



POLICY FOR THE SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

“All children and young people in Scotland have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights and needs are respected. The welfare of children is paramount”.

“Every adult in Scotland has a role in ensuring all our children live safely and can reach their full potential.”

Wishaw YMCA has made efforts to ensure that this policy allows fulfilment of UNCRC Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse & neglect) and in accordance with national requirements and recommendations. .

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1 INTRODUCTION

Wishaw YMCA seeks to provide quality programmes aimed at physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional development, especially for young people, to ensure their development and growth, wholeness and maturity as individuals and contribution to the wider community.

It is the duty and responsibility of all Wishaw YMCA staff and volunteers to safeguard children and young people engaged in these programmes by protecting them from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect.

Protecting children and vulnerable young people from physical, sexual, emotional, domestic and spiritual abuse, neglect and failure to thrive should be an integral part of the policy and practice of all Wishaw YMCA work.

Safeguarding children is a concept that reaches beyond child protection to incorporate the additional aims of preventing the harm of children's health and development, ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

The UK Government has defined the term 'safeguarding children' as: *'The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.'*

The Scottish Government wants Scotland to be the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up so that they can become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm and abuse and to grow up in a safe environment in which their rights are respected and their needs met.

Children (Scotland) Act 2020, has been written to enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots law and as such YMCA Scotland has made efforts to ensure that this policy allows fulfilment of UNCRC Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse & neglect).

Wishaw YMCA is committed to upholding the right for all children and young people to feel safe and to be protected by effective interventions if they are thought to be suffering, or at risk of, significant harm. All staff and volunteers have a duty of care towards the children and young people with whom they have contact.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people must be integral to all Wishaw YMCA programme planning and should not be an optional activity.

It should be noted that this policy covers all children and young people under the age of eighteen.

This document has been produced to enable staff and volunteers to respond in an informed and confident way to child protection issues. The policy covers all Wishaw YMCA work.

This policy has been written taking into consideration information from the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014), NSPCC and Northfield Academy, Education Scotland, Children (Scotland) Act 2020 and Nottingham YMCA.

2 PRINCIPLES

All staff and volunteers who work with young people have a responsibility to keep them safe.

Children and young people should be made aware, prior to the commencement of any services, that staff/volunteers have a duty to report any concerns, allegations or suspicions of abuse and will not be able to 'keep secrets' of this nature. All confidentiality clauses must clearly state that confidentiality cannot be maintained

where there is an allegation of abuse although clearly any investigations, reporting etc will be done only to appropriate bodies/persons.

This means:

- Individual staff and volunteers must understand that they cannot singularly, on their own, meet the complex needs of our young people, which means they must work together to ensure that young people remain safe from harm
- In order that organisations and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that every individual working with young people and families are aware of the role that they play and the role of other professionals
- Staff and volunteers must be clear that effective safeguarding systems are child centred

We have a clear legal duty to take the views, wishes and feelings of young people into account, particularly in relation to matters affecting their care, welfare and their lives. Young people want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have a stable relationship with professionals built on trust and to have consistent support provided for their individual needs.

3 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure that the appropriate procedures are in place to protect children and young people in the care of YMCA staff and volunteers and to receive and investigate complaints surrounding physical, sexual, emotional harm or neglect being made as a result of programme work provided by Wishaw YMCA staff, consultants and volunteers

Ensure all child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures reflect current legislation and guidance

Ensure all staff and volunteers receive appropriate child protection training.

4 PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

The Wishaw YMCA Chairman is responsible for:

- Ensuring ongoing safeguarding training is provided throughout employment/volunteering as appropriate for the role
- implementation of policy through all staff and volunteers
- ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to protect young people from all forms of neglect, abuse and discrimination as far as is possible
- ensuring all staff and volunteers are aware of the indicators of neglect and the different categories of abuse and are familiar with some common signs linked to the categories
- authorising immediate changes as a result of near misses
- adherence to the Disclosure Scotland and PVG code of practice (2011) with respect to the management of PVG Scheme Records in the recruitment of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

5 INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All staff and volunteers will receive basic training in safeguarding children and identifying and responding to evidence or suspicions of abuse. This training is included in the induction process for all staff and is then supplemented by formal training and individual supervision for those working with children. Ongoing safeguarding training will be provided throughout employment/volunteering as appropriate to the role.

