**Sheffield Young Carers Project**

**Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

**Policy Statement**

1. Sheffield Young Carers Project (SYC) believes that safeguarding young people is everyone’s responsibility and should be reflected in every aspect of our work with young people.
2. The welfare of every young person in contact with the service remains our priority at all times. This principle is the central tenet of the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004 (Children Scotland Act 1995; Children (Northern Ireland) Order).
3. SYC is committed to promoting the welfare and safety of all who come into contact with it, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, sexual preference, racial origin, language or religious belief.
4. SYC will respect the confidentiality of young people within clearly defined boundaries which are explained to all service users. Young people should be supported to give and receive personal information responsibly and in the knowledge of the possible consequences of doing so with reference to our Confidentiality Policy.
5. SYC recognises the need for working in partnership (including appropriate information sharing) with other agencies in order to protect young people.
6. SYC will ensure that all staff and volunteers are selected, trained and supported appropriately.
7. SYC will assess all risks carefully and take all reasonably practicable steps to avoid, minimise or manage them as appropriate.
8. Young people will be treated with dignity and respect at all times. SYC will support young people using its services to tackle behaviour that is characterised by discrimination, bullying, aggression, intimidation or verbal or physical abuse.
9. SYC will review this policy and the relevant procedures regularly in consultation with a range of its stakeholders.

**Definitions**

1. “Worker” means any paid or unpaid staff member or volunteer (including Trustees).
2. “Young person” means a child or young person under 18 unless specified otherwise. Whilst good practice is usually the same for all people under 18, some legislation applies only to those aged under 16, some only to those aged 16-18.
3. “Safeguarding” refers to keeping young people safe from harm and includes the issues associated with Safeguarding.
4. “Social Services” have now become “Children’s Social Care” in England.

**Roles**

**Designated Child Protection and Safeguarding Trustee**

A named Trustee should take responsibility for leading on Safeguarding issues and the board/ committee should satisfy itself that:

* The roles outlined in this section are being undertaken appropriately.
* An appropriate Safeguarding induction, support and training programme is implemented.
* Recruitment procedures safeguard young people’s welfare.
* There is adequate financial support for the services and activities offered by the Young Carers Service in order for the Service to operate effectively and safely.

**Designated Safeguarding Officer/s**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer has the following responsibilities:

To ensure that this policy is implemented and is adhered to at all times.

To be familiar with, and have an understanding of all relevant legislation.

To liaise with the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board, Sheffield Safeguarding Partnership and Sheffield Social Care (adults and children’s).

To ensure that safeguarding is part of SYC’s working culture.

To arrange appropriate training and support for all relevant workers, volunteers and trustees.

To provide support during and after incidents involving safeguarding and referrals to Children’s Social Care or the police.

To provide the Board of Trustees with appropriate information on the number and outcomes of incidents or concerns involving safeguarding young people.

**All workers should:**

1. Adhere to all points as laid down in this document and related procedures (See below).
2. Report any incidents or concerns regarding young people’s well-being or safety to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or their Line Manager as appropriate.
3. Use supervision to actively discuss Safeguarding issues and develop best practice.
4. Attend induction and other training courses and ongoing training in Safeguarding.

# Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

From *Working Together 2018*. These are statutory definitions for England only.

**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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

**Emotional abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meets the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse:** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Child sexual exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Extremism:** Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

**Working Together 2018 was amended in 2020 to include the following changes (in addition to the information outlined above):**

#### **Contextual safeguarding**

[**Contextual safeguarding**](https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/introduction-to-safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding/) was renamed in the guidance as 'assessment of risk outside the home' (p.25), and teenage relationship abuse has been added as an area of risk, however the primary content of this section has not changed.

#### **Mental health concerns**

The importance of mental health concerns for children has been emphasised throughout the revised document. Mental health has been added to physical health (p.7 & p.14) and the significance of mental health concerns about a child has been linked to abuse, neglect or exploitation. While aimed at school staff, the advice to refer concerns about a child’s mental health to children’s services while not making mental health diagnoses (p.18) is relevant to other roles.

