Fun, Learning & Achievement

Safeguarding Policy

Person Responsible for Review and Policy	Method of Approval
Head of Safeguarding	Board of Management and Chief Officer

Version	Date	Publication / Amendments	Author	Date of next review
1.0	01/09/2026	Published	Head of Safeguarding	01/09/2027

National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs

Safeguarding Policy

Contents:

1. Introduction…….. 1
2. Policy Statement…….. 1
3. Policy Objectives……2
4. Scope of the Policy……2
5. Statutory Legislation and Guidance……3
6. Principles Underpinning Effective Safeguarding Practice…… 4
7. Safeguarding Responsibilities, Commitments and Training……4
8. Safeguarding Children and Young People……..11
9. Safeguarding Adults at Risk…….. 12
10. Abuse, Exploitation and Harm…….. 13
11. Mental Health and Safeguarding……..16
12. Procedures for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns……..17
13. Responding to Concerns About a Child or Young Person……20
14. Responding to Concerns About an Adult……21
15. Mental Capacity and Consent……...22
16. Low-Level Concerns……...23
17. Managing Allegations Against Leaders, Staff and Volunteers…… 24
18. Position of Trust……...26
19. Whistleblowing……30
20. Safeguarding at YFC Events and Activities…… 30
21. Residential Trips……...31
22. Regulated Activity……32
23. Safer Recruitment……...32
24. Information Recording, Storing and Sharing…….. 33

Appendix 1: Links to External Policies, Legislation and Guidance……35

Appendix 2: Links to NFYFC Internal Policies, Procedures and Guidance…… 36

Appendix 3: Definitions……37

1. Introduction

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) is a federation of over 570 individual Clubs, spread over 47 counties and 7 regional area throughout England and Wales, most of which are independent charities and separate legal entities. The NFYFC is one of the largest rural youth organisations in the U.K. with around 23,000 members aged between 10 and 28 years enjoying all the benefits that membership has to offer.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our members, staff and volunteers is ***everyone's responsibility all of the time*** and it is a priority for the NFYFC. Awareness and application of this policy will help to provide an environment within Young Farmers' Clubs (YFC) that is safe, fun and welcoming for everyone and help to create a positive safeguarding culture that underpins our core values at YFC.

This policy applies to everyone involved with YFC at every level of the organisation including all members, staff, volunteers and trustees. This policy also provides comprehensive information and guidance for anyone who has a safeguarding or welfare concern about any child, young person, adult at risk, staff member or volunteer.

This policy will also make sure that everyone has clear understanding about their individual and collective responsibilities with regard to safeguarding in YFC.

2. Policy Statement

NFYFC believes that everyone has the right to participate safely in YFC activities in an environment free from abuse and neglect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or background, political belief, appearance and physical ability.

NFYFC recognises our duty of care for our members and volunteers. We believe that the safeguarding and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk should be central to everything we do and recognise the need to ensure that we meet our responsibility to promote their welfare.

We accept our responsibility to ensure that we and our affiliated clubs and counties have effective safeguarding arrangements in place and respond appropriately to any incidents of harassment, abuse or safeguarding concern that may arise within YFC.

The NFYFC recognises that there are critical differences between the safeguarding of children and the safeguarding of adults. However, we have made an organisational decision to maintain one unified safeguarding policy in response to the expressed preference of our membership and evidence from research and practice. Risks and vulnerability do not suddenly decrease as young people transition into adulthood, and for many, protection and support decrease considerably. The age range of our membership (10-28 years old) is unique and something that our organisation is very proud of and our approach to safeguarding both children and adults is similarly framed by our values and shared principles.

The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk must always be the top priority for NFYFC, all clubs, counties and areas and we are all governed by the requirements of this policy. Safeguarding in YFC is ***everyone's responsibility all of the time*** and we all have a

moral and ethical duty of care, combined with a legal obligation and accountability to protect and support all of the children, young people and adults at risk in YFC.

3. Policy Objectives

This policy underpins NFYFC's commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our members, leaders, staff and volunteers within YFC and to ensure that safeguarding is embedded and an integral part of all YFC activities.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Raise awareness of NFYFC's commitment to safeguarding
- Promote a positive culture of safeguarding within YFC
- Contribute to safe, positive and enjoyable experiences for all our members
- To provide an understanding of the different types of harm and abuse
- To demonstrate the importance that the YFC Code of Conduct plays in strengthening safeguarding within the organisation
- To develop an understanding of our moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from harm
- To provide guidance on how to recognise, respond to and report any safeguarding concerns or allegations of abuse or harm
- To raise awareness of local and national safeguarding guidance and frameworks to help support the discharge of our own safeguarding responsibilities
- To ensure that YFC contribute effectively to safeguarding concerns or incidents that require a multi-agency response
- Advise of measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of harm or abuse occurring within YFC including leaders within YFC with specific safeguarding responsibilities being appropriately trained
- Ensure that sensitive and confidential information is recorded, retained and shared in accordance with statutory safeguarding legislation and guidance

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy and associated standards and guidelines are mandatory and applies to all members, those in positions of responsibility (officers), volunteer helpers (leaders, advisory, committee members, presidents and vices, ambassadors and parents/carers) and staff involved in YFC as well as all those who are working with or on behalf of NFYFC such as directors, stewards, judges, officials or administrators whether employed, contracted or voluntary.

In addition, the policy applies to non-members who attend YFC events and activities, including but not limited to visitors/guests, trainers and invited speakers, agents, medical personnel and to any individuals acting on behalf of NFYFC.

The policy applies to affiliated club, county and area YFCs involved in the delivery of YFC activities.

Where there are devolved nation variations arising from differences in legislation and government guidance, these should be discussed and agreed with NFYFC. The statutory legislation and guidance in the UK which informs this policy can be found in Section 4 below and links to these documents are in Appendix 1 of this document.

5. Statutory Legislation and Guidance (non-exhaustive list)

This policy complies with the following legislation and guidance (this is a non-exhaustive list):

- Care Act 2014: Provides a clear statutory legal framework for safeguarding adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004: Form the legal foundation for child protection in England and Wales The key principles being that the welfare of the child is paramount, establish parental responsibilities and a requirement for Local Authorities and partner agencies to collaborate to safeguard children.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015: Gives local authorities a statutory duty to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (the 'Prevent' duty).
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018: States that children's data should have specific protection and introduces new changes for the online processing of a child's personal data. Protection of personal data has expanded individual rights and increased corporate accountability.
- Equality Act 2010: The primary legislation in Great Britain that legally protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and requires equal treatment for everyone. The Act protects individuals from unfair treatment based on nine specific 'protected characteristics.'
- Mental Capacity Act 2005: Is a law in England and Wales that protects and empowers people aged 16 and over who may lack the mental capacity to make specific decisions for themselves due to an impairment or brain disturbance.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: A legal framework in the UK designed to protect children and adults at risk. It details the statutory requirements for preventing unsuitable individuals from working with these groups of people and provides the legislation for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026: Statutory guidance setting out the framework that all statutory and non-statutory agencies[1] should follow and details multi-agency responsibilities to protect children and young people.

[1] Statutory safeguarding agencies are core public bodies mandated by law to cooperate in protecting children and vulnerable adults. The three primary statutory safeguarding partners are local authorities, the police, and health services which work alongside secondary partners.

