Youthscape Safeguarding - Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Youthscape is a registered charity working face-to-face with young people, training and supporting youth workers, offering online services for young people focused on mental and emotional well-being and running an annual national residential youth event.

1.2 This policy applies to all our work, whether it takes place in Luton, online or elsewhere within the UK and to all our staff, volunteers, trustees and visitors.

2. The purpose of this policy

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to clearly outline the principles that underpin our approach to safeguarding, our responsibility as an organisation, and how we will meet our legal obligations and the highest standards of practice.

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the accompanying document **Youthscape Safeguarding – Practice** which describes the procedures for safeguarding at Youthscape, and other supporting documents.

3. Statement of our safeguarding responsibilities

3.1 We believe that:

• Children, young people and adults with care and support needs should never experience abuse of any kind.

• Youthscape has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and adults with care and support needs, to keep them safe and to practice in a way that protects them.

• Children, young people and adults with care and support needs have the right to participate in a safe and enjoyable environment.

• Children, young people and adults with care and support needs have the right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development.

3.2 We recognise that:

• Safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs is paramount, and we have a responsibility within the work we do to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

• All children, young people and adults with care and support needs, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

• Some children, young people and adults with care and support needs are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

• Working in partnership with children, young people, adults with care and support needs, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting welfare.

• Safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation, regardless of their role.

3.3 Our responsibilities as an organisation are to:

• Establish clear safeguarding policies and procedures that all trustees, staff and volunteers understand and follow.

• Ensure all trustees, staff and volunteers receive regular training relevant to their role in the organisation.

• Appoint a Safeguarding Lead to oversee our safeguarding.

• Carry out safe recruitment in accordance with our policy.

• Manage concerns, complaints, whistle blowing, suspicions and allegations relating to abuse or poor practice in a timely, appropriate, and effective manner.

• Comply with all relevant legislation and guidance and uphold safeguarding criteria thresholds.

• Ensure the sharing of confidential information is restricted to the necessary external agencies.

• Ensure all personal information about children, young people and adults with care and support needs is shared and stored appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and Information Sharing Protocols.

3.4 Youthscape acknowledges our statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs, and to work with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (LSCP) to comply with its safeguarding procedures.

4. Recognising Abuse

4.1 [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) 2023 defines abuse as:

“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.”

4.2 There are four major types of abuse:

* Physical abuse.
* Emotional abuse.
* Sexual abuse.
* Neglect.

4.3 Other types of abuse include but are not restricted to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

4.4 Staff and volunteers at Youthscape also have a responsibility to be aware that some children and young people who take part in our activities may experience difficulties that adversely affect their lives and therefore make them more vulnerable to risk of harm.

4.5 Particularly vulnerable groups include:

* Young people with a disability
* Young people at risk of CSE
* Young carers
* Young people in care
* Young people involved in CCE
* Young people who are NEET
* Young people who are homeless
* Young people who are experiencing domestic abuse
* Young people whose parents/carers misuse substances
* Young people whose parents/carers have learning disabilities
* Young people whose parents/carers have a mental illness
* Young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers or refugees
* Young people who are exposed to extremism
* Young people who self-harm

5. What is safeguarding?

5.1 Every organisation and its individual staff members have a duty of care to ensure the protection from unnecessary risk and/or harm of the children, young people and adults with care and support needs they are working with.

5.2 Safeguarding children and young people is defined in [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) as:

• Protecting children and young people from maltreatment.

• Preventing the impairment of children and young people’s health or development.

• Ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

• Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

5.3 Safeguarding adults with care and support needs is defined in the [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance) issued under the [Care Act 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents) as:

• Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

• People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.

• People and organisations making sure that the adult’s well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs when deciding on any action.

• Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being.

6. Who is this policy is intended to safeguard?

6.1 Whilst Youthscape works primarily with young people between the ages of 11-18 years, we recognise that we may, from time to time, work with younger children and with adults with care and support needs.

6.2 All young people under the age of 18 are regarded as children for the purposes of this policy. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the Armed Forces or is in hospital, prison or a young offender’s institution does not change their status.

