YOUTH FOR CHRIST

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Tees Valley Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer:

Tim Wye-Williams – 07825346746

Tees Valley Youth for Christ Deputy Safeguarding Officer:

Matty Steel – 07890852071

Local Centre Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility:

John Stewart – 07701063050

National Safeguarding Officer: Lesley Taberer - 07890 414236

National Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibility: Annabel Wheeldon-Clarke

Overview

As a Christian organisation, Youth for Christ affirms our belief in the God-given value of every individual with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we are committed to treating each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers abuse of any kind.

It is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk (also known as adults with care and support needs) against any form of harm and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. With this in mind, Youth for Christ is committed to supporting, resourcing and training all those who work with children, young people and adults at risk across our ministries.

This policy is for use by both national team (British Youth for Christ) and chartered local ministries (local centres or projects) operating as part of Youth for Christ in England and Wales.

There is a separate Safeguarding Policy for Scotland which reflects the different legislation in that nation.

There is a separate 'Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' Policy for England/Wales and a Recruiting with Convictions policy for Scotland which reflect the different legal requirements for each nation and provide the framework for working with ex- offenders and self-disclosure.

The sections highlighted in yellow may be amended with details relevant for the context of local ministries but any other amendments or additions must be approved in writing by the Designated Safeguarding officer of British Youth for Christ.

Ministry Affiliates of Youth for Christ are required to have in place an appropriate safeguarding policy, commit to annual safeguarding training for their team, and ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place and subject to the approval of the policy by Youth for Christ.

The British Youth for Christ Board should review this safeguarding policy on an annual basis in

September and any updates or revisions to the policy will be sent out to all local ministries by the end of September of each year for adoption.

As part of the national federation of Youth for Christ, all local ministries commit to informing the national Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding or welfare issue or concern that arises in their context. This is so that they can be appropriately advised and supported and so that any wider implications or risks can be assessed and managed.

British Youth for Christ have entered a partnership with Thirtyone:eight (formerly known as CCPAS) as a demonstration of our commitment to safeguarding. This partnership enables us to gain both up-to-date, expert support at a national level and to provide the same level of support and guidance to all our local ministries. As part of our Advanced Membership with Thirtyone:Eight, an information sharing agreement is in place whereby if a Youth for Christ local centre contacts Thirtyone:Eight via their safeguarding helpline, notification is sent to the designated safeguarding leads at British Youth for Christ, so that they can provide clear and robust support around any decisions or specific actions that need to be taken.

There are a number of additional policies and guidance documents referred to within this policy which are available from the British Youth for Christ office - please email hr@yfc.co.uk.

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Organisational Details

National

Name of Organisation:	British Youth for Christ
National Office Address:	Albion Street Church Albion Street Brierley Hill DY5 3EE
Tel No:	0121502 9620
Email address:	yfc@yfc.co.uk
Charity Numbers:	263446 (England & Wales) and SC039297 (Scotland)

Local Ministry

Name of Organisation:	**Tees Valley Youth for Christ**
Office Address:	558A Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe Stockton-on-Tees TS16 0BX
Tel No:	**07790789164**
Email address:	**admin@tvyfc.co.uk**
Charity Number:	**1100160**

Part One: Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Youth for Christ is committed to the prevention of abuse and the appropriate handling of suspicions or concerns regarding the abuse of children, young people and adults at risk. We recognise that each individual worker (employed staff, volunteer or Trustee) is responsible for ensuring everyone in their care is kept safe from harm and any concerns regarding the infliction of harm or the failure to prevent harm are reported appropriately.

As part of the national federation of Youth for Christ, all local ministries commit to informing the national Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding or welfare issue or concern that arises in their context. This is so that they can be appropriately advised and supported and so that any wider implications or risks can be assessed and managed.

Youth for Christ will ensure that children, young people and adults at risk in our care are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. A sample poster to display relevant contact details is available from Thirtyone:eight or British Youth for Christ which is to be displayed in all Youth for Christ centres or projects (and at all events and activities, as far as is possible).

A. Responding to an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

1) Reporting Responsibilities
If abuse is suspected, observed, disclosed or otherwise alleged, under no circumstances should a worker carry out their own investigation. In all cases, they should follow the procedures as below: The person in receipt of an allegation or who has suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to their Safeguarding Officer:

Local Ministry – Tees Valley Youth for Christ

Local Safeguarding Officer (dealing with local ministry staff and volunteers)
Name - Tim Wye-Williams – 078253467465

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer or, if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Officer, then the report should be made to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer.

Local Ministry Deputy Safeguarding Officer:
Name - Matty Steel – 07890852071

Other Helplines (Local Contacts)

Stockton First Contact – 01642 130080

Middlesbrough First Contact – 01642 726004

Out of Hours Service – 01642 524552

Police Emergency – 999

Police Non-emergency – 101

Thirtyone:eight Helpline on 0303 003 1111.

National Contacts

National Safeguarding Officer (dealing primarily with national staff and volunteers):

Lesley Taberer – 07890 414236

National Deputy Safeguarding Officer/s:

Nick Blanch – 07570 350029

Sandra Blair – 07817 261242

Hannah Woodhouse – 0121 502 9620

Other Helplines (Contacts local to the National Office)

Dudley Children's Social Services:
Telephone: 0300 555 0050 (Office Hours) or 0300 555 8574 (Out of Hours)
Thirtyone:eight Helpline: 0303 003 1111
Regional Child Protection Unit: Telephone: 0845113 5000

Police Emergency Telephone: 999

The absence of the nominated Safeguarding Officers should not delay referral of the allegation to the relevant bodies. Therefore, if for some reason, the Safeguarding Officer, Deputy Safeguarding Officer and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the Trustee Board are all unavailable then the individual should take action themselves (in accordance with their training and following the process below themselves). They should continue to make every effort to contact the Safeguarding Officer as the process develops. They should also contact the Thirtyone:eight Helpline on 0303 003 1111. Thirtyone:eight will be able to advise on the appropriate next steps, which may involve contacting the local Social Services or Police.

As part of the national federation of Youth for Christ, all local ministries commit to informing the national Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer of any safeguarding or welfare issue or concern that arises in their context. This is so that they can be appropriately advised and supported and so that any wider implications or risks can be assessed and managed.

Mandatory Reporting (Wales)
If working in Wales there is a duty for a practitioner to report a child at risk of abuse, neglect and / or harm ('practitioner' includes anyone who is in paid employment or an unpaid volunteer). For the purpose of this guidance a duty to report to the local authority will be taken to mean a referral to social services, who, alongside the police, have statutory powers to investigate suspected abuse or neglect. A report must be made whenever a practitioner has concerns about a child under the age of 18 yrs who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or other kinds of harm; and
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to social services or the police who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary. The use of the term 'at risk' means that actual abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm do not necessarily need to occur, rather without interventions by services actual abuse and neglect are likely to occur.
Further guidance can be found here: Safeguarding Wales

Statutory Duty to Report Child Sexual Abuse (England)
The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduced a new statutory duty for individuals undertaking key roles with responsibility for children and young people in England to report sexual abuse when they are made aware of it. It also includes a new criminal offence of attempting to prevent someone reporting child sexual abuse. Ahead of implementation, the government will develop and publish

detailed guidance on the mandatory reporting duty. Further guidance can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crime-and-policing-act-2026-factsheets/crime-and-policing-act-overarching-factsheet