- Working Together to Safeguard People: Code of Safeguarding Practice 2022: Embedded in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, this is the Wesh Governments statutory guidance and framework for protecting children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect.
- Sexual Offences Act 2003: Is a key piece of legislation in England and Wales that defines sexual crimes, sets legal penalties and protects children and vulnerable people from sexual harm.

Links to these external policies, legislation and guidance can be found at Appendix 1.

6. Principles Underpinning Effective Safeguarding Practice

Safeguarding practice is strongly value-driven and underpinned by the principles set out in UK wide legislation and statutory guidance. The NFYFC is committed to creating and maintaining a culture and practices that makes everyone feel protected, included and welcomed, and ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all members is prioritised throughout our organisation and affiliated clubs and counties.

7. Safeguarding Responsibilities, Commitments and Training

7.1 Responsibilities for Safeguarding

Everyone is responsible for safeguarding within NFYFC, and particularly for those who work with, or who have responsibility for, children and adults in YFC. Shown below are the groups within YFC that have specific roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults in YFC.

This policy interprets for the YFC community any relevant legislation and statutory guidance for safeguarding children and adults at risk to ensure, as a minimum, that we all comply with all applicable legal responsibilities.

7.2 The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs

The NFYFC will work to:

- Promote a culture of safeguarding and inclusivity so that that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all members is embedded throughout our affiliated clubs and Organisation in order to ensure that everyone can participate in YFC activities safely, feel protected, included and welcomed.
- Implement safe recruitment procedures, as documented in the NFYFC Safer Recruitment Policy, including criminal record (Disclosure and Barring Service [DBS]) checks of staff and volunteers where their role meets the eligibility criteria outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The NFYFC acknowledges and requires all staff and volunteers in YFC to acknowledge, that they have a duty of care to safeguard children and adults from harm. Counties, clubs and their members must follow the policies and procedures in the Safeguarding Policy to safeguard children and Adults at Risk from harm and act appropriately where an individual is identified as being at risk of harm.

7.3 NFYFC Board of Management

The NFYFC Board of Trustees is responsible for providing strategic direction, guidance and oversight to create a safer organisation.

Key responsibilities of the NFYFC Board of Management include:

- To be accountable for and oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policy.
- Ensure safeguarding policy and procedures are reviewed periodically.
- Monitor safeguarding work to see how effective measures in place are working.
- Ensure safeguarding is included in board meetings and report findings.
- Support regular updates to staff, volunteers and communities.
- Promote safeguarding and model behaviours that support a safe culture.
- Commit sufficient resources by NFYFC to ensure that effective safeguards can be implemented and supported in accordance with this policy and procedures.

7.4 Chief Officer

The Chief Officer is responsible for communicating strategy for creating a safe organisation and motivate staff and volunteers to implement it.

Key responsibilities of the Chief Officer include:

- Share the organisation's strategy on safeguarding with Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that the board understand the importance of safeguarding.
- Ensure a culture of openness within the organisation to enable staff and volunteers to report concerns.
- Model the behaviours that promote safeguarding.
- Provide strong leadership support to safeguarding focal points.
- Remind the Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers regularly of the organisation's commitment to safeguarding via emails and other communication channels, staff and county chairs' conferences, NFYFC staff and County Staff meetings etc.
- Provide updates to Board of Trustees on safeguarding practice or case reviews. This includes ensuring that an informed overview of safeguarding is provided as a standing agenda item at all Board Meetings.
- Ensure that all concerns and referrals are promptly investigated.

7.5 Head of Safeguarding

The Head of Safeguarding is responsible for coordinating and supporting the development and implementation of safeguarding related policies and procedures and supervising the work of the Safeguarding & Behaviour Team.

Key responsibilities of the Head of Safeguarding include:

- Support the organisation to implement and monitor the safeguarding policy and report regularly to senior management on issues with implementation.
- Raise awareness on safeguarding policy throughout the organisation and ensure that members know what behaviours to expect from staff and how to raise and report concerns.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, members, contractors and partners are signed up to and understand the code of conduct, are aware of expected behaviours and the implications of misconduct.
- Oversee the work of the Welfare, Safeguarding & Behaviour Team and provide effective supervision, support and guidance as required.
- Ensure staff and volunteers access and complete safeguarding training appropriate to their roles.
- Receive safeguarding reports/ concerns and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address them.
- Ensure that proper records of all reports and the case handling process are maintained.
- Provide regular updates regarding reports/ concerns that arise to senior management and relevant stakeholders.
- Clarify questions on safeguarding raised by staff, volunteers, members, partners and contractors.
- Build and maintain relationships with statutory agencies, key service providers ensuring that the organisation has the right network of support.
- Ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up to date with current legislation and best practice.

7.6 Safeguarding and Behaviour Management Team

The NFYFC's Safeguarding and Behaviour Management Team is responsible for maintaining and embedding standards set out by the NSPCC. The team is made up of two Safeguarding and Behaviour Case Managers who are line managed by the Head of Safeguarding.

This team is responsible for providing support to County Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) to enable them to respond confidently, confidently and consistently when concerns arise and when they are in receipt of referrals and managing safeguarding and behaviour or misconduct cases. The team is also responsible for responding to referrals and concerns that are shared directly with NFYFC and, where appropriate, the team will manage safeguarding and behaviour or misconduct cases and appeals, contribute to updating and implementing the Safeguarding Policy, and take an active role in promoting and sharing best safeguarding practice with club and county YFCs.

The Safeguarding and Behaviour Management Team will:

- Ensure staff and volunteers are appropriately supported to respond to and manage safeguarding concerns and cases.
- Seek support from the appropriate statutory agencies if immediate risk of harm or abuse is identified or suspected
- Support, and where possible take action, to secure the safety of individuals, and ensure that all referrals to services provide all relevant/known information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability
- Ensure staff, members and volunteers are aware on a need-to-know basis of information that indicates that a member may have additional support needs or may be in need of protection. Where appropriate, information will be shared with the agreement and knowledge of the adult, young person or parents/carers
- Contribute to the creation of policies, guidance and training to support county and club staff and volunteers in their safeguarding work.
- Ensure that their own knowledge and skills remain up to date with current legislation and best practice.

7.7 County Designated Safeguarding Officers

DSO's play a vital role in safeguarding in YFC. They are often the first point of contact for members and parents/guardians of members who have a concern and are the visible and accessible 'face of safeguarding' across the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring that any concerns are responded to appropriately, escalated where necessary and reported to NFYFC and/or relevant statutory agencies by following the procedures and practices in the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

DSO's will:

- Read and be fully familiar with the organisation's policies, codes of conduct and guidance relating to safeguarding within YFC and ensure that they operate in accordance with them.
- Ensure that all members are signed up to and adhere to the YFC Code of Conduct
- Act as the first point of contact for any member who has a concern.
- Manage and investigate cases of concern or misconduct as appropriate in line with YFC policy, legislation and statutory guidance
- Seek and follow relevant advice and guidance from NFYFC where required
- Ensure that full records are securely maintained in relation to all cases, and are appropriately stored, retained and retrievable to those who hold this role and responsibilities once they step down or depart the organisation
- Share information appropriately and without delay on request from NFYFC.
- Ensure that the membership database is appropriately updated in relation to banned and suspended members, including on conclusion of any ban or suspension.

7.8 Club and County Officers, Staff and Volunteers

Club and county officers, staff and volunteers are responsible for contributing to creating a safe culture.