7. Implementation of this policy

7.1 In order to manage and fulfil our responsibilities we have implemented a Safeguarding Team made up of the Safeguarding Lead and two Deputy Safeguarding Leads. Either of the two Deputy Safeguarding Leads may act for the Safeguarding Lead in their absence.

7.2 The Safeguarding Team also

• Respond to any safeguarding concerns or referrals as they are identified.

• Manage any communications between Youthscape and other organisations or bodies as part of a safeguarding referral.

• Carries out an annual review of the policy, and accompanying documents, in conjunction with the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees.

• Is responsible for developing and implementing a strategy for the policy, and accompanying documents, to be understood and implemented across the organisation.

• Organise training and familiarisation with the policies and practice across the organisation.

7.3 Youthscape’s Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and monitored on an ongoing basis to review implementation and to identify any issues or training needs.

7.4 The following situations may also trigger a review of the policy:

• Any changes in legislation

• The outcome of a case or referral

7.5 Although reviews will be initially carried out by the Safeguarding Team, The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for safeguarding at Youthscape. The Safeguarding Team makes a report to them at every Board meeting.

8. Safe Recruitment

8.1 Safe recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with children, young people and adults with care and support needs are appointed to promote safety from risk of harm.

8.2 Safe recruitment procedures must be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a staff member, trustee or volunteer.

8.4 Under the [Protection of Children Act 1999](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/14), all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

8.5 Safe recruitment also involves ensuring employees receive appropriate and competent training to fulfil the requirements of their role effectively. Youthscape are committed to providing comprehensive safeguarding training as part of each employee’s induction, as well as ongoing training appropriate for the role.

8.6 The procedures for safer recruitment are laid out in the accompanying document **Youthscape Safeguarding - Safer Recruitment**.

9. Acting on a safeguarding concern

9.1 All trustees, staff, and volunteers at Youthscape have a responsibility to act on any information or suspicion about any abuse or harm to a child, young person or adult with care and support needs.

9.2 The procedure for acting on a safeguarding concern is laid out in the accompanying document **Youthscape Safeguarding - Practice** and must be followed in all circumstances.

10. Complaints or allegations against a staff member, trustee or volunteer

10.1 Any complaints or allegations involving a Youthscape staff member, trustee or volunteer will be taken seriously and investigated. Youthscape will provide information about how to make a complaint on our website and displayed at Bute Mills.

10.2 Youthscape will follow the requirements of [Working Together to Safeguard Children](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf) 2023 which sets out procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children (including adults working in the private, voluntary, and independent sector). The procedures also manage concerns about adults where there is an indication they may pose a risk of harm to children.

10.3 The procedures are used in all cases in which it is alleged that an adult who works with children has:

* Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child.
* Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child.
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.

11. Data Protection and Management of Confidential Information

11.1 Youthscape is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All reported safeguarding concerns and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know, and all information is stored securely.

11.2 Any information shared with external agencies is done so following the guidance of the [Luton Safeguarding Children Partnership](https://www.safeguardingbedfordshire.org.uk/about-us/luton-safeguarding-children-partnership).

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Youthscape Safeguarding - Practice

1. Introduction

These procedures apply to all Youthscape staff, trustees and volunteers and must be followed.

2. Acting on a safeguarding concern

2.1 If a child, young person or adult with care and support needs discloses that they are concerned about someone’s behaviour towards them or another child, young person, or adult with care and support needs, the person receiving this information should:

* Remain calm and in control.
* Reassure the child, young person or adult with care and support needs by telling them they have done the right thing in sharing this with you.
* Take what the child, young person or adult with care and support needs says seriously.
* Listen carefully to what is said.
* Keep questions to a minimum – only ask for clarification with no leading questions.
* Not promise to keep the disclosure a secret. Let the child, young person or adult with care and support needs know you will need to share the information with other professionals to keep them and/or others safe.
* Report the concern to the staff member in charge and then to the Safeguarding Team, who will decide upon the appropriate action.
* Record the incident, including what is said on CPOMS.
* Tell the child, young person or adult with care and support needs what will happen next. If the Safeguarding Team determine that it is necessary to pass on the information to the Police or other external agencies then the child, young person or adult with care and support needs is to be given as much agency within the process as possible. This may involve them being the ones to make the referral with the support of Youthscape staff.