2) Process for Safeguarding Officers

The role of the Safeguarding Officer is to collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion and pass this information on to statutory agencies who have a legal duty to investigate. It is not the role of the Safeguarding Officer, or anyone within Youth for Christ, to investigate allegations and concerns, unless directed to do so by the relevant statutory agency or advised by Thirtyone:eight to explore and gather more information. A written record of the concerns, observations or disclosure should be made as soon as practically possible (ideally within 1 hour) in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place. The date, time, location and people present should be included in the written record. (A sample reporting form can be found in Appendix D)

a) Dealing with Allegations of Physical Injury, Neglect or Emotional abuse

If a child, young person or adult with additional care and support needs has a physical injury, an indicator of neglect or where there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact Children's or Adult Social Services immediately for advice in cases where a child/young person or adult at risk is afraid to return home, there has been a deliberate injury, a disclosure of physical or emotional abuse, or you are concerned about their safety and believe there is a risk of significant harm. If there is immediate danger, threat or risk from further harm, then the police should be contacted.
- Seek and follow advice given by Thirtyone:eight (who will confirm their advice in writing by email) if unsure whether or not to refer a case to Children's Social Services.
- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the doctor of any suspicions.
- Not tell the parents or carers unless advised to do so by Social Services or Thirtyone:eight
- For concerns relating to parenting skills and choices the Safeguarding Officer will encourage the parent/carer to seek help from a local support option, such as the school or early help, but not if this places anyone at potential risk of harm. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, the Safeguarding Officer will offer to accompany them to engage with the support. If they still fail to act and the concerns the Safeguarding Officer has could put a child at risk, then a referral to Children's Social Services may need to be considered.

b) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Contact the Children's Social Services Department or Police Child Protection Team direct. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else.
- Seek and follow the advice given by Thirtyone:eight if, for any reason, they are unsure whether or not to contact Children's Social Services/Police. Thirtyone:eight will confirm its advice in writing for future reference

Detailed procedures where there is a concern that an adult up to the age of 25 with additional care and support needs is in need of protection

Suspicions or allegations of abuse or harm including; physical, sexual, organisational, financial & material abuse, discriminatory, neglect & acts of omission, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery, domestic abuse, psychological & emotional abuse.

Youth for Christ takes responsibility for any adults who may be at risk of harm including staff, volunteers or parents/carers.

If there is concern about any of the above, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact the Adult Social Care Team who have responsibility under the Care Act 2014 to investigate allegations of abuse. Alternatively Thirtyone:eight can be contacted for advice.
- If the adult is in immediate danger to themselves or others, or has sustained a serious injury contact the Emergency Services, informing them of any suspicions.

If there is a concern regarding spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Contact Thirtyone:eight and in discussion with them will consider appropriate action with regards to the scale of the concern.
- Identify support services for the victim, ie counselling or other pastoral support

c) Dealing with Allegations or Suspicions relating to Staff or Volunteers

If an allegation is made against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or trustee) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Officer will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (in England), or equivalent in Scotland and Wales, within Children's/Social Services whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. You should also make a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults at risk. This decision should be informed by the LADO if they are involved. (Terminology Note: this role has different titles in different areas.) The Designated Safeguarding Lead within their own Trustee Board will also be informed. If the allegation involves the designated safeguarding lead then the Chair of the Board will be informed.

In any of the cases above, the Safeguarding Officer will:

- Keep their nominated Trustee informed
- Keep the National Safeguarding Officer informed
- Not discuss details of the case with anyone else, other than those nominated above
- Seek advice from Thirtyone:eight and follow their guidance - this can be done at any stage, but is most helpful and effective when advice is sought at the earliest possible time

d) Dealing with Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults up to the age of 25 years with additional care and support needs.

The Safeguarding Officer/Deputy will:

- Liaise with Adult Social Services with regards to the suspicion of the worker
- Inform the LADO
- Make a referral to the DBS following the advice of Adult Social Services.

The Care Act 2014 or its equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm to adults with additional care and support needs. This may result in a range of options including action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers or no further action if the 'victim' chooses for no further action and they have the capacity to communicate their decision. However, this is a decision for Adult Services to take.

3) DBS for Referrals (Disclosure Scotland Referrals see separate Scotland policy)

Where there is a proven allegation against a worker (employed staff, volunteer or Trustee), there is a requirement under law to make a referral to the DBS who manage and maintain the lists of people barred from working with children, young people and adults at risk. We have a duty to ensure that individuals who pose a threat to vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups. The duty is upon us as a 'regulated activity' provider, which includes churches and other voluntary organisations. The DBS must be informed by way of a referral where the 'employer' (of a paid or volunteer worker) withdraws permission for an individual to be engaged in the relevant activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant, or been transferred to a position which is not regulated or controlled. The referral should be made when the organisation has obtained sufficient evidence and, where appropriate, has consulted with the relevant statutory Designated Officer. Further information and advice is available from Thirtyone:eight.

4) Charity Commission

Youth for Christ should get in touch with the Charity Regulator, the Charity Commission, if there are any serious issues which trustees have been unable to address, through the following form: https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/

It is the responsibility of Youth for Christ's trustees to manage the charity effectively and manage serious safeguarding issues as they arise.

The safeguarding incident would be classified as a serious incident or notifiable event if it results in, or risks significant:

- Harm to people who come into contact with Youth for Christ
- Loss of Youth for Christ's money or assets
- Damage to Youth for Christ's property
- Harm to Youth for Christ's work or reputation

For further guidance as to whether an incident needs to be reported, please contact the Charity Commission (0300 066 9167 for England and Wales) or Thirtyone:eight.

Prevention of Abuse

1) Safer Recruitment* of *Staff and Volunteers

Having in place robust practices surrounding the recruitment of staff and volunteers, including Trustees, is an essential element in our safeguarding arrangements. These help to deter, detect and prevent people we would wish not to be working with children, young people and adults at risk from doing so at the earliest point. Both British Youth for Christ and local ministries will ensure all staff and volunteers are appointed and supervised in accordance with a safer recruitment policy and guidelines. It is advised that suitable questions around safeguarding should be asked as part of the interview process.

Specific guidance on recruitment practice can be found in the British Youth for Christ Recruitment Policy & Selection Procedures. To request a copy, please email hr@yfc.co.uk.