Key responsibilities include:

- Read and be fully familiar with the organisation's policies, codes of conduct and guidance relating to safeguarding within YFC and ensure that they operate in accordance with them.
- Ensure that safe recruitment procedures are followed, in line with the Safer Recruitment Policy for all volunteers and staff. Through safer recruitment practice, to ensure that those who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable groups are not allowed to do so. Criminal record checks though the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are only a small, but critically important, part of an overall safe recruitment process which should include consistent application processes, taking up of references and appropriate supervision, mentoring and induction processes (see Appendix 2).
- Demonstrate and encourage behaviours that promote a safe, inclusive and positive culture.
- Be aware and alert to signs of concern that indicate that all is not well with someone.
- Have low thresholds for responding to and reporting any and all concerns immediately to the relevant DSO.

As part of safeguarding, staff and volunteers must also be alert to, recognise and challenge poor practices and breaches of the YFC Code of Conduct. Such breaches may impact the wellbeing of members and those who are in breach must be held accountable for their conduct and behaviour to ensure that a positive safeguarding culture is established and maintained.

7.9 YFC Members

YFC Members have a responsibility to:

- Declare any conditions, medications and/or additional support/access needs that may impact their participation or that of other in YFC activities
- Abide by the YFC Code of Conduct and policies
- Treat all other YFC stakeholders with dignity and respect at all times and in line with the YFC Shared Values.

YFC Members also have a responsibility to be aware and alert to signs of concern that indicate that all is not well with fellow members, volunteers or staff, and to report their concerns to the officer with responsibility for safeguarding within their club and/or the County DSO without delay. This also includes responsibility to report any concerns about anyone whose behaviours, attitudes or language appear to have an adverse impact upon anyone involved in YFC activities.

7.10 Working with Children and Adults at Risk

Everyone who works or volunteers to work with children and adults at risk within YFC must ensure that:

- The welfare and safety of all our members is paramount.
- Members, staff and volunteers are treated with dignity and respect
- Good practice is promoted, in order to reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring.
- They continually reflect upon their own practices and leadership style to ensure the safety and wellbeing of members at all times and encourage others to do the same.
- They know and understand NFYFC's safeguarding and other policies, procedures and codes of conduct.
- They always work appropriately and openly with children and adults in the organisation.
- They are an excellent role model at all times, which includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- They always put the wellbeing, health and safety of members before all other considerations.
- They build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers members, including both children and adults, to share in the decision-making process.
- They refer and address safeguarding concerns appropriately.

In addition, Club and County Officers, Leaders and other volunteers must:

- Keep their safeguarding knowledge and training/qualifications up to date
- Complete a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check at the relevant level upon commencing a new post and update that check at least once every three years
- Complete the NFYFC safeguarding course before commencement of the role and attend a refresher course or other appropriate safeguarding learning and development opportunities every year
- Have open and regular communication with parents/guardians of child members
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for a member's age, maturity, experience and ability
- Promote honesty, teamwork and a supportive, inclusive environment
- Follow NFYFC guidance on running clubs and activities.

Club and County and Officers, Leaders and other volunteers **must not:**

- Abuse their position of power or trust.
- Take children or adults at risk to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone.
- Transport children in isolation. They must not give lifts to, or otherwise transport, any child (unless they are a family member) when unaccompanied. This includes tractors and other farm vehicles.
- Use physical force on a child or adult, for example pushing or striking a member.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to children or adults at risk (including the use of language/images on printed or online materials, on clothing or merchandise or verbally).
- Engage in a sexual relationship, including online or non-contact in nature, with a child aged 17 or under.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves.
- Share overnight accommodation with a child or adult at risk.
- Reduce a child or adult at risk to tears as a form of control.
- Cause a child or adult at risk to lose self-confidence or self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual.
- Use any form of humiliation as a punishment to a member.
- Resort to bullying tactics or verbal abuse.
- Show favouritism or devote excessive amounts of attention or time to one member to the detriment of the rest of the club.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Allow inappropriate language or behaviour, including bullying or harassment, by other members, staff or volunteers to go unchallenged.
- Allow allegations made by a member to go unrecorded or not acted upon.

7.11 A Child Centered Approach

Effective safeguarding systems are child centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children.

The statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023', sets out the feedback from consultation with children and young people about what they need from those who work with and support them. It states that children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them.
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening, to be heard and understood, and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if they are a refugee.

8. Safeguarding Children and Young People

The fundamental principles of safeguarding children are typically outlined in statutory frameworks, such as the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and the Children Act 1989 and 2004. They operate across three core objectives: identifying risk early, protecting children and young people from harm, and enabling the best possible outcomes for children.

These principles can be broken down into the following key areas:

8.1 The Child Centered Approach

- **Welfare is Paramount:** The child's health, safety and best interests must always come first in any decision-making process.
- **Listening to the Child:** As far as is reasonably possible, the child's views, wishes, and feelings must be ascertained, recorded, and factored into decisions.
- **Early Intervention:** Support and help should be offered as early as possible to prevent issues from escalating or causing long-term damage.

8.2 The Six Core Principles of Safeguarding Children

- **Empowerment:** Supporting children and their families to make their own informed decisions and giving them a voice.
- **Prevention:** Taking proactive measures to stop abuse before it happens, through robust staff training, awareness, and safe environments.
- **Proportionality:** Ensuring that any action taken is appropriate, balanced, and the least intrusive response necessary to manage the specific risk.
- **Protection:** Putting clear measures in place to safeguard children from abuse and neglect.
- **Partnership:** Effective safeguarding requires agencies (e.g., schools, police, health services, and social care) to work collaboratively together and with the child's family.
- **Accountability:** Every organisation, volunteer, and professional must understand their responsibilities and be fully transparent in their delivery of safeguarding practice.

8.3 Practical Responsibilities

- **Safer Recruitment:** Vetting all staff and volunteers through background checks (e.g., the Disclosure and Barring Service in the UK) and obtaining robust references.
- **Recognising Signs:** Training staff to be alert to the signs and symptoms of physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect.
- **Reporting and Recording:** Having clear, accessible procedures for recording concerns and safely escalating them to senior designated leads or statutory child protection services.

9. Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Safeguarding adults means protecting an individual’s right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect. It involves organizations and communities working together to prevent risks, stop harm, and promote well-being while ensuring the adult's views, wishes, and choices are respected.

The Care Act 2014 identifies six core principles that underpins the safeguarding of adults at risk.

9.1 The Six Core Principles of Safeguarding Adults

- **Empowerment:** Supporting adults to make their own decisions and provide informed consent, encouraging them to take control of their lives.
- **Prevention:** Prioritising proactive measures to stop abuse and neglect before it occurs.
- **Proportionality:** Ensuring any interventions or responses are the least intrusive possible and directly match the severity of the risk.
- **Protection:** Providing dedicated support and representation for those in greatest need of assistance.

- **Partnership:** Fostering local solutions where organisations, services, and communities work together to detect and prevent abuse.
- **Accountability:** Maintaining transparency in safeguarding practice and decision-making so that everyone involved is clear about their responsibilities.

