



SAFEGUARDING POLICY & PROCEDURES

Version 3.5

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1. Document Control

Document Control		
Author/s	Job Title	Contact email
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Version	Comments	Reviewed by	Date
3.5	Annual review – updated following internal consultation and review of external guidance. Update of roles/responsibilities following organisational changes.	AD Impact and Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead	March 2024

1.1 Referenced Documents

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a broad concept. Therefore, the policies and procedures which contribute to safeguarding are listed below, they should also be followed and used in conjunction with this document, dependent on your role and responsibilities:

Document title	Author/s	Version	Date
Whistleblowing policy			
Safer recruitment and vetting procedures			
YHA Code of Conduct and How we Resolve Issues			
OHS 31 Event Lost Child Procedure			
YHA Exclusion Register Policy			
OHS 25 Drivers' Standard Operating Procedure			
Use of images (film and photograph)			
DBS Policy & Code of Practice			
OHS 15 Admissions guidance			
OHS 14 Security strategy			
Social Media Policy			
YHA ICT Acceptable Usage Policy			
YHA Inclusion Policy			
Drugs and Alcohol Policy			
Risk Management Policy			
Volunteering policy			

2. Introduction

YHA (England and Wales) has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for all that come into contact with the activities and services of YHA, both on and off site. By the very nature of the work undertaken by YHA, many employees and volunteers have contact with children during the course of their work.

YHA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is embedded across its network of sites and business models. We are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility in our organisation and will strive to deliver a safe and trusted environment.

YHA believes that it is always unacceptable for any child to experience abuse or neglect of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, by committing to policy, procedures and practices that seek to prevent and protect them from all forms of abuse and neglect.

3. Scope and Context

3.1 Scope

YHA have developed this policy and procedures to provide an overarching framework for the organisation on how to prevent, recognise and respond to safeguarding concern and allegations. This will enable us to put the safety and well-being of children at the heart of our mission. This policy makes clear what is required in relation to the protection of all children and in doing so will enable us to create a safe and positive environment for all.

This document applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, and anyone who works on our behalf (for example contractors and freelance 3rd parties).

3.2 Responsibilities

This document applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, and anyone who works on our behalf (for example contractors and freelance 3rd parties).

See [Appendix 8](#) for contact details of those holding key safeguarding roles

3.2.1 All employees and volunteers

Whilst all employees and volunteers in YHA have a responsibility to identify and share safeguarding concerns or allegations and complete mandatory safeguarding training, some employees hold additional responsibilities for safeguarding at strategic or operational levels.

YHA employees should never use their title or seniority to allow them access to children, or seek to isolate a child from their leader, parent or guardian for any reason. Should for any reason any employee believe this to be the case they should have confidence to challenge the request, either directly, or through the methods available in our whistleblowing processes listed in this document.

3.2.2 Board of Trustees

The Board has ultimate accountability for safeguarding and has to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission which can be found in detail [here](#) In brief The Board will:

- Support the executive team in assessing and managing risk
- Trustees must be assured that all policies, procedures, and practices are checked and challenged to ensure they are fit for purpose. Trustees should promote a fair, open and positive culture and ensure all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to. Receive and review outcomes from audit processes and remedial actions
- Ensure compliance with the Charity Commission notification requirements for safeguarding¹
- Conducts annual reviews of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice, and if prompted by a significant external event (*e.g. a change of legislation or a particular incident*).
- Receive and review an annual report on safeguarding from the executive

3.2.3 Executive Director responsible for Safeguarding

- Holds strategic leadership responsibility for YHA's safeguarding arrangements
- Ensures there is an up to date and robust policy and procedure in place for the management of all safeguarding concerns, allegations, and breaches of the code of conduct
- Appoints a designated safeguarding lead responsible for day-to-day oversight of all safeguarding concerns and allegations
- In conjunction with trustees, ensures that YHA are compliant with Charity Commission reporting requirements as regards serious safeguarding incidents
- Alerts Senior Management Team colleagues of any safeguarding issues, risks, or developments
- Commissions an annual safeguarding audit and reports its findings to the executive and trustees

3.2.4 Executive team

- Implement safeguarding policies and procedures within their operational responsibility
- Ensure that safer recruitment and vetting procedures are used when recruiting
- Provide supervision and support for employees, including undertaking safeguarding training, a mandatory induction, and regular reviews of their own practice with line managers.
- Ensure safeguarding is considered in all new business development in their area
- Promote a culture and environment whereby employees and volunteers are enabled to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role
- Inform the Chair of any incidents that are reported to the Charity Commission

3.2.5 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Lead on the development and implementation of YHA safeguarding policy and related procedures with the support of the board and other senior managers
- Chair the Safeguarding Panel
- Ensure a process of dissemination is in place whereby all employees can be made aware of their responsibilities under this policy
- Support external reviews and feed back to the safeguarding panel and executive
- Provide information and advice on child protection within YHA
- Keep up to date with safeguarding best practice including legislative changes

¹ As per the charity commission reporting.

- Ensure accurate record keeping of safeguarding incidents
- Report any serious safeguarding incidents to the director for safeguarding
- Coordinate the delivery of safeguarding training for employees and volunteers
- When on leave or absent the DSL will nominate a deputy DSL and these details will be held by the director responsible for safeguarding.

3.2.6 Regional Safety Managers & Deputy DSLs

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the home authority of children's social care and/ or police child protection unit where appropriate, and follow up afterwards, except where this is a school group, where these should be reported to the schools safeguarding lead
- Ensure accurate written records of referrals/ concerns are stored securely and share appropriately
- Ensure accurate record keeping of safeguarding incidents
- Provide information and advice on child and adult protection within YHA
- Report any serious safeguarding incidents to the DSL
- Deliver Safeguarding training where required in network

3.2.7 Director responsible for People

- Ensure that there are up to date and robust procedures and practices for the recruitment and vetting processes of employees and volunteers working in regulated activity
- Contribute to the management of any safeguarding allegations concerning employees or volunteers
- Ensure that referrals are made to the DBS and other regulatory bodies where necessary following allegations of abuse against employees or volunteers
- Ensure that the list of unsuitable people (paid or unpaid) is maintained (Employee record check-list).
- Responsible for ensuring that national office employees and volunteers are recruited in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy

3.2.8 Regional Business Managers & Designate Operations Managers

- Have operational responsibility for YHA safeguarding practice in their area of responsibility
- Liaise with relevant organised groups
- Ensure hostel managers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Log safeguarding concerns or allegations
- Provide appropriate supervision and support for hostels managers in which safeguarding is integrated
- Undertake investigations where any individual is employed without a DBS check having been completed. Include safeguarding as an agenda item at team briefings
- Appoint key hostel managers from their regions to interact with local police child sexual offences initiatives, or Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs) if approached.

3.2.9 Director of Technology and Transformation

- Ensuring that all reasonable steps are in place in order to ensure that YHA's networks are safe for all users

- Installing appropriate software and taking all reasonable steps to block illegal and inappropriate websites, which includes pornographic sites, and inappropriate images
- Setting restrictions around YHA internal network, including emails and making all users aware of their responsibilities through the ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
- Ensuring that Wi-Fi provided for customer use in hostels either by YHA or YHA's partners has filters in place and a methodology for regular checks to ensure that these remain robust
- Ensuring that there is regular monitoring of user activity on the YHA network

3.2.10 Hostel Managers

- Ensure employees and volunteers understand their duty to report any concerns, allegations, or suspicions of abuse to their line manager, or if the line manager is implicated, to the DSL
- Take appropriate action when anyone discloses abuse to them
- Where CCTV is in place, ensure relevant employees understand how it operates
- Ensure all televisions, new and old are reset each business quarter, ensuring adult channels are blocked as well as those used for AV purposes only
- Ensure hostel team members complete their safeguarding flow training
- Responsible for ensuring that all hostel employees and volunteers are recruited in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy

3.2.11 Head of Hospitality Resources

- Ensure that there is a safeguarding training is in place for employees, trustees and volunteers
- Monitor safeguarding training completion rates and report on this
- Evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding training

3.2.12 Director of Development and Supporter Engagement

- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are made explicit in any contract or Memorandum of understandings with the provider, and any licenses or accreditations are checked for suitability
- Ensure that groups are provided with accurate details as regards the use of premises in order to enable a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be completed

3.2.13 Interim AD Commercial & Partnerships

- Ensure that third parties have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place
- Services provided are monitored to ensure compliance within their service level or contractual agreement
- The delivery of services provided satisfy YHA that safeguarding is managed effectively
- Ensure that any products / programmes away from 'business as usual' is flagged up to DSL
- Respond to concerns and report to the DSL

3.2.14 Head of Enterprise Transition

- Ensure that there is adequate safeguarding practice at branded sites, referring any child protection concerns to the Health & Safety Team and provide information and advice on YHA on safeguarding procedures

- Ensuring the Enterprise/franchise hostel managers are aware of their responsibilities under the safeguarding policy and procedures
- Knowing where regulated roles are within the enterprise/franchise sites
- Support for enterprise operators

3.2.15 Director of Operations and Impact

- Ensure that new Education or Youth packages have considered safeguarding implications throughout the planning process.
- To ensure that any organisation that works with YHA on its Education and Youth products have agreed to operate within the terms of the YHA Safeguarding policy.
- Ensuring young people are safe and supported through Educational activity participation with YHA.
- To review and assess safeguarding implications for any new, or material changes to existing, activities for children and young people within YHA.

3.2.16 Senior Volunteering and Youth Programmes Manager

- Ensure that new and existing Volunteering and Youth programmes have appropriate level of safeguarding in place, working with Associate Director of Impact
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- Ensure appropriate and proportionate aspects of Safeguarding are included in the YHA Volunteering policy and associated procedures
- Monitor and review training requirements and completion rates in line with the volunteering risk table*
- Seek and incorporate feedback of volunteers and young people relating to safeguarding to the safeguarding panel.

3.2.17 Safeguarding Panel

- Support the organisation with best practice in safeguarding in line with law and guidance
- Develop, monitor, and review the organisation’s approach and plans for safeguarding across the network.
- Advise/act on the safeguarding implications of any new organisational projects/development or identified gaps
- To review any serious safeguarding incidents and make recommendations for any changes to network policy or procedure.
- To review safeguarding audits and make recommendations for any changes.

See [Appendix 9](#) for the Safeguarding Panel Terms of Reference.

