

Safeguarding Policy

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Policy Lead: Group Safeguarding Lead

Trustee Committee Responsible: Governance & People

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1. Policy Statement, Purpose and Scope

Policy Statement

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to creating and maintaining a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk who access our services, work with us, volunteer with us or encounter our organisation.

This Policy outlines the Charity's commitment to safeguarding Children, Young People, and Adults at Risk ("CYP/AAR"), ensuring they are protected from harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect, as well as promoting best practice.

The term "Adults at Risk" relates to adults who meet the safeguarding criteria set out in the Care Act 2014. For children and young people, this policy reflects the definitions and safeguarding principles set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

The safety, welfare and rights of all CYP/AAR who access YMCA Chiltern Group services are central to our safeguarding approach. We recognise that each person's circumstances, needs and vulnerabilities are unique, and safeguarding decisions will always be made with the individual's best interests, safety, dignity and wellbeing at the forefront.

Where a child, young person or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, YMCA Chiltern Group will take prompt and appropriate action in line with legislation, statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding means protecting CYP/AAR from abuse and harm, preventing impairment of their health, wellbeing and development, and taking action to enable individuals to live safely and free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding includes prevention, early identification, risk management, information sharing, partnership working and responding effectively when concerns arise.



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE

We believe that every individual has the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination and harm, regardless of their age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, faith or belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

YMCA Chiltern Group adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. All safeguarding concerns will be taken seriously, responded to promptly and managed in accordance with legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding partnership procedures and regulatory requirements.

All colleagues have a personal responsibility to act when they have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person or adult at risk.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish YMCA Chiltern Group's safeguarding commitment and expectations;
- provide a consistent framework for safeguarding practice across all services;
- outline the responsibilities of colleagues, volunteers, managers, trustees and partner organisations;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised, recorded, reported and responded to appropriately;
- promote a culture of prevention, early intervention and continuous learning;
- ensure compliance with current legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals and organisations within the scope set out in **Appendix 1: Policy Applicability**.

This policy applies across every YMCA Chiltern Group service operating throughout Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Whilst local safeguarding partnership arrangements may differ, the principles and expectations within this policy apply equally across all YMCA Chiltern Group services.

Throughout this policy, the term "colleague" is used to refer to all individuals working with, representing or supporting YMCA Chiltern Group, including employees, volunteers, contractors, and any other person acting on behalf of YMCA Chiltern Group. The Group Partner Statement is set out in **Appendix 2: Partner Organisation Statement**.

2. Safeguarding Principles

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to delivering services where safeguarding is embedded within everyday practice.

To achieve this, we will:

- place the safety and wellbeing of CYP/AAR at the centre of all decision making;
- promote a culture where safeguarding is understood as everyone's responsibility;
- listen to and consider the wishes, feelings and lived experiences of CYP/AAR;
- promote equality, dignity, inclusion and respect;
- work in partnership with families, carers and statutory agencies wherever appropriate;
- take a trauma-informed and person-centred approach;
- encourage professional curiosity when concerns arise;
- maintain robust safeguarding governance and oversight;

- learn from safeguarding incidents, audits, reviews and serious case learning.

Safeguarding is not solely about responding to abuse. It includes preventing harm, identifying vulnerability, promoting welfare, reducing risk and enabling individuals to thrive.

All colleagues are expected to act immediately where safeguarding concerns arise. Delays in reporting concerns are unacceptable unless there is an immediate operational reason which must be clearly documented.

The Charity endeavours to safeguard CYP/AAR by:

- taking steps to ensure CYP/AAR understand how to raise a concern;
- operating with a comprehensive safeguarding strategy;
- operating safe recruitment procedures to deter unsuitable people from applying for jobs;
- ensuring that positions are risk assessed to identify the levels of Disclosure and Barring Service checking required as well as addressing any further guidance provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- ensuring that it has procedures and systems in place to secure information held by those individuals covered by the scope of this Policy;
- providing a comprehensive portfolio of policies and procedures which cover those listed under the scope of this Policy;
- operating a safeguarding allegations and complaints procedure to ensure that there is a consistent and effective response to any concerns, allegations or disclosures of abuse;
- providing beneficiaries with a comprehensive complaints' procedure;
- supporting staff in reporting and investigating incidents of abuse;
- enabling all those covered under this Policy to follow best practice in preventing abuse from occurring within the Charity;
- ensuring staff have a knowledge and understanding about CYP/AAR protection and that they receive appropriate training on adhering to these procedures;
- prominently displaying contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) (DSL(s)) and referral methods at all premises and on the intranet in such a way to be accessible to CYP/AAR, colleagues and partners;
- establishing multi-agency relationships and approaches to counteracting abuse.