10. Abuse, Exploitation and Harm

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child, young person or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse, neglect or exploit a child, young person or adult at risk by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not necessarily physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. 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 and exploitation can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse and exploitation. Children may be abused or exploited by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

10.1 Types of Abuse

- **Domestic Abuse:** Domestic abuse is typically exhibited as a pattern of abusive behaviour between intimate partners, family members, teenage relationship abuse, and adolescent to parent abuse. Dometic abuse can include a wide range of behaviours and may be a single or pattern of incidents. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:
  - Coercive and controlling behaviour
  - Economic / financial abuse
  - Emotional / psychological abuse
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Tech abuse
- **Emotional / Psychological Abuse:** The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 meet 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 or experiencing the effects of the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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, although it may occur alone.

- **Financial Abuse:** The theft or control of a person's property or assets.
- **Neglect:** Neglect refers to 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: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- **Child-on-Child Abuse:** Children and young people can also be abusers of other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of YFC and online. Different forms of child-on-child abuse could include:
    - Bullying (including cyberbullying)
    - Sexual abuse
    - Physical abuse
    - Online abuse e.g. youth produced sexual imagery
    - Forms of initiation / rituals
- **Online Abuse:** Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online, including social media, messaging apps, emails and live-streaming sites. The types of abuse that can happen online are, cyberbullying, emotional abuse, grooming, sexting. Sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. For more information about online abuse please refer to the NSPCC and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) guidance on online abuse and how to make a report in Appendix 1.
- **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.
- **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.

10.2 Types of Exploitation

- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, which increases as the exploitative relationship, develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.
- **Child Criminal Exploitation:** Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.
- **County Lines:** County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims (See Appendix 1 - Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults: County Lines).
- **Gang:** A group of people of any age with a defined leadership and internal organisation. They identify with, or claim control over, territory in a community and engage either individually or collectively in illegal and possibly violent behaviour.
- **Radicalisation:** Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability, which are often, combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people. (See Prevent duty guidance – Appendix 1).

10.3 Other Types of Harm (this is a non-exhaustive list)

- **Alcohol and Drug Misuse:** Being dependent upon and/or regularly consuming excessive/harmful levels of alcohol or prescribed or illegal substances. Alcohol and drug misuse can lead to a wide range of physical, psychological and social problems.
- **Bullying:** This is repeated threatening, aggressive, intimidating and cruel repeated behaviour involving an intentional balance of power. Bullying can occur in person or online (cyberbullying).
- **Forced Marriage:** When someone is forced into a marriage against their will by use of violence, threats or coercion. This is a criminal offence in the UK.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** This is the procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. FGM is a form of child abuse and is illegal.
- **Honour Based Violence:** Is a form of abuse committed by individuals who believe that a family member has brought shame or dishonour to their family or community.
- **Self-harm:** This is any behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to oneself e.g. by cutting, scratching, burning. (See Appendix – Self-harm Management and Suicide Prevention Guidance)
- **Self-neglect:** Is a severe lack of personal care by failing to meet your own individual needs such as hygiene, nutrition, medical care and living conditions. Self-neglect only applies to adults (18 years or older).

11. Mental Health and Safeguarding

YFC's have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all of our members as anyone can experience poor mental health at any stage of their lives. Whilst it is only appropriately trained professionals who can make a diagnosis of a mental health problems, all members, leaders, staff and volunteers are well placed to observe and identify those individuals whose behaviour may suggest that they are experiencing mental health issues.

If a child has suffered abuse and/or neglect or other Adverse Childhood Experiences this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood and any mental health issues may vary in terms of strength and frequency. Mental health issues may manifest themselves in different ways from person to person but may include, anxiety attacks, self-harm or suicide ideation, eating disorders or aggressive behaviour.

YFC's provide a great opportunity for children and young people to build strong friendships and support networks which can provide a positive and impactful environment for any of our members suffering from mental health issues. The NFYFC would encourage anyone who is facing mental health problems or anyone who has concerns about someone else's mental health problems, to speak to a YFC leader or County Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) so that the necessary advice and support can be put in place.

12. Procedures for Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

These procedures apply to everyone involved in YFC and have been approved by the NFYFC Board of Management.

These procedures set out detailed steps to be taken and what you must do if you are concerned about the welfare of a child, young person, adult or yourself, inside or outside of YFC. Everyone within YFC has a duty to report safeguarding concerns and any concern must be acted upon immediately or a soon as is practicable.

These procedures operate in conjunction with the NFYFC Code of Conduct and Shared Values and the Behaviour Policy (Appendix 2).

NFYFC is committed to ensuring that any member who attends a YFC club, event or activity will be safeguarded from harm. Protection and safeguarding of all of our members is paramount and should be based on prevention, best practice, and the NFYFC Safeguarding Policy.

All members, staff and volunteers must be aware of how to report any concerns that they become aware of. Concerns must be reported without delay and understand when it is appropriate to make an external referral to the local authority, social services or the police.

Everyone within YFC is advised to maintain an attitude of ***'it could happen here'*** so every safeguarding concern, allegation or disclosure must be taken seriously and responded to correctly.

If you are unsure what to do in response to a safeguarding concern, or you are unsure if a concern has been reported, contact the NFYFC Safeguarding Team or external partner agencies using the contact details below.

NFYFC Safeguarding and Behaviour Management Team	Safeguarding@nfyfc.org.uk
Neil Lowther NFYFC Head of Safeguarding	Neil.lowther@nfyfc.org.uk 07541 626 855
Lauren Hancox Safeguarding & Behaviour Case Manager	Lauren.hancox@nfyfc.org.uk 07823 884 659
Ally Sellar Safeguarding & Behaviour Case Manager	Ally.sellar@nfyfc.org.uk 07561 806439
NSPCC	help@nspcc.org.uk 0808 800 5000
Children's Services (England)	Find your local Children's Services
Children's Services (Wales)	Find your local Children's Services
Adult Social Care (England)	Find your local Adult Services
Adult Social Care (Wales)	Find your local Adult Services
Local Police	Call 101
In an Emergency	Call 999

12.1 Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer

The "5 Rs" of safeguarding are a foundational framework used by professionals and organisations to protect children and adults. This framework provides an easy-to-remember process for recognising, documenting, and taking appropriate action if a safety concern or disclosure arises.

RECOGNISE	Be alert to the warning signs, changes in behaviour, physical indicators, or direct disclosures of abuse, neglect, or harm. Recognise when ‘something just doesn’t feel quite right’.
RESPOND	Take immediate, calm, and appropriate action to ensure the individual's safety. Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by alerting you to the concern. Never ignore a concern or promise to keep it a secret.
REPORT	Follow safeguarding procedures by reporting the concerns to your County DSO or the NFYFC Safeguarding Team. Share information appropriately on a ‘need to know’ basis in the interest of safeguarding but maintain confidentiality.
RECORD	Write down exactly what you saw, heard, or were told immediately using the person's own words wherever possible. Include dates, times, and who else was present.
REFER	Pass the documented concern to the proper statutory or specialised agencies such as local Children’s Services or the police.

12.2 Recognising Concerns

Everyone has a duty to recognise, record and report safeguarding concerns. Be alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation, harmful behaviour and unexplained changes in behaviour. Concerns may arise from direct disclosure, indirect comments, behaviour or patterns over time. Particular care should be taken where individuals have disabilities, learning disabilities or neurodivergence that may affect communication or understanding. These factors do not reduce safeguarding responsibilities but may require reasonable adjustments.

12.3 Responding to a Disclosure

Respond calmly, listen carefully, reassure the individual, thank them for speaking up and explain that you must share the information with safeguarding leads. Ask only questions needed to clarify what has been said. Do not investigate, make promises of confidentiality, express opinions or ask leading questions. Record the person's own words wherever possible, including dates and times.

