



Safeguarding Policy

October 2018

1. SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

SECTION 1 POLICY STATEMENT

Youth Options is firmly committed to the belief that all children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, and fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The safety and protection of all children and young people that Youth Options supports is paramount, and has priority over all other interests.

The purpose of this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is to ensure, at all times, the maximum protection from any kind of harm for all children, young people and vulnerable adults, involved in any way with Youth Options. For the purposes of this policy Youth Options has defined harm as:

- **Abandonment** – leaving a child alone and unattended in circumstances that are inappropriate for their age/level of ability.
- **Emotional/Psychological abuse** – persistent emotional ill treatment that has a severe adverse effect on the emotional development of a young person. It may involve conveying to them that they are not wanted, not loved, useless, worthless. It may involve inappropriate expectations (such as taking on the responsibilities of an adult within the family) being placed on the young person leaving them feeling frightened and unable to cope. It may also involve the exploitation or corruption of young people.
- **Neglect** – the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and physiological needs of a young person that results in the serious impairment of their health and development, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter and failure to respond to basic emotional needs, such as being cared for when sick.
- **Physical abuse** – hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, throwing, burning, scalding, poisoning, drowning, suffocating or any other action intended to cause physical harm or ill-health to a young person.
- **Financial or Material abuse** - Theft or exploitation in financial matters or transactions, and the misuse or misappropriation of possessions or benefits.
- **Discriminatory abuse** - This may involve racist, sexist and religious abuse; abuse that is based on a person's disability, size, gender, age or marital status.
- **Domestic abuse** - This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.
- **Modern slavery** - This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.
- **Self-neglect** - This covers a wide range of behaviours including neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings, and includes behaviours such as hoarding.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - This includes procedures that intentionally alter or injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.
- **Sexual abuse or sexual exploitation** – forcing or enticing a young person to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the young person is aware of what is happening. It includes child prostitution, encouraging young people to watch or participate in the production of pornographic material and encouraging young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual acts include penetrative and non-penetrative acts such as touching or stroking.

The **Sexual Offences Act 2003** defines 'consent' as *'if he/she agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice'*. The Act removes the element of consent for many sexual offences for:

- Children under 16 (including under 13)
- Children under 18 having sexual relations with a person in a position of trust
(E.g. teachers, police officers; youth workers, foster carers)
- Children under 18 involved with family members over 18
- Persons with a mental disorder impeding choice or who are induced, threatened or deceived
- Persons with a mental disorder who have sexual relations with care workers

In relation to young people under the age of 13, consent is irrelevant. The law says 'a child under the age of 13 does not, under any circumstances, have the legal capacity to consent to any form of sexual activity'.

The Police must be informed immediately of any sexual activity involving a child under 13.

- **Peer abuse** - Young people are vulnerable to abuse from their peers, particularly when they are away from home. Teenagers and younger children commit a significant proportion of sex offences. Any such abuse must be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and the same procedures must be followed.
- **Exposure to drug/ alcohol misuse** – encouraging or permitting young people who are under the legal age to use alcohol and drugs in a way that is harmful to their health.
- **Radicalisation** - attempting to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

This policy forms part of the Terms and Conditions of Employment and applies to all employees.

Its purpose is to protect the personal safety of all children and young people using the facilities,

resources and activities provided by Youth Options by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

Vulnerability of Children and Young People with Additional Needs

Children with additional needs, including those with physical disabilities, special educational needs, emotional and behavioural difficulties or mental health issues are particularly vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse, including abuse whilst being cared for in institutions. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect. Children with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other child. People caring for and working with children with additional needs need to be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse.