Youth for Christ commits to ensuring all workers will be appointed, trained, supported and supervised in accordance with government guidelines on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description/person specification for the post
- Those applying have completed an application form and a self-declaration form
- Those short-listed have been interviewed
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview
- Written references have been obtained and followed up where appropriate
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check has been completed where necessary (we will comply with the DBS Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information)
- Qualifications, where relevant have been verified
- Suitable training is provided for the successful applicant
- The applicant has completed a probationary period
- The applicant has access to the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

2) Guidance* on *Recruiting Workers with* a *Criminal Record (see also separate policy)

If there is evidence that an applicant for a role has a criminal record, either through self – disclosure or through the DBS check, (criminal record check), or it comes to light that a current worker or volunteer has a previously undisclosed criminal record, then we advise you consult the 'Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' (England and Wales) or 'Scotland Recruiting with Convictions and Self Disclosure' Policies (Scotland). The following guidelines outline the relevant process.

a) Context
The Police Act 1997, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Exceptions) Order 1975, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 will apply. As Youth for Christ, we realise that gaining employment is an essential part of successful individual rehabilitation and that failure to secure employment or meaningful voluntary opportunities can be a key reason for re-offending.
Consideration must be given as to whether Youth for Christ is an appropriate place for this rehabilitation for each individual. It is unlikely that any policy can cover all of the circumstances which may arise, but the intention is to ensure equal opportunity and fairness to all prospective members of staff and volunteers.

b) Recruitment and Employment
Offers of work will be based primarily on the person's ability to undertake the tasks as stated in the job or role description. The nature of any criminal conviction will be considered as to its relevance to the work in question and will not of itself be a reason for non-employment. An assessment will be carried out by the Trustees, with advice from British Youth for Christ's Safeguarding Officer and Head of HR. Risks will be assessed and consideration given to not allowing a risk to be knowingly imposed on any of those whom Youth for Christ is serving, or on other staff or volunteers. An examination of the circumstances and events leading to an offence will be considered, as will repeat offences and the time since an offence took place. Careful attention will be given to relevant references and advice sought from appropriate agencies, taking into account the requirements outlined below. When there is an offence relating to children, young people or adults at risk of harm, or there is a known or suspected risk, Youth for Christ will undertake a risk assessment (please refer to Appendix A for a sample risk assessment) and agree appropriate action to mitigate any risks. For existing workers, this may involve removing the person from the relevant activity, either temporarily or permanently. Alternatively, Youth for Christ reserves the right to supervise the individual concerned, if any known risk is assessed as manageable and will set boundaries for that person, which they will be expected to keep. This may involve the use of behavioural supervision agreements. Whatever action is taken, appropriate pastoral care will also be offered.

c) Requirements
Information contained in a Disclosure or obtained from an individual about a criminal record will be treated in strict confidence and on a need-to-know basis in accordance with The Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Disclosures from applicants for a role will be kept securely retained for no longer than six months from the date they were received, and disposed of securely. Information on spent convictions will be asked only of those who are applying for work which allows exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. Applicants who wish to submit confidential information concerning any criminal convictions will be encouraged to do so separately from the application form, sent to the Chair of Trustees or other nominated person.

d) Decision
The decision to employ someone with a criminal record is the legal responsibility of the Trustees. Consideration should be given to any and all possible risks and how these can be minimised or excluded, including:

- The length of time since the conviction
- The severity and nature of the offence(s)
- Whether there was a repetition of offences
- All and any potential risks
- Evidence of rehabilitation

In taking such decisions, advice should be sought from the national Youth for Christ Safeguarding Officer and Thirtyone:eight. For further advice please see Youth for Christ Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (England & Wales) and Recruiting with convictions Policy (Scotland).

Training and Supervision Training

1) Training
Youth for Christ is committed to on-going safeguarding training for all workers, including Trustees

through;

- Developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding to help protect everyone. All workers at both national and local level should receive safeguarding training during their induction period. This will be updated every two years. Workers involved in recruitment and management will also receive appropriate training which includes safeguarding considerations.
- Detailing appropriate evidence of training in safeguarding to Trustees bi-annually as part of an annual cycle of review of policy and practice. Local ministries may seek advice on training levels and needs from the national Relational team or the national Safeguarding Officers.

It is recommended that roles engaged in regulated activity and having direct contact with children and young people and/or adults at risk, should consider taking a Foundation Level safeguarding training. From September 2026, any volunteer teaching, training or supervising children more than three days in 30, or overnight, is in regulated activity. Whilst it is recognised that Trustees may not have direct engagement with vulnerable groups, by sheer reason of their legal oversight, in relation to activities relating to vulnerable groups, it is recommended that they also have Foundation Level safeguarding training along with training specific to their role as Trustees.

Roles that fall outside of the above remits, would benefit from, as a minimum, a Basic Safeguarding Awareness course.

Wales National Training Standards Framework – Wales has a framework clearly outlining required training for all levels of practitioners across all sectors that have contact with vulnerable groups. These are arranged from Group A-F, with each group having specific principles, expected knowledge and processes. If you are a Centre operating in Wales, please check what levels of training apply to the different roles within your Centre. For example, those that work directly with children or young people in any capacity, would typically be in Group B. They should therefore complete training for Group A and B. You can find more information here: National safeguarding training, learning and… | Social Care Wales

2)Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

Youth for Christ commit to ensuring all staff and volunteers are appropriately line managed and/or supervised by a named individual who arranges regular meetings. This is critical to the cycle of review and to ongoing development in all areas, not just safeguarding. Part of the role of the line manager/supervisor is to ensure all training needs are met and that those they supervise have understood their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and are able to raise any concerns or suspicions appropriately. The Line Manager/Supervisor should also be aware of each worker's performance in their role and their approach to personal relationships with the children, young people and adults at risk in their care. It is expected that each Line Manager/Supervisor will regularly observe the worker in their role. They should also keep a written record of supervision meetings and ensure any concerns or training needs are addressed. Evidence of training attended should be kept. Appropriate evidence should be presented to Trustees as part of an annual cycle of review which demonstrates good working practice in this area.

Whistle-blowing (for more information see British Youth for Christ's Whistleblowing Policy)

In addition to effective management of allegations against staff, there is a mechanism in place for staff and volunteers to raise legitimate concerns (e.g. improper actions or omissions) about other workers. This is known as 'whistleblowing'. The reporting principles of this are contained in the Public Disclosure Act 1998 which gives legal protection to workers against being dismissed or penalised as a result of disclosing certain legitimate concerns. The Whistleblowing Policy is designed so that workers can raise safeguarding or other concerns internally and at a high level. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is Youth for Christ's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns raised anonymously are less credible but will still be considered at the discretion of Youth for Christ. If told not to raise or pursue wrongdoing, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to their line manager, supervisor or designated Trustee. Youth for Christ upholds the importance of creating and working in a culture which encourages individuals to feel safe, open and transparent.

There may also be occasions when a worker has a personal difficulty which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Workers have a responsibility to discuss each situation with their line manager or supervisor so professional or personal support can be offered. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare and safety of children, young people or adults at risk but any discussion of these personal difficulties will be limited to those who need to know within the organisation and with statutory authorities.

International Ministry
Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is no less important overseas than at home in Britain. This safeguarding policy still applies to all work undertaken overseas and also to international visitors attending ministry activities in Britain. Whilst different cultures and countries may adopt different standards to the care and treatment of children, young people and adults at risk of harm, the standards and principles outlined in this policy apply to international ministry contexts.

All International Ministry work undertaken on behalf of Youth for Christ will have a designated Safeguarding Officer responsible for implementing the safeguarding policy and for ensuring safer recruitment practice (including disclosures for British citizens). Due account must always be taken of the laws and frameworks in place within any country in which our activities operate. All incidents, allegations or concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Officer who will then liaise with the appropriate authorities to ensure good practice is facilitated in relation to the reporting of any allegations of abuse in line with this policy.

Pastoral Care - supporting those affected by abuse
Youth for Christ is committed to offering pastoral care to all those affected by abuse. This may be young people or those working within the organisation as employees, volunteers or Trustees who have been personally affected by abuse in the past or have been involved in dealing with abuse in some form as part of their current role. In offering pastoral care, we seek to work with each individual to provide the most appropriate support, working with an individual's home church if applicable and any local contacts, including relevant statutory agencies.