Colleagues have a responsibility to:

- Ensure beneficiaries, contractors and designated partnership workers adhere to this Policy
- Inform Human Resources of any new offences, charges, cautions, reprimands or warnings against them. Failure to do so may result in suspension from duties while an investigation is completed.
- Maintain professional boundaries and always respect the dignity of all beneficiaries
- Sign up to Online DBS service, within the required timeframe

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. ***Nothing within this policy prevents any colleague from making a direct safeguarding referral where they believe somebody is at immediate risk of harm.***

Every colleague, volunteer and person working on behalf of YMCA Chiltern Group must:

- safeguard CYP/AAR;

- remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm;
- report concerns immediately;
- maintain professional curiosity;
- record concerns accurately and objectively;
- complete safeguarding training relevant to their role;
- always maintain professional boundaries;
- understand and follow this policy;
- cooperate with safeguarding investigations and statutory agencies;
- contribute to a positive safeguarding culture.

Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- safeguarding procedures are implemented within their service;
- colleagues receive appropriate supervision;
- safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately;
- safer recruitment processes are followed;
- safeguarding risks are regularly assessed;
- safeguarding remains a standing agenda item within team meetings.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are responsible for:

- providing safeguarding advice;
- reviewing safeguarding concerns;
- making or overseeing statutory referrals;
- maintaining safeguarding records;
- supporting colleagues managing safeguarding concerns;
- liaising with Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Police, LADO, Ofsted and other safeguarding partners;
- contributing to safeguarding quality assurance.

The Charity reserves the right to ask for someone to complete a new Disclosure and Barring Service Check as appropriate. If a colleague is accused or suspected of abuse or neglect, or other inappropriate behaviour, this will be investigated, and disciplinary action will be taken if appropriate. The Charity reserves the right to instigate disciplinary procedures if a colleague fails to report an incident of abuse or neglect, or professional misconduct.

Relationships with beneficiaries:

Colleagues must maintain a professional relationship with beneficiaries at all times. It is essential that colleagues do not form a sexual or close personal relationship with Beneficiaries or Residents of the YMCA. To allow relationships to develop beyond the boundaries of a professional one could be an abuse of colleagues' relationship with the Beneficiary. A breach of professional boundaries may lead to disciplinary action being taken and in serious instances could lead to dismissal.

YMCA Chiltern Group has the following expectations of all colleagues:

- a. Colleagues must not initiate or respond to any unprofessional physical contact towards or from Beneficiaries. This includes contact that may be perceived as sexual, that may cause harm or reasonably be perceived as threatening.

- b. Colleagues must not disclose any personal information to Beneficiaries relating to themselves or relating to other colleagues including personal phone numbers or addresses. Colleagues should not take a Beneficiary into their own home.
- c. Colleagues must not lend or make personal gifts to a Beneficiary. Where YMCA Chiltern Group might provide resources or vouchers to beneficiaries; colleagues may only do so within the confines of their delegated authority making it clear that the gift or voucher is given on behalf of the Charity.
- d. Colleagues must not borrow money or property from a Beneficiary or buy from or sell property to a Beneficiary.
- e. Colleagues must not assist any Beneficiary outside of normal hours without the prior consent of their Line Manager.
- f. Colleagues must respect the dignity, independence, and the rights of the Beneficiary to take risks and to make informed choices regarding their own care and welfare.
- g. In line with our Code of Conduct Policy colleagues shall behave and conduct themselves with a high standard of integrity, commitment, and courtesy. And must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Charity into disrepute.

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that individuals working with CYP/AAR are suitable to undertake their roles. Safeguarding considerations are embedded throughout recruitment, selection, vetting, induction and ongoing supervision processes.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises that colleagues may sometimes need to raise concerns about safeguarding practice, decisions or actions taken by others. Colleagues will be supported to raise concerns openly and without fear of disadvantage. Concerns should be escalated through management structures, Human Resources, or the Whistleblowing Policy where appropriate.

4. Central Safeguarding Team (CST)

YMCA Chiltern Group has a Central Safeguarding Team (CST) which provides strategic safeguarding leadership, professional advice and quality assurance across all YMCA Chiltern Group services operating throughout Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire.