6 PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Staff and volunteers must remember that this policy covers young people up to the age of 18.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to the protection of young people, loss of trust or confidence or bringing the employer into disrepute.

Members of staff and volunteers must always:

- maintain professionalism in their conversations, language and conduct
- maintain appropriate dress and personal appearance when working with young people (this includes not getting changed in front of young people)
- not undertake other work e.g., babysitting services, childminding etc for young people who are receiving services from us or attending our provisions
- never disclose their home address or personal phone numbers, share information about their personal lives, arrange to meet young people or their parents socially or allow access to their personal social networking sites, on line messaging systems etc
- never start a personal relationship with a young person receiving our services or attending our provisions. In posts working directly with young people any potential relationship who has previously accessed our provisions should be discussed with your line manager and formally declared
- in the interests of transparency, all pre-existing relationships must be declared to your line manager and a declaration of interest form completed and submitted to the Safeguarding lead (Child Protection Officer), the secretary, or the chairman.
- pre-existing online relationships, e.g., Facebook friends must be declared and, where appropriate should be stopped whilst the young person is in receipt of our services and for at least six months afterwards

7 WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN, SUSPICION OR RECEIVE A DISCLOSURE ABOUT A YOUNG PERSON

All staff and volunteers have a duty to protect young people and have a responsibility to identify and pass on concerns, suspicions or disclosures they receive about a child or young person to the Safeguarding lead (Child Protection Officer).

Guidance for dealing with any concerns, suspicions or disclosures are summarised in Appendix 1 'Child Protection Procedural flowchart' and explained further below:

7.1 Responding to suspicion or allegation of abuse

You may have reason to believe that a child or young person has been or is being abused or there is a likelihood or risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect. This suspicion may arise from physical evidence or voluntary disclosure of information from the child/young person or another individual. It is not your responsibility to investigate your suspicions or decide where an allegation is true. It is vital that in all cases the following steps are taken:

Act: Paid members of staff and volunteers have a duty to report these suspicions or allegations to their line manager. The volunteer or staff member's first concern however must be re-assurance of the child/young person and for their protection from any potential risk. Throughout the time taken to report and respond to an incident the young person should be protected from further contact with the individual involved in an allegation.

It is important to avoid asking the young person for a full account of any incident as this can often weaken a subsequent disclosure to an appropriate individual. You must not ask leading questions when dealing with concerns, suspicions or disclosures (see appendix 2).

Staff and volunteers should also be aware of the possibility of false or malicious allegations but should take an allegation on trust unless there is substantive evidence to the contrary. The protection of the child is paramount.

If the allegation/suspicion is about their line manager or a colleague, the volunteer or staff member should report it to the Safeguarding Lead (Child Protection Officer), the secretary, or the chairman. If the allegation involves any of these individuals then volunteer or staff member should report to the General Secretary or to the Chair of Council.

Confidentiality: Details of suspicion, allegations or disclosures should only be passed on to the line manager or the appointed person as outlined above.

Wherever possible concerns about a child or young person should not be discussed in such a way that it may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

Record information: It is important to keep a written record of the suspicion, allegation or disclosure using the Child Protection Concern Form (appendix 2), for recording in the child's chronology. It is important that this record is completed with times and dates noted and where possible verbatim. This record must be forwarded to the Child Protection officer. Records should be signed and stored in a secure place.

Seek advice on referring the case: The person to whom the information is reported has the immediate responsibility to ensure that the child/young person is safe and protected from further contact with any potential risks. The line manager should contact Social Work in the relevant local authority area (follow the link <http://withscotland.org/public> enter the relevant postcode and this will guide you to the appropriate contact details) and ask to speak to the Duty Officer about a child protection issue. A report should be made using the pro forma included in Appendix 2. If the report is received during an evening, then the Social Work Department Emergency Duty team should be contacted.

Wishaw YMCA will provide staff with Emergency Duty Team information in the area in which they work

It is important not to divulge the child or young person's name

The situation should be fully discussed with the Duty Officer and they should be asked for more advice on how to proceed and who to notify

A note should be kept of the Duty Officer's name

Any further action should only be taken in line with the advice given by the Social Work Department. It is important to work alongside social workers to find the best solution for the child, rather than intervene and cause even greater problems.

Do not investigate: Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation any further or interview the child or young person regarding the situation. This action could complicate a sensitive situation and interfere with evidence/legal proceedings and cause distress to the young person.