#### **Domestic abuse**

The impact of domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour, has been integrated throughout the revised guidance. Both domestic violence and controlling and coercive control have been added to the definitions (pp.110-111). The changes (p.14) state that practitioners need to develop their knowledge and skills in addressing the impact that domestic violence has upon children, both as witnesses and by being forced to collude in this.

#### **Criminal exploitation**

Criminal exploitation has been added to the areas of risk in which practitioners should be developing their skills and knowledge to address (p.14). The [**National Working Group**](https://www.nwgnetwork.org/) has provided resources and training.

#### **Information sharing**

This information has been refined in response to the [**Data Protection Act 2018**](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection) and General Data Protection Regulation ([**GDPR**](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/)). This includes guidance about appropriate information sharing of safeguarding and child protection concerns. This includes the explicit statement that data protection legislation does not prevent the sharing of information to keep a child safe and that consent is not required when sharing information for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of a child (p.19).

In making decisions about appropriate information sharing, the guidance recommends using GDPR [**lawful bases**](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/)for sharing, i.e. [**legal obligation**](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/legal-obligation/) (the exercise of official authority) or [**public task**](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/public-task/) (a task performed in the public interest). Further information about this is available in the new appendices (Appendix B) and includes a useful myth-busting guide to information sharing (p.21).

It is also stated (p.15) that, while encouraged, the agreement of the child and parents is not required to share information, although it is important to explain the reasons for this.

#### **Homelessness duty**

The Homelessness duty has been added to this guidance (p.23) in relation to local authorities’ duties to intervene at an earlier stage in homelessness. Full information is found in the [**Homelessness Code of Guidance**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities).

# Safeguarding Procedures

# What to do when you have concerns about a young person

**Indicators that could constitute cause for concern:**

(This list is not exhaustive and these factors will not always provide grounds to suspect abuse or neglect on their own.)

1. Signs of neglect such as a young person being constantly hungry, dirty, tired, inappropriately dressed for weather conditions.
2. Physical injuries suspected of being non-accidental. Injuries can be suspicious because:
   1. they are on a part of the body not usually associated with accidental injury
   2. they are unusually symmetrical
   3. they are noticed on several occasions
   4. they suggest attack e.g. hand prints, cigarette burns, large bite marks, any small round bruise suggestive of grabbing, black eyes.
   5. Any marks, bruises or injuries noted on a young person should be documented on their case notes.
3. A young person who displays sexualised, aggressive, depressive or withdrawn behaviour or who is fearful of adults, runs away from home frequently or flinches when touched or approached.
4. A young person who self-harms.
5. Non-organic failure to thrive. This can mean that a young person significantly fails to reach normal growth or developmental milestones (i.e. physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development). (This is regarded a separate category of abuse in Scotland.)
6. Conflicting accounts of injury/ medical treatment/ absence.
7. Any disclosure by a young person that indicates abuse/ neglect. See Definitions section above.

**Whenever there is cause for concern follow these steps:**

If in doubt, raise concerns with your Manager, involving colleagues where necessary on a need to know basis.

Avoid acting alone except in emergencies.

Follow SYC’s Lone Working and Confidentiality procedures.

* It is **not** SYC’s role to decide whether abuse/ neglect has or has not taken place: this is the role of Children’s Social Care. Any reasonable grounds for suspecting abuse/ neglect must be reported to Children’s Social Care or the Police for them to investigate.

**If your concern is based on a disclosure by a young person:**

Do not promise confidentiality, but reassure the young person that the information will only be passed because this is necessary to help them. The young person may wish to retract the disclosure. This usually reflects the anxiety they feel about the consequences of the disclosure and **should not** be taken as an indication that the original disclosure was false.

Listen to the young person. Do not prevent a young person who wants to talk about what has happened from doing so but do not ask leading, interrogating or probing questions. You do not need to know all of the details – this is the role of Children’s Social Care/Police.

Reassure the young person that they were right in telling you, acknowledge any distress or difficulty in disclosing and explain what will happen next and who will be informed.

**If your concerns are based on a disclosure by a parent or other member of the public:**

Explain what will happen next and who will be informed, unless doing so could lead to further harm to a young person. Follow the steps below.

**If the young person is in immediate danger follow these steps:**

Do not place yourself in danger.