3.3 Key Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

A child	is defined in law (Children Act 1989) as a person who is up to the age of 18 years. Therefore, the term ‘child’ is used throughout the document and procedure and this includes young people. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his or her status or entitlement to protection.
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Abuse	A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. They may be abused offline, online or a combination of both.
Safeguarding/Promoting the welfare of children	is defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting children from maltreatment • Preventing impairment of children’s health or development • Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care • Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances
Child protection	This is part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Different types of abuse may constitute significant harm including as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.
Abuse and neglect	are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional, or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, adults, by another child, or children. Anyone, regardless of gender or sexuality, can be involved in abuse.
Types of abuse	There are different types of abuse although, in reality, more than one type of abuse may be occurring simultaneously or sequentially. See Appendices for further information to help you recognise different types of harm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 2 – Definitions of child abuse and neglect • Appendix 3 - Indicators of child abuse • Appendix 4 - Grooming behaviours • Appendix 5 - Children and young people abused in specific circumstances
Historical abuse	Any disclosure or concerns that relate to abuse that happened more than a year ago. Whether it involves anyone working within or outside of the YHA it must still be taken seriously and acted upon in line with the procedures in this document. Often victims of abuse take many years to come forward due to shame and a fear of being disbelieved, however the alleged perpetrator may remain a risk to others and therefore all non-recent historic allegations have to be examined. YHA will report such cases and concerns to the local authorities and/or the police.
Additional vulnerabilities including safeguarding disabled children	Some groups of children are particularly vulnerable to abuse either due to impairment and/or life experiences. For example, research shows that disabled children are more likely to be a target for abuse. Equally, children who are in the looked after system, or those that have already experienced harm, may be more vulnerable.
Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB)	Were multi-agency bodies set up to coordinate local procedures and work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure the effectiveness of what the member organisations do individually and together in every local authority. Note: LSCBs have been replaced by local safeguarding boards that do not have a consistent name across England and Wales

	<p>Local safeguarding partners are responsible for child protection policy, procedure and guidance at a local level.</p> <p>The local safeguarding arrangements are led by three statutory safeguarding partners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the local authority 2. the integrated care board (previously clinical commissioning group) 3. the police. <p>Working together with other relevant agencies, they must co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children, including making arrangements to identify and support children at risk of harm.</p>
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4. Policy Statements

4.1 Code of Conduct

4.1.1 Purpose

This code of conduct outlines the expectations of behaviour required of all YHA employees and volunteers. It will help everyone to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour and reduce the possibility of false accusations being made against them.

Employees and volunteers are seen as role models by children and therefore must behave in an appropriate manner at all times by upholding the code of conduct. They should also be mindful that their behaviour should reflect the spirit of the code of conduct in their personal life as well and should not behave in a way that would undermine the reputation of YHA be it in a professional or personal capacity.

4.1.2 We expect all employees and volunteers to:

- Treat all children equally, respectfully, and listen to their wishes and feelings
- Encourage a non-discriminatory environment
- Behave in a calm, positive, supportive, and encouraging way with children
- Report on any suspicions, concerns, allegations, or disclosures made by a child including poor practice and 'grooming' behaviour
- Ensure the relationship with a child (including their family) that you have met through work always remains professional. The aim should never be to develop the relationship into a friendship or intimate relationship
- 1-2-1 time alone with a child is discouraged. Plan activities that involve more than one other adult present, or at least within sight of others.
- Respect a child's right to personal privacy but never agree to keep any information relating to the harm of a child confidential
- Risk assess any new activities for children
- Ensure that dangerous or otherwise unacceptable behaviour, including bullying by children are challenged and addressed
- Be aware that children can develop infatuations (crushes) towards adults. If this is happening, you should tell your line manager and then respond to the situation in a way that maintains the dignity of all concerned.

- Discourage physical contact. If a child needs physical comfort that this is done in a way that is both age appropriate and respectful of their personal space, with their permission and in the presence of someone else or with others.

4.1.3 It is unacceptable for employees and volunteers to:

- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child regardless of the age of consent.
- Use any job title or role, at any level of the organisation, to gain access to children when not in the presence of a parent, teacher, guardian, group leader or carer.
- Swear or make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory, or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to, or in front of, children
- Behave in a way that is discriminatory, offensive, or violent
- Engage in or allow any sexually provocative games involving or observed by children or adults
- Show favouritism or gossip about children
- Work, or volunteer, under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Smoke, vape or drink alcohol in front of children
- Young people in YHA's employment should be discouraged from going alone to smoke or vape with adult colleagues.
- Discuss your own personal or sexual relationships in front of children
- Give or receive gifts and/or substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and e-cigarettes from or to a child or their family
- Use any type of physical punishment to discipline. Shouting at children should also be avoided whenever possible and only if necessary to prevent harm from occurring
- Do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves
- Steal, or condone someone else's stealing, regardless of the value the stolen item
- Photograph or film children without prior consent from an appropriate adult.
- Play any audio and/or visual material (CDs, DVDs, videos, photos, films, computer or games etc.) that has inappropriate content for children
- Arrange to meet a child outside of your work context where the purpose is one of friendship or an intimate relationship
- Permit a child to use language that aims to radicalise by supporting terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism
- Offer to transport a child alone in your car
- Ignore or isolate a child
- Photograph or film children unless prior consent from the parents has been obtained
- Allow guests to access employees' accommodation or restricted parts of the hostel
- Discipline children and young people as this is the responsibility of the group leader or line manager
- Enter a bedroom, including shower spaces, where you will then be alone with a child or children

4.1.4 Online behaviour

We advocate applying the same principles, expectations, and standards for interacting and communicating with children and adults online as in other areas of practice, maintaining personal and professional boundaries in all communications.

The term 'online safety' is defined here as the process of limiting the risks to children and young people when using any internet, digital and mobile technology.

YHA I.T. equipment (including computers, laptops, mobile phones, notebooks, etc.) must not be used to view, download, create or share illegal content or images including adult pornography or obscene images of children

In respect of any child met through your work for, or on behalf of, YHA, employees and volunteers must not:

- Give their personal contact details to any child. This includes mobile phone numbers, email, home address, social networking accounts, personal website/blogs, online image storage sites, passwords
- Communicate with any child via any personal social networking sites
- Use the internet or web base communication to send personal messages unless part of official YHA business using professional accounts and devices.
- Ask to become an online friend/contact of a child
- Add/allow a child to join your contacts/friends list on personal social networking accounts
- Use personal digital camera/video for work including integral cameras on mobile phones
- Play online games with any child unless it is part of official YHA business using professional accounts and devices
- Share any illegal/inappropriate content (written, images or icons) via mobile devices
- Engage in sexting children. Sexting is sending, receiving or forwarding sexually explicit messages, photographs or images through mobile phone, computer or another digital device. It is illegal. By sending an explicit image of a child, a person is producing and distributing child abuse images and risks being prosecuted, even if the picture is taken and shared with their permission
- Seek to befriend a child or their family online whom you have met through work for any purpose whatsoever including for the purpose of developing a personal and/or sexual relationship
- Use personal mobile phone to communicate with any child. This includes phone calls, texts, emails, social networking sites etc.

4.1.5 Position of Trust

- All employees and volunteers should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their interactions with any children and adults using our sites. They should be aware that they may be seen as role models by children and must always act in an appropriate manner. When you are working with children on behalf of the YHA you are considered to be acting in a position of trust. 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
- Young people of 16 or 17 years can legally consent to some types of sexual activity but they may still be relatively immature emotionally. It is essential that those who may be in a position of responsibility and trust recognise this vulnerability and ensure that it is not exploited; exploitation in this area is illegal.

- Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with (or in the presence of) that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity even if the young person is ostensibly consenting.
- Any behaviour, which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the children in their care, must be avoided. Any sexual relationship within a position of trust relationship is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues.

4.1.6 Handling children's data

- All children's information is securely stored, accessed and managed in line with UK GDPR.
- A limited number of approved YHA employees have access to the data and the process of approval will be managed through the **Director of Technology and Transformation**.
- Children's data must be used for YHA business purposes only.
- Children's data must not be printed off or shared with others (internal or external) unless it's for a clear work purpose and has formal documented line management approval in line with YHA data sharing protocols.

4.1.7 Physical contact

Some roles within YHA will have to initiate some physical contact with children, for example 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. Such activities should be carried out in accordance with existing codes of conduct, regulations and best practice.

It is recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Employees and volunteers should be particularly mindful of this when it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the employee or volunteer to sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

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 the child's age or understanding and adults must be sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by a child.

This means that employees and volunteers should:

- Treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- Always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- Consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact
- Be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols
- Conduct activities where they can be seen by others

- Be aware that issues of gender, sexuality or culture may have implications for physical contact

4.1.8 Breaches of the code of conduct

YHA expect its employees and volunteers to raise any concerns if they think another person is breaching the code of conduct.

If any employee or volunteer believes that their behaviour could be misinterpreted, or if they observe that a colleague has breached the code of conduct then they are expected to take action. In the first instance they should discuss the concern with their line manager/nearest hostel manager who will determine whether to notify the Director responsible for People. Employees can also record their concern directly on to OSHENS. Depending on the seriousness of the breach it might necessitate further training, performance plan, disciplinary or the need to instigate the management of allegations procedure ([Section 5.2](#)).

If the concern is about the line manager then it should be reported to the next person in their hierarchy, Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director responsible for People directly.

Employees or volunteers who are concerned about any employee, regardless of their seniority, can report their concern as detailed in the YHA whistleblowing policy by calling Safecall Tel 0800 915 1571 or www.safecall.co.uk/report should they feel unable to do so in any other way.

YHA's Whistleblowing policy can be found here: [YHA Whistleblowing Policy](#)

4.2 Safeguarding requirements for third parties

YHA contracts other organisations to provide services (e.g. activity providers) and has a responsibility to ensure that those who work with, or for us, have robust safeguarding arrangements in place. To do this the YHA will stipulate that safeguarding requirements are met, and these would be set out in the contract or memorandum of understanding.

The safeguarding requirements include expectations in respect of the organisation having in place:

- Safeguarding policy and reporting procedure
- A code of conduct
- Safer recruitment practices for relevant roles
- Safeguarding training

Responsibility for ensuring these elements are checked and in place for third party activity providers rests with the Head of Programmes and Partnerships. Responsibility for other service providers resides with the department or team commissioning the service.

4.3 Bullying

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying (including bullying via the internet or mobile devices) can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Within some YHA activity there is an increased likelihood of bullying occurring because children are together for a sustained period of time and some of those children belong to marginalised groups, such as children in the care system. If you see signs of bullying do not ignore it; try to resolve it with those involved, including group leaders as necessary and report it to your line manager in the first instance.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and must therefore be reported on to the hostel manager, Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager, and Regional Safety manager as per procedures. The Regional Safety Manager will liaise with the police and the group leader in instances including: violence or assault; theft; repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages and hate crimes.

4.4 Children and young people staying in YHA accommodation

In order for any guest to stay at YHA they must do so in line with the YHA Admissions policy guidance which can be found on YHA intranet and website.

To ensure that YHA provide safe and suitable accommodation for everyone the following conditions apply:

- Children under the age of 16 years must be accompanied by a person who is aged 18 or older
- Children aged 12 and over can be in public dorms if accompanied by an adult, who they checked in with
- Children aged 16 years or over may stay in any accommodation within the YHA.
- Families and private groups of mixed genders, who wish to stay in the same room, must book private accommodation

Guests staying with YHA, aged 16 and over must provide identification in line with YHA's Admissions guidance in order to stay with YHA.

