

Safeguarding Policy

CONTENTS:

Number	Description	Page
1	Introduction	Page 2
2	YPAS underpinning policies and procedures	Page 2
3	Identifying & Reporting Child Protection Concerns	Page 3
4	Responding to disclosures	Page 7
5	Information Governance	Page 8
6	Approval	Page 8

1. Introduction:

The Young Person's Advisory Service (YPAS) is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people (CYP) and vulnerable adults (VA). We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment, free from abuse, harm, and neglect.

To achieve this, YPAS has adopted comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that reflect legal requirements, best practice, and statutory guidance. Our approach ensures that concerns are identified and acted upon promptly and effectively.

Nothing is more important than the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Those who require help and protection deserve high-quality, timely, and effective support. As stated in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), everybody who 'comes into contact' with children, families, or vulnerable individuals has a vital role to play in safeguarding.

Effective safeguarding arrangements are underpinned by two key principles:

1. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility: For safeguarding to be effective, every professional and organisation must play their full part.
2. A child-centred approach: Services must be based on a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, and views of children and young people.

Everybody who works with or 'comes into contact' with CYPs or VAs e.g. teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, ED staff, pediatricians, VCS staff and social workers, has a responsibility to help keep them safe.

This Safeguarding Policy outlines the procedures to follow whenever there is a need to act to protect a child, young person, or vulnerable adult from harm or the risk of significant harm.

This policy is written in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989 (as amended)
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in 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 into the Death of Baby P (2009)
- The Prevent Strategy (2011)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015, updated 2018)
- The Children and Social Work Act (2017)

2. Underpinning policies and procedures:

YPAS has robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place to ensure the protection and wellbeing of children, young people (CYP), and vulnerable adults (VA). These procedures are designed to embed a safeguarding culture across all levels of the organisation.

Safer Recruitment and Staff Onboarding:

YPAS follows a rigorous safer recruitment and selection process. All new staff:

- Undergo comprehensive reference checks and an enhanced DBS check before appointment.

- Are made aware of their responsibilities and commitment to safeguarding CYP and VA at the recruitment stage.
- Begin employment with a comprehensive induction that includes safeguarding expectations and organisational values.
- Are subject to a six-month probation period, which includes regular *Keep in Touch* (KIT) meetings with senior management.
- Are supported by experienced staff who have contributed to YPAS's strong safeguarding culture.

Mandatory Training and Ongoing Support:

All new staff receive:

- Compulsory Safeguarding Training ratified by the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Compulsory Information Governance Training delivered in line with standards from the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC).
- Ongoing professional development through annual safeguarding refresher training.
- Regular line management supervision, clinical supervision, and annual appraisals to ensure continued professional competence and accountability.

YPAS expects consistently high standards of professional behaviour. Staff working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults must understand and accept the significant responsibilities and trust placed in them (refer to code of conduct policy).

Core Safeguarding Policies and Procedures:

This Safeguarding Policy is underpinned by the following key policies and procedures:

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

These policies are designed to embed a safeguarding culture across all levels of the organisation.

3. Identifying and Reporting Child Protection Concerns:

YPAS is committed to ensuring that all staff are confident and equipped to identify and report concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Staff are expected to demonstrate professional curiosity and a respectful and inquisitive approach to exploring concerns, particularly where there may be indicators of neglect, abuse, or disguised compliance by parents or carers.

YPAS encourages staff to ask questions, seek clarification, and reflect on what may not be immediately visible or explained. This approach helps to identify potential safeguarding risks that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Staff should refer to the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership's Guide on Professional Curiosity, which promotes:

- Awareness of disguised compliance and minimisation of risk
- A mindset of respectful uncertainty
- The confidence to challenge, explore, and seek supervision when concerns arise
- Clear guidance on when and how to escalate concerns

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

All safeguarding concerns must be reported without delay in line with YPAS's safeguarding procedures. Concerns should be recorded and shared with a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

As part of YPAS's commitment to safeguarding, the initial assessment with a CYP and their parent/carer includes key safeguarding and information governance components. The assessment consists of:

- A baseline assessment using relevant outcome measures
- An explanation of confidentiality and its limits
- Information on data protection and the CYP's rights under UK GDPR
- Clear communication around information sharing and consent

It is essential that both the CYP and their parent/carer understand the limits of confidentiality. This must be clearly explained during the initial assessment and reiterated in every subsequent session.

Throughout the assessment process and during subsequent sessions, practitioners should continuously risk assess. Risk assessments must consider not only immediate safeguarding concerns, but also the potential for re-traumatisation. Some activities, topics, or interventions may trigger conscious or unconscious reminders of past trauma, resulting in the re-experiencing of the traumatic event. Practitioners must remain alert to this risk and address it within the safeguarding and risk assessment framework.

YPAS follows the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership - Levels of Need guidance to inform decision making and ensure an appropriate and proportionate safeguarding response. LCSP levels of need link: https://liverpoolscp.org.uk/assets/1/lscp_levels_of_need_level_indicators.pdf

3.1 Duty of Care:

Once a practitioner is engaged with a CYP, they assume a duty of care. This means they are professionally and ethically responsible for ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and dignity throughout their engagement.