Contact the police by dialling 999

In an emergency, get medical help.

**Report** the concern young person to the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub. Discuss any future action with them e.g. suspension of a member of staff, contacting the police, contacting parents/ guardians, arrangements for immediate care of the young person if needed.

Inform parents/ guardians as appropriate unless this could place the young person at further risk of harm.

As soon as possible, **inform** theDesignated Safeguarding Officer or, if they are not available, SYC’s Safeguarding Trustees.

Once the young person is no longer in immediate danger, follow the steps below.

**If the young person is not in immediate danger or once immediate danger has passed:**

**Always** inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer or your Manager. If you cannot contact them, seek support from colleagues, continue with these steps and inform the Designated Officer as soon as possible. See Appendix 1 for outline of procedure.

**If you are unsure of whether to refer to Social Care:**

1. Discuss your concerns with your Manager and/ or the Designated Safeguarding Officer. Raise your concerns with the young person and their parents/ guardians if it is safe to do so.
2. If the staff team is satisfied that there are no grounds for on which to make a referral, record all concerns and actions and continue to monitor the situation.
3. If still unsure, seek advice from the Safeguarding Hub 0114 273 4855. You may decide not to give the personal details of the young people/ family involved at this stage, but to outline the situation.
4. If you do not refer, **after an incident/ referral:**

* As soon as possible, **record** the time, setting and details and any other witnesses to the conversation using SYC’s Incident Form. Use the young person’s own words as much as possible. Do not include your own opinions or interpretation, only facts. Make a case note on VC Connect stating that an incident form has been completed.
* Pass the completed form to your Manager/Safeguarding Lead to agree any further action, to sign off and store securely.
* If any further action is required, add this information to the Incident Form.

**If you decide to refer:**

1. Once a decision to refer has been made, the referral should take place **immediately**, through Sheffield’s Children’s Safeguarding Hub.
2. A referral can be made by any worker at any time. Disagreements between workers should be discussed with a more senior member of staff. No worker shall attempt to prevent another from making a referral.
3. You can contact the **Safeguarding Hub** on the single telephone number **0114 273 4855.** You will need to explain why you have a concern, what it is, and who it is about
4. It is good practice to tell the family that you are contacting Children’s Social Care (unless you are concerned that this will put the child at risk). It is not essential to obtain consent for information sharing with other professionals, however if you are able to do so it will speed up decision making.

**After an incident/ referral:**

1. Following your call, you must complete a multi-agency confirmation form (MACf). Use the young person’s own words as much as possible. Do not include your own opinions or interpretation, only facts.
2. Once completed, save the form in your HR folder on the Z Drive and share it with a Designated Safeguarding Officer to send it securely to confirm the details of your concern. The Safeguarding Hub must receive this within 24 hours of the contact.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will agree any further action with you and sign off a copy to store securely.
4. Begin to plan subsequent support for the young people and vulnerable adults and their family where possible.
5. If you have not heard from Children’s Social Care within three working days of the referral, follow this up by phone.
6. Your Manager/ Designated Safeguarding Officer will provide you with ongoing support with any concerns you have.

**Safeguarding Procedures: If allegations have been made about a worker**

1. Ensure the immediate safety of young people - you may need to ask the worker to leave or to call the police.
2. **Always** inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer and your Manager/ Chair of Trustees as appropriate. If one of these post holders is the person about whom you have concerns, seek advice from the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub. Also see Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle-Blowing) Policy
3. Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Officer /Chair of Trustees should make a referral to the LADO, full details are [here](https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/scsp/processes/allegations-of-abuse-against-people-who-work-with-children-lado)
4. If the concerns relate to someone working with a **vulnerable adult**, see SYC’s Vulnerable Adults Policy and contact Adult Services Access Team to report concerns.
5. See *Concerns about a worker’s behaviour* below.

# Workers’ Conduct and Support

**Recruitment and selection**

See Recruitment Policy

**Training and support**

In order to safeguard young people, SYC’s training and support process will reflect the following points:

1. All workers should be provided with a clear Job or Role Description, detailing
   1. their responsibilities
   2. the line management structure around their role
   3. the boundaries around their role
   4. a requirement to work within these procedures
2. Induction should include information on these procedures appropriate to the role as well as clarification of the worker’s Job or Role Description.
3. Supervision sessions and appraisals should include exploring the worker’s understanding of Safeguarding policies and procedures.
4. Workers should attend training through the Sheffield Safeguarding Board as a minimum every three years and receive regular support around Safeguarding through supervision and individual and team discussions.