Support may be provided in a variety of ways including through personal contacts, local clergy or other church connections, pastoral care teams, through counselling agencies, specific Safeguarding Services or any other possibilities. The main aim is to ensure that no-one feels isolated because of their experiences, and no one is left to deal with difficult feelings or stress because of the safeguarding aspects of their role within Youth for Christ.

Categories of Abuse
Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child, young person or adults at risk and includes somebody inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. Abuse may take place in any context; a family setting, an institution or a community setting and may involve someone known to the child or may involve a stranger. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (England guidance) also considers abusive behaviour in intimate relationships, coercive control, and more hidden harms such as Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and teenage relationship abuse. Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual or by a group and may be by an adult or by another child or children. Children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or care giver abuse.

1) Statutory Definitions
Although the statutory definitions of abuse vary slightly in England, Scotland and Wales, the following are broad definitions on which we base this policy. *(Please refer to Appendix* B *for further information on specific categories of abuses.)*

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and continuous adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only so far as they meet the needs of

another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capacity as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying). It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill- treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexual ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse), this also includes sibling to sibling sexual abuse. Sexting and cyberflashing is another form of sexual abuse and refers to the sending of sexually explicit messages or images usually between mobile phones. Sexting and cyberflashing is now a criminal offence. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Tend to a child's basic emotional needs.

Financial Abuse is also a category of abuse if working in Wales (Social Services and Well-being Act 2014). This is when someone takes advantage of a child's finances or property, causing them harm or distress. This can include stealing, defrauding, pressuring the child regarding money, or misusing their finances. Any concerns should be reported to social services or the police.
Examples of financial abuse in Wales:
- A family member selling a child's belongings without their consent.
- A child worker not being paid for their work.
- Benefits intended for a child being misused by a caregiver.
- A child being forced to give money to an older sibling.
- Someone taking a child's EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) without their consent.

2) Abuse and Additional Needs

Additional Needs covers a wide range of disabilities and impairments, including but not limited to moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning disabilities; physical or visual impairments; deafness; autism and autistic spectrum needs, physical or mental health needs; speech, language and communication needs, and social, emotional and behavioural development needs. This range of needs has a different impact on each individual child and their experience of disabling barriers. Any one child's experience of their impairment will be unique to them.

Research consistently shows that children and young people with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse (NSPCC 2018) and specifically more likely to experience multiple kinds of abuse and multiple episodes of abuse. The increased risk applies to disabled children in all impairment groups and all forms of abuse.

One of the factors that places disabled children at higher risk is that they may have less access to services and support which would otherwise protect them. Consideration needs to be given of any barriers to communication and sense of isolation they may have, either as a result of their needs or as

a consequence of our own attitudes or assumptions. Consideration needs to be given to appropriate training for all workers engaging with children and young people with additional needs to ensure there are no ongoing skills gaps or any lack of awareness.

In implementing this policy and our safeguarding procedures, Youth for Christ seeks to ensure that specific consideration is given to those with additional needs and to ensure that our services and safeguarding support is accessible in ways appropriate to all, regardless of any disability or impairment. This includes children with sensory needs such as hearing or visual impairment.

3) Specific Contexts

The definitions and further information for the following contexts can be found in Appendix B:

Children affected by gang activity

Child-on-child abuse

Grooming

Self-harm (e.g. overdoses, cutting, misuse of drugs or alcohol).

Domestic Abuse

Parents who are adults at risk of harm

Female genital mutilation

Child trafficking

Modern slavery

County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Sexual exploitation

Forced marriage and honour-based violence

Cuckooing (Forced Home Invasion or Home Takeover)

Internal Concealment

Complex (organised or multiple) abuse

Bullying

Intimate Image Abuse

Part Two: Best Practice Guidelines

Introduction

The following provides specific guidance about expectations for those who work as staff and volunteers for Youth for Christ nationally and locally with children and young people. The overriding principle of working safely in this context is that workers should take every opportunity that is reasonable to ensure that their actions do not cause harm, or fail to prevent harm, or provide opportunity for misunderstanding, misinterpretation or unnecessary allegations to be made. In doing so, the following guidance should be followed.
(Note: 'Workers' refers to all those who work with and have contact with children, young people and adults at risk through the activity of Youth for Christ. This includes staff, Trustees and all volunteers.)

1) Position of Trust and Expected Behaviour

As a result of their role, all those working with children, young people and adults at risk are in 'positions of trust' in relation to those in their care. As of 2022 the Sexual Offences Act (2003), now includes faith group leaders and sports coaches (defined in section 22A), as well as teachers, care workers, youth justice workers, social workers and doctors. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship. Workers should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others.

It is unacceptable for those in a position of trust to engage in any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop with a child, young person or adults at risk for as long as the relationship of trust continues. This can be achieved by staff and volunteers respecting boundaries and privacy of those being cared for, knowing how to deal with issues of discipline appropriately and developing an awareness of issues related to equality, inclusion and additional needs. Any incident, behaviour or attitude that has potential to be misinterpreted or which could lead to a breach of trust should be reported at the earliest opportunity.

All workers have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work. There may be times when a worker's behaviour, or actions in their personal life, come under scrutiny because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position or indicate an unsuitability to work with children or young people. The behaviour of a worker's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by an employer as to whether there may be a potential risk to children and young people in the workplace. It is important to remember that any concerns in such instances may warrant a referral to the LADO in England and appropriate relevant professional in Scotland and Wales. All workers and Trustees will have signed the Youth for Christ Code of Conduct which is available on request from British Youth for Christ from hr@yfc.co.uk

A sample Volunteer Agreement is available on request from British Youth for Christ from hr@yfc.co.uk

2) Record Keeping and Data Protection

Workers may have access to personal or sensitive information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned. If a worker is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from their manager or Safeguarding Officer. Any actions should be in line with the Youth for Christ Data Protection Policy. Trustees should provide clear advice to staff and volunteers about their responsibilities under this legislation. Whilst workers need to be aware of the need to listen to and support children and young people, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a child or young person under any circumstances.

Records of contact with children, young people and adults at risk of harm will be kept for every activity in accordance with the Data Retention Policy of the organisation. The record should cover the number of children, young people and adults at risk of harm in attendance; the activities done or the issues covered in conversation; and any unusual events (e.g. fire alarms, unexpected guests, behaviour incidents). These records safeguard children, young people and adults at risk and also all workers.

Every child, young person, adult with additional care and support needs, parent or carer should be able to view what is recorded about them. This information will be kept in a way that does not breach the confidentiality of an individual. Whilst it is important to observe data protection requirements, safeguarding is always the priority. Information about the prevention and detection of crime is exempt from Data Protection requirements. It may, therefore, be inappropriate to release information to a parent that has been disclosed by a child, young person or adults at risk, without first consulting the statutory agencies.

Information of a sensitive nature (e.g. a child/ young person/ adult with additional care and support needs disclosing abuse) will need to be kept separately in a secure place and recorded using a report

form. (Samples available from British Youth for Christ or Thirtyone:eight).

However, a cross-reference could be recorded along the lines of "Jenny spoke to Bill tonight - see separate note in her file".

For further information around record keeping and data protection, please refer to the Data Protection Policy available from British Youth for Christ and the Data Retention Policy of the organisation.

3) Social Contact

Social contact and communication between workers and children, young people or adults at risk, in whatever form, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.