The Central Safeguarding Team consists of:

- Associate Director – Family Support Services
- Safeguarding Quality and Practice Manager
- Safeguarding Administrator

The Central Safeguarding Team provides:

- safeguarding advice;
- consultation on complex safeguarding cases;
- quality assurance;
- policy development;
- oversight of serious safeguarding incidents;
- safeguarding practice reviews;
- support with statutory notifications and referrals;
- safeguarding updates following statutory guidance reviews;
- safeguarding governance reporting

The Central Safeguarding Team supports services but does not replace local safeguarding responsibilities. Managers and Designated Safeguarding Leads remain responsible for safeguarding within their own services.

5. Governance

The Trustee Board retains accountability for safeguarding within YMCA Chiltern Group.

The Board will:

- receive safeguarding assurance;
- monitor safeguarding performance;
- review safeguarding risks;
- promote a culture of continuous improvement.

A nominated Trustee will maintain strategic oversight of safeguarding.

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring appropriate safeguarding arrangements are implemented throughout the organisation.

For services regulated under the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023, the Chief Executive Officer, Guy Foxell, is the organisation's Nominated Individual. Where an incident meets the threshold for a Regulation 27 notification, this must be escalated immediately in accordance with Section 15 of this policy.

YMCA Chiltern Group safeguarding arrangements are informed by, and must be read alongside legislation, statutory guidance and regulatory requirements, including:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Female Genital Mutilation 2003
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023
- Relevant Ofsted regulations, inspection frameworks and statutory guidance
- Relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures and protocols

This list is not exhaustive.

6. Recognising Abuse

Abuse can occur anywhere and may be perpetrated by adults or children.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises that children and young people can also harm other children and young people. Colleagues must remain alert to peer-on-peer abuse, including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, online harm and harmful sexual behaviour.

All colleagues must remain alert to signs of:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- domestic abuse;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- financial abuse;
- discriminatory abuse;
- organisational abuse;
- modern slavery;
- self-neglect;
- online abuse;
- radicalisation;
- exploitation.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises that abuse increasingly occurs outside traditional family environments. Colleagues must understand and respond to contextual safeguarding risks; additional information can be located in Section 10 of this policy.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a form of child abuse and a serious safeguarding concern. FGM involves procedures where the female genital organs are deliberately cut, injured or altered for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in the UK and can cause significant physical, emotional and psychological harm.

Indicators that someone may be at risk of FGM may include:

- a child or young person talking about a planned trip abroad;
- references to a “special procedure”, “ceremony”, or “becoming a woman”;
- family or community pressure relating to expectations around FGM;
- concerns raised by the individual, family member, friend or professional;
- changes in behaviour, anxiety or fear linked to a possible procedure.

Where a colleague becomes aware that a girl under the age of 18 has disclosed that FGM has been carried out on her, the colleague must follow the organisation’s safeguarding procedures immediately and seek advice from the DSL or CST regarding any applicable mandatory reporting requirements. Concerns that a child may be at risk of FGM must also be referred through the appropriate safeguarding pathway immediately, without delay.

Recognising abuse requires professional curiosity. Colleagues should respectfully explore concerns, consider patterns of behaviour and remain alert to disguised compliance or cumulative harm.

7. Responding to Concerns

Everyone has a responsibility to respond to safeguarding concerns immediately.

Where a colleague becomes aware of a safeguarding concern they must:

1. ensure the immediate safety of the individual where possible;
2. listen carefully without judgement;
3. reassure appropriately without promising confidentiality;
4. avoid asking leading questions;
5. make a clear factual record as soon as possible on the safeguarding recording platform used within the service;
6. report the concern immediately to the appropriate manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead;
7. complete the required safeguarding record before the end of the working day and no later than 24 hours after the concern becomes known.

Where there is immediate risk of significant harm, colleagues must contact emergency services without delay before informing a Designated Safeguarding Lead where necessary.

All safeguarding records must be:

- factual;
- accurate;
- contemporaneous;
- objective;
- securely stored;
- shared only with those who have a legitimate safeguarding need to know.

Where a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or manager is unavailable, colleagues must not delay acting where they believe a CYP/AAR is at risk of significant harm. Colleagues should make a direct referral to the appropriate local authority Children's Social Care or Adult Social Care Team or contact the police where there is an immediate risk.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises that timely information sharing is essential to safeguarding and will share information lawfully, proportionately and in accordance with statutory guidance where this is necessary to protect CYP/AAR.

