

Guidelines on Safeguarding Young People and Children:

PYF Policies and Procedures

Please note, for staff members, these guidelines should be read in conjunction with PYF Safeguarding for Staff Policy Documents, as outlined in Induction Processes.

GUIDELINES ON SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

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Guidelines on Safeguarding Young People and Children PYF Policies and Procedures

1.0 Introduction

Positive Youth Foundation takes seriously the welfare of all children and young people who come into its premises or who are involved in its activities.

Positive Youth Foundation aims to:

- identify and respond to the needs of young people and wish to build effective working relationships with young people based on respect and trust, but prevent any physical, sexual or emotional abuse of those young people.
- take care in the selection of those who work with young people.
- maintain it is the duty of all those employed by or involved in the organisation to prevent the abuse of all young people with whom they come into contact.
- encourage the development of good practice.
- protect those who work with children and young people from unfounded accusations or from behaving in ways that may be well intended but inadvisable.

<https://www.proceduresonline.com/covandwarksscb/>

2.0 General Duty of Care

Anyone employed to work with children and young people whether voluntarily or otherwise is under a legal duty of care which case law has interpreted has a duty to act as a careful parent would. This means that if a worker carries out his or her responsibilities negligently he or she or Positive Youth Foundation could be held liable under civil law and would have to compensate the young person with damages.

3.0 Confidentiality

Is an essential principle of Positive Youth Foundation's work with young people and in English law there is a general duty to maintain confidentiality where a relationship of confidence exists, such as a counselling or advisory relationship. It is vital that people working with Positive Youth Foundation or using its services understands that Positive Youth Foundation will generally treat what they say in confidence, sharing information only within Positive Youth Foundation. Personal information about Positive Youth Foundation staff, volunteers or clients will only be shared within Positive Youth Foundation when there is a professional need to know; with immediate colleagues - never in casual conversation or with family or friends.

Personal records or information concerning staff, volunteers or clients will be kept in a secure place and only factual information will be stored. However, we will disclose information where that will prevent harm. Incidents & disclosures will, wherever possible, be dealt with by obtaining the person's written permission before talking to a third party. Breach of confidentiality will only take place in accordance with the guidance given below.

4.0 The Law & Good Practice

This document should be used in the context of and in conjunction with The Children's Act (1989) which affects children, their parents and those working with children either as paid workers or volunteers. In order to protect children and young people it is important for both paid workers and volunteers to be aware of the rights and protections for children and young people created by the Act.

"Safe from Harm", was prepared by the Home Office (1993) as a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people (up to the age of 16) in voluntary organisations in England and Wales. It supports and reinforces "The Children's Act (1989)". It is applicable to all workers; both staff and volunteers.

Complete guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-howtoprotect-vulnerable-groups-including-children>

5.0 Multi Agency Child Protection Procedures

We will follow all guidance issued by our local authority and maintain working relationships with the Social Care Services.

6.0 Positive Youth Foundation's Procedures

To plan work so as to minimise situations where the abuse of young people or children may occur.

To provide a system whereby young people or children may talk to an independent person.

To refer young people and children to specialist agencies where necessary.

To give all staff and volunteers clear roles & responsibilities.

To provide appropriate supervision for staff and volunteers

All applicants for voluntary and paid posts will complete an application form and their experience of working or having contact with children and young people will be explored before appointment.

Guidelines will be issued to all Positive Youth Foundation workers on how to deal with abuse and training on the use of these guidelines will be provided.

These guidelines and training will include:

- A reminder of the worker's duty, both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.
- Guidance on what constitutes abuse and how to recognise it.
- Specific instructions on who to inform if abuse is disclosed or discovered.
- Where identified, the name and address/number of the independent contact person in case it should be suspected that the abuser is someone holding a position of responsibility within Positive Youth Foundation.
- Some indication of what might happen if the abuse is reported.
- Guidance on how to support the abused child or young person.