Workers should not request or respond to personal information from a child or young person, other than that which is appropriate as part of their professional role. Workers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny and should also be clear in their approach to communication, so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details (including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, social media handles) to any child, young person or adults at risk of harm, unless the need to do so is agreed in advance with their management and parents/carers. Communications outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. (see Online Safety Policy)

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the worker's own family or personal networks. All contacts established or continued with children, young people or adults at risk outside of the normal work environment should be open and transparent, with appropriate caution for safe working practices being adopted.

This means that workers should:

- Ensure that all contact with children, young people or adults at risk is transparent and open to scrutiny and therefore have no secret contact or private communication
- Consider the appropriateness of all their contacts and communication, according to their role and the nature of their work
- Maintain appropriate levels of accountability in relation to their contact with children, young people and adults at risk and advise management of any social contact they have which may give rise to concern
- Report and record any situation which may place anyone at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own role or standing

4) Appropriate Relationships

a) Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when workers may wish to give a child or young person a personal gift. The giving of gifts or rewards to children, young people or adults at risk should be part of an agreed plan for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements. Workers need to be aware that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or 'groom' a young person.

Adults should exercise care when selecting children and/or young people for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Care should also be taken to ensure that workers do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when children, young people or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis of any significant value.

b) Infatuations

Occasionally, a child, young person or adults at risk may develop an infatuation with someone who works with them. Workers should deal with such situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach and they are transparent and accountable. A worker who becomes aware that a child or young person is developing an infatuation should discuss

this at the earliest opportunity with a manager so that appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress, misunderstanding or embarrassment. Such concerns should be reported and recorded with an agreed plan of action implemented to ensure professional boundaries are maintained.

c) Sexual Contact and Relationships

All workers should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their work with children, young people and adults at risk up to the age of 25. Intimate or sexual relationships between workers and children or young people will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and a matter of gross misconduct. This includes contexts in which the worker and the young person are close in age. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is always unacceptable, due to the breach of trust and the nature of the worker's position of power. Depending on the circumstances and the worker's role, it may also be classified as a crime.
This means that workers should NOT:

- Have any form of intimate relationship with a child, young person or adults at risk
- Have any form of communication with a child/young person or adults at risk in their care which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative
- Make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person or adults at risk of harm
- Discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, children/young people or adults at risk of harm
- Gain access to information about the child or young person for their own or another's benefit
- Intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine
- Form or promote relationships that are or may become sexual

5) Physical Contact

Not all children and adults at risk feel comfortable about physical contact. Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made. Where the child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary.

a) General Principles

When physical contact is made with a child, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. However, physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of an adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a worker believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the manager as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and parents/carers should also be informed in such circumstances. Workers should always be prepared to report or explain their actions and accept that physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

Where a child seeks or initiates inappropriate physical contact with an adult, the situation should be handled sensitively and care taken to ensure that contact is not exploited in any way. Careful consideration must be given to the needs of the child and advice and support given to the worker concerned.

b) Activities that may require Physical Contact

In some contexts, workers will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example in sporting, drama or other physical activities. This may be to demonstrate technique in the use of a particular piece of equipment, adjust posture, or perhaps to support a child so they can perform an activity safely or prevent injury. Physical contact should take place only when it is necessary in relation to a particular activity. It should take place in a safe and open environment i.e. one easily observed by others and last for the minimum time necessary. Contact should be relevant to their age or understanding and workers should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.
This means that workers should:

- Have an approved plan for any regular activities involving possible physical contact
- Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- Always explain the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take

- Seek consent of parents where a child or young person is unable to do so because of a disability
- Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact
- Be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered before initiating physical contact

c) Managing Challenging Physical Behaviour

All children and young people have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour. Workers should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a child. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and whilst there may be a legal defence for parents who physically chastise their children, this does not extend, in any circumstances, to other adults who work with children and young people.

Where children display difficult or challenging behaviour, workers must follow an agreed plan of work, which aims to meet the needs underlying the behaviour and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed. Where a child has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties. The use of physical intervention should only be used to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances. When used, it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause. The minimum necessary force should be used and the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported. The parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible.

This means that workers should:

- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Inform and agree with parents any behaviour management techniques used
- Be mindful of factors which may impact upon behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse
- Always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary
- Record and report as soon as possible any incident where physical intervention has been used
- Ensure they have appropriate training to handle challenging behaviour
- Hold a debrief

Recommended guidance on safe ratios whilst working with children over the age of 8 years old is one adult to be present for every 10 children. There should also be at least two adults for each activity that is run, so for the first 10 children – two adults, but if there were 20 children, 2 adults would still be acceptable.

d) Children and Young People in Distress

There are some contexts in which workers will need to manage occurrences of distress and emotional upset. When a distressed person needs comfort and reassurance, this may involve appropriate physical contact. Young children in particular may need immediate physical comfort, for example after a fall, separation from parent etc. Adults should use their judgement to comfort or reassure a child in an age-appropriate way whilst maintaining clear professional boundaries.

This means the worker should:

- Consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed child
- Be circumspect in offering reassurance in unsupervised or one-to- one situations, but always record such actions
- Do not assume that all children seek physical comfort if they are distressed

e) Personal Care

Children, young people and adults at risk are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes, bathing or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision to safeguard those in our care and/or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of those concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

This means that workers should:

- Avoid any physical contact when children and adults at risk are in a state of undress
- Avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- Where there are changing rooms, announce their intention of entering before doing so and preferably be of the same biological sex

This means that workers should NOT:

- Change in the same place as children and adults at risk
- Shower or bathe with children
- Assist with any personal care task which a child, young person or adults at risk can undertake by themselves

f) First Aid and Administration of Medication

It is expected that there should always be at least one worker present who is trained in basic first aid techniques. When administering first aid, workers should ensure that another adult is aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered, and this should be documented in an accident book as appropriate. In circumstances where young children need medication during the course of their activities, an agreed plan should be in place and appropriate permissions given by parents/carers for administration of medication. Depending upon the age and understanding of the child, they should, where appropriate, be encouraged to self-administer medication or treatment including, for example, any ointment or use of inhalers.

***6) Lone working and working* 'One-to-One'**

There are some contexts in which it is appropriate to work with a young person alone, such as mentoring or pastoral contexts. Due to the nature of this context, it is vital to have clear procedures and agreements in place. 'One-to-one' situations have the potential to make a child/young person more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Those working in 'one-to-one' settings with children and young people may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities should be recognised so that when one-to-one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken.

Workers should consider the safest and most appropriate venue for meeting a young person one-to-one and how to make this space the safest it can be. There should be a written agreement in place which outlines the expected setting and purpose of the work. This should include the worker and young person outlining expectations, and could also include the agreement of their parent/carer, school or church, social worker or other professional contact. There are occasions where workers will need to undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of 'one- to-one' work. These assessments should take into account the individual needs of the child/young person and the individual worker and any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. Meetings with children and young people outside regular agreed working arrangements should not take place without prior agreement of managers and parents or carers. Workers should be aware of the need to be transparent and accountable in all their work and the particular risks of working alone with a young person.

7) Home Visits

There may be workers for whom home visits are an integral part of their work. In these circumstances it is essential that appropriate procedures and risk assessments are in place to safeguard children and young people and the adults who work with them.