A complaint may also constitute a safeguarding concern. Where information received through a complaints process indicates potential abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, safeguarding procedures take precedence and must be initiated without delay.

Safeguarding Response and Escalation Flowcharts

One YMCA maintains service-specific Safeguarding Response and Escalation Flowcharts to support colleagues and volunteers to respond promptly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns. These flowcharts provide clear information about the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for each service area, the appropriate internal reporting routes and the arrangements for seeking advice, support and escalation where required. They are designated to complement this policy and the relevant service-specific safeguarding procedures.

The relevant service-specific flowcharts are available:

- within the staff area for each service; and
- on the YMCA Chiltern Group intranet page under “Safeguarding”

Service specific flowcharts will be reviewed regularly and updated when there are changes to DSL arrangements, referral pathways, organisational structures or relevant safeguarding requirements.

Where a concern involves the service DSL, or a colleague is unable to access the appropriate safeguarding route, the concern must be escalated to the next level identified within the relevant flowchart or to the organisational safeguarding lead. Concerns must not be delayed because the usual DSL is unavailable.

If a colleague believes that appropriate action has not been taken, they have a professional responsibility to escalate their concern through management, the Central Safeguarding Team or directly to the relevant statutory safeguarding agency in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

Where a safeguarding concern requires referral to statutory services, colleagues should follow the relevant local authority safeguarding referral arrangements. The appropriate contact details for Children’s Social Care and Adult Social Care are set out below by local authority area.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Concerns

<https://www.ceop.police.uk>

Hertfordshire

- Children and Young People – 0300 123 4043
- Adults at risk – 0300 123 4042
- Both contact numbers available out of hours

Bedford Borough

- Children and young people – 01234 718 700
- Adults at risk – by calling 01234 276 222
- Out of hours - 0300 300 8123

Central Bedfordshire

- Children and young people – call 0300 300 8585
- Adults at risk – call 0300 300 8000
- Out of hours – 0300 300 8123

Buckinghamshire

- Children and young people – 01296 383 962
- Adults at risk – 01926 383 204
- Out of hours – 0800 999 7677

Oxfordshire

Social Care services for Oxfordshire are managed by Oxfordshire County Council, rather than the district council.

- Phone: 0345 050 7666
- Out of hours - 0800 833 408

8. Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends upon timely, lawful and proportionate information sharing.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises that concerns about sharing information must never delay action where a child, young person or adult at risk may be at risk of abuse.

Colleagues must:

- share information where it is necessary to safeguard an individual;
- only share information with those who have a legitimate safeguarding need to know;
- ensure information shared is relevant, accurate, necessary and proportionate;
- record what information has been shared, with whom and why;
- comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Consent should normally be sought before sharing information unless:

- seeking consent would increase the risk of harm;
- it would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime;
- a child or adult at risk lacks capacity to consent;
- there is another legal basis to share information.

Where there is uncertainty, colleagues should seek advice from their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Central Safeguarding Team. However, uncertainty must never prevent action where there is an immediate safeguarding risk.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR should not be used as a reason to avoid sharing safeguarding information where there is a lawful basis to do so.

9. Allegations and Concerns About Adults Working with Children, Young People or Adults at Risk

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to ensuring that all allegations, concerns or information relating to adults who work with, volunteer with, or represent the organisation are taken seriously and managed promptly, fairly and in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

An allegation or concern must be reported immediately where a colleague, volunteer, contractor, or any person acting on behalf of YMCA Chiltern Group is alleged to have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a CYP/AAR;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a CYP/AAR;
- behaved towards a CYP/AAR in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved in a way that may indicate they are unsuitable to work with CYP/AAR, including concerns arising from behaviour outside of work.

All concerns must be reported immediately to the relevant Line Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Central Safeguarding Team (CST). Human Resources must also be informed where the concern relates to an employee or worker.

Colleagues must not investigate allegations themselves. The role of YMCA Chiltern Group is to ensure concerns are recognised, reported, recorded and appropriately escalated. Decisions regarding investigations, referrals and safeguarding actions must be made by Human Resources, the appropriate safeguarding leads and statutory agencies.

Concerns relating to children and young people

Where an allegation relates to an adult who works with or has contact with children or young people, YMCA Chiltern Group will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the concern meets, or may meet, the threshold for LADO involvement.

The LADO will be involved where concerns relate to an adult who may have:

- harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- committed, or may have committed, a criminal offence against a child;
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved in a way that raises concerns about their suitability to work with children.