YHA employees are encouraged to decline bookings if they believe that a child may be at risk of abuse by the person they are presenting with.

YHA trains employees in how to spot signs of abuse through its online training schemes, including triggers that could indicate suspicious behaviour at check-in and what steps to take.

Where a vulnerable individual, young person 18 or under, approaches the hostel, at an hour where alternative accommodation is unlikely to be available, the individual may be allowed a private room for one night only at dormitory rates. This is to ensure the individual's safety but does not supersede any sole use booking obligations that may be in place. This should be done only at the discretion of the member of the hostel management team who is on call that night (this may require a late night phone call). That manager should personally visit the guest the following morning, and an incident report should be completed by the same manager even if this is due to be their day off.

YHA does not allow adults from educational establishments and youth groups to share bedrooms with children. The exception to this is where a child's health or wellbeing would prevent them from staying with us otherwise, for example carers, and YHA has proof in writing that the parent or guardian of the child have provided written consent naming the adult they permit to share with the child or young person. This information is stored in the booking details of the group.

Hostel managers must ensure group leaders are made aware of other hostel users – this includes an explanation about other groups, sole users, alternative accommodation and café opening hours.

Wherever groups request our accommodation YHA will provide transparency of the hostel make up, such as the presence of other users, including Café users, alternative accommodation, meetings and any other people staying within YHA.

4.5 Transporting young people in YHA vehicles

It is important that all steps are taken to ensure the safe transport of children and young people.

If children are to be transported by YHA Vehicle the following should be considered:

- Ensure sufficient supervisors are on each transport (male and female)

- All participants have a seat and seat belt regulations are adhered to
- All supervisors are issued with all relevant information of passengers e.g. Name/contact number, pick-up/drop-off point, name of parent/ carer to collect, emergency telephone number
- Participants are not to be left unsupervised
- If private cars are used for transport, you should ensure parental consent has been obtained.

If YHA is arranging transport on behalf of a group, this should be through a reputable company providing the necessary insurances and procedures.

Please refer to YHA's Drivers Standard Operating Procedure for more details.

4.6 DBS Checks

YHA's Safer recruitment processes require all YHA employees to undertake a basic DBS check prior to commencing work for YHA. Further details can be found in the DBS policy.

YHA is legally restricted from undertaking enhanced checks on roles that do not pass a frequency and proximity check, with or without barring.

Whilst Executive and Senior Leadership Team members would participate in enhanced checks if legally possible, at this time legal restrictions forbid this undertaking.

YHA trustees are subject to Enhanced checking, whilst its Youth Advisory Team have basic checks completed.

YHA employees should never use their title or seniority to allow them access to children, or seek to isolate a child from their leader, parent or guardian for any reason. Should for any reason, any employee, believe this to be the case they should have confidence to challenge the request, either directly, or through the methods available in our whistleblowing processes listed above.

4.7 Working with young people online

YHA does not actively seek to engage children online, however, should development of interaction on this platform take place a review of how this will be conducted safely in line with NSPCC guidance will be undertaken, this will include but not be limited to:

- Meeting our safer recruitment policy.
- Ensure it is in line with our Safeguarding code of conduct
- Manage content to ensure it is uploaded on YHA owned devices only.
- Review if consent is required by parents/guardians for young people to engage online.
- Review reporting procedure to ensure it meets any new requirements.
- Appoint employees using or moderating the platform to attend online child safety training.

YHA monitors its own social media platforms to ensure they remain free of any inappropriate or potentially harmful content including any potential offensive or derogatory material.

Where any concerns about behaviour or wellbeing are recorded, they are reported to the Health & Safety Team as per our existing processes.

Any comments/content posted on our social channels deemed to be unsuitable, is screenshot, recorded, reported to line manager, and either “hidden” or deleted depending on the platform.

4.7.1 Youth Advisory Team (YAT):

For 16 to 18 years olds, YHA need to respect the freedoms and rights that young people gain at 16 years of age, while ensuring that we have appropriate checks and protocols in place to protect them. As part of their work, YAT members have sustained one-to-one interactions with YHA Staff online. To mitigate risk, we operate the following:

- All virtual meetings/calls with YAT members are booked through the communitysupport@yha.org.uk shared calendar. No meetings should be booked directly by YHA Staff. No informal or ad hoc meetings or calls should occur without being booked through the community support shared calendar.
- All virtual meetings/calls must be recorded using the MS Teams recording function. The recordings are purely for monitoring purposes (unless additional purposes are stated at the time of recording – such as to provide missing YAT members a catch up)
- If a meeting occurs without being properly booked or recorded, YHA Staff member present on the call (or the Youth Volunteering and Engagement Manager if only YAT members attended the meeting) must produce a report to explain the breach of protocol.
- All videos and reports will then be stored in secure folder and will be reviewed periodically by a YHA Staff Member outside of the Impact Team.
- Meeting recordings will be stored for the maximum period allowed within current UK GDPR protocols.

4.7.2 Virtual Volunteers (and other DofE volunteering and school work experience):

- All automated Kinetic emails ask for a parent/carer to be cc'd if under 16.
- All correspondence goes through communitysupport@yha.org.uk shared email (or volunteers@yha.org.uk if a general volunteering query).
- Accidental correspondence from individual emails must be moved into the community support shared emails folders and correctly filed.
- All users of the community support shared email have the following added to automated signature for new emails and replies: “If you are under 16 years old, then please “cc” a parent/carer’s email address in any reply.”
- This acts as a reminder to for YHA staff to check ages on Kinetics and re-add the parent emails if dropped during email chain.

5. Processes

5.1 Procedures for reporting concerns about a child at risk

5.1.1 Principles of the Procedures

'5 Rs' underpin these reporting procedures:

- **Recognise** concerns that a child is being harmed or might be at risk of harm
- **Respond appropriately** to a child who is telling you what is happening
- **Refer** the concerns, if appropriate, to children's social care or the police
- **Record** the concerns appropriately and any subsequent action taken; ensure there is no delay in passing on concerns. Timescales are in place to ensure that matters are resolved in a timely way but these are the *maximum allowed* and nothing should prevent a more speedy response if needed
- **Resolution** and escalation – It is best practice for the DSL, or their deputy DSLs, to follow up referrals made, record outcomes and, if necessary challenge the outcomes if risks still persist

It is not the role of YHA employees or volunteers to decide if a child or adult has been abused, rather it is our role to identify and pass on concerns to the relevant authorities to investigate. YHA employees and volunteers must guard against making a decision not to report any issues in the belief that they are protecting a person's cultural or religious beliefs or through fear that their action might be interpreted as being prejudiced.

5.1.2 How concerns may arise

A concern about the safety of any child might arise as a result of:

- Any child saying that they are being abused or telling you about an experience or event that has happened to them that you think would be harmful (this is sometimes referred to as a 'disclosure' – not to be confused with a disclosure to do with a vetting check for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS))
- You identify physical or behavioural indicators of child abuse or neglect
- A person's behaviour is inappropriate and gives cause for concern e.g. a guest, group leader or another child
- You directly witness someone being harmed by an adult or another child;
- Somebody telling you (for example another child, or a member of the public) either face to face or by any other means of communication, that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm
- An adult survivor of abuse telling you about their experience of abuse in childhood – this can be referred to as 'historical abuse'. However, the perpetrator may still be alive and children may therefore be at risk

5.1.3 Steps to take if you have concerns:

If you have any concern about the safety or welfare of a child at risk or you think that a guest is posing a risk to someone else because of their behaviour, then you must:

Step 1 - Report your concerns immediately to your hostel manager (or person in charge at the hostel) or line manager (for central teams) and complete a report on OSHENS with as much information as possible about the nature of the concern/incident, names and contact details of everyone involved, any actions taken or anyone else spoken to.

Step 2 - The hostel manager (or person in charge) will then discuss the situation with their Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager, and Regional Safety Manager to determine what action should be taken and one of them must record any action taken and decision on OSHENS. If it's an **emergency** where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm then hostel manager (or person in charge) should act immediately and then inform their Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager, and Regional Safety Manager afterwards. Central teams' line managers should follow step 2, informing a Regional Safety Manager or Head of Health & Safety to manage the emerging situation and agree next steps. These are outlined [appendix 7](#).

If you cannot get hold of your Regional Safety Manager or Head of Health & Safety, you can call the safeguarding phone line: 01629 592680. If it's out of hours follow the instructions on the voice mail. The safeguarding form on OSHENS must be fully completed.

Step 3 –Regional Safety manager / Head of Health & Safety will then determine what action is necessary. If it is deemed to be a safeguarding concern, the DSL will be notified and a decision reached about next steps This will consider whether the concern requires a safeguarding referral to be made to children's social care or the police. The Regional Safety Manager can always seek advice from the DSL or NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 (when it's a child protection concern). Depending on the nature of the concern it must be acted upon within the same working day and in some instances straight away.

Step 4 – Health & Safety Team member must record all decisions on OSHENS, including a decision to take 'no further action' and the rationale for such a decision.

Step 5 – Health & Safety Team member will have to determine whether or not to inform the child/parent/responsible adult of a referral being made and who is best to do this. A record of this action must be made.

Step 6 – Health & Safety Team member to put any referral made to the police or children's social care in writing within 48 hours of having made the referral by phone, if requested, or no feedback is received. They may have to complete the safeguarding report form of the local authority for this purpose.

Step 7 – Health & Safety Team member should notify the Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager, and Hostel Manager who raised the concern of the outcome.

Step 8 – Close out actions to be recorded on OSHENS.

5.1.4 Responding to a direct disclosure of abuse

Sometimes a child at risk will make a direct disclosure about their experience of abuse; the following guidelines should be followed when responding to this situation:

Do:

- Be accessible and receptive
- Listen carefully
- Take it seriously
- Reassure them that they were right to tell
- Explain what will happen next

Do not:

- React strongly – for instance saying ‘that’s terrible’
- Jump to conclusions especially about the abuser
- Tell them you will keep this a secret
- Ask leading questions
- Make promises you cannot keep
- Stop them from speaking freely
- Tell them to stop talking so that you can fetch your manager

5.1.5 If a child indicates that they have concerns or a problem but are unwilling to discuss it then give them the contact details for NSPCC ChildLine or Helpline where they can talk in confidence. Record the action taken on OSHENS.

5.1.6 Safeguarding concern about the behaviour of a group member, group leaders, contractor, guest or member of the general public

Sometimes the behaviour of adults or other children may pose a risk of violence/sexual harm to others. In such instances employees or volunteers must:

Step 1 - Consider the potential type of harm; see Appendices 2-5 for types of abuse. It may be helpful to consider the following prompts:

- What is the presenting behaviour
- What risks does the behaviour present to the person at risk, employees/volunteers, and guests
- How serious is the behaviour
- Does the behaviour constitute possible criminal behaviour
- Is anyone in immediate danger

Step 2 - Report your concerns immediately to your hostel manager (or person in charge at the hostel) or line manager (for central teams) and complete a report on OSHENS with as much information as possible about the nature of the concern/incident, names and contact details of everyone involved, any actions taken or anyone else spoken to. If they are unavailable or unsure what to do then they should discuss with the Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager, or Regional Safety Manager. This must be done the same day the concern is identified. Also speak to the group leader(s) if they are not implicated in the concern. The hostel manager must then alert their Regional Business Manager, or Designate Operations Manager, and their Regional Safety Manager and follow the steps laid out in [appendix 7](#).