**Codes of Conduct**

1. All workers must understand and abide by SYC’s Confidentiality Policy.
2. Where workers’ behaviour does not fall within these guidelines, the worker will be considered guilty of misconduct or gross misconduct and their Manager will instigate SYC’s Disciplinary Procedure.

**Code of Conduct**

1. Workers must do everything possible to protect those using the service from discrimination, bullying, aggression, intimidation or verbal or physical abuse.
2. Workers should only be alone with a young person when this is
   1. a necessary part of supporting that individual **and**
   2. recorded appropriately **and**
   3. discussed with the young person, the worker’s Manager and the young person’s parent/ guardian
3. Workers must follow all of SYC’s policies and procedures
4. Workers should not give a young person a lift in their own car without prior arrangements being made with the young person, their guardian, and the worker’s manager, except in emergency and only during working hours when working with the young person
5. Unacceptable behaviour includes:
   1. inviting young people into the worker’s own house
   2. abuse of trust: While it is always an offence for any adult to engage in sexual activity with a young person under 16, it is also unacceptable and possibly an offence (an “abuse of trust”) for a worker to have an intimate relationship with a young person aged 16-18 when the adult holds a “position of trust” over the young person
   3. any language or behaviour that is inappropriate to the worker’s relationship with a young person
6. Support of a physical or intimate nature should only be provided by a worker if
   1. It is absolutely necessary, due to an individual’s young age or disability,
   2. recorded in the young person’s case notes **and**
   3. **either** consented to by the young person and their parent/ guardian **or** a necessary response to an emergency situation, in which case parents/ guardians should be fully informed as soon as possible.

**Concerns about a worker’s behaviour**

1. All workers have access to SYC’s written Disciplinary and Grievance procedures in place for all workers. These comply with the ACAS Code of Practice.

Where team members or manager are concerned that a young person is at risk of physical or psychological injury due to the practice of another member of staff, their concerns must be passed on. The initial point of contact should be their line manager who will then liaise with appropriate personnel, i.e. SYC’s Managing Director, Chair of Trustees. If, following discussion and investigation it is found to be true of a staff member, then the Disciplinary Procedure must be followed alongside the procedures outlined in Section 3.

When an allegation is made against a worker, they will receive support during the process of verifying or disproving the allegation from an appropriate member of staff or other professional as agreed with their Manager. This support must not jeopardise any investigation or put young people at risk.

Please refer to SYC’s Public Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) Policy.

**Information**

1. Young people and their parents/guardians should be given safeguarding information and these procedures in an appropriate form.
2. Young people attending groups or residentials should be supported to draw up ground rules for their participation that they understand and agree to abide by.
3. All young people and their parents/ guardians should be made aware of their entitlement to use SYC’s Complaints Procedure in a manner appropriate to their needs.

**Signed Date:**

Chair, Board of Trustees

**Date of review**: 12th May 2022 **Date of next review:** May 2023

**Appendix 1: Safeguarding Procedure for Out of Hours Working**

**If you have a concern about the safety of a young person:**

If there is an on call manager working that night, call them

Alternatively try the following people in this order:

Managing Director– (numbers available internally)

Deputy Manager – numbers available internally)

Nominated Trustees (when neither Managing Director and Deputy Manager not available)

AW (numbers available internally)

LG (numbers available internally)

If you cannot get hold of anyone from SYC, phone:

**Sheffield Safeguarding Hub - 24 hours a day, 7 days per week**

**Or when immediate risk of harm to a child, phone the police: 999**

If you need additional support at that time, speak to the on call manager or, in the absence of a manager, speak to your group co-worker.

Text your manager (or Managing Director/Deputy Manager in their absence) to let them know what has happened and they will arrange a check-in with you as soon as possible.

The next day, complete an Incident Form or Safeguarding Disclosure Form and speak to your manager regarding any further follow-up.