**Vision 4 Youth Safeguarding Children and Young Adults Policy**

**Terms of Reference**

- A child is defined as a young person under 18 years of age and a young adult is defined as a person between the age of 18 to 25 years.
- Vision 4 Youth (V4Y)
- The term 'staff' or 'volunteer' define both paid and voluntary staff working directly with young people on a service delivered by V4Y.
- This document should be used in conjunction with V4Ys other policy documents.

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

Child and young adults protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children and young adults who are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm. Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and young adults and promote their welfare. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults – and in particular protecting them from significant harm – depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. Individual children and young adults and those at greatest risk of social exclusion, will need co-ordinated help from health, education social care and quite possibly the voluntary sector and other agencies, including youth justice services. For those children or young adults who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, joint working is essential, to safeguard and promote welfare of the children and young adults and where necessary to help bring to justice the perpetrators of crime.

**All agencies and professionals should:**

- Be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
- Be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children or young adults;
- Share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the child's or young adult's needs and circumstances;
- Contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's or young adult's welfare;
- Take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child or young adult against specific plans; and
- Work co-operatively with parents and carers unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the child's or young adult's safety.

**Recruitment**

The recruitment of paid staff or volunteers will be carried out according to a written procedure. This procedure will include the following:

- Completion of an application form
- Confirmation of identity
- Satisfactory references
- Undergoing an interview
- Obtaining a satisfactory DBS check

**Training Provision**

All staff and volunteers will be required to attend and pass an online introduction to Safeguarding training session.

All staff and volunteers will be given electronic copies of V4Y's policies and procedures, then required to sign a document to state they have read and understood the documentation.

V4Y will also seek to support staff and volunteers with additional training opportunities relevant to the service or project they are supporting.

**Staff Awareness**

All staff and volunteers will be made aware of this policy as part of their initial induction process and there will be regular briefings and updates for all staff. Staff, volunteers and trustees are expected to attend appropriate training courses annually.

**Reviewing the Policy and Procedure**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually and in line with legislative changes and guidance, this will include checking telephone numbers, accuracy of professional contacts, and any updates required by a change in local or national policy.

**Staff/Volunteer Code of Conduct**

All staff, volunteers and trustees will be provided with a code of conduct in the form of staff and volunteer policies. These policies are specific to the delivery of the project they are supporting and in addition to the policies and procedures outlined in this safeguarding document.

The staff and volunteer policies and this safeguarding document includes:

- A statement that outlines how children and young people and staff/partners/ volunteers should relate to each other. This should take account of the V4Ys commitment to safeguarding children and young adults, i.e. in relation to bullying, discrimination, violence, aggression, abusive behaviour and language.
- What the procedures and guidelines are concerning e.g. whether children and young adults are free to leave an activity or organisation when they wish.
- Whether children and young adults should be picked up by parents or carers at the end of a session or are free to leave on their own.
- A statement in relation to appropriate staffing ratios for the activities V4Y participates in.
- A statement on V4Ys policy regarding smoking.
- The involvement of parents or carers.
- Details of what will happen (i.e. consequences) in the event that a child or young adults has behaved inappropriately in accordance to the code of conduct.
- A statement and details in relation to cases when restraint is allowed to be used.
- A statement in relation to the appropriate staffing levels for the opening and closing of the club and the transporting of young people.
- A statement and procedures in relation to activities and residential' undertaken outside the normal project buildings.
- Details of the complaints procedure.

In addition to this all staff/volunteers should not:

- Be alone with young people unless agreed with the appropriate professional and prior parent/carer consent.
- Unlock and lock up premises without another adult present.

- Transport young people in a car or minibus unless agreed with the appropriate professional and prior parental//carer consent.
- Invite young people into their own home.
- Make inappropriate contact with young people i.e. develop relationships outside the club setting.
- Leave young people unattended.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to the member of staff/volunteer.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had the relevant DBS checks.
- Show favouritism to young people within the organisation.
- Use inappropriate language and or behaviour.