Where required, YMCA Chiltern Group will also make referrals to Children's Social Care, Police, Ofsted, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or other relevant safeguarding partners.

Concerns relating to adults at risk

Where an allegation relates to an adult working with or supporting adults at risk, YMCA Chiltern Group will manage the concern through appropriate adult safeguarding procedures.

This may include referral to Adult Social Care, Police, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), regulatory bodies or other safeguarding partners where thresholds are met.

Safeguarding adults' concerns will be managed in accordance with the Care Act 2014, the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal, and relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Recording, confidentiality and support

All allegations and concerns regarding those working with CYP/AAR must be recorded accurately, factually and without delay. Records must include the nature of the concern, actions taken, decisions made, advice received and the rationale for those decisions.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding information-sharing guidance.

YMCA Chiltern Group will ensure appropriate support is offered to all individuals involved, while maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of safeguarding processes.

10. Children Missing, Exploitation, County Lines and Cuckooing

Children and Young people who go missing from home, education or care may be at increased risk of abuse and exploitation.

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises the links between children missing from services and:

- child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- child criminal exploitation (CCE);
- county lines;
- trafficking;
- modern slavery;
- online grooming;
- serious violence;
- radicalisation

Colleagues must remain professionally curious where children and young people:

- regularly go missing;
- have unexplained money, gifts or expensive items;
- associate with significantly older individuals;
- frequently stay away from home;
- use multiple mobile phones;
- show sudden behavioural changes;
- appear fearful, withdrawn or controlled.

YMCA Chiltern Group also recognises cuckooing as a form of criminal exploitation where criminals take over the home of a vulnerable child or adult to facilitate criminal activity, including drug supply, violence, storing weapons or exploitation.

Any suspicion of exploitation, county lines or cuckooing must be treated as a safeguarding concern and reported immediately using safeguarding procedures.

The following links provide local guidance and information for professionals who have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of, or experiencing, exploitation. They offer area specific advice on recognising concerns, accessing support and reporting or referring concerns to the relevant local safeguarding services.

Hertfordshire – [Professionals – report a concern about a child or young person | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

[Herts Exploitation Referral](#) this completed form must be submitted to

Exploitation@herts.police.uk from 9th November 2026

Buckinghamshire – [Reporting concerns and getting help | Family Information Service](#)

South Oxfordshire – [Child exploitation - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Bedfordshire – [Safeguarding Bedfordshire - Exploitation](#)

11. Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

Online safety forms part of YMCA Chiltern Group's safeguarding responsibilities.

Children, young people and adults increasingly experience harm online through abuse, exploitation and harmful content.

Colleagues must remain alert to:

- online grooming;
- exploitation;
- cyberbullying;
- coercive control;
- image-based abuse;
- radicalisation;
- misinformation and extremist content;
- online scams and fraud.

Colleagues must:

- use only YMCA Chiltern Group-approved communication systems when communicating with beneficiaries;
- never use personal devices or personal social media accounts to communicate with beneficiaries;
- never store images or confidential information on personal devices;
- report all online safeguarding concerns immediately.

Images or recordings of beneficiaries must only be taken using YMCA Chiltern Group equipment and with appropriate consent in accordance with organisational procedures.

12. PREVENT

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. Prevent forms part of safeguarding and aims to protect individuals from becoming involved in terrorism or supporting extremist ideologies.

Colleagues should remain alert to individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation through:

- social isolation;
- online influence;
- grooming;
- grievance;
- mental ill health;
- exploitation.

Indicators may include sudden changes in behaviour, language, beliefs, friendship groups or online activity.

Should you have a concern regarding a person potentially being radicalised or drawn into terrorism, you should first contact your Head of Service, or YMCA Chiltern Group's Senior Safeguarding Officer: Linzi Schier:

Linzi.schier@ymcacg.org (07776 488165) before a referral is made [National Prevent Referral Form](#).

Where there is an immediate terrorism risk, Police must be contacted immediately on 999.

13. Adults at Risk

YMCA Chiltern Group recognises its responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 to safeguard adults with care and support needs who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect. Abuse may include:

- physical;
- emotional or psychological;
- sexual;
- financial;
- discriminatory;
- neglect or acts of omission;
- organisational abuse;
- domestic abuse;
- modern slavery;
- self-neglect.