7.2 Responding when a child or young person discloses abuse: It is likely that a child or young person who has been abused will have given a lot of thought as to whether they should disclose the abuse. It is highly likely that they will be nervous and afraid that they might be rejected, blamed or not believed. It is important that staff and volunteers follow the steps outlined below:

Stay calm - remain calm and natural. You have been approached because you are trusted, not because you are an expert counsellor.

Do not promise to keep the information secret, you may have to inform an appropriate person. You must take any disclosure seriously and reassure the young person that there is no reason to worry.

Listen - listen to what the child or young person is saying. Give them the time and opportunity to tell you as much as they are able and willing to. Do not pressurise them and allow them to disclose information at their own pace.

Try to do this in an appropriate place as outlined in section 6 paragraph 2

Reassure - Reassure them that what they are telling you is not their fault.

Sorry - Say that you are sorry about what happened.

Confidentiality - Reiterate that you do not promise to keep the information secret. You must take any disclosure seriously.

Details of the disclosure should only be passed on to your line manager or the appointed person, who should refer the case to the appropriate authorities.

Wherever possible you should try not to discuss any concerns that you have about a child or young person in a way that may lead others to suspect that they are being abused.

Take the allegation seriously - Tell them that you are willing to help and support them. It is important that the case is referred to the Social Work department. It is up to them to take the matter further and investigate if appropriate. Under no circumstances should you investigate the disclosure.

It is important that as soon as possible after disclosure has been made you record the details outlined in paragraph 5.1 'Record Information' and in Appendix 2

Communication – *all efforts should be made to ensure that the young person is able to continue engaging with Wishaw YMCA services and communication is maintained with the young person in line with Social Work guidance, ensuring that the young person is not put at further risk of harm*

7.2 What to do in the event of an allegation of abuse being made concerning a Wishaw YMCA staff member, volunteer, sessional staff member or consultant

If a concern or allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct is made against a member of staff or volunteer, or if a staff member or volunteer has a suspicion of inappropriate conduct with young people, the Secretary, the Chairman, or Wishaw YMCA senior staff should be contacted. If the allegation is about any of these, then a report should be made to the National General Secretary. The overriding priority is always the safety of the young person.

Where there are grounds for suspicion of abuse, the staff member or volunteer will be informed of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond.

The staff member or volunteer will then normally be removed from duties that have direct contact with young people or be suspended with full pay without prejudice. This action will be taken by the Wishaw YMCA Secretary or Wishaw YMCA Chairman prior to referral of the allegation to the appropriate authorities. In all such cases Wishaw YMCA will fully comply with all aspects of an external investigation and will seek to review policy and procedures on conclusion of same.

In all allegations of abuse involving a member of staff or a volunteer, external support for that person will be considered.

Lack of Police or other investigatory authority action will not preclude the possibility of disciplinary action being taken with staff/volunteers if deemed appropriate in response to poor practice. Procedures will take place as per the Wishaw YMCA Staff disciplinary policy.

Wishaw YMCA will refer an allegation of abuse, even if the staff member or volunteer has left the employment or service of the organisation.

Where appropriate, a referral will be made to the Disqualified from Working with Children List in accordance with the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003.

7.3 What to do where an incident of alleged abuse whilst under Wishaw YMCA supervision is alleged

The most important priority in such incidents is to ensure the immediate safety of the child/young person who has been abused. Both abuser and victim must be kept apart. In a residential setting, it may be appropriate for the individuals to be taken home and, depending upon staffing levels, this may involve taking the whole group home. The procedure as outlined in section 5.3 should be followed.

Where allegations/suspicions occur where the victim and abuser are both participants in Wishaw YMCA programmes, the procedure outlined in section 5.3 should still be followed. Such a situation will not automatically involve ceasing to work with either young person, but it may involve referring one or both parties on to another organisation.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The following recommendations have been written to safeguard paid and voluntary staff from situations that might give rise to unjustified allegations of abuse.

Workers should be aware of the possibility of false allegations that might arise when they meet alone with a child or young person. Where a private meeting with a lone child/young person is unavoidable it should be held in an open place in view of others or in a room visible to those outside and where a colleague has agreed to visually monitor the meeting. If a young person participates in a review of their involvement in a programme as a result of disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, it is advisable that this review is witnessed by a second staff member/volunteer

Workers should not give lifts in their car to individual children or young people.

