

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & VULNERABLE ADULTS

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PART A: POLICY

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 For the purpose of this policy YMCA Reading follows the national statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018' and aims to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for all staff, trustees, volunteers, residents, Parkside Pre-School children, and visitors to our facilities.

1.2 In particular, the Association is fully committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults that come into contact with our work. We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have an absolute right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity and consider their welfare is paramount.

1.3 We recognize that safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organization should play their full part.

1.4 We have an important responsibility to increase awareness around issues of abuse and we have clear alerting and referring procedures for employees and volunteers to follow should they have any suspicion that abuse is occurring or has occurred.

1.5 We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are appropriately recruited, vetted, DBS checked, inducted, managed and trained.

1.6 We ensure that Service Users are aware that we have a duty to report concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse and that confidentiality cannot be maintained where there are allegations of abuse.

1.7 We encourage Service Users who suspect abuse to share their concerns with appropriate staff members.

1.8 As an organization dedicated to the wellbeing of young people, YMCA Reading recognize that children and young people including vulnerable young adults, are at the centre of everything we do, and are aware of how the decisions we make regarding their care may impact them. We aim to give young people a voice regarding the services we provide, and make them aware of their rights to make complaints and voice any safety concerns or allegations regarding their care or the services we provide.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

YMCA Reading recognize that the period between childhood and adulthood is a particularly vulnerable time for our residents.

We will: -

2.1 Take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected where our staff, trustees, volunteers and all associates are involved in the delivery of our work.

2.2 Enable all our staff and those who work with us to make informed and confident risk-based decisions regarding safeguarding.

2.3 Create an environment where staff and volunteers feel able to raise any safeguarding concerns.

- 2.4 Expect everyone (staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone working jointly with YMCA Reading) to have read, understood and adhere to the policy set out below and related procedures.
- 2.5 Respond appropriately to any allegation, report or suspicion of abuse.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 The law in England and Wales defines children and young people as any child or young person that has not yet reached their 18th birthday. However, at YMCA Reading we work with a spectrum of children and young people that includes vulnerable young people up to the age of 25.

3.2 SAFEGUARDING

YMCA Reading defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as ensuring that they are:

- 3.2.1 Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence & sexual exploitation
- 3.2.2 Safe from accidental injury & death
- 3.2.3 Safe from bullying & discrimination
- 3.2.4 Safe from crime & anti-social behaviour
- 3.2.5 Protected from coercive control and abusive behavior, including financial coercion.
- 3.2.6 Afforded the safety and security of a stable home.

3.3 CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

Contextual Safeguarding refers to threats posed by exploitation from outside their families. These threats may come from peer groups, school, or more widely within the community and importantly from online. This could include county line activity, trafficking, exploitation by criminal gangs or online abuse or extremism.

3.4 TYPES OF ABUSE

YMCA Reading expects all trustees, staff, volunteers and contractors to respond proactively to any allegations of child abuse involving any young person under the age of 18.

There are four types of child abuse defined in the UK Government guidance as follows:

- 3.3.1 Physical abuse
- 3.3.2 Emotional abuse, including bullying and coercive control
- 3.3.3 Sexual abuse
- 3.3.4 Neglect

Abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable adult within these four categories of abuse may take many forms, and may also involve more than one category of abuse.

3.5 ACRONYMS

- 3.5.1 DBS: Disclosure Barring Service
- 3.5.2 DSO: Designated Safety Officer
- 3.5.3 LADO: Local Authority Designated Officer
- 3.5.4 LSCB: Local Safeguarding Children Board

4.0 SCOPE

4.1 This policy is applicable to all Staff, trustees and volunteers and anyone working jointly with YMCA Reading.

5.0 LINKED DOCUMENTS

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

- 5.1 Staff Handbook
- 5.2 Equality and Diversity Policy
- 5.3 Health and Safety Policy
- 5.4 Whistleblowing Policy
- 5.5 Privacy Policy
- 5.6 Contractors Protocol

6.0 SERVICE STANDARDS

- 6.1 YMCA Reading shall endeavor to gain the opinions of Staff before the Policy is next reviewed.
- 6.2 YMCA Reading shall inform all new Staff of this policy on induction.
- 6.3 YMCA Reading shall ensure that all Stakeholders have the opportunity to comment on this Policy

7.0 POLICY OWNER

- 7.1 The Policy owner is the Chief Executive Officer

8.0 MONITORING

- 8.1 YMCA Reading shall review this Policy every year or earlier if necessary.

9.0 CHANGE LOG

10.0 NEXT REVIEW

March 2020.