**Physical contact with young people:**
Staff/volunteers should avoid physical contact with young people unless in circumstances where the contact is obvious, transparent and visible to other staff/volunteers. For example a hug when a young person is in distress is acceptable but staff/volunteer/partners should ensure it is witnessed by colleagues. Where physical contact is necessary as part of any activity i.e. coaching or instructing in sports actions must be explained to the young person what physical contact will be required so that no action can be misunderstood on their part.

**Lone working with a young person:**
A situation may arise when a young person approaches you whilst you are alone, to talk to you in confidence about an issue or case of abuse. In such cases to ask another staff member to join you may put the young person off disclosing information.

Another colleague MUST however be informed that this happening and if it is inappropriate to leave the door open you must ask them to check on you regularly and inform the young person that this will take place.

In the instances where project work requires a staff member to be alone with a young person, the following guidelines must be followed:
The meeting to take place in a public place
The meeting would be pre-agreed with consent from the parent/carer and/or the referring party (eg. school, GP surgery)
The meeting would be recorded in a diary shared with the admin team
Safeguarding measures should be adhered to that take into account the safety of both the young person and the staff member.

**Transporting young people:**
In certain circumstances it may be safer to transport a young person home than they walk home alone. In such cases prior arrangement must be made with the appropriate professional and the young person's parent or guardian and if possible another adult should be present in the vehicle.

**Definitions of Abuse**
It is recommended that all staff/volunteers make themselves aware of the following definitions and remain alert to any potential indications or signs of abuse.

**Abuse:** "An act, or failure to act, by the person responsible for the care of the child. It may involve cruelty, exploitation or neglect."

The following definitions are taken from the NSPCC website https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/

**Bullying and Cyberbullying:** Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Cyberbullying is bullying

that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited they're given things, like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship. This is called grooming. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They're moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.
Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them. Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship could be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be used to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.

**Child Trafficking:** Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Children are trafficked for:

- sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking and childcare
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms or moving drugs.

**Criminal Exploitation and Gangs:** Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. The word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.

- **Peer group** A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.
- **Street gang** "Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."
- **Organised criminal gangs** "A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation."

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

**Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended
- both men and women can be abused or abusers.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting', but has many other names.

**Grooming:** Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

**Neglect:** Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing.

**Non-recent Abuse:** Non-recent child abuse, sometimes called historical abuse, is when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18. Sometimes adults who were abused in childhood blame themselves or are made to feel it's their fault. But this is never the case: there's no excuse for abuse.

**Online Abuse:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including:

- social media
- text messages and messaging apps
- emails
- online chats
- online gaming
- live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online.

**Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes:

- hitting with hands or objects
- slapping and punching
- kicking
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning and scalding
- biting and scratching
- breaking bones
- drowning.

It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

**Sexual Abuse:** When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced or tricked into sexual activities. They might not understand that what's happening is abuse or that it's wrong. And they might be afraid to tell someone. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online.
It's never a child's fault they were sexually abused – it's important to make sure children know this.

**Reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations**

What to do if you have concerns about a child or young adult. You may have concerns about a child or young adult because of something you have seen or heard, or a child or young adult may choose to disclose something to you.

**If staff/volunteers suspect a young person is or has been abused:** Discuss your concerns with the V4Y Safeguarding Officer. They will also act as the 'child or young adult protection specialist' for your project.

Your 'child or young adult protection specialist' will offer advice regarding the next stage of the process. This will be either contacting the relevant local authority immediately or logging the concerns. The choice will be determined by the nature of the abuse i.e. whether it is significant harm.

Ensure you record any facts which support the suspicion and pass the appropriate information on to the 'child or young adult protection specialist'.

If you are unable to follow these procedures due to not being able to contact the 'child protection specialist' it is essential that you seek advice from the Children's Services or Adult Social Care immediately or in emergency dial 999 for the Police.

**If a young person is about to disclose abuse:** If a young person discloses abuse whilst activities are being provided, provision needs to be made for the member of staff to be able to talk to the young person. Suitable levels of supervision must be maintained for the other young people whilst this occurs.

Explain clearly 'Confidentiality'. You have the legal responsibility to notify the appropriate 'child or young adult protection specialist' or Children's Services or Adult Social Care in the event of a disclosure. Never promise that the information will remain a secret.