Central teams’ line managers should follow step 2, informing any Regional Safety Manager or Head of Health & Safety to manage the emerging situation and agree next steps.

Step 3 - If someone is in immediate danger, seriously injured or may cause serious harm to others you must call the emergency services on 999. Inform your hostel manager of the action taken as soon as you are able to do so within the same working day.

Step 4 - Ensure that a record of the concern and any action taken is recorded on OSHENS within the same working day.

Step 5 - Regional Safety manager / Head of Health & Safety will then determine what action is necessary. If it is deemed to be a safeguarding concern, the DSL will be notified, and a decision reached about next steps This will consider whether the concern requires a safeguarding referral to be made to children’s social care or the police. If it is deemed necessary to make a

referral out to the police or children social care then they should follow this up to ensure action has been taken and record the outcome on OSHENS.

Step 6 - Following the incident, the Regional Safety Manager and Regional Business Manager or Designate Operations Manager/Associate Director for central teams, will decide whether the behaviour is such that the person should be excluded from booking with YHA again – this is referred to as being placed on the ‘Exclusion Register’ and the process for doing this must be followed.

5.1.7 Addition to the procedure for concerns about school employees

If the concern is about a teacher with an organised school group then the Regional Safety Manager may need to contact the school and report the concern to the designated safeguarding lead for that school, record on OSHENS and follow up afterwards to check outcome and record this.

5.1.8 Online safeguarding concerns

5.1.8.1 Indecent Images of Children (IIOC)

If an employee or volunteer is inadvertently exposed to IIOC of children whilst using the internet they should take the following steps:

Step 1 - Employees or volunteers should refer to the DSL by:

- Calling the safeguarding phone line: 01629 592680. If it is out of hours follow the instructions on the voice mail,
- Sending the completed electronic safeguarding form on OSHENS

Step 2 - The URLs (webpage addresses) which contain the suspect images should be reported by the DSL to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) via www.iwf.org.uk. Actual images must not be sent to the IWF or anyone else.

Step 3 - The DSL should contact the police. If any copies of images need to be stored at the request of the police, then they should be stored securely where no one else has access to them. If there is a doubt about whether the images are criminal, then a discussion will take place with the police regarding the best way for them to receive copies to determine whether they are criminal or not.

5.1.8.2 If an employee or volunteer is found in possession of IIOC on any electronic device provided by YHA

Step 1 - Employees must report what they have found to the DSL or a Regional Safety Manager immediately, and the Safeguarding Form should be completed on OSHENS and forwarded to the DSL.

Step 2 - The URLs (webpage addresses) which contain the suspect images should be reported on to the IWF via www.iwf.org.uk by the Regional Safety Manager. You must avoid sending copies of the images to the IWF or anyone else.

Step 3 - The Regional Safety manager should:

- Contact the police. If any copies of images need to be stored at the request of the police, then they should be stored securely where no one else has access to them. If

there is a doubt about whether the image is criminal, then a discussion will take place with the police regarding the best way for them to receive copies to determine whether they are criminal or not.

- Discuss with the police what to do about the device on which the images are stored e.g. whether it should be quarantined and if any other devices should be checked.
- Consider suspending the person's access to the YHA network account but not explain the reason for this until agreed with the police.
- Consider whether to initiate the 'Responding to safeguarding or allegations against employees or volunteers' procedures ([see Section 5.2](#)).

5.1.9 Grooming

'Grooming' is the process through which a person attempts to befriend a child with the intention of later developing a sexual relationship with them. It involves making the child feel comfortable through a variety of methods thus developing trust, before initiating physical contact and abusing that trust. Some argue that the term *entrapment* or *control* better describes this process.

An offender is likely to look to groom the adults as well as the child in order to gain their trust. This process can happen within any setting. Those who sexually abuse children are often experts at gaining confidence and can look for situations where they can have unsupervised access to children.

See [Appendix 4](#) for indicators of grooming behaviours.

If a child discloses that they are being groomed or abused by someone online or you have suspicions that this might be happening to them you should follow the procedures as outlined in [Section 5.1.4](#).

Advice and a report can also be made to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) which is a specialist Police command dealing with inappropriate online behaviour. Refer to [Appendix 8 - Safeguarding Contact List](#) for the details.

If the adult who is displaying online grooming behaviour is a YHA employee or volunteer follow the procedures in [Section 5.2](#).

5.1.10 Information sharing, confidentiality and seeking consent for children

5.1.10.1 Information sharing can be a complex area. The following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Ideally information should be shared where there is consent for so doing
- Data protection law is not a barrier to sharing information about safeguarding
- Be open and honest about what you will do with the information
- Seek advice from appropriate professionals
- Share with consent ideally, but do not let a lack of consent prevent sharing if it places a child at risk
- Always consider the safety of the child (for instance would telling a child's parents put that child at further risk?)
- Ensure what is shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure

- Record on OSHENS what information has been shared and if consent was sought or not and the reasoning behind this.

5.1.10.2 All employees and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. The public interest in safeguarding children may override confidentiality interests. Information will be shared on a need to know basis only, as judged by the DSL. All YHA employees and volunteers cannot promise any child that they will keep information confidential when it concerns safeguarding.

5.1.10.3 In the case of child protection, it is best practice to get consent to share information if possible and as long as it will not increase the risk of harm to the child. In most instances parents/carers and the child depending on their age should be informed that you are making a safeguarding referral to children's social care unless to do so might put a child or in further danger, or where you suspect the parents/carers may be directly harming the child or where it might put yourself in danger. If anyone is unsure about this, they should speak to the DSL or have a conversation with children's social care to seek advice.

5.1.11 Escalation

If, after reporting on a concern, it is evident that the local authority has not taken appropriate next steps in relation to the safeguarding concern, then the DSL must discuss this with the Director for Safeguarding and determine if the matter needs escalating with the local authority. The local safeguarding boards for children will have specific procedures to be followed in such instances where escalation is warranted. A record of any decisions and outcomes must be kept by the DSL on OSHENS.

5.1.12 Missing or lost child

Refer to the missing child flowchart on the Health & Safety Team intranet pages.

5.2 Responding to safeguarding allegations against employees or volunteers

5.2.1 Definition of a safeguarding allegation

This is where an employee or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, may have harmed a child, or might lead to a child being harmed
- Possibly committed or is planning to commit a criminal offence against a child, or
- Behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicates s/he is, or would be, unsuitable to work with children

The allegation may:

- Not directly have a 'known victim' as such. For example, if an employee is accessing abusive images of children online or using the internet to groom children with the intent to harm in future
- Be about any type of abuse
- Concern a serious breach of our code of conduct
- Relate to an employee or volunteer who has left YHA (often known as a 'historical abuse')

5.2.2 A safeguarding allegation may arise when:

- A child or parent/carer makes a direct allegation against an individual employee or volunteer
- An employee or volunteer directly observes behaviour that is cause for concern
- YHA receives a safeguarding allegation from a person, including a member of the public or professional
- A member of the public or professional tells an employee face to face
- In the course of another internal procedure, for example a disciplinary or someone whistleblowing or making a complaint
- YHA is informed by the police or local authority or another organisation that an individual is the subject of a child protection and/or criminal investigation
- Information emerging from the renewal of a DBS that an employee volunteer may have committed an offence or been involved in an activity that could compromise the safety of a children
- An employee or volunteer informs YHA that they have been the subject of allegations, have actually harmed a child, or committed an offence against or related to a child

5.2.2.1 The managing safeguarding allegations procedure must be followed consistently in all instances, regardless of how the safeguarding allegation arises or from whom, or whether it is shared with YHA by email, face-to-face contact, social networking, telephone or letter.

5.2.2.2 If an employee or volunteer is concerned about the behaviour of a colleague, they should stay calm and ensure they report it. If you are mistaken it is better to discuss it and enable a proper investigation and assessment to happen than not report it at all. You should not:

- Ignore concerns
- Confront the person
- Discuss the matter with other employees or volunteers outside of those individuals named in this procedure.

5.2.2.3 There may be up to four strands in the consideration of any safeguarding allegation:

- Enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection and/or services
- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual
- Referral to DBS for 'consideration to bar' a person from working with children

5.2.3 What to do if a safeguarding allegation is made

The person who receives or has a safeguarding allegation must make a note of the basic details of the allegation on OSHENS

The person should then inform his/her line manager in the first instance to agree next steps. If the concern is about the line manager then the person should inform the second line manager, which is the line manager of the person above them. However, information about any safeguarding allegation must be kept confidential and should not be shared outside of the line management structure.

If the concern is raised by the police a badge number, reference number and phone number must be taken and the details escalated to the Regional Safety Manager within 30 minutes who will make contact with the police on behalf of YHA.

If the person and/or line manager considers that any child is subject to life threatening concern, risk of immediate harm, or needs emergency medical attention, then the emergency services must be contacted straightaway and the parents/carers of the child told that immediate steps are being taken to get help. Otherwise, the person or his/her line manager must pass on the information about the allegations within 24 hours to either the DSL or Deputy DSL who will then inform the director if the DSL is not available.

The Director responsible for People or DSL will determine if any records need to be secured or 'locked down, or any equipment removed from the individual who is the subject of the concern.

5.2.4 Initial considerations about managing a safeguarding allegation

The DSL will oversee the management of all allegations and hold accountability for them. In consultation with the Director responsible for People the DSL will decide on the make-up of any required investigative team and the investigation lead.

The DSL will report any allegations that meet the threshold for reporting to Charity Commission back to the Director responsible.

The Director responsible for Safeguarding will assume responsibility for the investigative task and responsibilities where there is a conflict of interest, or the allegation concerns the DSL.

The Director for Safeguarding or DSL, and The Director responsible for People are responsible for agreeing an initial plan of how to proceed with managing the allegation. They need to agree that the information before them is a safeguarding allegation. The safeguarding allegation may be in respect of the person's employment, voluntary activity or behaviour towards any other children including their own.