Safeguarding adults should be person-centred and outcome-focused, supporting individuals to make informed decisions wherever possible. Where an adult lacks capacity to make a specific safeguarding decision, colleagues must act in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, applying its statutory principles and seeking appropriate advice where required.

Safeguarding concerns relating to AAR must be managed in accordance with the six safeguarding principles: Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership and Accountability. These principles should

underpin all safeguarding practice, decision making and risk management. Any safeguarding concerns for an AAR must be reported immediately in line with this policy and the organisations safeguarding reporting procedures.

14. Record Keeping

Accurate and timely safeguarding records are essential to protecting CYP/AAR. All safeguarding records must be:

- factual;
- clear;
- objective;
- legible;
- recorded as soon as possible after notification/incident/event;
- dated and timed;
- stored securely.

Records must include:

- what was seen, heard, disclosed and/or discussed;
- who was present;
- actions taken;
- referrals made;
- decisions reached;
- rationale for those decisions;
- ongoing risk management.

Colleagues must record safeguarding concerns on the appropriate YMCA Chiltern Group recording system as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the concern becomes known. Safeguarding records will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements, organisational retention schedules and data protection legislation. Managers and the Central Safeguarding Team will undertake regular quality assurance of safeguarding records to ensure consistency, compliance and continuous improvement. Professional opinion must be clearly distinguished from fact. Records should identify what is known, what is suspected, and what actions have been taken to reduce risk.

15. Regulation 27 Notifications (Supported Accommodation)

For services regulated under the **Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023**, YMCA Chiltern Group has a legal duty to notify Ofsted of certain serious events affecting the safety or welfare of children.

The **Nominated Individual (NI)** for YMCA Chiltern Group is Guy Foxell, Chief Executive Officer for YMCA Chiltern Group.

Where any incident may meet the threshold for a Regulation 27 notification, **staff must immediately inform their Head of Service and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**. The Head of Service will work with the Central

Safeguarding Team and the Nominated Individual to ensure all statutory notifications and referrals are completed within the required timescales.

Examples of incidents requiring consideration of a Regulation 27 notification include (but are not limited to):

- the death of a child;
- a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) under Section 35 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 relating to a member of staff;
- a child who is involved in, subject to, or suspected of being involved in child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- a child who is involved in, subject to, or suspected of being involved in child criminal exploitation (CCE);
- a serious safeguarding incident affecting the welfare or protection of a child;
- any serious incident that may significantly affect the running of the service or the safety and wellbeing of children living there.

Regulation 27 notifications do not replace safeguarding referrals. Referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted or any other relevant agency must still be made where required.

YMCA Chiltern Group maintains a Serious Safeguarding Incident tracker to monitor notifications, identify themes, capture learning and strengthen safeguarding practice across the organisation.

16. Safeguarding Training

Colleagues

All colleagues must be trained to a suitable and appropriate level of Safeguarding proficiency, specifically relevant to their role, within two months of commencing work within YMCA Chiltern Group.

The minimum training requirement involves the required safeguarding modules on iHASCO, culminating in a certificate of completion.

Specific training for DSLs is essential and will be more rigorous and comply with the Local Safeguarding Board recommended levels; usually a half or full-day course. The Charity will keep a record of training undertaken, including due dates for refresher courses, but it is the responsibility of colleagues to ensure that they keep their safeguarding training up to date. DSLs are to complete service area specific Local Safeguarding Board-approved training (minimum full-day course) and refresh every 2 years.

Where training is not kept up to date, employees may face suspension from duties (except in extenuating circumstances) until they have met the basic threshold.

Volunteers

Volunteers are required to complete the minimum safeguarding training requirements before undertaking their first activity session. Safeguarding training must be refreshed every two years, or sooner where required due to changes in role, legislation or organisational requirements.

Where a volunteer's safeguarding training has expired, and has not been renewed within the required timeframe, the volunteer may be temporarily unable to undertake activities or duties involving beneficiaries until the required training has been completed, subject to any exceptional circumstances agreed by the organisation.

YMCA Chiltern Group Trustees

Where Trustees have completed Safeguarding training via another external provider and have provided copies of training certificates, this training can be recorded internally.

Alternatively, Trustees will be required to complete the relevant safeguarding modules on iHASCO. Trustee safeguarding training is required to be refreshed every 3 years.

17. Monitoring, Governance and Review

YMCA Chiltern Group is committed to continuous safeguarding improvement.

