



Safeguarding Policy

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1) Introduction

The Young Person's Advisory Service (YPAS) is committed to practice, which protects children and young people (CYP) and vulnerable adults (VA) from harm. We will endeavour to safeguard by – adopting comprehensive CYP and VA protection policies and procedures.

Nothing is more important than children, young people and vulnerable adult's welfare. Individuals who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified. Everyone who encounters children and families has a role to play. Working Together (2018)

Effective safeguarding arrangements is underpinned two key principles;

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part
- A child-centred approach for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of CYPs. Everyone who works with CYPs – including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early year's professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers – has a responsibility for keeping them safe.

This safeguarding policy details all policies and procedures that should be followed where it is necessary to take action to safeguard CYP or VA from the risk of significant harm.

This policy has been written in line with the following government guidance:

- The Children Act 1989 (as amended).
- Framework for the assessment of children and need and their families (2000)
- Lord Laming's report of the Victoria Climbié inquiry - Every child matters (2003)
- National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services (2004).
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Lord Laming's report Baby P failures and review of child protection (2009)
- The Prevent Strategy (2011)
- Children and Families Act (2014).
- Working together to safeguard children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2015)
- The Children and Social Work Act (2017).
- Working Together (2018)

2) YPAS underpinning policies and procedures

YPAS has robust policies and procedures for safer recruitment and selection. New members of staff undergo comprehensive reference checks and enhanced DBS checks

All new staff receive

- Comprehensive Induction
- Compulsory safeguarding training ratified by Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)
- Compulsory Information Governance Training by Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)
- Six months' probation period regular Keep in Touch (KIT) meetings with senior management
- Monitored and supported by YPAS's skilled workforce who understand and have been instrumental in developing YPAS's strong safeguarding culture.

At recruitment stage, YPAS employees are made aware of their responsibilities and commitment to safeguard CYPs and VAs . Staff members are required to attend compulsory annual training.

Professional competence is assured through the comprehensive induction and annual refreshers, regular line management supervision, clinical supervision, and annual appraisals. YPAS ensures all staff members are aware and fully understand safeguarding requirements.

YPAS expects high standards of behaviour: When professionals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role (*refer to staff code of conduct*).

This safeguarding policy is underpinned by YPAS's comprehensive policies, procedures and process maps to ensure all staff are compliant with safeguarding requirements

- Employee Handbook
- Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Information Sharing Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Clinical Risk Management Policy
- Clinical Supervision Policy

3) Identifying and Reporting Child Protection Concerns

YPAS encourages all staff to have professional curiosity. Refer to link below LSCPs guide to professional curiosity. This guide aims to raise awareness of the need for respectful uncertainty, it helps practitioners spot the signs of when a parent/carer

may be using disguised compliance and let you know where and how to access support.

https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/assets/1/lscp_quick_learning_guide_to_professional_curiosity_jan_2020.pdf

The initial assessment with CYP parent/carer consists of a baseline assessment utilising outcome measures, explanation of confidentiality and the limits, explanation of data protection and their rights, information sharing and consent. It is vital that as part of the initial assessment, the CYP and/or parent/carer understand the limits of confidentiality and this is reiterated at each session. During the initial assessment and all subsequent sessions' practitioners will be risk assessing the child or young person. Practitioners should always consider the possibility of some activities could trigger re-traumatization this will be considered in the risk assessment. Re-traumatization is a conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in the individual re-experiencing of the initial trauma event.

YPAS subscribes to the LCSP levels of need refer to link below for levels of need

https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/assets/1/lscp_levels_of_need_level_indicators.pdf

3.1) Duty of Care

Once the practitioner is engaged with the child/young person they will hold duty of care. Practitioners are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect children and young people from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All practitioners, have a duty to keep CYPs and VA safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. CYPs and VA have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that professionals are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of CYPs and VA. Failure to do so may be regarded as neglect

3.2) What if a child is at risk from significant harm?

The local authority has a duty under section 47 of the Children Act 2004 to make enquiries about the need to safeguard or promote a child's' welfare where they have reason to suspect that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Indications of significant harm would include

- Children/young people who have been or are alleged to have been physically abused
- Children/young people who have been or are alleged to have been sexually abused
- Children/young people exposed to inappropriate sexual activities, including sexual exploitation

- Children/young people whose parents have exposed them to significant harm, for example by leaving them alone and in danger; by failing to protect them from dangerous substances; by knowingly exposing them to those with a history of abusing children
- Children/young people so neglected that their health is in immediate jeopardy
- Children living with those who have a history of abusing children
- Children whose self-harming behaviour is life threatening

3.3) Significant Harm Criteria

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include, involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or young person's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or young person's basic emotional needs. If neglect is suspected refer to the neglect screening tool (2020)

<https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/scp/professionals-volunteers/neglect>

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people, causing them to frequently feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person including the fabrication of the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child or young person.

If a child protection concern is raised the staff member needs to inform the child, young person and/or parent/carer that they have a concern and need to take advice from the designated child protection co-ordinator (refer to child protection flow chart).

Child sexual exploitation (CSE):

CSE is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and

alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to children and young people in gangs

“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive “something” (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): it is increasingly being recognised as a major factor behind crime in communities while also simultaneously victimising vulnerable young people and leaving them at risk of harm. CCE often occurs without the victim being aware that they are being exploited and involves young people being encouraged, cajoled or threatened to carry out crime for the benefit of others. In return they are offered friendship or peer acceptance, but also cigarettes , drugs (especially cannabis), alcohol or even food and accommodation. CYP as young as 10 or 11 are being groomed to enter gangs and commit crime on behalf of older criminals. These young people are being exploited and, by being persuaded or lured into carrying out illegal activities, often with the promise of something they desire as a reward, they become incredibly vulnerable. Victims of CCE are often fearful of getting into trouble themselves - for the very actions they have been exploited into carrying out - so it can also be difficult to get these young people to come forward and speak out about their situation.