There should always be an appropriate ratio of adults to children/young people to ensure that:

- Activities are being run safely and allow maximum participation
- Disruptive behaviour can be controlled

There should always be at least two adults present with a group who are under eighteen years of age, particularly when it is the only activity taking place on YMCA premises.

The Care Inspectorate expects that the following ratios apply in children's day care settings, including out of school care:

Age Range	Ratio
0 to under 2 years	1 adult to 3 children
2 to under 3 years	1 adult to 5 children
3 to under 8 years	1 adult to 8 children*
Over 8 years	1 adult to 10 children

*Where children aged 3 and over attend settings fewer than four hours in any one day the adult:child rate can be 1 adult to 10 children.

A group of under eighteens should not be taken off YMCA premises with less than two adults present.

When working with a mixed gender group there should be staff/volunteers of both genders to manage all activities. If all staff/volunteers are of one gender, another person of the opposite gender should be designated as a contact point for members of the group.

Workers should treat all children and young people with respect and dignity.

Workers will not engage in any of the following:

- Invading the privacy of children and young people when they are toileting or showering, changing or dressing unless providing necessary help to very young children maintaining same gender boundaries.
- Where such help is deemed, necessary parental consent should first be gained
- Inappropriate physical or sexually provocative games
- Sharing sleeping accommodation with an individual child or young person
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or young person even in fun
- Inappropriate and intrusive touching of any form
- Scape-goating, ridiculing or rejecting of a child or young person.

Workers should not use any form of physical punishment

If a young person requires a review of or challenge to their behaviour as a participant in activities, this should take place privately, but in accordance with point 5 (paragraph 2).

If staff or volunteers are engaged to work with children and young people then a general information and consent form will be required to be completed by a family member or legal guardian. This form should include emergency contact details.

Permission must be sought within the general information and consent form for the taking, storage and use of photos and videos, of children and young people under the age of 18 (See Communications Policy for further guidance)

9 SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

“The single most effective point at which an organisation can use good management to minimise the possibility of abuse is when new paid staff or volunteers are appointed, although it is important to ensure that vigilance is maintained thereafter”. (1995 Smith: Protecting Children)

All recruitment of staff, volunteers, consultants and sessional staff should take place using the procedure outlined in the table in Appendix 5 and as per the Wishaw YMCA Procedure and in conjunction with the Recruiting People with Criminal Convictions policy

10 USE OF CAMERAS, RECORDING EQUIPMENT AND MOBILE PHONES

- Parents/carers/young people have a right to decide whether images are to be taken, and how those images are used
- Parents/carers/young people must provide written consent using the Wishaw YMCA consent form, to take and use their image, which will be stored confidentially by Wishaw YMCA. This consent must explicitly state how long the image(s) will be stored and for what purpose(s)
- Care must be taken to ensure that images are never sexual or exploitative in nature, nor open to misinterpretation and misuse
- All images of young people will be securely stored and in case of images used on websites, particular care will be taken to ensure that no identifying details facilitate contact with a young person by a potential abuser
- If we use external photographers they will be advised of our safeguarding and other pertinent policies and will sign to acknowledge that they have read, understand and will abide by them

If parents/carers or other spectators are intending to photograph or video an event/activity, they must be told of our expectations and wherever possible written notices to this effect will be displayed. Any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography/filming should be reported to the line manager/event coordinator or other relevant person immediately and dealt with in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern

Under no circumstances must cameras of any kind be taken into the bathrooms without prior consultation with your Line Manager. If photographs need to be taken in a bathroom, e.g., photographs of the children

washing their hands, then the Line Manager must ask, and staff must be supervised whilst carrying out this kind of activity.

Mobile Phones / similar devices

We believe our staff and volunteers should be completely attentive during their hours of work to ensure all young people are properly looked after. For those working directly with young people, personal mobile devices must not be used during working hours and must be kept on silent or switched off and placed with staff belongings and may only be used on a designated break and only in a young person free area of the setting.

Ideally the site mobile must be used on outings. However, in the unlikely event that this is not available, staff may use mobiles on outings for programme/emergency use only with explicit permission. Personal mobiles must never be used to take photographs of any of the young people. It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and report any concerns to a manager or designated officer.

Staff should not allow young people to use a Wishaw YMCA owned phone without supervision. Staff must never allow young people in our provisions to use the staff members personal phone.