To ensure this policy remains effective we will:

- undertake regular safeguarding audits and quality assurance activity;
- monitor safeguarding concerns, referrals and outcomes;
- review serious safeguarding incidents and safeguarding practice reviews to identify organisational learning;
- monitor safeguarding training compliance;
- review safeguarding risks through governance and assurance processes;
- regularly review safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance to reflect changes in legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

The Central Safeguarding Team will provide safeguarding assurance reports to senior leaders and Trustees to support effective governance and oversight.

This policy will be formally reviewed annually, or sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- statutory guidance is updated;
- regulatory requirements change;
- learning from safeguarding incidents identifies improvements;
- organisational changes require policy revision.

18. Glossary of Terms

This glossary provides definitions of key safeguarding terms used throughout the YMCA Chiltern Group Safeguarding Policy. It is intended to support colleagues who may not recognise some terms used but have an equal responsibility to recognise, report and respond to safeguarding concerns.

This glossary provides general definitions and should be read alongside the full safeguarding policy, relevant organisational procedures and guidance.

Abuse and neglect categories are not exhaustive.

Term	Definition
Adult at Risk	For the purpose of this policy, an adult at risk is an adult who has needs for care and support, whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs, who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and who is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect as a result of those needs. This reflects the safeguarding criteria set out in Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.
Allegation	A concern or information suggesting that a person who works with, volunteers with or represents YMCA Chiltern Group may have harmed, or may pose a risk of harm to a child, young person or adult at risk.
Beneficiary	A child, young person, adult or family member who accesses or receives support, services or activities provided by YMCA Chiltern Group.
Child/Young Person	Anyone under the age of 18. Safeguarding duties apply to all children and young people regardless of age, background or circumstances.
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	A form of abuse where children or young people are manipulated, coerced or controlled into taking part in criminal activity, often by individuals or groups who seek to benefit from their vulnerability. This may include county lines activity.
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	A form of child sexual abuse where a child or young person is manipulated, coerced or pressured into sexual activity in exchange for something the perpetrator provides, such as money, gifts, status, affection or protection.
Children's Social Care	The local authority service responsible for responding to concerns about children and young people who may be experiencing abuse, neglect or harm.
Contextual Safeguarding	An approach that recognises that children and young people may experience harm outside of their family environment, including within peer groups, schools, online spaces, communities and neighbourhoods.
County Lines	A form of criminal exploitation where organised crime groups use children or vulnerable adults to transport or sell drugs, often across geographical areas.
Cuckooing	A form of criminal exploitation where criminals take over the home of a vulnerable person to use it for illegal activity, such as drug dealing, storing weapons or facilitating exploitation.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	A person appointed within a service or organisation who has responsibility for safeguarding advice, oversight, and supporting colleagues to manage safeguarding concerns.
Disclosure	Information shared by a child, young person or adult that indicates they may have experienced, witnessed or be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.
Discriminatory Abuse	Abuse or unequal treatment based on a person's protected or personal characteristics, such as race, disability, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.
Domestic Abuse	Behaviour by a partner, ex-partner or family member that is abusive or controlling. It can include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial abuse and/or coercive or controlling behaviour.
Duty of Care	The responsibility organisations and individuals have to take reasonable steps to protect others from harm and act appropriately when concerns arise.
Early Help	Support provided at an early stage when a child, young person, adult or family may need additional help to prevent concerns escalating.
Emotional Abuse	Persistent or repeated behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, emotional or psychological harm, including intimidation, humiliation, threats, controlling behaviour or isolation.