2.2 Staff, trustees and volunteers should report their concerns immediately to the staff member who is leading the activity or programme in which they are participating (and if there is no programme, to the Safeguarding Team). The staff member will make a risk assessment with them as to whether the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so (if in doubt they are to contact a member of the Safeguarding Team).

2.3 The risk assessment will determine what level of risk the young person is at, and therefore what the appropriate steps are. The risk level has been categorised using a traffic light system as below:

* Red: You have evidence the young person is at immediate risk of harm.
* Orange: You have concerns, but no evidence the young person is at immediate risk of harm.
* Green: You are not currently concerned about the young person’s safety, but there are pieces of information that may contribute to a bigger picture.

2.4 Staff members must follow the steps outlined in the Safeguarding Flow Chart based upon their risk assessment. Where there is any uncertainty, the Safeguarding Team must be contacted immediately.

2.5 Where information needs to be recorded using the CPOMS software, this must be completed within one working day. For more information on what and how to record when using the CPOMS software, see Appendix on Using CPOMS.

2.6 If there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so, the staff member must contact the Safeguarding Team immediately to explain the situation. This includes a disclosure made outside of standard working hours. The staff member must ensure that this is done before the child, young person or adult with care and support needs re-enters the situation which may be causing significant harm, and so this may involve asking them to remain at the activity or programme until advice has been given or a referral has been made.

2.7 The Safeguarding Team will decide whether to make a referral to MASH (Mulit-Agency Safeguarding Hub) or other authority, such as the Police.

2.8 The Safeguarding Team will also inform the child’s parents or carers before a referral is made, subject to the exceptions in Section 5 of this document.

2.9 If the child, young person or adult with care and support needs is in immediate danger and the staff member is unable to get in contact with the Safeguarding Team straight away, they must contact the Police.

3. Acting on a Safeguarding Concern in schools and other external contexts

3.1 Youthscape’s work with young people may take place in a school, church, or other context where Youthscape staff and volunteers are visiting or providing services.

3.2 Where there is information, an observation or a suspicion giving rise to a safeguarding concern in this context, the relevant safeguarding contact of the organisation must be informed. Where they are willing to do so, the child may be accompanied to meet the relevant safeguarding contact of the organisation and to pass on information. The organisation’s safeguarding officers will then take responsibility for the situation.

3.3 Youthscape staff and volunteers must still complete a record of the information, observation, or a suspicion in line with Youthscape’s recording procedures (see Safeguarding Flow Chart and Thresholds for MASH Referral).

3.4 Youthscape’s Safeguarding Team will contact the organisation’s safeguarding officer to confirm that the information has been received and acted upon.

4. Visitors

4.1 Where visitors to Youthscape may encounter children, young people, or adults with care and support needs, a range of steps are taken to ensure safety from risk or harm.

4.2 Any visitors who are in the vicinity of children, young people, or adults with care and support needs, will be always accompanied by a Youthscape staff member.

4.3 Short term placements, internships, or visits that are longer than 1 day where there is contact with children, young people, and adults with care and support needs, require accompaniment, the provision of a clear Enhanced DBS check in advance of the visit.

5. Informing parents/carers of a referral

5.1 Where appropriate, all reasonable efforts will be made to inform parents and carers before Youthscape makes a referral to the local authority’s MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Children’s or Social Care services or other authority, such as the Police. However, an inability to inform them will not prevent a referral being made.

5.2 There are cases where it will not be appropriate to discuss concerns with parents or carers before referral. In such situations, the timing of contact with parents or carers will be agreed with the local MASH, Children’s Social Care Services and/or the Police once the referral has been made. Situations where it would not be appropriate to inform family members prior to referral include where discussion would put a child at additional risk of significant harm or there is evidence to suggest that involving the parents or carers would impede the Police investigation.