PART B: PROCEDURES

1.0 Identifying the Need for Early Help

YMCA Reading aims to work in partnership with Safeguarding Partners (Local Authority, Police and NHS) to help to identify emerging problems with the young people we work with. Where staff and or volunteers have any concerns regarding the welfare of any child or young person using YMCA services those concerns will be raised with appropriate Authorities /agencies. Staff and volunteers will avail themselves of Continuous Professional Development to help them to recognize early signs of abuse, grooming, exploitation and radicalization. Case Practitioners should in particular be alert to the potential need for early help for child or young persons who:

- 1.1 Has a disability or specific additional needs
- 1.2 Has special educational needs
- 1.3 Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behavior, including gang involvement and association with organized crime groups (e.g. County Lines)
- 1.4 Is frequently missing or absent from the project or staying away overnight.
- 1.5 Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- 1.6 Is at risk of being radicalized or exploited
- 1.7 Is in family circumstance presenting challenges such as drug and alcohol abuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- 1.8 Is misusing drugs or alcohol.

Any concerns regarding any of the above should be referred to the relevant social worker or to Reading Borough Council Children’s Social Care. This should be done immediately if there is any concern that the child or young person is suffering significant harm or likely to do so. Always follow-up concerns if you are not satisfied with the response.

NOTE: A description of the definitions and signs of abuse can be found here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

If there are concerns that a child or young person may be a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking, then a referral should be made to the National Referral Mechanism as soon as possible:

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/specialist-capabilities/uk-human-trafficking-centre/national-referral-mechanism>

2.0 INFORMATION SHARING

2.1 YMCA Reading Staff have all had training in General Data Protection protocols and should all be familiar with the Privacy Policies associated.

2.2 Staff and Volunteers should be confident that where there is a need to share special category data the Data Protection Act 2018 contains ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk as a processing condition that

allows practitioners to share information with relevant authorities. This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent, if it is not possible to gain consent or where it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or where gaining consent might put a child or vulnerable person at risk.

3.0 CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

3.1 AT YMCA Reading staff and volunteers must be particularly aware of the impact of Contextual safeguarding particularly within our accommodation.

Contextual Safeguarding refers to threats posed by exploitation from outside their families. These threats may come from peer groups, school, or more widely within the community and importantly from online. This could include county line activity, trafficking, exploitation by criminal gangs or online abuse or extremism.

Once placed within the YMCA for housing, a young person may be particularly prone to extra-familial threats of this kind. Any concerns regarding contextual safeguarding of YMCA residents should be referred for assessment through either the relevant Social Worker or:

- Safeguarding Adults - 0118 937 3747
- Children's Single Point of Access - 0118 937 3641

4.0 DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

4.1 Any trustee, staff member or volunteer concerned about a possible incident of abuse should immediately report this to their line manager and the YMCA Reading Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). The DSO is also able to give advice on queries, questions or anxieties regarding child abuse.

4.2 At YMCA Reading we have 2 separate Designated Safeguarding Officers:

- **Stephen Ritchie – General Manager Housing & Support**
- **Alison Bennett is the DSO for the Parkside Pre-School**

When a DSO is not in the office and there is a concern that needs immediate escalation they should be referred to:

- **Kirstie Brock, Deputy DSO for Housing and Support**
- **Marie Nolan Deputy DSO in Parkside Pre-School**

Escalation is then to the Chief Executive.

Stephen Sherwood is the Trustee Lead for Safeguarding

4.3 The role of the DSO is to:

- 4.3.1 Support staff and the Board of Trustees in the formulation of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.
- 4.3.2 Provide advice and support to trustees, staff and volunteers when they have a concern regarding any safeguarding issue.

4.3.3 Liaise and act as a point of contact between YMCA Reading and the Local Children’s Safeguarding Boards, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) and the statutory agencies involved in the safeguarding of children across the Reading and any other area of operation.

4.3.4 Monitor and report to the YMCA Board on any safeguarding children incidents within YMCA Reading services.

4.3.5 Work alongside the Human Resources Department to organise a programme of safeguarding induction and training and development for trustees, staff and volunteers.

4.3.6 Work alongside the Human Resources Department and operational managers to ensure safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.

5.0 SAFER RECRUITMENT

5.1 As part of the recruitment procedure all workers, paid or unpaid, complete a comprehensive application form. All situations which involve work with children and/or young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants are requested to give details of any criminal convictions on a separate form as part of their application and are informed that the YMCA will carry out a criminal background check (DBS). Failure to complete this form halts the application process for that applicant.

5.2 It is important that the nature of the applicant’s contacts with children and young people are thoroughly explored at interview. If there is any doubt about the suitability of the applicant this should be explored further through searching questions.

5.3 All posts are offered on the condition that 2 satisfactory references and DBS are received. If there is cause for concern over either of these the offer may be withdrawn and the person dismissed.

NOTE:

If the worker has moved frequently from one job to another it is advisable to find out why. The request for a reference should make it clear that the post will involve working with children or young people and that the reference given should include their views on applicant’s suitability for this type of work. If replies are vague or ambiguous they will be followed up by a telephone call or, if necessary, in person. The recruitment process and interview must take into consideration that an abuser may lie or withhold information.

5.5 Disclosure and Barring Service

5.5.1 A DBS form will be completed by all applicants. On taking up their post the applicant will not be permitted to work with children or young people unsupervised until their disclosure is received.