7.0 Guidelines for the Implementation of the Procedures

7.1 Planning Work

Arrange that, as far as possible, an adult is not left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no opportunity of the activity being observed by others. This may mean groups working within the same large room or working in an adjoining room with the door left open.

Wherever possible ensure that all children and young people's workers do not meet a child or young person off Positive Youth Foundation premises without another adult being present.

Always have at least two adults present with a group, particularly when it is the only activity-taking place on Positive Youth Foundation premises.

NEVER work with a ratio of staff/volunteer to clients greater than 1:15 (The particular needs of your group may mean that you need to work with smaller ratio than this; check with your line manager what has been agreed for your team)

Never take a group off the premises with fewer than two appropriate adults.

Where children and young people have to be transported by car or minibus, arrange as far as possible, to have more than one passenger in the vehicle.

7.2 Roles & Responsibilities

Abuse of children and young people is most easily concealed where there is confusion amongst adults about roles and responsibilities.

Positive Youth Foundation staff must recognise their responsibilities for the protection of children and young people. This includes volunteers should have a clear idea of what is expected of them, as outlined in their role description.

Leaders **MUST** ensure that their team knows who to contact in the local child protection team if they suspect that abuse may be happening.

7.3 Supervision

Regular opportunities should be made for workers to meet together to review and plan their work, to share their experiences, to receive training and to talk about their relationships with the children and young people.

Special attention should be paid to any situation in which a child or young person is being either highly favoured or harshly treated, as these could be signs of abuse.

When possible, leaders of groups should take opportunities to observe those for whom they are responsible as they work with children and young people.

7.4 Recruitment

All applicants must complete an application form and provide referees.

Positive Youth Foundation will explore applicant's experience of working or having contact with children and young people before appointment. These may be through previous work in the industry, through family contacts, through work with a voluntary organisation or in other ways. If there is any doubt about the suitability of the applicant this should be explored further through searching questions.

References will be sought, in writing, for all workers. It will be made clear that they will be working with children and young people and that views on their suitability for this type of work are being invited. If replies are vague or ambiguous it may be necessary for them to be followed up in person or by telephone.

All situations that involve children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all convictions that relate to children and young people, however old, must be declared. Information about other criminal convictions must also be given, as these may be relevant to the suitability of the person.

A determined, convicted abuser may well tell a lie. It is for this reason that a reference should be obtained. If the volunteer has moved frequently from one (voluntary) job/organisation to another it would be advisable to find out why.

DBS checks must always be carried out on all who work with children or young people.

Leaders will actively develop working relationships with key local agencies e.g. Police, Social Care, IYSS etc in order to facilitate communication with these agencies.

7.5 Records

It is very important that adequate records are kept of any accidents, altered behaviour or injury of children. Proper record keeping ensures that there is evidence if a child abuse case is suspected or if a damages claim is brought. The police may be entitled to see information that has been given in confidence, but this is a very complex area and legal advice should be sought. Confidential information given to voluntary organisations or individuals with a counselling role is generally exempted from the general power of the police to search for "relevant evidence" to help in the detection of crime. The police would have to apply to a judge to gain access to such material and consent is unlikely to be given.

Courts have power to require disclosure of confidential information in proceedings involving children. Some information is subject to "privilege" however, which is a legal term covering things like the correspondence between a client and his or her lawyer.

Legal advisers will tell you whether you can claim that certain information is privileged. Courts do not generally order the disclosure of confidential information insensitively.

Can children & young people gain access to confidential information held on them?

Children and young people have the right of access to records held by Positive Youth Foundation. Third party information held by Positive Youth Foundation remains the property of that party and as such Positive Youth Foundation does not have the right to disclose this information to the child or young person.

Although disclosure may be refused if the child's physical, mental or emotional health would be seriously prejudiced. Children are also able to make applications to the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act for access to certain computerised information.