12.4 Managing Incidents

If a safeguarding incident is ongoing, prioritise immediate safety. Stop harmful behaviour where safe to do so, provide support to anyone at risk and seek emergency medical assistance or contact the police where necessary. Serious concerns involving positions of trust or suspected criminal offences must be referred promptly to statutory agencies in line with safeguarding procedures.

12.5 Reporting

It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to determine whether abuse has occurred or to investigate concerns. All concerns, including low-level concerns, should be reported without delay to the appropriate safeguarding lead (Club, County or NFYFC). Where there is immediate risk of harm, contact emergency services first. Accurate, factual records must be completed promptly and maintained confidentially. External referrals should be notified to NFYFC in accordance with organisational procedures.

12.6 Good Practice

Do: stay calm; listen; reassure; record facts; share concerns promptly; seek advice when unsure.

Do not: investigate; ask leading questions; promise secrecy; delay reporting; share information beyond those who need to know.

13. Responding to Concerns About a Child or Young Person (Under 18 Years)

- Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare **must** report their concerns to the relevant County DSO as soon as possible.

- Any safeguarding concerns about a child that are reported to the County DSO should be reviewed to determine (where appropriate, in consultation with NFYFC Safeguarding Team) whether information should be shared with the statutory agencies or any other organisations.

- Any concerns or allegations where a criminal offence is known or suspected or involves a person in a Position of Trust within YFC, **must always** be reported to the County DSO **and the** NFYFC Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. (For more information regarding a Position of Trust see Section 17).

- If a child is suffering significant harm or is likely to suffer significant harm, a referral should be made to the Local Authority Children's Social Care and/or the police **immediately**.
- If a child is at immediate risk and action needs to be taken urgently, contact the police by dialling 999. If concerns are identified out of hours, the police and Children's Social Care Services provide an out-of-hours service.
- Where concerns arise in relation to a child, a parent or carer should also be informed, when it is appropriate to do so. This is particularly important if a situation arises where an individual was hurt or distressed, may have misunderstood or misinterpreted something that was said or done. However, where you have reason to believe that a parent/carer/family member may be responsible for abuse or neglect, you should always seek advice from police or children's social care first and follow their advice in relation to what action should be taken and about who will inform the parents.
- When a referral is made to an external partner agency e.g. Children's Social Care, that agency has a legal responsibility to make enquiries where a child may be at risk of significant harm. This may involve gathering information from others who know the child or talking to the young person and their family. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police where a criminal offence is suspected.
- The County DSO must be contacted without delay where an allegation or concern is made against an individual who is a YFC member.
- Anyone who makes a referral should always follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the response or seek support from the NFYFC Safeguarding Team for support and advice regarding whether concerns should be escalated or reported via an alternative route.

14. Responding to Concerns About an Adult

- Anyone concerned about the welfare of an adult member must report the concern to the County DSO or the NFYFC Safeguarding & Behaviour Team for advice and support. Information may be shared internally without consent where necessary for safeguarding. Consent should be sought before sharing information externally unless there is an immediate or significant risk of harm.
- Adults have the right to make their own decisions, including whether information about them is shared. An unwise decision alone does not justify overriding their wishes.
- Information may be shared without consent where necessary to safeguard the individual or others, particularly where:
    - there is a risk of significant harm;
    - a serious crime has been or may have been committed;
    - the concern involves a person in a Position of Trust; or
    - others may be at risk.
- In line with the Care Act 2014 and Welsh legislation, safeguarding should balance an adult's rights with the need to prevent harm, while prioritising their safety and wellbeing. Information should be shared where necessary to:
    - prevent death or serious harm;
    - protect children where domestic abuse is suspected;
    - enable appropriate safeguarding responses;
    - prevent escalating risks;
    - reduce abuse and neglect; and
    - identify individuals who may pose a risk to others.
- Anyone who suspects an adult member is experiencing abuse, or harassment must report their concerns. Advice should be sought from the County DSO or the NFYFC Safeguarding & Behaviour Team to determine whether the matter is a safeguarding or conduct concern.
- Referrals should reflect statutory guidance. An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Serious safeguarding concerns must be referred to the NFYFC Safeguarding & Behaviour Team, who will determine whether a referral to statutory agencies is required. Where there is immediate or significant risk of harm, a referral to the Local Authority must be made without delay.
- Unless doing so would increase risk, members should be informed if information needs to be shared externally, why it is necessary, and with whom it will be shared.

- Where there is no lawful basis to share information without consent, the reasons for requesting consent should be explained, including the benefits of accessing support.
- If consent is refused, the decision and reasons must be recorded. Members should be reassured that any information shared will be limited to those with a legitimate safeguarding need.
- Local Authorities have a statutory duty to make safeguarding enquiries where an adult at risk is, or may be, experiencing abuse or neglect.

15. Mental Capacity and Consent

Mental capacity is an individual's ability to understand, remember, weigh and communicate information to make an informed decision and to be able to communicate that decision.

Only specifically qualified professionals such as doctors and social workers can ultimately decide if an individual has mental capacity or not but safeguarding officers within YFC do have a responsibility to consider a person's mental capacity in the first instance.

Before referring concerns to the Local Authority or Police, consider whether the adult has the mental capacity to decide whether information should be shared. Capacity should be assessed in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and recorded where relevant.

Use the following guidance when deciding whether or not you feel a person has mental capacity or not:

- **Presumption of Capacity:** Start with the presumption that every adult has capacity to make decisions. Then consider if the individual has the ability to understand, retain, weigh and to communicate their decision.
- **Understand:** Does the individual understand the details and facts relevant to the choice that is to be made, including options and consequences.
- **Retain:** Do they remember the information long enough to make a decision.
- **Weigh:** Do they use the relevant information as part of a reasoning process.
- **Communicate:** Can they express the decision that they have made by any means e.g. verbally or in writing.

The individual should be supported to understand the concern being raised, the purpose of sharing the information, the benefits and risks of consenting or refusing and the likely outcome of their decision.

If capacity is uncertain, seek advice from the County DSO, the NFYFC Safeguarding Team or Adult Social Care.

Where an adult has capacity but refuses consent, their wishes should normally be respected. However, information may still be shared where there is a serious safeguarding concern, including where:

- others are at risk;
- a serious crime has been or may have been committed;
- the concern involves a person in a Position of Trust;
- coercion or duress is suspected; or
- there is another legal basis to share the information.

Where information is shared without consent, the adult should normally be informed unless doing so would increase the risk of harm. The decision, rationale and any refusal of consent must be recorded.

Where an adult appears to lack capacity, safeguarding concerns must always be shared with the appropriate statutory authorities.

Adults with capacity should decide who else, if anyone, information is shared with. Their consent should be recorded. Where an adult lacks capacity, information should only be shared with parents, carers or family members where appropriate. If there is any doubt, advice should be sought from Adult Social Care before sharing information.

16. Low-Level Concerns

16.1 What is a Low-Level Concern

A low-level concern is any concern, doubt, or worry that a YFC member, leader, member of staff or volunteer may have acted in a way that conflicts with our YFC Code of Conduct and Core Values.

Concerns or allegations can relate to behaviour inside or outside of work and do not have to directly involve children.

These worries or concerns might not be considered serious enough to meet the ‘harm threshold’[2] whereby concerns should be referred to the police or children’s services. However, they still require a response. If low-level concerns are not addressed they can escalate into more significant breaches of our Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy and can even result in harm or abuse.