If confirmed as a safeguarding allegation, the Director responsible for People and DSL must agree an initial plan within one working day, which includes:

- The immediate safety of any relevant child/children involved, for example those that are the subject of the safeguarding allegation, or other children that the individual has contact with through work or family life
- What information to share with the individual who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation, and when to do so
- Whether any immediate decision has to be taken about suspension of the individual subject to allegation, pending further enquiries and/or investigation
- In the case of "live-in" employees whether there is a need to move the employee out of their accommodation
- Whether the criteria is met for referral to the local authority and/or the police
- What further information may be required for clarification
- Identifying who else is aware of the safeguarding allegation and who has been spoken to
- Arrangements for support for the person who is the subject of the safeguarding allegation and the person who raised the allegation
- Consideration of support arrangements for the child/children and family members concerned
- If or when, it is necessary to advise the CEO about the allegation and its management, depending on the seriousness of the allegation, reputational risks, liability and potential media interest.
- Whether the nature of the concern warrants a notification to the Charity Commission at this stage

- If there is sufficient evidence, a need to invoke the disciplinary process

If, after the initial consideration, the Director responsible for People and DSL do not consider the matter constitutes a safeguarding allegation then they must decide if an internal investigation is required to determine if the behaviour/incident was related to poor practice or misconduct. The disciplinary process must then be followed. All decisions and the reasons for them must be recorded and kept on the individual's file.

5.2.5 In the event that a safeguarding allegation is made:

If it is agreed that the safeguarding allegation meets one or more of the criteria ([see para 5.2.1](#)), then the DSL must make a referral within one working day to:

- The Designated Officer in the local authority (in England) or social services (in Wales) if the allegation is about behaviour towards a child

Some safeguarding allegations are so serious that they require immediate referral to the local authority/police. Other allegations that appear to meet the criteria may seem less serious, however, it is important that they are followed up and examined objectively by the external authorities who may hold other relevant information about the individual that is unknown to the YHA.

If the allegation is considered to meet the criteria for referral, then the safety and welfare of any child/children or adult at risk is of the utmost importance, and any child or adult protection investigation and/or police investigation must take priority over any internal YHA procedures.

All decisions and the evidence upon which they are based must be recorded on OSHENS.

5.2.6 Action following initial consideration

Where the allegation meets the criteria, the DSL will make the referral to the appropriate local authority department to discuss and agree the next steps, including informing parents/carers of the child/adult concerned (if applicable) about the allegation if they are not already aware of it.

The designated officer (or equivalent in adult social care) will:

- discuss the allegation and obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made
- discuss whether there is evidence/information that establishes the allegation is false or unfounded
- convene a strategy discussion within procedural timelines in order to plan any police investigation and/or protective action in respect of the child or adult if there is cause to suspect a child or adult is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and/or a criminal offence may have been committed

As an employer, YHA should expect to be invited to join this discussion alongside other relevant professionals, including the police and children's care. The DSL would be the YHA representative in this case.

The employee subject to the allegation should be informed as soon as possible that an allegation has been made. However, where a strategy discussion is required with the authorities, or it is clear that the police or children's or adult social care may need to be

involved, information about the allegation should not be shared until those agencies have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person who is the subject of the allegation.

5.2.6.1 Potential suspension. The possible risk of harm to a child or children must be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of any child or children involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases, this will require the YHA to suspend the employee who is the subject of the allegation or cease to use the services of a volunteer (sole trader, contractor, student etc.) on a temporary basis.

The act of suspension does not indicate a person's guilt; it is a neutral act that allows the investigation to take place. An individual must not be suspended automatically when there has been an allegation or without careful thought. Suspension should be considered in any case where:

- There is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal
- There are concerns that the person about whom the allegations are made may put pressure on or interfere with potential witnesses.

The power to suspend the accused employee or dispense with the services of the volunteer lies with YHA. However, in making these decisions the DSL in consultation with the Director responsible for People will need to take into consideration the views of the police and the local authority.

Where the potential of suspension of "live-in" employees is under consideration there should also be consideration given to the possible need to move the employee out of their accommodation.

The DSL will be responsible for deciding how and when to feed back to the person who made or received the allegation, and what information to give to others who may know the accused individual concerned.

5.2.7 Action following the conclusion of the investigative process

At the conclusion of any external investigations, the Director for Safeguarding, the DSL and the local authority Designated Officer (or equivalent in Wales or in adult social care services) will formally review the outcome and determine any further action required. The line manager of the employee or volunteer will need to be informed of any decision. The range of options open will depend on the circumstances of the case and will need to take into account the result of any police investigation or trial, any investigations in respect of the child's safety, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

Options for employees include:

- Reintegration of the employee
- Performance management or capability processes invoked
- Disciplinary process invoked
- Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration to be barred from working with children/adults at risk

Options for volunteers include:

- Reinstating the volunteer activity

- Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration to be barred from working with children/adults at risk

5.2.7.1 The following definitions should be used when recording the outcome of allegation:

Substantiated: there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation.

False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

Malicious: there is clear evidence to prove that there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false.

Unsubstantiated: this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove the alleged behaviour occurred or that the claim may have been malicious.

Unfounded: there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation.

5.2.7.2 Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion in all cases even if:

- the individual refuses to cooperate, although they should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations
- it is difficult to reach a conclusion
- the employee has resigned or the volunteer withdrawn their services

5.2.7.3 YHA never agrees to the use of a 'settlement agreement' for any matter relating to safeguarding. This is where the employee subject to the allegation agrees to resign, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in future references. Nor can it be used to override the YHA's duty to make a referral to the DBS where they meet the criteria for consideration to bar them from working with children.

5.2.7.4 The DSL or Director responsible for People must determine who needs feedback following the conclusion of any investigations and the nature of that feedback in accordance with the principles of data protection and confidentiality. This might include feedback to the child, the parents/carers, and/or the person who raised the concern initially and the line manager of the employee or volunteer.

5.2.7.5 If an allegation is determined to be unfounded or malicious, the DSL where relevant, must consider if any further action is required:

- If the safeguarding allegation was made by a child or adult then there is a need to consider if a referral to children's social care is required to determine if that child is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else and/or
- If the safeguarding allegation was deliberately invented or malicious by an adult then this should be discussed with the police and advice sought
- Whether disciplinary action is required in respect of employees or volunteer resolution process in respect of volunteers

5.2.7.6 At the end of the process of managing an allegation and its conclusions, the Director for Safeguarding in consultation with the DSL are responsible for the identification of any lessons to be learned about the procedure, the actions taken, and the support offered. This learning should feed into policy and procedural revisions as well as the safeguarding training strategy.

5.2.7.7 The Director for Safeguarding must provide in writing feedback to the person who has been subject to the investigation, clarifying the final outcome and any implications for their

employment/volunteering. This must be provided within five working days of the conclusion of the investigation.

5.2.8 Support

In managing any allegation there is a need for the DSL to consider the support needs of individuals involved. The support they require depends on the circumstances of the case and will have to be negotiated and agreed on a case-by-case basis. Support may include responding to the impact from shock, anger or being a suicide risk, for example. It may include support for the:

- Person who raised the concern at the outset
- Person who is the subject of the allegation
- Child/parents/carers, if applicable, where harm was alleged against a particular child

DSL or Director responsible for people is responsible for ensuring that the employee or volunteer who is subject of the allegation is:

- Informed of the allegation against them (once agreed by the local authority/police), notified of the processes that will follow and signposted to independent support should they require it
- Kept up to date about any progress in relation to their case
- Advised to contact their union or professional association at the outset
- Informed of arrangements to keep them updated about developments in the workplace in cases where the employee or volunteer is suspended or the YHA cease to use their services as a volunteer
- Sent correspondence confirming all of the above including the arrangements for support.

5.2.9 Referral to DBS / Charity Commission / Professional Regulatory Body

Once the outcome of the allegation management process is concluded the DSL in conjunction with the Director responsible for People must make the following decisions:

- Where an employee or volunteer is engaged in providing regulated activity then the issue of whether they can continue with this work must be considered depending on the outcome of the investigation /disciplinary process. If it is concluded that the person should no longer be engaged in regulated activity then YHA must refer the person to the DBS for consideration to bar them from working with children. The process for this is outlined on the DBS website
- Where an employee or volunteer is registered with a professional body (e.g. Health and Care Professions Council), the issue of referral of the employee to the professional regulatory body must be considered
- Where the incident meets the Charity Commission serious incident reporting criteria then this will be done in conjunction with the Chief Executive's office
- If reported to the Charity Commission, Executive team to follow internal escalation processes.

5.2.10 Escalation

If any employee or volunteer considers that the concern they have raised has not been taken seriously or remains, then they should speak with the DSL. Any employee who is unhappy with the response and/or action taken by YHA can:

- Contact the Director responsible for Safeguarding
- Use the Whistleblowing line: Safecall Tel **0800 915 1571** or **www.safecall.co.uk/report**
- Contact the **NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000**
- Report the matter directly to the local children's social care team

6. Compliance

This policy has been developed to ensure the organisation complies with applicable English and Welsh legislation, regulations, and guidance including:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR regulations 2018
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government)
- Care Act 2014
- Care and support guidance (July 2018)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014 (for young adults 18-25)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Keeping children safe in education 2023
- After-school clubs, community activities, and tuition. Safeguarding guidance for providers (2023)
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Working Together to Safeguard People, Volume 1
- Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information (WASPI) 2013
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7. Ownership and Authority

This policy has been authorised by the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is the owner of this policy.

8. Accountabilities

The Safeguarding Policy is ultimately the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead in conjunction with [Safeguarding Panel, Executive Director responsible for Safeguarding, Board of Trustees other job titles and service providers].

All employees, relevant volunteers, franchise hostels and managers of all business functions are required to comply with this Safeguarding Policy.

9. Review and changes to this policy

This policy and related risk assessments will be reviewed annually and when there is a significant change in the organisation's business activities or in the regulatory environment (e.g. new legislation or revised regulatory guidelines).

Proposed changes to this policy should be notified to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will be responsible for issuing updated policies.

10. Appendix 1: Policy Statement

10.1 Policy Purpose

YHA (England and Wales) has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for all that come into contact with the activities and services of YHA, both on and off site. By the very nature of the work undertaken by YHA, many employees and volunteers have contact with children during the course of their work.

YHA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is embedded across its network of sites and business models. We are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility in our organisation and will strive to deliver a safe and trusted environment.

YHA believes that it is always unacceptable for any child to experience abuse or neglect of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, by committing to policy, procedures and practices that seek to prevent and protect them from all forms of abuse and neglect.

YHA have developed this policy and procedures to provide an overarching framework for the organisation on how to prevent, recognise and respond to safeguarding concern and allegations. This will enable us to put the safety and well-being of children at the heart of our mission. This policy makes clear what is required in relation to the protection of all children and in doing so will enable us to create a safe and positive environment for all.

10.2 Application

This document applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, and anyone who works on our behalf (for example contractors and freelance 3rd parties).