8.0 Kinds of Abuse

Physical

- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect

The following may be signs of abuse:

Allegations made by the child or young person

Injuries that have received no medical attention

Severe sleep disturbances with fears & phobias

Signs of neglect: looking uncared for

Inappropriate relationships with peers/adults

Pre-occupation with sexual matters

Inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawings

Self harm

Hidden injuries

Nervousness

Sudden under-achievement

Attention-seeking

Running away

Stealing or Lying

Unexplained injuries.

N.B. This list is not exhaustive and every person is different. Any one person may display some, all, or none of these symptoms and may or may not have suffered abuse. They should make us stop and think, **but not necessarily** jump to conclusions.

9.0 Supporting the Young Person

If a young person wants to talk about abuse:

- Keep calm; accept what the child or young person says.
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens.
- Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell you.
- Even when a child or young person has broken a rule they are not to blame for the abuse.

- Let them know if you need to tell someone else, and make every effort to gain their permission to tell someone else, but do not promise confidentiality.
- Be aware that the child or young person may have been threatened.
- Never push for information.

Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when he/she said it. Record dates and times of these events and keep the hand-written record.

Independent Person

Arrange for a person to be available for children and young people to talk to if they feel that they have been abused in any way. The person should be totally independent of the activities of the children and young people but should be someone to whom they could relate. It may be that this person is from another team within or it may be necessary or appropriate to ask someone from a different organisation to undertake this role.

If this is done the appointed person must be given clear, preferably written guidelines as to what action to take to stop any abuse disclosed by a child or young person, otherwise they may unwittingly permit the abuse to continue. It is strongly recommended that contacts should be by telephone rather than one-to-one.

Consider ways of letting the children and young people know that such a person is available for them to talk to.

Display their telephone number where children and young people will see it, along with an unthreatening message e.g. "Want someone to talk to? Ring..." Warn the person that there may be calls that have nothing at all to do with abuse. This is not a commitment to be taken lightly, but may be of great benefit in the general pastoral care of children and young people.

Alternatively, display the number of Childline or a similar organisation on a notice board which is regularly seen by children and young people. To make sure that all adults working with children and young people know the name of a suitable person with whom they could put the child or young person in contact, or to whom they could turn for help.

Consider the need also to provide opportunities for workers to talk to independent people about any difficulties or anxieties in relation to their work.

10.0 Reporting to a Third Party

In cases of suspected child abuse there is a clear moral duty to tell the local authority. However, it is vital that decisions are well informed and considered. Leaders **MUST** ensure that they know who to contact in the local child protection team if they suspect that abuse may be happening. Volunteers **MUST** also be clear who they need to approach within Positive Youth Foundation. In general there is no obligation to tell parents that advice has been sought or what advice has been given. In the case of a child without the required level of understanding, a worker may feel that disclosure to parents is appropriate and if in doubt should seek further advice from the child protection team.

If:

Past or present abuse has been disclosed and intervention is required.

or The life of a third party is at risk or threatened

or The person has put her/himself at grave risk and in your opinion is not in control of her/his own safety, i.e. involved in an accident or experiencing a drugs/alcohol overdose and is at further risk if not made safe

or There is a threat of violence

or Another young person has been mentioned who you feel is at risk or 'serious harm'

or The emotional or mental state of the young person is such that it may put him or herself or a third party at risk of 'serious harm'

Then do not delay.

Consult with your line-manager, the independent person appointed within the Positive Youth Foundation, or another appropriate person.

If a member of staff/volunteer has observed a situation or received information, which indicates that the young person themselves, a third party or another Positive Youth Foundation worker is in immediate risk of 'serious harm', the senior person present should inform an appropriate agency,

(e.g. social services, police, health services) immediately. In this event the manager should be informed immediately.

Contact the statutory services responsible for child protection in your area, i.e. Social Services or the Police. Be aware that in every area there are procedures for investigating cases where a child is at risk. The Social Services Department has the main responsibility and will normally set up a Case Conference carried out by social workers and police. You may be asked to attend, either to give information or to support the parent/family. It is important to clarify in what capacity you have been invited and how you want to be seen by the family, i.e. as a member of the Conference or as a support.