Children with disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons:

- An increased likelihood that the child is socially isolated
- A need for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care
- Physical dependency with consequent reduction in ability to be able to resist or avoid abuse
- Communication or learning difficulties preventing disclosure or making disclosure more difficult
- Carers and staff lacking the ability to communicate adequately with the child
- The child being especially vulnerable to bullying, intimidation or abuse by their peers
- Some sex offenders may target disabled children in the belief that they are less likely to be detected
- Over-identification with the needs of parents/carers that can lead to a professional reluctance to make judgements about aspects of parenting

In addition to the universal indicators of abuse/neglect, the following abusive behaviours must be considered in relation to children/young people with disabilities:

- Force feeding
- Unjustified or excessive physical restraint
- Rough handling
- Behaviour modification techniques which include the deprivation of liquid, medication, food or clothing

- Misuse of medication, sedation, heavy tranquillisation
- Invasive procedures against the child's will where the child is competent
- Failure to attend medical appointments and/or follow medically recommended treatment programmes where the child suffers harm as a result
- Ill-fitting equipment e.g. callipers, sleep boards which may cause injury or pain
- Misappropriation/misuse of a child's finances

Safeguards for children with additional needs are essentially the same as for all other children. Particular attention should be paid to promoting a high level of awareness of the risks of harm and to high standards of practice. Concerns about the welfare of a child with a disability should be acted upon at an early stage in the same way as for any other child as detailed in the procedures.

Vulnerable Adults

As well as children and young people, the safeguarding procedures outlined below are also to be followed in the case of working with vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult is:

- a person over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness
- a person who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself
- a person who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation

The Toxic Trio

The term 'Toxic Trio' has been used to describe the issues of domestic violence, mental ill-health and substance misuse which have been identified as common features of families where harm to women and children has occurred. They are viewed as indicators of increased risk of harm to children and young people.

Youth Options has created guidance notes for all staff highlighting the risk of harm related to the Toxic Trio; this guide includes reporting requirements - staff must report any suspicion that a child is experiencing any of these three risk factors to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SECTION 2

POLICY PROCEDURES

Personnel/Recruitment

- Youth Options practices robust recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people, this includes:
 - All employees will complete an application form and will be interviewed.
 - All employees are required to provide references, which are always verified.
 - All employees are required to provide evidence of their identity and qualifications.
 - All potential employees are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders or reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children or young people
 - All employees have DBS checks at a level appropriate to their role. In the event of employment, any failure to disclose convictions will result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
 - Staff will not have unsupervised contact with children or young people until their suitability has been checked.
- All new employees are required to sign up to the DBS online update service. Existing employees will be required to sign up when their DBS is next renewed. Sign up to the update service must be completed within 14 days of DBS check having been completed.
- Status checks through the update service will be completed for all employees.
- No person disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006 will be employed in Youth Options' childcare or early years settings. All staff in these settings are required to declare (using the Disqualification Declaration Form) if they live in the same household as someone who is disqualified, and therefore, may be disqualified by association.
- All employees will receive Safeguarding and Child Protection Training as part of their induction and throughout their employment at a level and frequency suitable for their role (detailed in Youth Options' Staff Training Overview).
- For further detail relating to recruitment please see the Safer Recruitment Policy

Responsibilities (Organisation)

- Youth Options will ensure a minimum of three senior members of staff are Designated Safeguarding Leads with responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Leads to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and to make, or support other members of staff to make, referrals to the appropriate agency.

- All employees will be made aware of the named Safeguarding Leads and how to contact them (*Appendix One*).
- Youth Options will ensure that all staff members receive training to update them on Child Protection and Safeguarding at a level and frequency suitable for their role.
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads will ensure that advice is sought from relevant child protection agencies when dealing with more complex issues.
- Youth Options will ensure that all employees receive regular monitoring and supervision in their work with children and young people.
- Youth Options will ensure that all employees have access to, and understand the Prevent agenda in combating radicalisation. (Youth Options Guide to Prevent)

Responsibilities (Employees)

- All employees, whether paid or unpaid, working on behalf of Youth Options have a duty of care and a responsibility for the welfare of the children and young people that they work with in relation to their employment.
- A duty of care is defined as the duty which rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of a child or young person involved in any activity or interaction for which that individual or organisation is responsible. Any person in charge of, or working with children and young people in any capacity is considered, both legally and morally to owe them a duty of care.
- Youth Options has a code of conduct in place which all staff must adhere to.
- All employees, whether paid or unpaid, have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection or radicalisation is reported using the reporting procedures detailed in this policy.
- If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from one of the named Safeguarding Leads (*Appendix One*).
- Youth Options frequently takes photographs of children and young people participating in activities and events. At all times written permission from parents will be obtained before any photographic material of young people under the age of 18 is used in the public domain.