Radicalisation and Extremism: Safeguarding CYPs from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding them from other forms of harm” - The Prevent Strategy 2011 Children may be at risk from exposure to materials or influences that support or endorse terrorism and extremism. Local authorities and other public bodies, including schools, the police, health services, have a legal duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and to provide support via the Channel programme to people who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The risks posed to young people by extremism are now included within the criteria for determining whether children and young people are in need of early help, specialist support or protection.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to procedures that intentionally alter, mutilate or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is medically unnecessary and can have serious health consequences, both at the time it is carried out and in later life. FGM is a violation of the body and of the individuals human rights. It is an act of violence and gender discrimination against girls and women. FGM is a child protection concern - it causes significant harm and is classed as physical abuse. Specific FGM and child protection legislation and

policy exists to protect children and young people from being subjected to the procedure. FGM is also a health concern - there are no medical benefits to the individual following FGM procedure and it is harmful because of the various gynaecological, obstetric and psychological health complications for mother and baby. FGM is prevalent in 28 African countries and areas of the Middle and Far East, but it is increasingly practiced in the U.K. in communities with larger populations of first-generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. FGM is deeply embedded in some communities and is performed for cultural and social reasons. It is usually carried out on girls before they reach puberty, but in some cases it is performed on new-born infants or on women before marriage or pregnancy. It is often justified by the belief that it is beneficial for the girl or woman, but FGM is an extremely harmful practice which violates basic human rights. The most significant risk factor for girls and young women is coming from a community where FGM is known to be practised and/or where a mother, sister or other female family member has been subjected to FGM. Practitioners should be aware of this and provide families with advice and information which makes it clear that FGM is illegal.

Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence

Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, where some element of duress is a factor. The United Nations views Forced Marriage as a form of human rights abuse, since it violates the principle of freedom and the autonomy of individuals. This is acknowledged under the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, article 16(2):

So called 'honour' based violence (HBV) is where the person is being punished by their family or their community. They are being punished because of a belief, actual or alleged, that a person has not been properly controlled enough to conformity and thus this is to the 'shame' or 'dishonour' of the family.

'Honour Based Violence' is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community members (ACPO 2007). Not everyone who is at risk from Honour Based Violence has been subjected to Forced Marriage

One Chance Rule: All practitioners working with victims of forced marriage and HBV need to be aware of the 'one chance' rule. That is, they may only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and may only have one chance to save a life. This means that all practitioners working within statutory agencies need to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations when they become aware of potential forced marriage/ HBV cases. If the victim is allowed to walk out the door without support being offered, that one chance might be wasted. Coercion is likely to have been used with one or both spouses; by family members, friends and the wider community. This may include: threats of violence, being held against their will, emotional threats and other forms of coercion and harassment, such as not being allowed to go anywhere without being accompanied by someone. There is a common misconception that forced marriages and HBV are confined to certain religious groups and cultures, however this is not the case. The practice of forced marriage and HBV is not confined to one culture or religious group and can happen regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, age, gender and sexuality. Any

person can find themselves in a situation where they are offered no choice but to proceed with the marriage.

Modern Slavery

From 1 November 2015, specified public authorities have a duty to notify the Home Office of any individual encountered in England and Wales who they believe is a suspected victim of slavery or human trafficking. The Duty to Notify is intended to gather better data about modern slavery in England and Wales. The 'duty to notify' provision is set out in the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and applies to all police forces and local authorities in England and Wales, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and the National Crime Agency. Home Office staff within UK Visas and Immigration, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement are also required, as a matter of Home Office policy, to comply with the duty to notify.

4) Responding to disclosures

Where concerns arise as a result of the information given it is important to reassure them but not to promise confidentiality. An allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, do not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation such as asking the child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations (tampering with evidence).

If appropriate, arrange for a colleague to remain with the CYP whilst discussions with the child protection officer take place.

A colleague's role is not to discuss the concerns with the CYP. The staff member who receives a disclosure is the person who carries out the necessary referrals/conversations to Children's Services.

When seeking advice from the safeguarding officer it is important that practitioners' record concerns in the young person's case file along with the advice/decision of the safeguarding officer. If it is identified that the safeguarding concern needs to be escalated, it will involve the comprehensive completion of online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF); this information is essential to the information gathering process by Children's Services. YPAS Safeguarding Officer will support staff during this process but will not intervene with the CYP. See link below more information on LSCP MARF referral

<https://liverpool.gov.uk/referrals/childrens-social-care-referrals/make-an-urgent-marf-referral/>

5) Information Governance

Personal identifying Information concerning clients or staff is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to unauthorised persons. This obligation shall continue in perpetuity. Disclosures of confidential information or disclosures of any data of a personal nature can result in prosecution for an offence under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 or an action for civil damages under the same Act in addition to any disciplinary action taken by the YPAS.

5) Approval

Policies and Procedures are approved by YPAS's Chief Executive Officer and Ratified by the Board of Trustees.

Policy approved by:

Monique Collier (Chief Executive Officer).

Signature: 

Date: 17/08/2024