Practitioners are accountable for how they:

- Exercise authority
- Manage risk
- Use organisational resources
- Protect CYPs and vulnerable adults (VAs) from discrimination and avoidable harm

All practitioners have a duty to keep CYPs and VAs safe from sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological harm. This includes taking reasonable and proportionate steps to identify and respond to any concerns about their safety or wellbeing.

CYPs and VAs have the right to be treated with respect, compassion, and dignity. A failure to take appropriate safeguarding action may be regarded as neglect and could lead to disciplinary action or professional consequences.

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

Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a legal duty to make enquiries when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. These enquiries aim to determine whether action is needed to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. YPAS practitioners must recognise the signs of significant harm and raise concerns promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for appropriate action and referral.

If a practitioner suspects that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, immediate action must be taken in line with YPAS's safeguarding procedures.

Indications of significant harm:

- CYP is known or suspected to have been physically abused
- CYP is known or suspected to have been sexually abused
- CYP is exposed to inappropriate sexual activity, including sexual exploitation or grooming
- CYP is left alone in dangerous situations, or whose parents fail to protect them from known risks (e.g. harmful substances or individuals with a known history of child abuse)
- Cases of severe neglect that places the health or development of a CYP at immediate risk
- CYP living in households where there is a history of abuse or serious safeguarding concerns
- CYP engaging in self-harming behaviour that is life-threatening or poses a serious risk to health

Concerns that meet the threshold for significant harm must be escalated immediately.

3.3 Significant Harm Criteria:

Significant harm is the threshold for intervention under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, where a local authority is required to make enquiries if they believe a CYP is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This section outlines the key categories and indicators of significant harm.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This may include:

- Physical sexual contact (penetrative or non-penetrative)
- Involvement in the viewing or creation of pornographic materials
- Encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour

Neglect: is the persistent failure to meet a CYPs basic physical and/or emotional needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health or development. This includes:

- Lack of adequate food, shelter, or clothing
- Failure to ensure appropriate supervision or medical care
- Unresponsiveness to emotional needs

If neglect is suspected refer to the neglect screening tool (2020)

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

Emotional Abuse: involves persistent emotional maltreatment that negatively affects a CYP's emotional development. Examples include:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved
- Imposing inappropriate expectations
- Causing frequent fear or intimidation
- Exploiting or corrupting the child emotionally

Physical Abuse: involves deliberately causing physical harm. This can include:

- Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding
- Drowning, suffocating, or inflicting fabricated illness
- Any non-accidental injury caused to a child or young person

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): is a form of sexual abuse where CYP are manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, affection, or status. This can involve:

- Grooming through online platforms or in person
- Coercion through parties, substances, or peer pressure
- Trafficking for the purposes of exploitation

“CSE occurs in exploitative contexts where the CYP receives something, such as gifts, drugs, or affection, in return for sexual activity. Power imbalance is a key feature of these relationships.”

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): involves CYP being exploited, often by gangs, to commit crimes such as theft, drug trafficking, or violence. Key characteristics include:

- Grooming with promises of friendship, protection, or material rewards
- Exploitation through threats, peer pressure, or manipulation
- Victims often unaware they are being exploited and fear speaking out

Radicalisation and Extremism: Under the Prevent Strategy (2011), all staff have a duty to protect CYP from being drawn into terrorism. Risks may include:

- Exposure to extremist materials or ideologies
- Recruitment via online platforms or peer networks
- Involvement in the Channel programme where appropriate

Safeguarding from radicalisation is no different from safeguarding from other forms of harm.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is:

- A form of physical abuse and gender-based violence
- A human rights violation with no health benefits and significant long-term consequences
- Illegal in the UK, even if carried out abroad

Practitioners must be alert to risks where FGM is known to be practiced in a CYPs family or community.

Modern Slavery:

Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, specified public bodies (including charities and local authorities) have a duty to report suspected victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. Modern slavery includes:

- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation
- Trafficking for any form of exploitation

Important Practice Note:

If a child protection concern is raised, the practitioner must inform the CYP and/or parent/carer (where appropriate) that the concern will be escalated, and that advice will be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. (refer to the safeguarding procedure for guidance).

4. Responding to disclosures:

When a CYP makes a disclosure or raises a concern, staff must respond with sensitivity, professionalism, and clarity.

Key principles:

- Reassure the CYP, but do not promise confidentiality. Make it clear that you may need to share the information with others in order to help keep them safe.
- Do not ask leading questions or attempt to investigate the allegation yourself. This could jeopardise any future police investigation.
- Avoid tampering with evidence, including texts, images, or objects that may be relevant to the disclosure.
- If needed, a colleague may stay with the CYP for emotional support but must not engage in discussion about the concern or disclosure.
- The staff member who receives the disclosure is responsible for recording the concern and seeking advice from the Safeguarding Lead.

Recording and Reporting:

Record the concern clearly and factually in the CYP's case file, including:

- What was disclosed
- Your response
- Any advice or decision made by the Safeguarding Lead
- The Safeguarding Lead will guide and support through the referral process but will not intervene directly with the CYP unless appropriate and agreed.
- If the concern needs to be escalated, the Safeguarding Lead or senior manager will support with the completion of the online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

- It is essential that the MARF is completed comprehensively, as it forms the basis for Children's Services' decision-making.

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 Data Protection Act 1998 or an action for civil damages under the same Act in addition to any disciplinary action taken by the YPAS.

6. Approval:

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

Name: Monique Collier (*Chief Executive Officer*).

Signature:



Date: 16/06/25