support Social Care staff to determine if the child/young person concerned needs other services.

12.3 Sharing information with parents / carers and those with a statutory duty of care

Parents or carers of a child or children under 18, should be sensitively informed about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know, but this must be in collaboration with the LADO/police in the first instance, and may not always be appropriate.

Social workers and/or support workers for young people in YIFTD services should be kept informed of any allegation or concern of abuse or conduct. They must be updated of progress and outcomes of the Investigation. If the Conduct issue is a Criminal Justice, or Child Protection Investigation the updates will be undertaken by the Designated Officer.

12.4 Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service

If YIFTD (in consultation with the LADO) makes the decision to withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults, and we believe that the person has carried out one of the following:

- has engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and or adults, whereby an action or inaction has harmed a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk or,
- satisfied the 'harm test' in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults, e.g: there has been no relevant conduct issue as far as we know, but a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult still exists or,
- they been cautioned or convicted of a *relevant* crime whereby automatic barring (either with or without the right to make representations) prevails

YIFTD then has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service. Once the DBS receives a referral, they will then consider whether that person needs to be added to their 'barred list'.

13.0 Allegations against other professionals

There may be concerns about reporting an allegation or inappropriate behaviour in relation to an external professional or volunteer for fear of damaging working relationships or even jeopardising contracts. Staff must always prioritise the safety of children and/or young people and should discuss any concerns or disclosures with their Line Manager and the DSO. They will then support members of staff and/or service users to appropriately formalise their concerns/allegations externally.

More information can also be found by looking at the HIPS LSCP escalation policy

This policy applies to all staff: employees and volunteers (including Trustees and volunteer counsellors) and is available on our [website](#).