Low-level concerns should not be treated as being insignificant as it is important that YFC responds to all concerns about an adult’s behaviour no matter how small. This consistent approach helps to create a positive safeguarding culture where the safety of all our members is always prioritised.

[2] The harm threshold is the line that separates low-level concerns from serious concerns, abuse or neglect that legally requires statutory partner agencies such as the police or social services to become involved.

16.2 Self-Reporting Low-Level Concerns

Occasionally an adult YFC member, leader, member of staff or volunteer may find themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted or might appear compromising to others. Equally, this adult may, for whatever reason, have behaved in a manner which, on reflection, they consider falls below the standards set out in the YFC Code of Conduct. Self-reporting in these circumstances can be positive for a number of reasons, and anyone who finds themselves in this situation are encouraged to self-report to the County DSO on the basis that:

- It is self-protective, in that it enables a potentially difficult issue to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- It demonstrates awareness of the expected behavioural standards and self-awareness as to the member of staff's own actions or how they could be perceived.
- Crucially, it is an important means of maintaining a culture where everyone aspires to the highest standards of conduct and behaviour.

A link to the NFYFC Low-Level Concern Policy can be found in Appendix 2 of this document.

17. Managing Allegations Against Leaders, Staff or Volunteers

Sometimes safeguarding allegations may be made against a YFC leader, member of staff or volunteer who is in a Position of Trust. Such safeguarding allegations will be dealt with according to guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Appendix 1) and the procedures set out by the Local Authority where the person concerned, resides.

An allegation is where any person who works or volunteers with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

Any allegation of this nature should be made to your County DSO or a member of the NFYFC Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Once the County DSO or NFYFC Safeguarding Team member has received the allegation, if the threshold is met, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in England or the Designated Officer for Safeguarding (DOS) in Wales. The referral to LADO or DOS will be made within 24 hours of receiving the allegation.

It is important to understand that allegations can relate to an individual's behaviour outside of YFC that might make that person unsuitable to work with children, this is known as transferable risk.[3]

The NFYFC Safeguarding Team must always be made aware of any allegations received and referrals made by the relevant County DSO. If the allegation relates to a County DSO then the matter must be reported to a member of the NFYFC Safeguarding Team. If the allegation concerns any member of the NFYFC Safeguarding Team then the NFYFC Chief Officer must be made aware of the allegation.

17.1 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information concerning an allegation or concern must only be shared with those who need the information to safeguard the child or young person or to manage the concern appropriately.

Confidentiality must not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to protect a child or young person from harm.

Records must be accurate, factual, securely stored and managed in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

17.2 The Role of the LADO or DOS

The LADO and DOS main responsibilities include managing the referrals, coordinating a multi-agency response to the referral, provide guidance to organisations on how to conduct internal investigations and Chair multi-agency meetings.

When allegations arise, there are three possible areas of investigation:

1. Police investigation
2. Statutory Child Protection investigation
3. Internal YFC Investigation

In cases where a statutory agency is conducting an investigation, the YFC safeguarding officer dealing with the cases will liaise with partner agencies to monitor the progress of the case. Once the statutory agency confirms the outcome of their investigation to YFC, decision making about next steps will be made in consultation with the LADO / DSO and in line with the NFYFC Behaviour Policy.

[3] Transferable risk refers to a situation where a person in a Position of Trust within YFC behaves or is involved in incidents outside of YFC which indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or adults at risk.

18. Position of Trust

The NFYFC recognises that adults who work with, lead, supervise or support children and young people may hold a position of trust. This position carries additional responsibilities because children and young people may place confidence in adults who have authority, influence or responsibility for their welfare.

A position of trust must never be used to exploit, manipulate, intimidate or otherwise harm a child or young person.

This chapter sets out the NFYFC's expectations for anyone acting in a position of trust and the action that must be taken where boundaries are breached or concerns arise.

18.1 What is a Position of Trust?

A position of trust exists where an adult has responsibility, authority, influence or significant access in relation to a child or young person.

This may include, for example:

- club leaders, youth workers and volunteers;
- office holders and committee members;
- activity leaders, instructors, coaches and mentors;
- adults supervising trips, residential activities or events;
- individuals providing pastoral, welfare or other support;
- anyone who regularly supervises or has significant responsibility for children or young people.

A position of trust can exist whether the individual is paid or unpaid, employed, self-employed or volunteering.

The NFYFC will take a broad safeguarding approach to positions of trust. Even where a particular relationship does not meet the legal definition of a position of trust, the organisation's safeguarding expectations and professional boundaries still apply.

The law in England and Wales (Sexual Offences Act 2003), makes it an offence for an adult aged over 18years old who is in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a person under 18 over whom they have that position of trust.

18.2 Expected Standards of Behaviour

Anyone in a position of trust must:

- act in the best interests of children and young people;
- maintain appropriate professional and safeguarding boundaries;
- treat children and young people with dignity and respect;
- avoid behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as grooming, favouritism or inappropriate intimacy;
- ensure that contact with children and young people is appropriate to their role;
- use communication methods and social media appropriately;

- avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations where safer alternatives are available;
- never use their position, authority or influence to obtain personal, emotional, financial or sexual benefit;
- report safeguarding concerns, allegations or boundary breaches promptly;
- comply with the NFYFC's safeguarding procedures, code of conduct and relevant policies.

Adults must recognise that a child or young person may perceive their relationship differently because of the authority or influence held by the adult.

18.3 Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

The following behaviours are not acceptable when they arise from, or are connected to, a position of trust:

- developing an inappropriate emotional or sexual relationship with a child or young person;
- sexualised conversations, jokes, messages or images;
- private or secret communication that is inappropriate to the person's role;
- giving excessive or inappropriate gifts or money;
- showing favouritism towards an individual child or young person;
- deliberately seeking opportunities to be alone with a child or young person;
- sharing personal or intimate information inappropriately;
- contacting children or young people through personal social media accounts where this is not necessary or authorised;
- arranging private meetings or activities outside the organisation without an appropriate safeguarding reason;
- encouraging a child or young person to keep aspects of their relationship with an adult secret;
- using authority or influence to discourage a child or young person from reporting concerns.

These examples are not exhaustive. A concern may arise from a pattern of behaviour or from a single incident.

18.4 Sexual Relationships

Adults in a position of trust must not engage in sexual activity or pursue a sexual relationship with a child or young person for whom they have responsibility, authority or influence.

In England and Wales, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 contains specific offences relating to sexual abuse of trust (See Sexual Offences Act 2003 – Abuse of position of trust Appendix 1). These protections recognise that young people may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation by adults who hold power, influence or responsibility over them.

The fact that a young person appears to consent does not remove the safeguarding concern or, where applicable, the criminal offence.

Any allegation or concern that an adult has engaged in sexual activity with a child or young person in circumstances involving a position of trust must be treated as a safeguarding matter and reported immediately to the County DSO and the NFYFC Safeguarding Team immediately.

18.5 Grooming and Abuse of Trust

Abuse of a position of trust may develop gradually. Grooming can involve building trust with a child or young person, their peers or other adults in order to facilitate inappropriate or abusive behaviour.

