

Safeguarding Policy

Contents

- **Introduction (P2)**
- **Policy Statement (P2)**
- **Application and scope (P4)**
- **Mandatory Reporting Procedures (P7)**
- **Safer Recruitment Mandatory Procedures (P8)**
- **Partnership Agreements (P9)**
- **Safeguarding Equity Statement (P9)**
- **Definitions (P10)**
- **Important contacts (P13)**

This policy is one of a series of YUAF integrated safeguarding portfolios and should be read in conjunction with the policies listed below, which can be found in the YUAF Policies shared folder.

- **Anti-bullying**
- **Complaints**
- **Data protection**
- **E-Safety**
- **Health and safety**
- **Safer recruitment**
- **Staff code of conduct**
- **Whistleblowing policy**

Introduction

YUAF takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of everyone with whom we work and with whom we come into contact, and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our activities, community settings and schools to prevent harm and to identify, assess, and support those who are suffering harm.

Policy Statement

YUAF believes that everyone connected with its work, particularly children and young people, should be safe from harm. Our first priority will always be the protection of anyone at risk of harm and abuse, which will take precedence over all other considerations. This includes our staff.

YUAF believes that everyone has the right to protection from abuse and neglect regardless of their age, disability, gender identity, nationality or immigration status, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, maternity, marriage or civil partnership status. YUAF will be proactive in creating a safe environment and culture, planning for safe engagement with others, with special consideration given to the protection of those with whom we work with. We will always act in the best interest of children and those at risk of harm, promoting their wellbeing at all times.

This policy encompasses the protection of children, young people, adults at risk, our staff, trustees and anyone with whom we come into contact including volunteers, contractors, from all forms of abuse and exploitation, including domestic abuse and violence. YUAF defines children as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and recognises that some adults (those over 18) may be at risk from abuse and that this risk may be transient. YUAF believes that all children equally deserve protection from harm regardless of age.

All breaches of this policy and any allegations of abuse and neglect will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

YUAF will report all allegations of abuse to the relevant authorities. Non-recent and anonymous allegations will be dealt with under this policy. There is no time limit on our obligation to those at risk of harm and to those who have been abused.

YUAF will not tolerate any form of abuse, bullying, harassment, or retaliation against anyone raising a legitimate concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of anyone else. Any type of reprisal will be considered gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal or other disciplinary action.

YUAF recognises that in certain cases it may be best to safeguard someone at risk of harm in partnership with other agencies and organisations, statutory or non statutory.

YUAF recognises that in some cases employees, trustees or volunteers may believe that the actions of agencies, organisations and partners may need to be challenged to ensure that everyone is safe from harm. YUAF will always professionally challenge where there is action or inaction that may harm a child or young person.

The following principles underpin the YUAF's approach to safeguarding:

- **The welfare of the child and young adult is paramount;**
- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults is everyone's responsibility. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all staff should ensure their approach is child/ young adult-centered. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child or young adult;**

- **All those working for and with YUAF must maintain the attitude that “it could happen here” and guard against complacency when it comes to safeguarding;**
- **All children and young adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse;**
- **Working in partnership with children, young adults, their parents, carers, schools, and agencies is essential in promoting their welfare;**
- **No single professional will have a complete picture of a child or young adult’s needs and circumstances. If children, young adults and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action; and**
- **All concerns and allegations of abuse and/or neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.**

Application and Scope

This policy applies to all YUAF employees, trustees, contractors, and volunteers who must:

- a) **Be mindful of the position of trust and power they occupy through their engagement or work;**
- b) **Respect and maintain appropriate boundaries, in person, online, digitally and in social media with anyone with whom they come into contact through our work;**
- c) **At all times follow the Code of Conduct;**
- d) **Proactively engage with children and young people who we encounter through our work; ensuring that they are informed of this policy, how to raise any concerns, and of the Code of Conduct;**

e) Plan all activity that may involve contact with children or those at risk to ensure the safety of anyone who may reasonably engage in our work, both formally and informally, in person and remotely;

f) Respect the privacy of others and ensure that children are never identified online through posts and social or digital media. This includes never combining information such as someone's full name, school, specific location, and any form of identifying image of them;

g) Complete and maintain a written risk assessment for any event or activity that may involve contact with children or adults at risk, including online activities and community based activities;

h) Ensure that YUAF systems are not misused or exploited in any way that could cause a child or person at risk of any harm;

i) Ensure that any contract awarded that may bring a contractor into contact with children or adults at risk includes provisions for the prevention, response and reporting of abuse and harm; and that contractors have adequate safeguarding arrangements in place equivalent to or of a higher standard than this policy;

j) Maintain their safeguarding knowledge through the completion of mandatory training and development;

k) Inform the DSL and the CEO immediately of any relevant allegations/investigations civil or criminal proceedings during their employment, appointment as a trustee or volunteer;

l) Report and share information in accordance with this policy regarding all allegations, suspicions, and concerns of any type of abuse of another person. Everyone within the scope of this policy must cooperate fully with any request for information. The withholding of any information which relates to violence, abuse or neglect can delay work to safeguard those at risk and prevent care and protection. Failure to report, withholding information or

mishandling of allegations of abuse are breaches of this policy and could lead to disciplinary action for gross misconduct; and
m) Be aware that any allegation of abuse or neglect made against them will result in a thorough response that prioritises safeguarding:

- **Through consideration of a referral to law enforcement when appropriate;**
- **Through engagement with the Local Authority Children's or Adult Services (or equivalent) for concerns regarding the safety of children and adults at risk or for concerns regarding those that work/volunteer with children the Local Authority Designated Officer (if applicable);**
- **Through a robust internal investigation using this policy and any relevant disciplinary policy and process, which could lead to dismissal; and**
- **Through compliance with YUAF's legal obligation to refer to the relevant barring authorities, individuals who have been found to have harmed a child or adult with whom we work or placed them at risk of harm. Where the threshold for a barring referral may not have been reached, a referral will be made as a matter of caution. YUAF employees, trustees, contractors, and volunteers must never:**

1) Engage or attempt to engage in any form of sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of consent locally. A mistaken belief in age is not a defence;

2) Engage in any form of sexual activity with other staff, volunteers, trustees, partner/supplier representatives aged over 18 where there is a power imbalance for example any dependency role, a manager subordinate relationship, a senior leader and more junior employee or an employee who awards contracts or services;

3) Engage in a personal relationship including any form of sexual activity with a beneficiary;

YUAF Safeguarding Policy v2.0 June 2023

4) Support, take part in or condone any form of sexual exploitation, trafficking or abuse of any other person;

5) Imply or suggest that employment (paid or otherwise), opportunity or any form of benefit is received because of any form of sexual activity or exploitative behaviour;

6) Take part in any form of transactional sexual activity, regardless of local legislation; 7) Engage in or support the marriage of anyone under the age of 18 regardless of local legislation;

8) Agree, engage in, negotiate or support any form of settlement or agreement between a victim of abuse, a witness, or their family. Such agreements must be reported in accordance with this policy; or

9) Fail to, or delay, the reporting of any safeguarding allegations or concerns in accordance with this policy. An anonymous or non-recent allegation or the lack of evidence is never reasonable grounds to delay or fail to report any concern of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Any failure to report or delays such a report may result in disciplinary action.

Mandatory Reporting Procedures

If you have or receive any concern, suspicion, or allegation of any form of abuse, neglect or exploitation it is your duty to act.

If you believe that anyone is at risk of imminent harm, you must contact the police by calling 999 without delay and then report the matter using the Safeguarding Procedures document.

YUAF employees, trustees, contractors, and volunteers must report any suspicion or allegation of any form of abuse in accordance with the Safeguarding Procedures. Failure to do so is a breach of this policy and a disciplinary matter which may result in dismissal. Victims or survivors of abuse aged over 18 have a right to decide if they wish to participate in any investigation. Nothing in this policy mandates a victim or survivor to make a report of abuse. If a victim or survivor declines to engage with any investigation,

YUAF will assess and determine whether any investigation should take place.

The CEO will commission and oversee all investigations of breaches of this policy in a victim/survivor centred manner and maintain a suitable investigative resource. Where an allegation that this policy has been breached by the CEO, the Chair of the Board Trustees may commission an investigation.

The DSL and the CEO will ensure that adequate records are maintained relating to all matters of safeguarding concerns including low-level concerns.

Where any individual leaves their position at YUAF before the completion or commencement of any investigation under this policy or related disciplinary action the process will continue, and an outcome clearly recorded.

YUAF Safeguarding Policy v2.0 June 2023

Before the commencement of any investigation, permission must be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (or equivalent) and/or the police in any relevant cases.

No one in YUAF including trustees and executive leaders, may prevent an allegation of abuse or neglect from being reported to a statutory agency or a consultation taking place with a Local Authority Designated Officer, Local Authority Children's or Adult services (or equivalent).

Safer Recruitment Mandatory Procedures

The recruitment of any staff or volunteer position, including trustees must follow safer recruitment procedures which will include, but not be limited to, completion of an interview, pre-employment/engagement checks and declarations, references and criminal records checks prior to joining.

Any failure to follow safer recruitment procedures or attempt, successful or otherwise, to mislead or frustrate this process is a

breach of this policy and a disciplinary matter which may result in dismissal or the withdrawal of any offer of employment or volunteering opportunity.

Partnership Agreements

Staff who negotiate any formal or contractual arrangements between YUAF and any form of partner, individual or groups that brings the partner into contact with people with whom we work, including any form of image and data, must ensure that contracts include provisions for the prevention, response and reporting of abuse and harm. The CEO must approve all such contractual arrangements in advance.

Partners must have policies in place to maintain safeguarding arrangements at least equivalent to this policy. Any partner without such policies must give a written undertaking to ensure standards in this policy are met.

