Vision 4 Youth's Serious Incident Reporting Policy

1. Why this policy exists

This policy covers serious incident reporting to the charity regulator, the Charity Commission ("the commission"), as it relates to Vision 4 Youth (V4Y). This policy provides V4Y with an effective and easy to follow process that closely follows the commission's guidance.

2. Background

The commission states that it is vital that charities report serious incidents to the regulator. The commission also states that data on serious incident reporting allows it to better understand risks facing the sector and take appropriate action.

The commission recognises the challenging nature of the work undertaken and the difficult context faced by many charities. It understands that serious incidents will happen, but it is the commission's role to ensure that trustees comply with their legal duties and that the charity manages the incident responsibly. The commission will be looking for assurance that the charity has taken steps to limit the immediate impact of any serious incidents that may occur and, where possible, prevent it from happening again.

The commission acknowledges that many problems can be resolved by the trustees themselves, however, sometimes it needs to use its powers to protect a charity. Reporting also means the commission can identify whether other charities might be affected and can give better advice to all charities to help them protect themselves.

3. What is a serious incident?

The commission defines significant as 'significant in the context of your charity, taking account of its volunteers, operations, finances and / or reputation'; and defines a serious incident as an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- Harm to people who come into contact with our charity through our work
- Loss of our charity's money or assets.
- Damage to our charity's property (not currently relevant)
- Harm to our charity's work or reputation.

An act of discrimination against any person with a protected characteristic listed in the Equality Act 2010 will also be treated as a serious incident.

The main categories of reportable incidents set out by the commission are:

- Protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work.
- Financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering.
- Large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using the charity's funds.

- Other significant financial loss.
- Links to terrorism or extremism, including 'proscribed' (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze or kidnapping of staff.
- Other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches / losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect the charity.

4. Policy

Staff and volunteers must report all incidents, whether deemed 'serious' or not, to V4Y's Chairperson or another Trustee immediately. This will either be in writing using the V4Y Incident Report Form (accessed via https://vision4youth.org.uk/staff-info/), or if verbally reported, confirmed in writing immediately after notification.

This Trustee will inform the remaining Trustees of the incident within 24 hours and the Trustees will decide within 48 hours if the incident is deemed to be of a serious nature and complete a Serious Incident Reporting Form if applicable. All 'serious incidents' will be reported to the commission within 48 hours of the Trustees' decision to do so and to respond to any resulting requests for information within five working days.

5. What we will report

The list of incidents that we will report and the incidents that it is not necessary to report can be found vis the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752170/RSI_guidance_what_to_do_if_something_goes_wrong_Examples_table_deciding_what_to_report.pdf

This is not a definitive list of reportable incidents but indicates the type of incidents categorised as 'serious' and reportable and will act as a guide as to what should and should not be reported.

6. Who is responsible for reporting?

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the charity's trustees. All trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring their charity makes a report and does so in a timely manner.

All discussions and decisions taken will be formally recorded and then minuted at the next available board meeting along with any outcomes and further action taken.

Actions we will take in response to a serious incident

If there is a serious incident the trustees will:

- As soon as reasonably practicable prevent or minimise any further harm, loss or damage.
- Report it to the commission as a serious incident.
- Report it to the police (and / or other relevant agencies) if we suspect a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the charity is accountable to and other agencies such as the local authority designated officer (LADO) for safeguarding.
- Put in place a communication plan for volunteers, attendees, the public, the media and other stakeholders

- Review what happened and prevent it from happening again – this may include reviewing internal controls and procedures, internal or external investigation and / or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

7. How we will report

The Chairperson or another Trustee will report it to the Charity Commission using its online reporting form. To ensure that the relevant and appropriate information is captured at the time and reported consistently the Trustees will complete a Serious Incident Reporting Form, which will be attached to the original Incident Reporting Form. These forms are intended for internal use only as currently the online form cannot be saved or printed.

The charity is required as part of its annual return, to sign a declaration confirming there were no serious incidents during the financial year that should have been reported to the commission. If incidents did occur, but were not reported at the time, we will submit these before we file our charity's annual return, so that we can make the declaration and meet our legal reporting requirements.

8. Data Protection

No additional personal or third-party data should be provided to the commission unless an incident cannot be reported without you doing so. If you do need to provide personal data, you should limit this to the minimum amount necessary to submit your report.

Date policy reviewed: May 2025