DBS Policy

1 It is Positive Youth Foundation policy that no staff working for the organisation (including trustees, volunteers and sessional workers) should take up their post until Positive Youth Foundation has received an enhanced level DBS disclosure about them.

Responsibilities

2 It is the Programme/Project Manager's responsibility to make sure that no employee or volunteer takes up their post until Positive Youth Foundation has received an enhanced level DBS disclosure and to ensure that the DBS Disclosure Policy and Procedure is adhered to.

Procedure

3 All contracts of employment for new employees will have a condition that the employee must not start work until Positive Youth Foundation has received a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure in line with DBS disclosure policy.

4 Where possible, all candidates invited to interview will be asked to complete and bring with them a completed DBS form and the related evidence in order that the manager can process the DBS application of the successful candidate as swiftly as possible. Where this is not possible, the line manager must ensure that a completed DBS application form is sent to the relevant team for processing as soon as possible after the employee has provisionally accepted the offer of the post.

5 The relevant officer will write to the employee and the line manager to confirm the start date for the employee, only after the management team has received a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure in line with this policy. The employee must not start work until they and the line manager have received confirmation in writing from the management team that their DBS disclosure is satisfactory.

6 The Project/Programme Manager must ensure that a completed DBS application form is sent to managers as soon as possible

7 Where possible, line managers must ensure that a volunteer does not work with the project until the volunteer has received confirmation in writing that their DBS disclosure is satisfactory. This may not always be possible so please seek advice.

Assessing the content of DBS disclosures – authorisation process

8 When the Disclosure is returned from the DBS Disclosure Service or appropriate agency, senior managers will notify the relevant co-ordinator if there are convictions on the DBS disclosure.

9 The relevant co-ordinator should consult with their own line manager and make a recommendation (supported by a short explanation) as to whether or not the appointment should be confirmed.

10 If both managers agree, the relevant manager should speak to the Director about the recommendation.

Criminal Offences while employed by or working for Positive Youth Foundation

11 Being charged with or arrested for a criminal offence while employed by or working for the Positive Youth Foundation will not necessarily prevent an employee or volunteer from working with Positive Youth Foundation.

12 However, any employee or volunteer, who is charged with or arrested for a criminal offence while they are employed by, or work as a volunteer with, Positive Youth Foundation must tell their line manager within 24 hours of the charge or arrest. This will enable Positive Youth Foundation to consider any necessary changes to management arrangements and to safeguard the interests of both the employee/volunteer and the users of the project.

Independent contractors

13 Independent contractors, who are engaged to work at the project, do not have to have an enhanced Disclosure, although it is obviously preferable that they do. Such contractors must never be given access to personal information about young people and must never be left unsupervised with a young person or group of young people. As this is not always straight forward, please seek advice.

Missing Child/Young Persons Policy

Positive Youth Foundation operate an 'open access' programme, meaning we cannot be held responsible if a young person decides to leave a session, however, to maintain good practice, the following guidelines below should be followed if possible.

- All young people attending activities must be registered when they arrive and when they leave if appropriate. Make sure all young people have consent forms completed as fully as possible. The minimum we must have is a name and an emergency contact number.
- Staff must be aware of the exits/boundaries of the setting and be observant of these to ensure no child leaves unnoticed.
- Staff must periodically check number of children present with the numbered register.
- Should a young person decide to leave, efforts will be made to negotiate with the child that they agree to stay.
- In the event of a child leaving, staff will not chase them. Staff will immediately contact a PYF Manager, who will take a decision on contacting the child's parents, the police (if appropriate) and record the incident.
- Should a member of staff become aware that a child has left the activity without their knowledge that staff member should contact a senior member of the Positive Youth Foundation team.

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Frequency of Review: Annually

Date of Next Review: 12.5.2021

Designated Senior Person for Child Protection: Katie Davis

Deputy Designated Senior Person for Child Protection: Krishan Singh

Named Trustee for Safeguarding & Child Protection: Amy Foster

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Angie Bishop. Tel: 024 7683 4831