Possible indicators may include:

- increasing attempts to establish a special relationship with a particular child;
- excessive private communication;
- unexplained gifts or rewards;
- secrecy around contact or activities;
- inappropriate physical contact;
- persistent attempts to isolate a child or young person;
- inappropriate discussions about relationships or sexual matters;
- behaviour that appears increasingly controlling or possessive;
- attempts to undermine parents, carers or other safeguarding professionals;
- testing or deliberately crossing professional boundaries.

Leaders, staff and volunteers must not dismiss concerns because an individual is well regarded, experienced or trusted within YFC.

18.6 Reporting Concerns About a Person in a Position of Trust

Any person who has a concern that an adult may have:

- abused their position of trust;
- behaved inappropriately towards a child or young person;
- breached safeguarding boundaries;
- engaged in grooming behaviour; or
- caused or may cause harm to a child or young person

must report the concern immediately to the County DSO and NFYFC Safeguarding Team.

The concern must be reported even where:

- the child or young person has not made a formal complaint;
- there is uncertainty about what has happened;
- the behaviour appears to have been consensual;
- the adult disputes the concern;
- the person is a senior employee, volunteer, committee member or office holder.

The person raising the concern should record factual information, including what was observed, heard or disclosed, and should avoid investigating the matter themselves.

18.7 Allegations Against Leaders, Staff and Volunteers

Where an allegation or concern relates to a leader, member of staff or volunteer, or any other person acting on behalf of the NFYFC, the organisation's Managing Allegations Against Leaders, Staff and Volunteers procedure (Section 16) procedure must be followed.

The NFYFC will ensure that concerns are handled fairly, promptly and confidentially, while prioritising the safety and welfare of children and young people.

The NFYFC will not undertake its own investigation when doing so could interfere with a statutory or criminal investigation. Appropriate advice should be obtained from the relevant child protection authorities and/or the police.

Where appropriate, protective measures may be taken while the concern is being considered. These may include changes to duties, increased supervision or suspension from relevant activities. Such measures are precautionary and do not imply that an allegation has been substantiated.

18.8 Responsibilities of Leaders and Members of Staff

Leaders and members of staff have a particular responsibility to:

- model appropriate professional boundaries;
- ensure staff and volunteers understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- respond promptly to concerns about behaviour or boundary breaches;
- ensure concerns are reported through the appropriate safeguarding channels;
- avoid conflicts of interest when managing allegations;
- seek advice from appropriate safeguarding authorities where required; and
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are recorded and followed appropriately.

No individual should use their seniority, status or length of service to prevent or discourage a safeguarding concern from being reported.

18.9 No Tolerance of Abuse of Trust

The NFYFC has a **zero-tolerance approach to the abuse or misuse of a position of trust**.

A person's reputation, seniority, length of service, voluntary status or contribution to the organisation must never take precedence over the safety and welfare of a child or young person.

All concerns will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with this safeguarding policy and relevant legislation and guidance.

For further information relating to position of trust within YFC please refer to 'Position of Trust (YFC Handbook) in Appendix 2.

19. Whistleblowing

Although incidents can be reported directly by the affected individual, the term “whistle blowing” is often used to describe a complaint relating to the conduct of an individual that is made by someone other than the affected person.

NFYFC recognises that some individuals may be fearful of the consequences of making a complaint under these procedures, particularly where the perpetrator is in a position of influence or authority. Raising concerns about someone’s behaviour is particularly difficult within close communities like Young Farmers where there are many potential conflicts of interest, family relationships and friendships. In these circumstances, where possible, the identity of the whistle blower will be protected and remain confidential.

Whistleblowing may also apply in circumstances where an individual has reported a safeguarding concern to NFYFC that has previously been reported to a club or county, but it is believed that the club or county either failed to act or has taken action that is considered unsafe in the circumstances.

Any person who reports a concern in good faith must not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences. These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes a complaint that is false, vexatious, retaliatory or frivolous.

For further information please refer to the NFYFC’s Malpractice and Whistleblowing Policy (Appendix 2).

20. Safeguarding at YFC Events and Activities

YFC events and activities are a fundamental part of the YFC community and safeguarding should be central to the planning and running of these events.

20.1 Supervision Ratios

The minimum supervision ratio requirements between adults and children (under 18 years) at YFC events are as follows:

- **10 – 12 years old** – one adult to eight children (1:8)
- **13 – 18 years old** – one adult to ten children (1:10)
- Where there is a group of children who’s age range is a mixture of the above two categories, for example a group of children ranging from 11 – 14 years old then the ratio of the youngest member of the group should be applied, in this instance 1:8.
- If any child(ren) within a group has been identified as having additional needs, no matter what age, the supervision ratio must be 1:6.
- Ideally and wherever possible two adults should supervise any group making the ratios 2:8, 2:10 or 2:6.
- If young people are helping to supervise younger children only people age 18 or over should be included as adults when calculating adult to child ratios.

20.2 Body of Persons Approval

For any YFC performance events such as the entertainment and drama competitions, a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA) must be applied for to the Local Authority where the event is taking place. Under the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (England) and The Children (Performances and Activities) (Wales) 2015 Regulations, a BOPA is an exemption granted by a Local Authority that allows an organisation e.g. YFC, to involve children in performances without needing to secure an individual performance licence for every child. Part of the core criteria for a BOPA application is for the NFYFC to evidence that robust and up-to-date child protection policies and procedures are in place, that NFYFC have dedicated safeguarding officers at the event as well as ensuring that children are supervised by registered chaperones. A BOPA applies to all children of compulsory school age[4] and at YFC events where a BOPA is in place the minimum supervision ratios as indicated above should be applied.

Further information relating to BOPA's in England and Wales and further guidance from the National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment (NNCEE) can be found at Appendix 1 – 'Links to External Policies, Legislation and Guidance.'

Other YFC events and activities also need to be planned, and risk assessed to a high standard, documenting all of the measures that have been put in place to help the event or activity run safely and that everyone attending the event is kept safe from harm and abuse. Careful thought must be given when events and activities may include the sale of alcohol and what measures are to be put in place so that all members stay within the licensing laws.

Further information regarding the organisation of YFC events and activities can be found in Section 4 – 'Day to Day Running a YFC' of the YFC Club Officer Handbook (Appendix 2).

21. Residential Trips

All YFC residential (overnight) trips are classified as a Regulated Activity (Section 21).This means that all leaders, staff and volunteers who are supervising YFC members on a residential trip must have undergone an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check that also includes a check of the DBS Barred List for both children and adults and has completed the Club Officer safeguarding training course or refresher course within the last three years.

For any residential trip where there is a mixture of male and female members there should be a minimum of two male and two female leaders on the trip. This provides appropriate supervision cover, avoids situations in which one adult is solely responsible and helps safeguard both our young members and the leaders. Adult leaders should have sleeping accommodation that is separate from any members under the age of 18. Leaders should therefore not share the same tent, room or other sleeping space as under-18 participants.

[4] Compulsory school age ends on the last Friday in June during the academic year a student turns 16 years old.

22. Regulated Activity

Regulated activity refers to certain roles that involve working with children or adults at risk, such as teaching, training or instruction, care for or supervision in either paid or unpaid roles. Anyone who is on the DBS barred lists cannot work in these roles. Therefore, any leader, member of staff or volunteer within YFC who carry these duties will be subject to an Enhanced DBS and Barred List checks to check whether they are barred and to prevent them from accessing these roles.

The definition of regulated activity is different for children and adults. Regulated activity with children includes both the nature of the activity undertaken e.g. teaching, as well as a frequency / time period whereas the definition of regulated activity for adults at risk only stipulates the type of work involved e.g. health care.