All agreements with partners must include a provision for YUAF to terminate any agreement or contract if the partner is judged by YUAF to have failed to prevent, respond, and report any abuse or harm.

Should any concerns regarding a partner's safeguarding arrangements or response arise, the CEO must be notified without delay.

Safeguarding equality statement

Some children and young adults have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist around recognising or disclosing it.

We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children and young adults diverse circumstances. We ensure that

all children and young adults have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

YUAF seeks to support all children and young adults and note the potential extra needs of children and young adults who:

- **Have special educational needs;**
- **Have disabilities that impact physical or mental;**
- **Have a social worker;**
- **Are young carers/ (young adult careers);**
- **May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, faith and belief or no faith, age, gender identification; sexuality;**
- **Are pregnant or in receipt of paternity/maternity leave;**
- **Are married or in a civil partnership;**
- **Have English as an additional language;**
- **Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse, domestic abuse or poor mental health;**
- **Are at risk of FGM, sexual/criminal exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation;**
- **Are asylum seekers;**
- **Are looked after or who have been previously looked after; and/or**
- **Are privately fostered.**

Definition

Abuse of Power

Abuse of Power consists of improper behaviour by someone with more power (or someone in a position of trust) to the detriment of a person in a junior or dependency role, including children.

Adult At Risk

Anyone who is 18 or over who may be or is unable to care or protect themselves for any reason. This can be due to a disability, illness or age. Sometimes referred to as vulnerable adults. It can also apply to those suffering from addiction, trauma or their immigration status. Vulnerability may be temporary and transient.

Child

Anyone under the age of 18.

Child Abuse

Any action or inaction by an adult or child that causes harm to a child. There are five categories of abuse: emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Child abuse can occur online using technology and social media as well as in person.

Child Exploitation

An umbrella term used to describe the abuse of children who are trafficked, forced, or coerced into exploitative activities for another's gain.

Child Sexual Abuse

The involvement of a child in any forced or coercive sexual activity, the child may not understand or be aware that they are being abused. This includes showing/sending a child sexual material.

Domestic Abuse

Being subject to abuse by a partner, family members or carer.

Emotional Abuse

Psychological harm caused by bullying, belittling, gaslighting and manipulation that harms another person's emotional wellbeing.

Financial Abuse

The exploitation of another person for financial gain, this includes theft, use of their funds, the acquisition of unwanted goods or credit. This includes Modern Slavery.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of others. It is any behaviour, even if unintentional, that is demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient and, when linked to a protected characteristic, can be unlawful.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Any behaviour that breaches our values or the Code of Conduct.

Neglect

Failure to meet the basic needs of another through action or inaction including the denial of food, water, medical assistance, clothing, or personal care.

People with whom we work

Individuals, communities, or groups who come into contact with our work through our operations.

Physical Abuse

Deliberate action that causes harm or physical injury can involve biting, hitting, kicking, being restrained, or struck with objects.

Position of Power or Trust

Safeguarding Procedures

Any position – formal or informal – in which one person has more authority or power over another for example, a practitioner working with a beneficiary, a leadership role, control of resources, or an informal role such as a volunteer who coordinates others.

Procedures determined and maintained by the Director of Services that define how abuse must be reported.

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct relating specifically to safeguarding, determined and maintained by the Director of Services.

Sexual Abuse & Exploitation (Adults)

Being forced to take part in, or exposed to, sexual activity or material, being photographed, filmed or observed for sexual purposes (including for financial gain) without their consent, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions, sexual touching, assault, and rape, this can occur without the knowledge of the victim.

Sexual Harassment

Any form of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature towards an adult, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. This includes all forms of direct or indirect contact.

Transactional Sexual Activity

The exchange of money, goods, services or employment for sex or any sexualised activity. This includes activity that may be lawful such as sex work. YUAF does not judge those that experience such transactions, we do however recognise that those exchanging something for sexual services do so through an inherent abuse of power.

Important contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Shauna O'briain
email: shauna@yuaf.org.uk / phone: 07946 007 717

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Sam Nankivell
email: sam@yuaf.org.uk

Acknowledgement

Please sign using the form below to acknowledge that you have read, understood and intend to apply this policy:

→ <https://forms.gle/KwV25dsWHYUFmgNN9> ←

Date of next review

This policy is to be reviewed and updated as necessary and by latest June 2026.

Version history

Version

Date

Author

Description

v1.0

v1.1

Aug 2021

16 May 2023

Lydia Newman, Kerry O'Brien

Rabena Faried (for

Safeguarding WG)

YUAF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures v1.0

Updated Safeguarding Policy draft circulated to Safeguarding Working Group for comments

v1.2

7 Jun 2023

Adam Kamenetzky (for Safeguarding WG)

Updated Safeguarding Policy draft with signoff sheet link circulated to YUAF Board of Trustees

v2.0

30 Jun 2023

Safeguarding WG

Finalised policy v2.0 reviewed and signed off by YUAF Board of Trustees