Mobile Phones

- When working within a Youth Options centre or base, all staff must ensure that their personal mobile phones are locked in the office (or other suitable area) when there are children/young people on site; they may have work mobile phones with them but only to be used in an emergency.

- When working in schools, all staff should follow the mobile phone policy of the individual school. If there is no such policy in place, staff must ensure that they leave their phones (personal and work) in a safe place within the school, or, if this is not possible, that their phones remain in their bags.
- It is recognised that it is necessary for staff to take their Youth Options mobile phones on offsite activities; when working with young people, phones are only permitted to be used for emergency situations or to communicate with your base contact.
- Staff are not permitted to use personal mobiles, at any time, when working with young people; if staff have personal mobiles with them, they must be **switched off** and remain in bags. Staff are encouraged to give their work mobile and office numbers to family members in case of emergency.
- Under no circumstances should a member of staff take photographs of young people with **any** mobile phone (personal or work), unless specifically authorised to do so.
- Photographs of young people may only be taken with Youth Options' cameras unless specifically authorised to use a personal camera or phone. Photographs should be uploaded to a computer as soon as possible, and then deleted immediately from the camera.
- All Youth Options' cameras and mobile telephones can be checked at any time by a member of SMT.
- **Any staff member or volunteer found to be non-compliant with this policy will face disciplinary action.**

Reporting Procedures

- Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
- The employee must record the concern using the Safeguarding Form, which they must hand deliver to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must take the Safeguarding Form to Head Office (it must not be posted). It must not be saved on any computer. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely following the Data Protection Procedures.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for making the decision as to whether further referral is necessary. This will either be to Children's Services, the MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub), or the Child Protection Unit of the police. If the immediate safety of the child is in any doubt then the Child Protection Unit must be informed. **See appendix 3 for contact numbers.**
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide who the most appropriate person is to make the referral (depending on the case/circumstances) and ensure that the referral is made. SLT will be informed of all referrals made.

- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform the employee who reported the concern of any action taken and any outcome. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any partner agencies involved with the young person are made aware of the disclosure and the action taken.
- All stages of the reporting procedure must be documented, marked CONFIDENTIAL and stored securely following the procedures laid out in the Data Protection Policy.

Allegations Against Employees

- When any form of complaint is made against an employee, it must be taken seriously and the complaint should initially be dealt with by the most senior staff member on site at the time the complaint is made. If the complaint is against the most senior member of staff on site then the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive or Director of Services must be informed.
- The senior staff member must report the complaint immediately to the Chief Executive, or in his/her absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team giving details of the circumstances.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

The LADO will be informed prior to any internal investigation taking place.

LADO Contacts:

Dorset - 01305 221122

Hampshire – 01962 876364

Southampton 023 80915535

Portsmouth – 023 92882500

- The Chief Executive or in his/her absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team will attend the site of the allegation to gain an initial account of what has occurred from all relevant parties, including the person against whom the allegation has been made. If this is not possible, contact will be made by telephone.
- The Chief Executive or in his/her absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team will have the right to suspend from duty and /or the premises, any person who is a party to the allegation until a full investigation has been made.

This action does not imply in any way that the person suspended is responsible for, or is to blame for any action leading up to the complaint. The purpose of any such suspension is to enable a full and proper investigation to be carried out in a totally professional manner.

- It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive to make the decision as to whether to inform Childrens Services and/or the Child Protection Unit of the Police, depending on the nature of the allegation. Youth Options will co-operate fully with the Police, Social Services and all other parties involved.
- The Chief Executive, or in his/her absence a member of the Senior Leadership Team will ensure that the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or in his/her absence a senior Board member, is fully briefed. An agreed statement will be prepared for the purpose of accurate communication with external sources and for the protection of the legal position of all parties involved.
- The Chief Executive or a member of the Senior Leadership Team will make a full written report of the incident and the actions taken. This report will be stored securely following the procedures detailed in the Data Protection Policy.
- If there is a complaint against the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive, the complaint must be reported immediately to the Chairman of the Board.