10.3 Our commitment to safeguard

YHA recognise that:

- The best interests of the child are paramount in all considerations about their welfare and protection, including when to maintain confidentiality and when to share information about them
- All children have a right to protection from harm and abuse, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or identity or other additional vulnerabilities
- The need to work in partnership with professionals, third parties, children, their parents/carers is essential in promoting children's welfare
- Concerns or allegations that anyone has harmed a child will be taken seriously and managed sensitively and fairly in accordance with this policy and procedures

Our commitment to safeguard will be demonstrated by:

- Adopting and disseminating YHA's safeguarding policy and procedures across YHA to ensure a unified approach
- Taking seriously all concerns and allegations of abuse and responding to these swiftly, appropriately, and fairly

- Sharing and recording information according to data protection principles
- Using safer recruitment, selection and vetting processes for employees and volunteers where relevant to roles and responsibilities
- Providing employees and volunteers with induction, training and supervision appropriate to their safeguarding role and responsibilities
- Having safeguarding arrangements in place with assigned roles and responsibilities
- Providing a code of conduct which serves to protect employees, volunteers and all who use our sites and services
- Informing employees, third parties, parents/carers, and children of the existence of the safeguarding policy and procedures and how they can share any concerns
- Providing trustees with Safeguarding specific training
- Having a best practice safeguarding working group (known as the Safeguarding Panel) in place
- Appointing experts in the field of safeguarding to support our safeguarding work as necessary
- Ensuring there are arrangements in place, including contractual obligations, where we contract the services of other organisations to ensure that they have appropriate safeguarding measures in place
- Maintaining an exclusion register for individuals that we will not permit to use our sites due to their behaviour and/or criminal record
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our safeguarding practices which includes having them audited by a third party
- Reviewing the safeguarding policy and procedures on an annual basis, or sooner if an incident or legislative change so warrants it

10.4 Breaches

YHA is committed to taking all appropriate action, including disciplinary, legal or other action in response to any breaches of its safeguarding policy and procedures.

It is the responsibility of our employees and volunteers to act if there is a cause for concern about a child or the behaviour of an adult towards a child, but it is not their responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred or what action is required to protect them.

Responsibility for deciding whether to escalate a concern to the appropriate authority lies with the YHA nominated safeguarding employees.

10.5 Associated policies and procedures

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a broad concept. Therefore, the policies and procedures which contribute to safeguarding are listed below, they should also be followed and used in conjunction with this document, dependent on your role and responsibilities:

Whistleblowing policy	OHS 15 Admissions guidance
Safer recruitment and vetting procedures	OHS 14 Security strategy
YHA Code of Conduct and How we Resolve Issues	Social Media Policy
OHS 31 Event Lost Child Procedure	YHA ICT Acceptable Usage Policy
YHA Exclusion Register Policy	YHA Inclusion Policy
OHS 25 Drivers' Standard Operating Procedure	Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Use of images (film and photograph)	Risk Management Policy

10.6 Law and Guidance

The policy and procedures are underpinned by law and statutory guidance ([see Section 6](#)) in England and Wales. This policy is reviewed annually and changes in legislation will be considered at review unless required sooner.

The policy and procedures were developed in consultation with the NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children).



JAMES BLAKE
Chief Executive Officer
February 2024

11. Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and neglect

There are four categories of harm although often children may suffer more than one type of harm.

11.1 Physical abuse

may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

11.2 Emotional abuse

is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include:

- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views
- Deliberately silencing them, 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

11.3 Sexual abuse and exploitation

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 oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- 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 sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by any one group within society. People of any gender can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

11.4 Child sexual exploitation

is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have

been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

11.5 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 harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Neglect can also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

12. Appendix 3: Indicators of child abuse and neglect

There are four main categories of abuse and neglect: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Each has its own specific indicators, which you should be alert to. The following signs may be indicative of abuse occurring:

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty or with consistently poor hygiene
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education or who are reluctant to go home after school
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to professionals' concerns
- Parents who collect their children from activities when inebriated, or under the influence of drugs
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why
- Children who talk about running away
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements

12.1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health or if they live in a home where domestic abuse occurs. Babies and disabled children also have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse. Physical abuse can also occur outside of the family environment.

Possible indicators are:

- Children with frequent injuries
- Children with unexplained or unusual fractures or broken bones
- Children with unexplained: bruises, cuts, burns, scalds, bite marks

12.2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve serious bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Possible indicators are:

- Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong

- Parents or carers who withdraw their attention from their child, giving the child the 'cold shoulder'
- Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child
- Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example, by name-calling or making negative comparisons

12.3 Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child. Often children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. A child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong, rather believe that they are in a relationship with someone.

Possible indicators of sexual abuse are:

- Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age
- Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge beyond their years
- Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy

12.4 Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

All accommodation providers have potentially, over the years, been unwilling venues for certain crimes such as child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, unlawful sexual activity, used for the purposes of meeting and grooming children and young people with the intention of abusing them.

Possible indicators of sexual exploitation are:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education

YHA provides accommodation and this is a high-risk area in terms of attracting the perpetrators of CSE and other such crimes. However, YHA can take steps to reduce the risk of these types of incidents occurring by looking out for some signals that a booking may have illegal activity behind it, these signs can include an adult checking in with a child in the following circumstances:

What you may recognise in your hostel:

- Last minute walk-in bookings, often late at night
- Guests only using a room for a few hours
- Guests refusing or unable to provide identification when checking in
- Guest providing a local address when booking a room
- Guests checking in with no luggage

- No clear signatures provided by the guest on the booking form
- Child appears to be distressed or in the building against their will
- Something about the booking just feels wrong.

In any of the above eventualities invite the guests to take a seat in reception and contact a senior manager whatever the hour. If you cannot reach them and are genuinely concerned, then you should contact the police to raise your concerns.

If you are concerned the child may be at risk of abuse do not allow the guests to go to the room until someone has confirmed this is ok. Should they attempt to leave make detailed notes of any identifiable factors you can, i.e. car registration, what they are both wearing and the direction they headed, do not follow or place yourself in harm's way.

12.5 Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it is adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter. It is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

Neglect may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may also have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or result in them prioritising buying drugs, or alcohol, over food, clothing or warmth for the child. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug or alcohol abuse.

Possible indicators are:

- Children who are living in a home that is persistently dirty or unsafe
- Children who are left hungry or dirty
- Children who are left without adequate clothing for the weather conditions
- Children who are living in dangerous conditions, i.e. around drugs, alcohol or violence
- Children who are often angry, aggressive or self-harm
- Children who fail to receive basic health care
- Parents who fail to seek medical treatment when their children are ill or are injured
- Children left in the care of unsuitable adults

13. Appendix 4: Grooming Behaviours

Signs that a person might be grooming a child or young person include:

- Being dressed inappropriately around the child or young person
- Spends most of their spare time with children and has little interest in spending time with someone of their own age
- Giving special attention to a particular child or young person
- Isolating a child or young person from other people
- Hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child or young person
- Giving gifts (including cigarettes/alcohol/drugs) or money for no apparent reason
- Treating a child as an equal/peer or like a spouse
- Finding ways to be alone with a child or young person when other adults are not likely to interrupt, e.g. taking the child for a car ride, arranging a special trip, etc.
- Not respecting the privacy of a child or young person
- Discussing their own sex life or asking a child or young person to discuss sexual experiences or feelings
- Viewing abusive images of children
- Abusing alcohol or drugs and/or encourages children or young people to use them. The use of such substances reduces inhibitions
- Allowing children or young people to consistently 'get away' with inappropriate behaviors
- Encouraging silence or secrets
- Makes fun of a child's body parts – uses sexualised names for the child or young person
- Not adhering to the rules, authority or code of conduct in the particular setting, organisation or within an activity

14. Appendix 5: Child abuse in specific circumstances

14.1 Child-on-child abuse

Young people, particularly those living away from home, are vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. It is subject to the same safeguarding children procedures as apply in respect of any young person who is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm from an adverse source. A significant proportion of sexual offences are committed by teenagers. Employees should not dismiss some abusive sexual behaviour as “normal” between young people.

14.2 Child abuse linked to belief in “spirit possession” or “witchcraft”

The belief in “possession” and “witchcraft” is widespread in some communities. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures or religions. The number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of “possession” or “witchcraft” is small, but young people involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, capacity to learn, ability to form relationships and self-esteem due to extreme physical and emotional abuse that may be wrongly justified on the basis of spirit possession or witchcraft.

14.3 Child abuse and social media

The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of abusive images of children. Social media is used as a means of contacting young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. Contacts made initially in a chat room can be carried on via email, instant messaging services, mobile phones or text messaging. Cyberbullying, including sexting (which is illegal), is now widespread and can be very harmful to young people. Further advice and guidance on this topic are on the websites of the NSPCC, CEOP, Internet Watch Foundation and the UK Safer Internet Centre.

14.4 Children and families who go missing

Local agencies and professionals should bear in mind, when working with young people and families where there are outstanding concerns about the young person’s safety and welfare that a series of missed appointments may mean the family have moved. Young people who are looked after (i.e. in care) sometimes go missing from their placements. There will be procedures in place, which should be followed if this occurs and the care home/foster placement must be immediately informed.

14.5 Child trafficking

Child trafficking is child abuse. This is where children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited e.g. for the purpose of sexual exploitation or domestic servitude. They are often subject to multiple forms of abuse. Children may be trafficked into the UK from abroad but can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. Advice can be sought from the Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) on: 0808 800 5000.

14.6 County lines/criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation is also known as ‘county lines’ and is when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone ‘lines’ to supply drugs.

Gangs may deliberately target vulnerable children – those who are homeless, living in care homes or trapped in poverty. These children are unsafe, unloved, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this. These gangs groom, threaten or trick children into trafficking their drugs for them. They might threaten a young person physically, or they might threaten the young person's family members. The gangs might also offer something in return for the young person's cooperation – it could be money, food, alcohol, clothes and jewelry, or improved status – but the giving of these gifts will usually be manipulated so that the child feels they are in debt to their exploiter. However, they become trapped in county lines; the young people involved feel as if they have no choice but to continue doing what the gangs want.

14.7 Disabled children

Children with a disability or additional health needs are a particularly vulnerable group as signs of abuse and neglect may be masked or misinterpreted as being due to underlying impairments. Disabled young people are three times more likely than non-disabled children to experience abuse due to a number of factors:

- Have fewer outside contacts than other young people
- May receive personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries
- Have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse
- Have communication difficulties that may make it difficult to tell others what is happening or to be believed
- Be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing services
- Be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation and /or, abuse by their peers

14.8 Domestic violence

Young people living in families where they are exposed to domestic violence have been shown to be at risk of behavioural, emotional, physical and long-term developmental problems. Everyone working with young people and families should be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic violence and the abuse and neglect of young people.

14.9 Families living in temporary accommodation

Living in temporary accommodation, often at a distance from previous support networks, can lead to young people and families falling through the net and becoming disengaged from services. Where there are concerns about a young person in temporary accommodation, safeguarding procedures should be followed.

14.10 Female genital mutilation (FGM)

(Also known as 'female genital cutting' or 'female circumcision') Communities tend to use local names for referring to this practice including "sunna". Some FGM-practicing families do not see it as an act of abuse; however, FGM has significant physical and mental health consequences both in the short and long term and, therefore, must not be excused, condoned or accepted. FGM cannot be left to personal preference or cultural custom as it is an extremely harmful practice that violates basic human rights. Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM. FGM is illegal in the UK and where it is suspected it must be referred onto children's social care.