Leaders, staff and volunteers involved in regulated activities are eligible for Enhanced DBS checks with children's and/or adults' barred lists. They reveal whether or not a person has committed criminal activity that makes them unsafe to work with children or adults.

For further information relating to regulated activity for both children and adults at risk please refer to the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Explanatory Notes' Section 5 (Appendix 1) and the Government document 'Regulated activity with children in England and Wales' (Appendix 1).

23. Safer Recruitment

As part of our whole organisational approach to safeguarding the NFYFC is committed to ensuring that any adults who work or volunteer within the federation are suitable to do so. To help us achieve this aim we follow strict procedures and guidance detailed in our Safer Recruitment Policy and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy (Appendix 2).

As part of our safer recruitment procedures the NFYFC will make sure that all staff and volunteers:

- Understand the role / job description that they are applying for.
- Complete an application and self-declaration form.
- Complete NFYFC safeguarding awareness training.
- Provide a minimum of two references.
- Complete appropriate vetting process

23.1 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

As part of its approach to safer recruitment, the NFYFC will use the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working within YFC. Any YFC leader, member of staff or volunteer who's role includes them being involved in 'regulated activity' (Section 21) within YFC will require an Enhanced DBS and Barred List check.

For further information regarding roles and DBS checks within YFC, please see the Disclosure and Barring Service document ‘DBS Checks: Detailed Guidance’ (Appendix 1) and the YFC ‘DBS and Safeguarding Training Checklist’ (Appendix 2).

23.2 Duty to Refer to the DBS

The NFYFC has a legal duty to refer any individual to the DBS where there are concerns that that person has or may have caused harm or poses a risk of harm to children or adults at risk.

Before making a referral to DBS the NFYFC should establish if the following two conditions are met:

- The individual has been removed from regulated activity. This can include dismissal, redeployment, retirement, redundancy, or resignation.
- The NFYFC believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfies the harm test.

For further information please see ‘The legal duty to refer to DBS’ and ‘Making barring referrals to DBS’ and the ‘DBS Referrals Flowchart’ in Appendix 1.

24. Information Recording, Storing and Sharing

24.1 Information Recording

All safeguarding concerns about a child or adult must be recorded in writing at the earliest opportunity. Records should be factual and signed and dated by the person making the record, with the name of the signatory clearly printed in writing. When making the record, it is important to distinguish between things that are fact and things that have been observed or overheard, in order to ensure that information is as accurate as possible.

Safeguarding records must detail exact dates, times, specific observations, actions taken and verbatim quotes when a disclosure is made. Personal opinions and speculation must not be included in safeguarding records. Reasons and rationale for any decisions that are made should also be recorded in writing.

24.2 Information Storing

All recorded safeguarding information must be stored securely. This information will be retained in line with national legislation and guidance including, Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR (2018) (Appendix 1) as well as the NFYFC Privacy Policy (Appendix 2).

24.3 Information Sharing

Sometimes sensitive safeguarding information needs to be shared with other people and partner agencies for a number of reasons, such as:

- A concern has been raised about the safety of a child or adult at risk.
- There is information that a crime has or may have been committed.
- A statutory agency e.g. police, social services of health agencies requires information about a specific person(s).
- Information is required to support a referral to a partner agency.

All information is shared in line with Government guidance on Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2018 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (Appendix 1).

Information sharing is an essential tool in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and adults at risk, safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to keep everyone in YFC safe. Information that is relevant to safeguarding is regarded as 'special category personal data' and as such can be shared securely on a *'need-to-know'* basis.

Appendix 1: Links to External Policies, Legislation and Guidance

- BOPA (England) – Child performance and activities: licensing legislation
- BOPA (Wales) – Keeping young performers safe: performance licences for children
- Care Act 2014
- CEOP – Online abuse guidance and making a report
- Child abuse concerns: guide for practitioners
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Criminal exploitation of children, young people and vulnerable adults: County Lines
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DBS Checks: Detailed Guidance
- DBS Referrals Flowchart
- Equality Act 2010
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners 2024
- Making barring referrals to DBS
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Capacity Act – Social care and support guide (NHS)
- National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment (England)
- National Network for Children in Employment & Entertainment (Wales)
- Online Abuse (NSPCC)
- Prevent duty guidance
- Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation
- Regulated activity with children in England and Wales
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Explanatory Notes - Section 5
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 – Abuse of position of trust
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The legal duty to refer to DBS
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) 2018
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard People: Code of Safeguarding Practice 2022 (Wales)

Appendix 2: Links to NFYFC Internal Policies, Procedures and Guidance

- Behaviour Policy
- DBS and Safeguarding Training Checklist
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Malpractice and Whistleblowing Policy
- Position of Trust (YFC Handbook)
- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention Guidance
- YFC Club Officer Handbook
- YFC Code of Conduct and Shared Values

Appendix 3: Definitions

Adult: Legally means any person over the age of 18 years old.

Adult at risk: An adult, who is, or may be, in need of community care services such as adult social services, because of mental health, disability, age or illness, and/or who is unable to care for themselves or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Adult protection: Adult protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect adults suffering from, or at risk of significant harm.

Allegation: Refers to an assertion or suspicion made by an individual that another person may have committed an act that is usually considered negative or harmful.

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years old.

Child protection: Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Development: Includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.

Disclosure: Information shared by an individual, either written or verbal, relating to a safeguarding concern that is non-recent, current or may happen in the future.

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.

Grooming: When a person builds an emotional connection and trust with a child, young person, or vulnerable adult to manipulate, exploit, or abuse them. It can happen online or in person and may take weeks or years.

Health: Includes both physical and mental health.

Maltreatment: Is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children and adults. It includes all types of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, negligence and commercial or other exploitation, which results in actual or potential harm to the child or adult.

Radicalisation: Refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and/or extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Safeguarding: For the purposes of this policy, we are using the terms ‘safeguarding’ and ‘to safeguard’ to describe the prevention and precautionary approach to planning and procedures needed to protect children, young people and adults at risk from any potential harm or abuse by providing safe and effective care and taking action to enable everyone in YFC have the best possible outcomes.

Safeguarding Concern: A safeguarding concern refers to any suspicions of non-recent, current or future potential harm or abuse towards a child, young person or adult at risk. A

safeguarding concern can refer to the actions of a person towards others whether deliberate or not. In YFC a breach of our Code of Conduct is also considered a safeguarding concern.

Significant Harm (Adults): Under the Care Act 2014 (Appendix 1), adult safeguarding focuses on whether an adult with care and support needs is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and is unable to protect themselves. It is not a formal legal threshold in the same way it is defined for children under the Children Act.

Significant Harm (Children): Significant harm is the legal threshold established by the Children Act 1989 (Appendix 1) that justifies compulsory state and social service intervention in family life. It measures ill-treatment or the impairment of a child's health and development compared to what is expected for a similar child.

Wellbeing: Refers to a person’s sense of contentment and satisfaction with their conditions in life and their current circumstances. It’s closely linked to emotional balance and mental health but is also affected by an individual’s attitude, values and perspective.

Fun, Learning & Achievement

National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)
YFC Centre, 10th Street, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire. CV8 2LG.
Tel: 024 7685 7200 Email: post@nfyfc.org.uk Web: www.nfyfc.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1211473 (England & Wales).
Incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee (England) No. 15893713
Patron: HM The King