Confidentiality

- Youth Options operates under a policy of confidentiality; however, under no circumstances will any individual in the employ of Youth Options keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person.
- This statement relating to confidentiality must be made known to all who access any provision of Youth Options.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child that they will keep secrets.

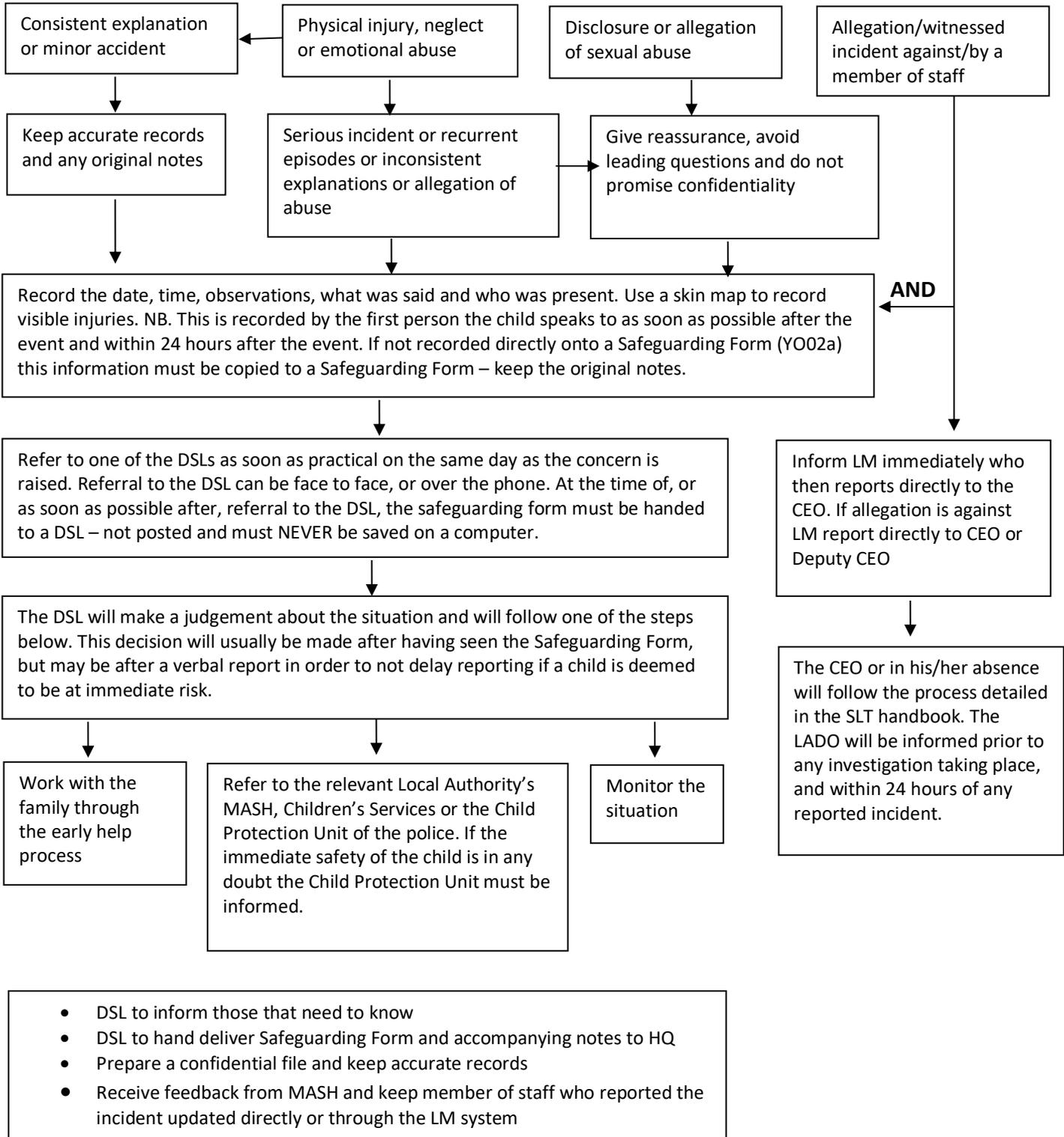
Review and Maintenance of Policy

- The Senior Management Team shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness annually..
- Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