14.11 Forced marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. It is entirely different from an arranged marriage, and the two should not be confused. In an arranged or assisted marriage, the families take a role in choosing and introducing the marriage partners, but the marriage is entered into freely by both people, without pressure. In a forced marriage, this consent does not exist. If this form of harm is suspected, advice should be sought from the Forced Marriage Unit prior to any discussion with the young person or family on 0207 008 0151 or out of office hours contact: 0207 008 1500 (ask for Global Response Centre).

14.12 Parental adversity

Parental drug misuse can cause harm from conception to adulthood, including physical and emotional abuse and neglect. Where drug misuse co exists with domestic violence and mental illness the risk of harm to a child is even greater.

14.13 Race and racism

Young people from black and minority ethnic groups may have experienced harassment, racial discrimination and institutional racism. The experience of racism is likely to affect the responses of the young person and parents/carers to other intervention in their lives. There is also a danger that professionals working with children and young people may not intervene soon enough for fear of being seen as racist and in so doing, offer the child less protection.

14.14 Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)

The fact that a child or young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

14.15 Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)

A UASC is an asylum-seeking child under the age of 18 who is not living with their parent, relative or guardian in the UK. They can be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation because they lack the necessary support networks, protection and communication skills.

14.16 Safeguarding adolescents

The nature of abuse and neglect for teenagers is different from that of younger children. Behaviours by parents/adults that might be deemed abusive or neglectful for a very young child may be considered appropriate for teenagers. Additionally, they may face a wider range of risks due to the relationships they have, social media that they use, lifestyles that they lead and with their increasing independence. Risk taking and experimentation is a normal part of growing up but also can place young people in harm's way.

14.17 Young people whose behaviour indicates a lack of parental control

When young people are brought to the attention of the police or wider community because of their behaviour, this may be an indication of vulnerability, poor supervision, abuse or neglect in its wider sense. It is important to consider whether these are young people in need of

protection and/or support services and not to view them as only an offender as they may well be also victims themselves.

14.18 Young people and gang activity

Overall, young people can be particularly vulnerable to suffering harm in the gang context are those who are:

- Not involved in gangs, but living in an area where gangs are active, which can have a negative impact on their ability to be safe
- Not involved in gangs, but at risk of becoming victims of gangs
- Not involved in gangs but at risk of becoming drawn in, for example, siblings or children of known gang members
- gang-involved and at risk of harm through their gang-related activities e.g. drug supply, weapon use, sexual exploitation and risk of attack from own or rival gang members

14.19 Young carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (of any age with the exception of where that care is provided for payment or as voluntary work). Young carers may require support services either for them or for the person they care for in order to ensure that their health and welfare does not suffer. In some instances young carers may also be in need of protection due to the adverse circumstances they may be experiencing or where the behaviour of the person that they are caring for is abusive.

14.20 Radicalisation and violent extremism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Extremism is defined by the Government in the 2011 Prevent Strategy as: *Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.* It also includes calls for death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

There is no such thing as a “typical extremist”: those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

Children or adults may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals.

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- *Identity crisis* – the young person is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
- *Personal crisis* – the young person may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging
- *Personal circumstances* – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy

- *Unmet aspirations* – the young person may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
- *Experiences of criminality* – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration
- *Special educational needs* – young person may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others

However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

Indicators of radicalisation and violent extremism may include:

- Showing sympathy for extremist causes
- Contact with extremist recruiters
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- Making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies
- Possessing illegal or extremist literature
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships secretive behaviour
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- Graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views

Children or adults who are showing signs of radicalisation and violent extremism will need to be considered as being at risk of harm to themselves or others and therefore such concerns should be acted upon by following safeguarding procedures.

15. Appendix 6: Barriers to help seeking for children

Many children and young adults are reluctant to seek help because they feel that they do not have anyone that they can turn to for support. They may have sought help in the past and had a negative experience, which makes them unlikely to do so again. In an NSPCC study of child maltreatment (2000), only a quarter of the people that had experienced sexual abuse as a child had told anyone at the time. Being unable to tell someone that you are being abused can be very stressful and may leave a vulnerable child at risk of continuing or further abuse.

LGBT children and young people may face additional barriers because they fear 'outing' themselves, have experienced discrimination or bullying because of their identity and do not trust others to be supportive.

Young people may not seek help because they:

- Fear not being believed
- Feel too embarrassed to talk to an adult about a private or personal problem
- Worry that their concern will not be taken seriously
- Worry about confidentiality and lack trust in both the people around them (including parents) and in the services provided to help them
- Fear the consequences of asking for help
- Fear the situation could become worse

Some groups of children and young people experience more barriers. For example, boys are often more reluctant to seek help than girls. Children with communication difficulties may lack the language necessary to enable them to express what is worrying them. Children that are more isolated are less likely to share their concerns, for example, children living in residential care.

15.1 Barriers for adults to listen

Sometimes there is reluctance by adults to listen to what children are telling them and to act on it. Adults' fears may be due to:

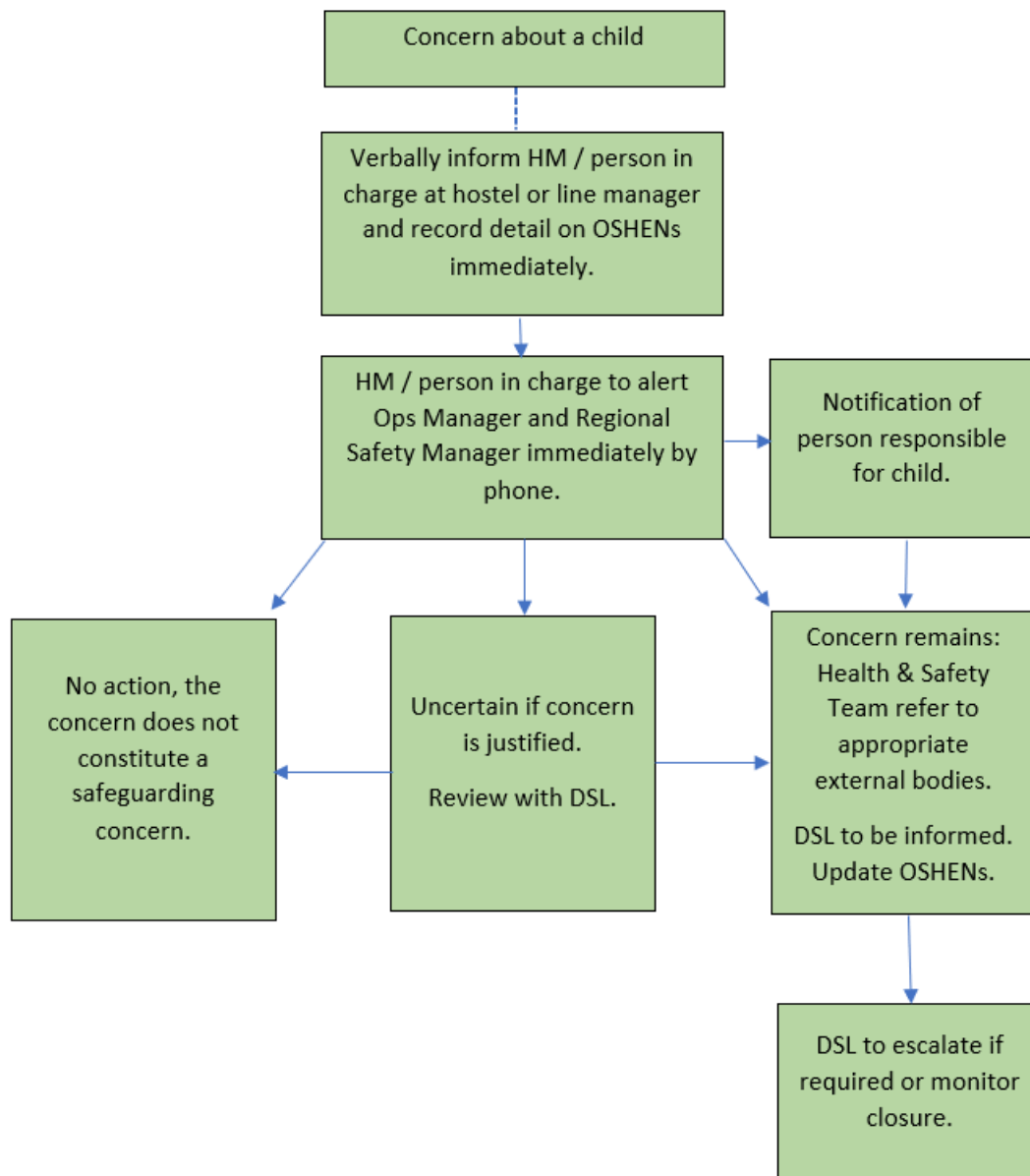
- Lack of trust of the child protection system
- Lack of understanding of the needs and experience of young people
- Not knowing how to react or who to tell
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Loyalty to the family or colleagues
- Lack of trust in the child protection system
- Not recognising the significance of the indicators

15.2 How to encourage children and young people to seek help and support

- Provide signposting to support services
- Make it easier for young people to take up the offer of help
- Listen to the people you help - see the whole person
- Build trust - treat young people with respect

- Empower young people to find their own solutions
- Advertise the benefits of seeking help
- Help to tackle the myths about those who seek help – seeking help is not a sign of weakness

16. Appendix 7: Flowchart for employees and volunteers – what to do if you have a safeguarding concern



17. Appendix 8: Safeguarding Contacts

Name and job title	Safeguarding Role	Contact details
Jane Price	YHA Director for safeguarding	07850515050
Eleanor Butterfield Head of Health, Safety & Compliance (HOHSC)	YHA Interim Designated Safeguarding Lead	07803519081
Out of Hours H+S Support – Weekends and 18.00 - 08.00 Monday - Friday		01629 702483
Will Brown	Regional Safety Manager (Deputy DSL in absence of HOHSC)	07841341908
External agencies		
NSPCC Helpline	24-hour helpline for advice on child protection matters for professionals and adults	0808 800 5000
ChildLine	24-hour helpline for children and young people	0800 1111
Whistleblowing helpline for YHA		Safecall Tel 0800 915 1571 or www.safecall.co.uk/report
Whistle blowing advice line (external)	Advice can be sought from NSPCC if using the YHA whistleblowing procedure has not resolved the concern	0800 028 0285
The UK Safer Internet Centre	Provides advice for professionals and responds to reports about sexual abuse images of children online	0844 381 4772
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre(CEOP)	Investigates inappropriate online behavior such as grooming online or sexual exploitation	0870 000 3344
Internet Watch Foundation	Remove images of child sexual abuse content and criminally obscene content online	01223 203030
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)	Advice line for criminal records checks	03000 200 190
Local authority Children's Social Care (England)	Use the following website to find out the details: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council	
Welsh Local Authorities	http://wlga.wales/welsh-local-authority-links	
Samaritans	24 hours a day helpline www.samaritans.org.uk	116 123
National domestic violence helpline	24 hours a day helpline For survivors, friends and families and professionals in contact with DV survivors	0808 2000 247

18. Appendix 9: Safeguarding Panel: Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

1.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk, requires effective co-ordination. For this reason, the YHA have established this specific Panel.