A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the child/young person, parents and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make workers more vulnerable to an allegation. Specific consideration should be given to visits outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed. Visits should not be made alone, unless there is prior permission from Trustees and an existing relationship between the worker and the family. There will be occasions where risk assessments are not possible or not available, e.g. when emergency services are used.
In these circumstances, a record must always be made of the circumstances and outcome of the home visit. Such records must always be available for scrutiny.

Under no circumstances should an adult visit a child in their home outside agreed work arrangements or invite a child to their own home or that of a family member, colleague or friend. If in an emergency, such a one-off arrangement is required, the worker must have a prior discussion with a manager and

the parents or carers and a clear justification for such arrangement is agreed and recorded. This means that workers will agree the purpose for any home visit with their line manager, undertake a risk assessment where possible and ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with their manager and, where appropriate, action is taken.

8) Transporting Children and Young People

There will be occasions when workers are expected or asked to transport children or young people as part of their duties. Workers who are expected to use their own vehicles for transporting children, should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

Under normal circumstances, staff and volunteers should not transport a single child or young person. Wherever possible ask another member of staff or volunteer to accompany you when transporting a single child/young person. However, this may be necessary in an emergency or when other possibilities have been explored but are not possible and this is the only means of the child attending a particular group or activity. In these circumstances, workers should do their utmost to spend the least amount of time alone in a car with a young person and should ensure they have written permission from their line manager and the parents/carers (please refer to Appendix C) In emergency contexts, where not giving a child a lift alone would cause them to be put at risk from harm, then this must be recorded and reported to a manager and parents/carers.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers should wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Workers should also be aware of current legislation and adhere to the use of car seats for younger children. Where workers transport children in a vehicle which requires a specialist licence/insurance, they should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle. A child or a young person should always be seated in the back seats of the car and never in the front passenger seats for good practice.

It is inappropriate for workers to offer lifts to a child or young person outside their normal working duties, unless this has been brought to the attention of the line manager and has been agreed with the parents/carers.

9) Praying

The following guidance provides additional considerations when praying with or for a child/young person/ adults at risk, which may be relevant to a range of contexts, including one-to-one meetings.

- Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if possible. Otherwise, the guidance for one-to-one meetings should be followed as usual practice.
- Prayer should be offered by someone of the same biological gender as the young person, if possible. However, consideration should be given where a young person approaches a leader of a different gender to ask for prayer, and this should be handled sensitively. For example, by suggesting another leader of the same gender or, where appropriate to the relationship, this can be accommodated as safely as possible, for example, by inviting another leader to join or simply ensuring transparency and accountability. These considerations also apply to those with non-binary gender identification.
- Whilst it is understandable to want privacy when praying, it should usually take place in an open space or a public venue. Where this is not possible or the context is already in a one-to-one context or more private setting such as an office or classroom, then the worker must ensure all efforts for transparency and accountability have been made.
- Whilst confidentiality is important, as in any context, there should be no promise of confidentiality.
- When praying for someone, the worker should not initiate a physical touch. If appropriate, they could ask if it is OK to touch an arm or shoulder, but this should not be assumed, and any touch should be primarily to offer comfort. A hug initiated by a child or young person can be reciprocated appropriately in response to their distress, but should avoid being unnecessarily sustained, or for comfort.

10) Residentials, Outings and Overnight Activities

Workers should take particular care when supervising children and young people on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Workers remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.

Where activities include trips away from the normal workplace and/or overnight stays, it is best practice to visit the venue in advance whenever possible. Activities should be well planned in advance and any necessary risk assessments undertaken in relation to activities and arrangements for personal care and sleeping, including accessibility requirements with the venue and awareness of fire safety issues of the venue. Children, young people, adults and parents should be informed of these before the start of the trip, including informing parents/carers of contact name & number for any concerns, ensuring consent, medical & emergency contact forms are completed beforehand. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/child ratios and to the gender mix of staff, especially on overnight stays. Health and Safety arrangements require workers to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

Residential activities
The following guidelines are intended to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk during residential activities, whether staying in camps, churches, hostels or other accommodation. All workers will:

- Respect the privacy of young people. Leaders will ask before entering accommodation, changing rooms or washing facilities and (except for emergencies) only enter the accommodation or changing rooms of young people of the same biological gender.
- Allocate accommodation on the basis of biological gender. Therefore, there will be separate accommodation for males and females. (Note where there is a young person who identifies as transgender or as a non-binary gender, advice can be sought from Thirtyone:eight or the national Safeguarding Officers on best practice in this context).
- Always use separate accommodation for leaders or, if unavailable, ensure permission is sought for shared accommodation from Trustees and parents/carers.
- Always ensure that there are leaders of the same gender as the young people attending.
- Carefully consider sleeping arrangements and communicate to the Parents and Carers in advance all details, also including having details of any emergency facilities near to the venue and contact numbers of the venue.

11) Working in Partnership
The diverse nature of the organisation and settings in which Youth for Christ works means there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding, for example, of what constitutes abuse.

We therefore have clear guidelines with regard to our expectations of those with whom we work in partnership, whether in the UK or not. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations to ensure that the partner organisation's and Youth for Christ's safeguarding policies are compatible and that the procedures within each are followed, should any incident or allegation occur. It is also our expectation that any organisation using our premises, as part of a letting agreement, will have their own policy that meets our safeguarding standards.

Good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding, both to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children, young people and adults at risk and to all those with whom we work in partnership.

Policy End
Policy approved September 2026

Appendix A

Sample Risk Assessment {PLEASE INSERT EVENT NAME}

KEY:
L = Likelihood of occurrence (marked out of 5)
I = Impact of consequences (marked out of 5)
T = Total risk consideration (max total 25 – marks 15 and above to be considered high risk)

Signed:

Date:

Signed off by Competent Person:

Potential Risk	Steps to Mitigate Risk	Planned Action	Assessment of:			Person Responsible	Date Completed
			L	I	T		

Sample Completed Risk Assessment

SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 18 WORKING WITH BRITISH YOUTH FOR CHRIST

Once completed, please send to relevant Safeguarding Officer.

Potential Risk	Steps to Mitigate Risk	Planned Action	Person Responsible	Date completed
Potential harm from supervisor	1. Ensure supervisor has been DBS/PVG checked in last year 2. Ensure supervisor has been fully trained in Safeguarding within the last 2 years. 3. Ensure supervisor understands how to mitigate specific risks relevant to their working context. (see notes.)	If a member of national staff, the supervisor will have a one-to-one meeting with a Safeguarding Officer to discuss the specifics of the context in which they are working and plan mitigation of any specific risks which will be added to this form. If a centre worker with a Year Out volunteer, then the Year Out manager will ensure that the supervisor has read the guidance notes relevant to hosting a volunteer who is under 18.	Safeguarding Officer Year Out Manager	1. 2. 3.
Potential harm from staff or volunteers in placement context (e.g. in centre in which they are working, with team with whom they are touring or whilst working alongside an	4. Ensure all those working in the placement context, including other volunteers, have been DBS checked in the last 2 years. 5. Ensure all those in the placement context have received basic safeguarding training in the last 2 years 6. Ensure all those working in the placement context have	If working with national staff or volunteers, this can be done with the support of the Safeguarding Officers. If in a centre context, then the Year Out manager should check with the centre director or Chair of Trustees.	Supervisor With support as needed from Safeguarding Officer and/or Year Out Manager	4. 5. 6.

office based supervisor.)	understood the specific risks of this working context.	The specific risks can be explained in the most appropriate way for that context. (e.g. at a team meeting or during one-to-one supervision.)		
Potential harm from those working for partner churches or organisations (e.g. for an event or specific activity)	7. Ensure the partnership agreement between Youth for Christ and any other organisations, including individual churches, includes an agreement that all those involved in any partnership work have had recent Safeguarding training and up-to-date DBS checks. 8. Ensure those involved in the partnership are made aware of the presence of an under 18 volunteer. 9. Ensure the supervisor, the volunteer and those involved in the partnership are aware and have made a note of any potential risks specific to this partnership work.	A copy of any partnership agreement should be filed alongside this form. Any specific risks should be added to this form as they become apparent - if necessary, this can be done by email and added as an appendix.	Supervisor With support as needed from Safeguarding Officer and/or Year Out Manager	7. 8. 9.