5.3 The Safeguarding Team must record the reasons for not informing the parents or carers of the referral using Youthscape recording procedures (see Appendix on Using CPOMS).

6. Complaints or Allegations against a Staff Member, Trustee, Volunteer

6.1 Any allegation against a Youthscape staff, trustee or volunteer will be dealt with by a member of the Safeguarding Team. In the absence of this person, the allegation should be reported to the Chief Executive or a member of the Youthscape Leadership Team. All trustees, staff and volunteers will be made aware of this reporting structure during their induction.

6.2 The Safeguarding Lead will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day, or immediately in urgent cases, and follow the guidance of the LADO. If the child may have suffered significant harm, the Safeguarding Lead will also contact Children’s Social Care (MASH) or Police (Public Protection Team) without delay. They will also inform the parents or carers unless doing so may put the child at risk.

6.3 If the LADO advises so, the trustee, staff member or volunteer may be asked to cease working on a temporary basis until the matter is formally resolved, and after investigation this could lead to dismissal and further action being taken against the member of staff. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided for the person who the allegation has been made against.

6.4 Any concerns directly involving the Safeguarding Team should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and they will follow the same procedures. All staff, trustees and volunteers will be made aware of this reporting structure during their induction.

7. Malicious Allegations

7.1 An allegation is classified as malicious when some parts may have been fabricated or exaggerated. It is, however, important to be aware that some elements still may be based on truth. Where the Safeguarding Lead or Chair of Trustees may deal with an allegation that results in being classified in this way, care should be taken as some facts may not be wholly untrue.

7.2 Where a preliminary enquiry / investigation was undertaken and the allegations were deemed to be malicious, a record should be made stating that:

* An allegation was made (but not what the allegation was).
* Date the allegation was made.
* The allegation was fully investigated.
* The outcome was that it was found to be malicious or unsubstantiated and that no further action was taken.

7.3 Where the Safeguarding Lead or Chair of Trustees may feel that they need support around managing this outcome, they are to contact the LADO.

8. Transference of Risk

8.1 Transference of risk is when a trustee, staff member or volunteer has committed a criminal offence, come into contact with a concern within their personal life, or has a mental health issue which affects their ability to perform their duties (e.g. depression etc). The staff member/volunteer have a duty of care to inform Youthscape should any of these occur.

8.2 If a trustee, staff member or volunteer’s own child/children come to the attention of the statutory agencies for child protection, then issues of transference of risk will also need to be considered by the organisation. Again, the staff member/volunteer have a duty of care to inform Youthscape should any of these occur.

8.3 When these issues come to the attention of the Safeguarding Team (either by the Police, the LADO, the employee, or an external source) a transference of risk assessment must be completed.

8.4 If the risk levels are deemed unacceptable even with control measures in place, then further discussion will need to be had with the trustee, staff member or volunteer’s line manager and/or the Youthscape Leadership Team to determine the appropriate course of action.

9. Training

9.1 Everyone who works with Youthscape, in whatever capacity, will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction. This will include an explanation of Youthscape’s safeguarding policy, including information on how to report a safeguarding concern and our whistle-blowing procedures. They will also receive their own copy of Youthscape’s safeguarding policy and accompanying documents.

9.2 Safeguarding training will continue to be provided to staff, trustees and volunteers throughout their work with Youthscape.

* In the case of those who do not work directly with children, young people or adults with care and support needs, this will take the form of an in-house refresher course, including Youthscape’s policy and procedures, at least once a year.
* Trustees will receive additional training on understanding their role and duties as trustees of the organisation regarding safeguarding.
* Staff working directly with children, young people or adults with care and support needs will be expected to complete Level 2 safeguarding training within the first year of their employment. They will also be given the opportunity to attend additional training on subjects related to safeguarding and will be required to attend an in-house refresher course, including Youthscape’s policy and procedures, at least once a year.
* Volunteers working directly with young people will be required to attend an in-house refresher course, including Youthscape’s policy and procedures, at least once a year.

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