1.2 Effective Safeguarding arrangements in the YHA are underpinned by the three key principles which will equally apply to the activities of the Panel:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- All activities must ensure that the welfare of children and adults at risk are at the centre of any decisions that are made.
- All Services need to seek the views of children and young people so that they are able to tailor support for prevention and intervention.

2. Role and Scope of the YHA Safeguarding Panel

2.1 The work of the YHA Safeguarding Panel fits within the wider context of all YHA services and our clear mission, to inspire all, especially young people, to broaden their horizons gaining knowledge and independence through new experiences of adventure and discovery. Our particular focus however is that of the 'Staying Safe' outcome with our aim to reach 1 million young people.

2.2 A key role of the YHA Safeguarding Panel will be to gain the agreement of the relevant stakeholders, to protocols and methods of working that will ensure that safeguarding activity is conducted in a consistent and integrated manner across the entire network and represented on the panel.

3. Objectives and Functions

3.1 Panel Objectives

The Panel will:

- Function primarily as a scrutiny and support function – supporting the organisation with best practice in safeguarding in line with law and current regulations,
- Ensure communication of lessons learned throughout the network, with the ultimate objective of preventing reoccurrence of any safeguarding incidents wherever possible
- Ensure YHA has Safeguarding policies and procedures in place which are regularly reviewed and revised as necessary
- Develop, monitor and review the organisation's approach and plans for safeguarding children and adults across the network
- Monitor compliance with a safeguarding training strategy
- Develop a safeguarding improvement plan which identifies its work and which will be reported against on an annual basis
- Advise/act on the safeguarding implications of any new organisational projects/development
- **Review the findings of serious incidents and agree on any remedial actions proposed**

4. Panel meetings

4.1 Meetings will take place four times a year but can also be convened at short notice if there is a serious incident that warrants it.

4.2 An annual timetable for Panel meetings will be published no less than four weeks before the commencement of the year indicating the date, time and venue for all meetings. All panel members have responsibility for identifying items for the agenda at each Panel meeting.

4.3 The Chair may call an extraordinary meeting at any time.

4.4 All Panel meetings will create minutes; draft minutes will be distributed within 15 working days and submitted for approval to the next meeting.

4.5 Spring Panel will review the Safeguarding Policy and suggest amendments or improvements following a review of law and practices.

4.6 Autumn Panel will review all of the training provided by YHA in relation to safeguarding and suggest amendments or possible improvements.

5. Panel Membership

5.1 Members will have a strategic role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults within the organisation.

5.2 If a panel member misses two consecutive meetings without sending apologies or an appropriate representative, then the Chair, on behalf of the panel, will write to that member. If non-attendance continues, the Chair will write to individual requesting termination from the panel and an alternative representative be sought.

5.3 The Chair of the Panel will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the YHA. The Chair will be held to account by the CEO in the performance of their functions relating to the Panel.

5.4 Wherever possible the Panel will seek to establish a consensus on any decisions made, however where there is impact on other Directorates, the Executive employees will be consulted as part of an escalation process.

5.5 Panel membership will include representations across the Directorates, but will always have the following:

- Head of Health & Safety Chair
- Regional Safety Manager
- Senior Regional Business Manager
- People directorate representative
- Hostel Manager representation
- Representative for Enterprise Network
- Head of Central Sales & UX
- Head of Programmes & Partnerships
- Senior Volunteering & Youth Programmes Manager

6. Accountability

6.1 The Panel will report to the following groups in order:

- Risk Management Group
- Executive employees

- Audit and Risk committee
- The Board

7. Roles and Responsibilities of Members

7.1 The key roles of a member are to contribute to the effective working of the Panel, in promoting high standards of safeguarding practice and to foster a culture of continuous improvement. This will require each member to:

- Be objective in undertaking assessments and scrutinise functions of the YHA safeguarding process in an unbiased manner.
- Identify, communicate and liaise as appropriate with employees within their area of responsibility about safeguarding.
- Attend all safeguarding committee meetings and where this is not possible, to ensure the committee is kept updated of any issues or risks within their area of responsibility that may influence safeguarding across the network
- Advise, contribute, and actively take part in decision making processes at Panel meetings
- Prepare for meetings and complete actions when required to agreed timescales.

8. Review

8.1 The panel will review its activity on an annual basis and determine at each review whether any changes are required to the terms of reference

19. Appendix 10: Adult safeguarding

Whilst a child legally becomes an adult on turning 18 YHA refers to young people as those up to the age of 26. They remain a key group and YHA commits to ensuring they have a safe and secure environment they can use when in need.

YHA welcomes people of all ages to use its services and therefore we acknowledge that we are likely to encounter adults that are at risk through our overnight accommodation or our day visitors. We may also find some adults, who are potentially at risk, working with us in some capacity.

YHA chooses to treat any concerns about Adults at Risk as it does a child safeguarding matter, in terms of how it internally reacts and manages concerns. Our teams are encouraged to report their concerns through the same mechanisms.

In terms of a legal framework, the arrangements for adult protection for those over 18 are governed by the Care Act 2014 which stipulates that safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and,
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

When statutory agencies consider whether a safeguarding response to an adult is needed under the **Care Act 2014**, they are required to examine three critical components:

- the person's need of care and support
- their risk of, or experience of neglect or abuse;
- and their ability or inability to protect themselves.

These are not questions to which YHA is expected to supply an answer. Rather, it will seek advice from the local authority adult safeguarding team and will make a referral if necessary. It is also important to note that, even if the three critical components are not fully met, the adult may still benefit from a preventative approach.

Managing issues of consent to the sharing of information is a critical difference between safeguarding children and safeguarding those who are legally adults.

In work with adults there are a set of national principles that reflects its approach to information sharing including consent, capacity and confidentiality, they are:

- **Empowerment** – supporting the young adult to make their own decisions and informed consent
- **Protection** – support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs, including signposting to agencies that can help
- **Proportionality** – proportionate and least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working with their communities
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

Adults should be made aware that YHA's approach to safeguarding is to share information with those who need to know both within the organisation and externally if there is a concern that an adult is at risk. They should also be informed that sharing information externally normally only happens after discussion with the adult at risk and with their consent, but that there may be occasions when it has to happen without the adult's consent.

Where an adult who is capable of giving consent to information being passed on to a statutory safeguarding authority, declines to do so, the Regional Safety Manager will consider whether 'vital interests' are at stake under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018. For example, this may include situations where the adult is in imminent or serious danger, or another person is in danger (including a child of the adult or any other child or adult) or a crime has been or is about to be committed. If the Regional Safety Manager thinks that any of these circumstances may apply, a referral to the local authority should be made even without the consent of the adult.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves. The principles of the Act state that an adult at risk:

- has the right to make their own decisions and be assumed to have capacity unless proved otherwise
- must receive all appropriate help and support to make decisions
- has the right to make eccentric or unwise decisions (in the opinion of others), and that
- decisions made on behalf of a person who lacks mental capacity must be done in their best interests and be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

In addition, decisions are time and decision specific. This means that a person may be able to make a certain decision, but not others, at a particular point in time. Decision-making ability may fluctuate over time.

Therefore, YHA will also pass on information where it appears that the adult at risk may lack mental capacity to consent to this or may be being coerced to withhold consent. The local authority will then consider who can obtain a 'best interests' decision and how it can be made.

Procedures advise that the local authority will do this after full consideration of the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice and also of the extent of appropriate involvement from the family and/or carers of the adult at risk.

An assessment of their capacity should be made by a professional person qualified to do so. In making this assessment, consideration will be given by the local authority to seeking the support of an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate to support the individual who lacks capacity.

Any decision made on behalf of an adult at risk should weigh up and balance both the Mental Capacity Act and the Human Rights Act, to protect their best interests whilst respecting their rights.

YHA can consult with adult social care for advice and support if there is any doubt about what to do before making a referral out.

20. Appendix 11: Safeguarding code of conduct:

YHA requires all its employees to agree to codes of conduct which are issued via flow, in the safeguarding training, which is issued in March of each year. At present the agreed standards are as follows:

- I agree to never accept or give gifts to/from guests
- I agree to report over familiar behaviour from guests to my manager (e.g. giving gifts, asking for number, asking for a date etc.)
- I agree to never arrange to meet/socialise with guests/children outside of work
- I agree to not meet/socialise with guests/children on site when off duty
- I will remember that whilst I am in YHA it is my workplace and I represent the organisation, regardless of whether on shift or not. Please act as you would like our customers to act e.g. do not get drunk in the bar
- I agree to not take or post pictures of guests/children on personal or YHA social media accounts without written consent of a school or group leader.
- I will never use work computers for personal use
- I will never post details about YHA/colleagues/guests on personal social media accounts
- I will never send inappropriate messages/images to colleagues
- I will always respect the privacy of guests/children/colleagues (e.g. don't Google people/groups for background information without a good reason e.g. serious concerns); these also need to be documented in an incident report.
- I will avoid any unnecessary physical contact with guests/children/colleagues.
- I agree to not allow or encourage guests to access staff accommodation/restricted parts of the hostel
- I won't try to punish/discipline children or members of a group – concerns must be relayed to the group leader to resolve.
- I will only touch/move customer personal belongings if absolutely necessary and after gaining permission e.g. an example of an exception to this rule could include removing luggage from a room where a guest hasn't vacated and should have
- I will never have inappropriate personal conversations with or in front of guests/children whilst on duty
- I will never drink alcohol/take drugs on site (and won't arrive at work under the influence of any such substances)
- I will keep conduct towards colleagues professional and appropriate at all times
- I will avoid focussing excessive attention on any one particular guest/colleague (favouritism that could be misinterpreted)
- I will never offer to keep in contact with a customer e.g. on Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Any allegation made against colleagues/guests should be reported immediately to your manager.
- To protect guests and employees from false accusation, individual members of staff should generally not enter bedrooms when in use
- Should an emergency require access to a bedroom, especially at night, an employee of the same sex as that of the occupants of the room should knock on the door first. If this is not possible, employees of the opposite sex should get assistance from another employee or other adult before entering.
- I will only smoke/vape in the area designated by my hostel manager
- In case of only one employee being available to attend an alleged maintenance issue in a room (or other physical standards item), the employee should politely ask the guest to

vacate the room and wait in reception wherever reasonable to do so until the issue can be resolved

- When bedrooms are in use, employees must only enter unaccompanied in the case of medical emergency
- Employees who must enter bedrooms during the day for cleaning/maintenance purposes may access any room after ensuring that it is unoccupied.