Appendix B: Categories of Abuse - Specific Contexts

In addition to understanding the statutory categories and forms of abuse, it is helpful for those who work with children and young people to have an awareness of the following specific contexts:

Children affected by gang activity
Such children may be at risk of violent crime and are therefore considered vulnerable. Children are considered vulnerable due to age in general, but children who are affected by gang activity may be at greater risk of potential harm. Risks include access to weapons (including firearms), retaliatory violence and territorial violence with other gangs. Other risks include increased likelihood of involvement in knife crime, dangerous dogs, sexual violence and substance misuse.

Child-on-child abuse including harassment and violence
Everyone should be aware that children can abuse other children.
Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and, in worst-case scenarios, a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
Child-on-child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse
- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery)
- Upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person in order to exploit and abuse them.

Self-harm (e.g. overdoses, cutting, misuse of drugs or alcohol).
Self-harm can take a number of forms, including but not limited to overdoses, cutting and the misuse of drugs or alcohol. Local Safeguarding Children Boards vary in their approach to deliberate self-harm, as some will see it as part of a wider mental health issue and not in itself a form of abuse whilst others will look at the motivating factors to establish whether there is any underlying abusive causes or whether this amounts to self-abuse. It will always be appropriate to discuss such a case with Thirtyone:eight and the Local Authority Children's Social Care. Help can also be obtained from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), through the General Practitioner (GP) and, sometimes, from direct access counselling services.

Domestic Abuse
Domestic abuse (including coercion and control) can encompass a wide range of behaviours, it involves any single incident or pattern of conduct where someone's behaviour towards another is abusive, and where the people involved are aged 16 or over and are, or have been, personally connected to each other (regardless of gender or sexuality). This can involve psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, violent, threatening, controlling or coercive behaviour. The Act gives criteria and further definitions of 'Personal connection'.

- Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

- Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This definition, which is not a legal definition, includes so-called 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (see below) and forced marriage (see below), and it is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right. They may see, hear or experience the effects of abuse between two personally connected individuals at home, and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development and ability to learn. Adults can also be victims of child-to-parent or caregiver abuse.

Parents who are adults at risk of harm
It is not uncommon for the parents of children who are abused or neglected to be themselves adults at risk of harm. Particularly common are problems of mental ill-health, domestic abuse and substance abuse (i.e. drugs and alcohol), often in combination. Where someone with such a difficulty is known to be a parent with a child living with them, a referral to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Service may be required.

Female genital mutilation
Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the ritual cutting or removal of all or some of the external female genitalia. It is a criminal offence in Britain, and any suggestion that it is being sought or has been carried out should be referred using the process outlined in this policy.

Child trafficking
Child trafficking is transporting children across national borders, although it can even be movement within the same street (see also Modern Slavery), sometimes without proper immigration arrangements, for a variety of illegal purposes which can include domestic service, illegal adoption, organ harvesting, benefit claims or prostitution. Such children may speak little English. The police should be contacted immediately if a member of staff or volunteer comes across such a child.

Modern slavery
Modern slavery is when someone has been forced, compelled or manipulated to do something for the benefit of someone else. The main forms of this in the UK are sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, labour exploitation and domestic servitude. Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery where there is movement involved. The police should be contacted immediately if a member of staff or volunteer comes across such a child. You can also contact the Modern Slavery Helpline for advice on the telephone: 08000 121 700. (See also County Lines section below)

County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation
County lines is a prevalent form of modern slavery and criminal exploitation, in which criminals groom, manipulate and coerce or force children into drug dealing, including storing drugs and money and/or transport/delivering them to urban/suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns. The 'lines' refer to mobile phones that are used to control an individual who is delivering drugs, often to towns outside their home county. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to

move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in many locations, including any type of schools. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. This is illegal in the UK, and the police should be contacted immediately if a member of staff or volunteer comes across such a child.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), as set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child Sexual exploitation (CSE)

Children can be exploited, coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want, such as gifts, drugs, money, status and affection (this list is not exhaustive). Internet and other media technology may be used in the abuse. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Regardless of the challenging behaviours they may display, exploited children should be viewed as victims of child sexual abuse, not as criminals. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and ranges from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who: have older boyfriends or girlfriends; suffer from sexually transmitted infections; display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Forced marriage and honour-based violence

Forced marriage is where one or both people do not, or cannot, consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force them into the marriage. It is also when anything is done to make someone marry before they turn 18, even if there is no pressure or abuse.

Disclosures of actual or possible forced marriage should not be treated as simply a family matter or be disclosed to other family members, but should be referred to the relevant statutory agencies.

The legal age for marriage in England and Wales is 18 and for Scotland is 16.

Honour-based abuse is a crime or incident committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of a family or community.

Cuckooing (Forced Home Invasion or Home Takeover)

Cuckooing takes place when a perpetrator takes control over the dwelling of another person to use it for illegal activities and is often associated with anti-social behaviour and the exploitation of children by criminal gangs. The person does not give consent for them to exercise this control over them. Victims are often individuals who are vulnerable due to substance or alcohol dependency, learning disability, mental health issues, bereavement, social isolation or financial difficulties. A person’s home should be a place where they feel safe and secure, and when a home is taken over and used for criminal activity, this causes significant harm. Cuckooing is when Organised Crime Groups (OCG’S) or perpetrators take over properties initially by befriending an individual (who lives in the property) and subsequently through force, deceit or coercion. It is often included with County Lines activity, occurring when gangs take control over a vulnerable individual’s address, as a site to store/supply/produce drugs from. Cuckooing is now a specific offence in the Crime and Policing Act 2026. Historically, victims were sometimes criminalised for their involvement, which contravened the non-punishment principle under modern slavery frameworks. The Act now allows focus on perpetrators rather than victims.

Internal Concealment

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 also introduced Internal Concealment as a criminal offence. This can be particularly relevant to Cuckooing (see above). Internal concealment is the practice whereby criminals cause the concealment of certain items inside another person's body for criminal purposes, often through compulsion, coercion, deception or through controlling or manipulative behaviour. Internal concealment is most likely to happen in relation to illegal activity such as the concealment or transport of controlled drugs, for the purposes of carrying out county lines-related criminality. The act of coercing or manipulating a person to insert or ingest an object into their body is a highly harmful form of exploitation which can cause psychological and physical harm to the victim, or even death where, for example, drugs leak internally causing an overdose.