5.5.2 All staff are signed up to the DBS update service and are checked by the HR department a minimum of twice a year for all staff members and volunteers.

5.5.3 It is a legal requirement that YMCA Reading must report any disclosure that comes to light during the employment of a staff member to the DBS.

5.6 Supervision and Training

5.6.1 Workers should be given regular opportunities to meet together and review and plan their work, share experiences, 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.

5.6.2 Line Managers should carry out and record regular supervision sessions with their members of staff and volunteers, and carry out observations of one to one work.

5.6.3 The opportunity is provided for workers to talk to an independent suitable person in the form of clinical supervision about any difficulties or anxieties they may have in relation to their work. This support is offered on a monthly basis.

5.6.4 The HR Manager will ensure that workers receive appropriate training and that a record of this is kept. Refresher training should take place regularly. All staff have access to regular Safeguarding training, and ancillary courses such as, but not limited to: Domestic Abuse, Coercive Control, and Exploitation training. Staff should liaise with their Line Managers about their training needs and ensure their training records are kept up to date with the HR Manager.

5.6.5 All staff are expected to read and understand this policy document.

6.0 PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF TRUST - Boundaries

6.1 YMCA Reading has clear policies regarding professional boundaries outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct. These are also set-out in the YMCA Reading Resident's Handbook.

An allegation relates to a person who works with children or vulnerable young adults who has:

6.1.1 Behaved in a way that has harmed the young person, or may have harmed the young person

6.1.2 Possibly committed a criminal offense against or related to a child or young person

6.1.3 Behaved towards a child or children or young person/people in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to them.

Any allegation against a member of YMCA Reading staff or volunteer should be reported immediately to a Senior Manager. The Manager must report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and escalated to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the allegation being made. It is the responsibility of the LADO to provide advice and guidance.

6.2 Should YMCA Reading have just reason to remove a staff member or volunteer due to a risk of harm to children or young people, we are obligated to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. This is required even if a staff member or volunteer leaves prior to being asked to leave.

6.3 Staff should be aware of the distinction between a safeguarding allegation, which must be escalated to the LADO; a concern about the quality of care or practice, which can be dealt with internally and a complaint which follows a process set-out in the YMCA Complaints Procedure which is available in the Resident's Handbook.

7.0 EARLY YEARS – Parkside Pre-School

7.1 The YMCA Parkside Pre-School maintains its own Safeguarding policies located in the YMCA Reading Shared Drive:Public/Policy Manual/Safeguarding folder

7.2 The Staff and volunteers understand their duty to comply under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage. They ensure that:

7.2.1 They are alert to any issues of concern in the child's life

7.2.2 They have an implemented policy and procedures to safeguard children, which includes the actions to be taken where there are concerns about a child and in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff.

7.2.3 Policies include those relating to use of mobile phones and cameras

7.2.4 All of the policies relating to staff recruitment and training in this policy relate to our early years professionals as well.

8.0 WHISTLEBLOWING

8.1 YMCA Reading will ensure that any allegations made against members or a member of staff, trustee or volunteer will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

8.1.1 YMCA Reading staff must ensure that the safety and welfare of the child or children affected is paramount immediately following an allegation being made.

8.1.2 The DSO should be notified of all details relating to the allegation at the earliest possible opportunity and they will advise on the action to be taken.

8.1.3 The DSO will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the full details of any allegation that a member of staff or volunteer may have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child, or has behaved towards children in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children. The LADO will advise the organization on what steps to take.

8.1.4 Guidance and support for handling allegations against staff can be sought from the DSO and the HR department. Staff may also consider the use of the YMCA Reading Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure where they have serious safeguarding concerns regarding the behaviour, actions or lack of actions by volunteers, trustees or another staff member.

9.0 REPORTING ABUSE AND ESCALATION

9.1 It is YMCA Reading's duty both to prevent abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected. The normal rule of client confidentiality cannot be observed when abuse is discovered or suspected. When workers suspect, discover, are told about, or learn about abuse occurring in or outside the YMCA setting, they should follow the reporting procedures outlined here.

9.2 You may suspect abuse; you may discover or witness abuse, or someone may report abuse to you. Take any allegation of abuse seriously. Where there are any concerns of abuse, it is important that you follow the following guidance:

9.2.1 Do not delay immediately report suspected abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

9.2.2 Do not confront the person who is alleged to be responsible for the abuse

9.2.3 Record any observations and keep an account of what you have been told by staff or the child or young person. These records must be accurate and factual. (link to incident sheet)

9.2.4 It is not your role to investigate – concentrate on presenting information clearly.

9.2.5 Pass on your information to the appropriate person (DSO, Deputy DSO, Line Manager and Chief Executive)

9.2.6 Do not discuss with anyone other than the person to whom you should report the matter.

9.3 Local Authority Contacts

9.3.1 Safeguarding Adults - 0118 937 3747

9.3.2 Children's Single Point of Access - 0118 937 3641

9.3.3 Local Authority Designated Officer – 01189 373555 (named officer frequently changes)