Exploitation	A situation where someone takes advantage of another person's vulnerability for a personal, financial, criminal or other gain.
Financial Abuse	Unauthorised, improper or coercive use of a person's money, property, benefits or other financial resources.
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	Non-medical cutting, removal or alteration of the external female genitalia, usually carried out on girls or women, and which can cause significant physical or psychological harm.
Harm	The negative impact on a person's physical, emotional, psychological, financial or social wellbeing caused by abuse, neglect, exploitation or other forms of mistreatment.
Information Sharing	The lawful and proportionate sharing of relevant information between professionals, organisations and agencies to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	A person within a local authority responsible for managing concerns and allegations about adults who work with children, where there may be concerns about their suitability to work with children.
Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)	An approach to adult safeguarding that focuses on the individuals wishes, feelings, outcomes and what matters most to them when responding to safeguarding concerns.
Mental Capacity	The ability of an individual to make a specific decision at a particular time. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides the framework for supporting people who may lack capacity to make certain decisions.
Modern Slavery	A form of exploitation involving individuals being controlled, forced or deceived into situations such as forced labour, servitude or trafficking.
Multi-Agency Working	Professionals and organisations working together to safeguard individuals, including local authorities, police, health services, education providers and voluntary sector organisations.
Neglect	The persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, medical, educational or care needs, resulting in or likely to result in significant harm.
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted regulates and inspects certain children's services, including supported accommodation for children.
Organisational Abuse	Abuse or neglect arising from the culture, systems, routines or practice of an organisation, which result in people being treated without dignity, choice or respect.
Physical Abuse	Deliberately causing, or threatening to cause, physical harm to another person.
Prevent Duty	The responsibility on specified organisations to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism or extremist activity.
Professional Curiosity	The willingness to explore and question information, consider explanations, identify inconsistencies, and look beyond what is immediately presented when assessing safeguarding concerns.
Regulation 27 Notification	A statutory notification that providers of supported accommodation for children must make to Ofsted when certain serious incidents occur that affect the safety or welfare of children.
Risk Assessment	A structured process used to identify potential risks, consider the likelihood and impact of harm, and agree actions to reduce or manage those risks.
Safeguarding	The action taken to protect children, young people and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm, while promoting their wellbeing, rights, safety and quality of life.
Safeguarding Concern	Any information, behaviour, incident or situation that suggests a child, young person or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.
Self-Neglect	A person's inability or unwillingness to meet their own essential care and support needs which could place their health, safety or wellbeing at risk.

Serious Safeguarding Incident	An incident involving serious harm, serious risk of harm, death, or another serious safeguarding concern requiring organisational oversight, review and possible external notification.
Sexual Abuse	Any sexual activity, contact or behaviour that occurs without a person's free and informed consent.
Six Safeguarding Principles (Adults)	The Care Act 2014 principles of empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability that underpin adult safeguarding practice.
Trauma-Informed Practice	An approach that recognises the impact of trauma and seeks to provide support in a way that promotes safety, trust, choice and empowerment.
Whistleblowing	The process for raising concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice, poor safeguarding practice, or failures to protect individuals where normal reporting routes may not be appropriate.
UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	Legislation that governs how personal information is collected, stored, used and shared. Safeguarding information can be shared lawfully where necessary to protect individuals from harm.

18. Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy Applicability

- Employees, workers (this includes bank, casual, sessional workers and nursery supply colleagues), agency workers, contractors, apprentices, students, work placements, secondees, volunteers, Trustees, and Directors, any other persons supporting, providing or delivering services for or on behalf of the Charity (referred to as "colleagues" for the purposes of this policy).
- partner organisations delivering services on behalf of YMCA Chiltern Group;
- anyone representing or acting on behalf of YMCA Chiltern Group.

Appendix 2: Partner Organisation Statement

PARTNER ORGANISATION POLICY STATEMENT

Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in Partnership. Our Charity is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children, Young People and Adults at Risk. We have a duty to ensure that our written partnerships agreements clarify responsibilities around safeguarding for all involved. We have a robust safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are reviewed regularly. All colleagues must ensure that they are aware of, and understand, our policy and procedures. Therefore, please be advised that the YMCA Chiltern Group Safeguarding Policy will be the policy used in partnerships. Where third parties work in one of our venues, or in conjunction with one of our projects, but are not directly employed by our Charity they are responsible for: undertaking checks (such as DBS or others in line with Safer Recruitment), storing records and ensuring that

Beneficiaries are aware of the safeguarding procedures that are in place. That the YMCA Chiltern Group policy will be used and followed. Written confirmation of this must be given to us prior to engagement as a partner. We may require confirmation of DBS certificate numbers, issue dates, level of check for any persons who work or volunteer within our premises. Beneficiaries are welcome to read our policies and procedures on request. Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies where there are concerns for the welfare of any Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk. We will ensure that concerns about any Child, Young Person or Adult at Risk who use our services are discussed with them first. For Children it is usual to have the initial discussion with their parent or carer. We may choose to not discuss our concerns with the individual (or their parent/carers) first if we

believe it would be contrary to their welfare. This is in line with our safeguarding policy and procedures. If you are concerned about the welfare of any individual, please report this to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads as soon as possible on the same day. Contact details are displayed at all our sites. You will also find their contact details in the YMCA Chiltern Group Safeguarding Referral Flowchart. Please do not investigate any incident except in conjunction with our safeguarding representatives.