Complex (organised or multiple) abuse
This is abuse which involves one or more abusers and a number of children or young people. The abusers may be acting in concert, or in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to abuse children. The internet may also be used. For example, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Bullying
Bullying is another way in which children (or adults) abuse other children, and it can be verbal, emotional or physical. Bullying includes teasing, making unkind comments about a child, demanding money, "ganging up" on a child or physically assaulting a child. You might see evidence of torn clothes, bruising, burns, or scratches. A child might be afraid to attend school or other activities if they think the bully will be present. Bullying is often seen as being part of natural 'playground' behaviour but is actually a form of abuse and should be treated as such.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation in this context is the process by which a child, young person or vulnerable adult comes to support extremist ideologies which may be associated with terrorist groups, or other forms of fundamentalist teaching within faith groups which is deemed to have potential for abuse or risk from harm. Every Local Authority has a dedicated police officer or team to deal with concerns and to assess whether the criteria for intervention is met.

Fabricated Illness
Fabricated illness involves a parent or carer exaggerating or deliberately causing symptoms of illness in a child. Whilst rare, it does happen and is harmful to the child for several reasons. Indicators could include an illness where symptoms only persist when the parent or carer is present, the only person claiming to notice the symptoms is the parent or carer, and the child's activities being limited far beyond what you would usually expect for a certain condition.

Intimate Image Abuse
The Crime and Policing Act 2026 created new offences criminalising the taking or recording of intimate images without consent or reasonable belief of consent and copying an intimate photograph or film shared temporarily without consent or reasonable belief of consent. It has also criminalised the making, adapting, supplying or offering to supply a tool or service that can generate or facilitate the generation of purported intimate images of a person (so-called 'nudification' tools)

Appendix C: Example Transport Consent Form

Organisation Name.....is able to provide transport for children to and from their homes and/or for specific activities. This transport will be in a minibus/car/other (state all modes of transport) and the following principles will be adhered to:

- All drivers will be safely recruited following national government guidelines and our safeguarding policy.
- Transport will be provided in vehicles that are roadworthy i.e. MOT and appropriate insurance.
- All mini bus drivers are over 21 years of age and have held a full driving licence for at least 2 years.
- Seat belts will be worn at all times by all occupants of the vehicle.
- Escort support will be provided.

I give permission for my child(ren) to be transported to and from the activity/I understand that my child(ren) will be transported to/from the address on this form (delete where appropriate).

I have been advised whom I need to contact to report any concerns.

Name of Child: .....

Date of Birth:

Address:

Signature: ..... Printed Name: .....

Appendix D: Example Reporting Form

This form should be completed immediately after any incident in which concern is raised regarding safeguarding children, young people or adults at risk. This includes direct disclosures, observations and incidents during face-to-face work plus phone calls and other conversations with staff, volunteers or external parties.

Once completed, please email or hand directly to the relevant Safeguarding Officer. If it is not possible to complete this form immediately, please ensure you make notes of the incident and contact a Safeguarding Officer. Your original notes should then be given to the Safeguarding officer, as soon as possible, along with this form.

Your full name:

Your role:

Your phone number and email address:

Date and time of completing this form:

Date and time of the incident or report of concern:

Location: *(please state event venue or where the conversation took place,* e.g. *phone call received in the office.)*

Name and contact details of person reporting concern, if not you:

Name and details of child, young person or adult to which this concern relates - please give as much information as possible regarding the subject(s) of this concern. *(Please give full name, age and address of any specific individuals, if known.)*

Please give details of the nature of the concern:

Notes:

If you have witnessed this incident directly, then please provide full details of your concern, giving as much detail as possible as to what was happening before and after the incident, who was involved, including others who may have witnessed the incident etc. Please comment on any action that was taken at the time, for example to ensure the immediate safety of a child or young person.

If you are giving details of a concern raised to you following a phone call or conversation with someone else, please aim to use wording as close to the original concern as possible.

If you are raising a concern about a named adult, for example a member of staff, volunteer or other adult, please give details of the nature of your concern, their observed behaviour or precise details of your concern including dates and locations of any specific incidents.

Please use a separate sheet if necessary.

Safeguarding Officer Name:

Date form received and read:

Action taken following receipt of this form:

Appendix E: Example Photography Consent Form

Consent form for .....
(Name of church/organisation commissioning photography)

To:.....
(Name of parent/carer* (*person with parental responsibility))

Name of child: .....

Church / Organisation / Club child attends:.....

Location of photograph: .....

Church/Organisation (name) ..... would like to take photograph(s)/ make a video/webcam recording of.....
.....(name of child/ren)

These images may appear in our printed publications, on our website, or both. (Delete/add as appropriate).

To comply with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation law), permission must be granted by the parent/carer before any images of your child/children are taken and used. Please answer questions 1 and 2 below, then sign and date the form where shown.

Please return the completed form to:
(Insert the name of the worker commissioning the photography and the return address.)

To the parent: (Delete as appropriate)
May we use your child's image in our printed promotional publications? YES/NO
May we use your child's image on our website/social media? YES/NO

Signed: (parent/adult with parental responsibility) .....

Date: .....

Youth/Children's Worker
I have checked which parents are happy for their child(ren)'s images to be used in the (churches/organisation's)..... printed publications or on its website or both. YES/NO

Please note that websites can be seen throughout the world, and not just in the United Kingdom, where UK law applies.

I have read and understood the conditions for using these images as detailed below.

Signed (Youth/Children's worker) .....

Date: ..... .

Print name: .....

Conditions of use
1. This form is valid for ..... (length of time in years) from the date of signing / *for this project only. Your consent will expire after this time.
2. We will not re-use any images *after this time/*after the project is completed.
3. We will not include details or full names (which means first name and surname) of any person in an image on website, or in printed publications, without good reason and only with your express consent.

4. We will not include personal e-mail or postal addresses, or telephone or fax numbers on our website or in printed publications.
5. We may use group images with very general labels, such as "youth enjoying sport" or "making Christmas decorations".
6. We will only use images of pupils who are suitably dressed; to reduce the risk of such images being used inappropriately e.g. we will not publish material from the youth group's swimming activity.

(*Please delete the option that does not apply.)

NB: This form can be adapted to include video if required

Glossary

"Adult"	An adult is anyone over the age of 18 and is viewed as a mature, fully developed person. An adult is legally responsible for their actions. When a young person reaches the age of 18 the responsibility for their wellbeing may transfer to adult service providers.
"Child"	A child is anyone under the age of 18.
"Adults at risk“	Although they cease to be subject of the Safeguarding Children Procedures, some adults may continue to be vulnerable. An 'Adult at risk' is defined as any person aged 18 years and over who is or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental health issues, learning or physical disability, sensory impairment, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation. They are also referred to as “adults at risk of harm” or “adults with additional care and support needs”.
"British Youth for Christ"	The national context for Youth for Christ, including employed staff, national board of Trustees and associated activity.
"Local Ministry"	A Youth for Christ local Centre, project or other expression of locally based ministry within Britain which is chartered to British Youth for Christ.
"Charter"	A covenant agreement between British Youth for Christ and a local ministry which exists to ensure mutual accountability and relationship.
"Worker"	In the context of this policy, anyone working for either British Youth for Christ or a local ministry, either as an employed member of staff or in a voluntary capacity, including as a Trustee.