Child Protection Procedures

IF IN ANY DOUBT AS TO WHAT YOU SHOULD DO AT ANY TIME DURING THIS PROCEDURE, SEEK ADVICE FROM YOUR LINE MANAGER OR THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM.

Child/Young Person



All staff have the right to make a referral to the police or social care directly and should do this if, the agreed protocol cannot be followed, e.g. they have concerns about sending a child home and cannot get in touch with the DSL.

Guidance Notes for Dealing with Disclosures

A member of staff who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

All staff should know who the DSLs are and who to approach if the DSL is unavailable. Ultimately, all staff have the right to make a referral to the police or social care directly and should do this if, for whatever reason, there are difficulties following the agreed protocol, e.g. they are the only adult on the premises at the time and have concerns about sending a child home.

Guiding principles, the seven R's

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable

Reassure

- Reassure the child/young person, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'
- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the child/young person only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do not ask the child/young person why something has happened
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child/young person to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the child/young person that it will be a senior member of staff

Report

- Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible

- If you are not able to contact any of the DSLs, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the Children's Services department directly
- If you are dissatisfied with the level of response you receive following your concerns, you should press for re-consideration

Record

- If possible make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible on to a Safeguarding Form (YO02a)
- Keep your original notes on file
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- Complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it

Review (led by DSL)

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following the report being made. If they do not receive this information they should be proactive in seeking it out.

If they have concerns that the disclosure has not been acted upon appropriately they might inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team or may ultimately contact the Children's Services Department.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and Youth Options has a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This includes reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

In some cases additional counselling might be needed and staff are encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

Young People and Illegal Activities

Youth Options strongly believe that a major part of the work of our organisation is challenging young people involved in potentially harmful activities and providing them with the best possible support to deal with the issues they face as a result of these activities. Following good practice in these areas requires the application of common sense to certain situations. If in any doubt about what action you should take in any of the following areas then you must consult or a member the Senior Management Team or Senior Leadership Team.

WEAPONS: If you are aware or suspect that a young person may be carrying a weapon, whether they have any intention of using it inappropriately or not, the sensible option is to report this to the police and have the young person removed. Under no circumstances should you attempt to remove a dangerous weapon from a young person. Your safety is paramount and you are responsible for it.

ALCOHOL: If a young person arrives at a session you are running under the influence of alcohol, you must make an informed decision as to whether you are happy to allow them to participate. This must be based on whether it is safe and appropriate for the young person in question, other young people participating and members of staff.

DRUGS: If you know that a young person in your care is in possession of drugs you must make an informed decision based on the information available to you as to what action you take. Your main concern must always be for the safety of yourself the young person, and the other young people in the group.

The information below will help you to make an informed decision:

- You must take immediate action to curtail the supply or use of illegal drugs on Youth Options' premises or premises where youth work is being delivered. It is an offence for the owner/occupier to knowingly permit the use or supply of illegal drugs on the premises.
- Confiscation – it is legal to confiscate an illegal drug in order to prevent an offence being committed, and then to destroy it or hand it in to the police. If you do confiscate an illegal drug, under no circumstances should you return it to the young person, as this is classified as dealing.
- Disposal – You are allowed to dispose of illegal drugs, for example by flushing them down the toilet; a witness should be present and the action recorded. A drug may be handed to the police, though the law does not require this.
- Searching – You can ask a young person to turn out their pockets and bags, however, you are not permitted to conduct a personal search of a young person.

Confidentiality – when a young person's actions put the safety and well-being of themselves or others at serious risk, you have a duty to pass on such information (this may include referral to emergency or specialist agencies, the police, parents or social services). The

boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to young people before they begin to disclose. Child Protection Procedures should be followed where appropriate.