Allow the young person to speak, never interrupt. Even if you have an idea about the context of the sentence, never put words into the mouth of the young person or finish the sentence. However difficult this may be, in the eye of the law the information needs to come direct from the young person.

Never question the young person, ask leading questions or make assumptions. Only the exact words that the young person uses and facts must be noted.

Try to alleviate feelings of guilt and isolation, remain non-judgemental, offer support and most importantly listen.

**Helpful things to say**

- I take what you are saying seriously.
- I am pleased you have told me. Thank you for telling me.
- It isn't your fault and you are not to blame at all.
- I am sorry that happened to you.
- I will help you.

**Things not to say**

- Why didn't you say something before?
- I really can't believe it.
- Are you sure this is what happened?
- Why? Where? When? Who? What? How?
- Don't make false promises to the young person - like confidentiality - be honest now, since any lies will be a further betrayal and abuse.
- Never say 'I'm shocked'. 'Make sure you don't tell anyone else'.

**Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer initially to Hart District Councils Safeguarding Team and/or complete online form. Please refer to the contact details included within this document.**

**What to do after a disclosure:** All information relating to an incident of child abuse is strictly confidential. It should only be discussed with:

- Your organisation's child or young adults' protection specialist
- The relevant local authorities Children's Services or Adult Social Care
- The Police

If a disclosure reveals a young person is in danger or at imminent risk of significant harm telephone the Children's Services, Adult Social Care or the Police with your concerns immediately.

Make notes – Ideally this should be whilst the young person is disclosing information to you, however it is not always practical to do so. Stopping a young person to make notes may deter the young person from disclosing further information. Therefore, it is important that once a disclosure has been made you immediately record details of the disclosure including the following:

- Name of the young person
- Parent / Carer's Details
- The Child or Young Adults' Address
- Relevant Phone Numbers
- What is said to have happened or what has seen to have happened
- When it occurred
- Who else was there?
- What was said or done by those involved
- Whether there is any actual evidence e.g. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour
- Who has been told about it?
- Who was concerned?
- Was the young person able to say what happened?
- Whether the parents have been advised.
- Actions taken
- You must sign and date the record ensuring it is legible.

The written report needs to be sent to Children's Services or Adult Social Care within 48 hours. Keep your own copy ensuring it is sealed, marked confidential and stored in a safe and lockable place.

Parental/carer permission should ideally be immediately obtained before the report is submitted to the Children's Services, Adult Social Care or the police. The child's parents/carers should be advised of the process to be followed and provided with support during this process. BUT – This only applies in cases where the allegation is NOT against the parent or carer, or in cases where contacting them will NOT bring evidence in court into disrepute or put the young person at further risk. (E.g. cases involving another family member or friend of family)

If the child or young person's parent or carer refuses a referral you MUST legally still contact the appropriate agencies and submit the report.

Throughout this process ensure you seek supervision and support from your clubs 'child or young adult protection specialist'.

Dealing with child abuse can be one of the most difficult and distressing areas of working with young people.

Do not underestimate how it may make you feel.

**Allegations made against staff and volunteers**

If an allegation is made, or suspicions occur regarding anyone working with young people you must:

- Immediately report to the appropriate professional.
- Notify the Child Protection or Young Adult Specialist.

If the allegations relate to the person in charge of child protection you should report to the next most senior person.

V4Y will then put into place the following procedure:

- Make a detailed factual record of the allegation and action taken.
- Consider suspending the person involved, taking into account the risks to other young people and to the staff/volunteer involved.
- Contact the parents of the young person, advise them of the process to be followed and provide appropriate support.
- Advise the relevant external bodies.
- Ensure that all information relating to the allegation remains confidential.'

**The following procedure should be applied in all situations where it is alleged that a person who works with children has:**

- Behaved in a way which has harmed a child or young adult, or may have harmed a child or young adult;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or young adult;
- Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Behaved towards a child or young adult in a way which indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

The allegations may relate to the person's behaviour at work, at home or in another setting. The Safeguarding Officer will discuss the matter to determine what steps should be taken and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made.

The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded, whether a referral to the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO) is required and/or whether disciplinary action is appropriate. Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to the LADO and the Police, but common sense and judgement must be applied in reaching a decision about what action to take. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child or young adult is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm, the decision must be taken and immediately refer the matter to the LADO and ask for a meeting to be convened straight away. Some allegations may be less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a police investigation or enquiries by the LADO. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are followed up and examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation. Consequently, the Child or Young Adult Protection Officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to come within the scope of this procedure so that he or she can consult Police and social care colleagues as appropriate. Where such allegations are made, consideration must be given to the following three strands: 1) The police investigation of a possible criminal offence; 2) Enquiries and assessment by Children's Services or Adult Social Care Services as to whether the child is need of protection or in need of services; 3) Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

**Implementing Control and Restraint**

V4Y do not advise staff or volunteers to implement control and restraint methods. In no cases should restraint be enforced upon a young person if they refuse to comply or as punishment.

However, it is recognised that in certain circumstances the implementation of control and restraint through 'reasonable force' may be warranted if not doing so would result in injury to the young person, others or cause significant damage to property.

In cases when restraint may be necessary it is important that the young person is restrained for the shortest period necessary to bring the situation to control. The incident should also be recorded detailing the facts, behaviour, methods used, witnesses and any other relevant information.

**Safeguarding Young People through the Internet**
Please refer to V4Y's Social Media Policy.

**Who to Contact**

Vision 4 Youth Safeguarding Officer
Name **Abby Roper**
Contact No **07423 336516**

| Lead | Role | Job Title | Email Contact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Senior Responsible Officer | Oversees safeguarding processes within Local Authority | Head of Community Services | Kirsty.Jenkins@hart.gov.uk |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer | The people to report safeguarding issues to | Community Safety Manager | safeguarding@communitysafetynh.org |
| Safeguarding Champions | The people to go to for safeguarding advice | | Kirsty.Jenkins@hart.gov.uk<br>Andrew.Vallance@hart.gov.uk<br>John.Elson@hart.gov.uk |
| General Enquiries Or Advice | Any other queries or to send referral forms to | | safeguarding@communitysafetynh.org |

Relevant Local Authority Children's Services
Name**.**

**Hampshire County Council**
**Children and Young People aged under 18**

Contact Nos

During office hours (8.30am – 5:00pm) - you should contact Children's Services: 0300 555 1384.
At all other times you should contact the out-of-hours Service: 0300 555 1373

**Young Adults aged 18 – 25 years.**
During Office hours you should contact Adult Social Care: 0300 555 1386.

**To report a concern about an adult working with Children & Young Adults,** contact the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) via child.protection@hants.gov.uk or follow this link to submit an Initial Enquiry Form: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations

At all other times for all young people aged up to 25 years you should contact the out-of-hours Service: 0300 555 1373

**For all emergency situations call 999.**

Local Community Police officer

Contact No

**In an emergency please telephone 999**

For all other calls to the police in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland please telephone 101

Please use the following link to access more details of the Hampshire Safeguarding procedures: www.hipsprocedures.org.uk

*Date this policy was reviewed: 07.2026*

**Appendix – Copy of the Safeguarding Flow Chart displayed in all premises where V4Y operates youth clubs and services**

**Safeguarding Flow Chart**

What to do if someone discloses something to you that you are concerned about

- Ensure the young person is protected from any immediate risk/danger
- Alert your Team Leader and/or Abby (our Safeguarding Officer) to the situation
- Pass on all information you have to your Team Leader and/or Abby
- Be supportive to the young person – do not ask questions that either of you feel uncomfortable about, just listen if they are willing to talk but do make notes of what you're told
- Once an investigating agency is involved, co-operate with them and work closely with their investigation as directed.

**If something has been disclosed to you and you are not sure what to do or whether it poses as a safeguarding issue – speak to your Team Leader or Abby for advice.**

**Contact Details**
V4Y Safeguarding Officer
Name **Abby Roper (Development Manager)**
Contact No **07423 336516**

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At all other times for all young people aged up to 25 years you should contact the out-of-hours Service: 0300 555 1373

**Police**
Contact No: **In an emergency please telephone 999**

For non-emergency situations please telephone 101