Concerns will be taken seriously, logged and investigated appropriately and thoroughly.

The registered Manager or another designated manager, in their absence, reserves the right to check the image contents of a member of staff's personal mobile phone or similar device should there be any cause for concern over its use. Wishaw YMCA has the absolute right to examine and hold Wishaw YMCA owned devices at any time.


Should inappropriate material be found on any personally owned or Wishaw YMCA owned device then the designated safeguarding officer/Child Protection officer will be contacted immediately.

All parents/carers that enter childcare/children's services setting are asked to ensure their mobile phones are not used. If they need to use their phones, they are asked to wait until they leave the setting. This is to safeguard against risk. Staff must remain vigilant and will remind any parents/carers and visitors if they observe anyone not adhering to this policy.

11 RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY

Operational Practice: Wishaw YMCA Safeguarding Lead

ACCEPTED AS POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON 5 December 2024. Signed copies of Document will be held out the office Wishaw YMCA, Quarry Street.

SIGNED  _____ Wishaw YMCA Chairman

SIGNED  _____ Wishaw YMCA Secretary

Concerns about a child/young person

- A child discloses abuse, or
- A member of staff/volunteer suspects a child may have been abused, or
- A third-party expresses concern
- A staff member/volunteer witnesses an abusive situation involving another member of staff/volunteer



DO NOT

- Investigate suspected/alleged abuse yourself
- Evaluate the ground for concern yourself
- Seek or wait for proof
- Discuss the matter with anyone other than senior staff/Child Protection Officer

Members of staff/volunteers must – Record

- Respond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock
- Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why the child/young person appears upset
- Confidentiality must not be promised to children or adults. The reasons to share information should be communicated openly and honestly with children/young people
- Observe carefully the behaviour of the child/young person
- Record in detail what has been observed or heard. Record the child's/young person's own words verbatim, time, date, context and actions taken – Use Child Protection Concern Form (appendix 2 of Policy)
- Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations.



Report to Child Protection Officer without delay: (insert appropriate name) (DO NOT email or leave phone messages)

Child Protection Officer assesses that concerns do not require an immediate response to keep the child safe

Record
The Child Protection Concern form, any action and reasons not to take further action in child/young person's chronology

Child Protection Officer assesses that concerns require an immediate **emergency response** to keep the child safe call **999**

Child Protection Officer assesses that concerns require an immediate response to keep the child/young person safe

Child Protection Officer should call the Social Care Direct team without delay (insert no) or Emergency Out of Hours (insert no) or Police Scotland on 101 and follow the steps below

In the unlikely event the Child Protection Officer is unavailable and no members of Senior Management are available follow these steps – If you assess that concerns require an immediate emergency response to keep the child/ young person safe call 999. If not call the Social Care Direct team without delay (insert no) or Emergency Out of Hours (insert no) or Police Scotland on 101 and follow the steps below

Flowchart – Appendix 1



Actions for Child Protection Officer/SMT/or staff in their absence following a Child Protection concern

- Information shared should be relevant, necessary and proportionate to the circumstances of the child/young person to support police and social work in making informed decisions
- State who you are, your role and your contact details
- State reason for your call
- State the name/date of birth/location of the child/young person
- State concerns which have been observed or heard, relaying clear factual information only
- Clarify what action SCDT/Social Work/Police will take as a result of the concern communicated and when the outcome will be communicated to you
- Police and Social Work services will decide when to inform parents/carers
- The Police and Social Work have a clear statutory role in deciding whether a Child Protection investigation will take place
- Contact the Named Person



No action to be taken by SCDT/Police/Social Work

Record

- The Child Protection Concern Form and contact with the SCDT in the child/young person's chronology
- What action SCDT/Police/Social Work will undertake and when the outcome will be communicated to you

Record

The Child Protection Concern Form and contact with the SCDT in the child/young person's chronology
Record that SCDT will take no further action and why if known



Appendix 2

Child Protection Concern Form

Member of staff reporting:			
Social Work Involvement (if known):	YES/NO		
Social Worker name if known:			
Name of Young Person:			
Gender:		Date of Birth:	
Address:			
Parent/Guardian/Carer:			

Date/Time	Incident/Concern	Action – please initial or name each action

Appendix 3

Definitions of the categories of Child Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

While it is not necessary to identify specific areas of concern when adding a child's name to the Child Protection Register, it is still helpful to consider and understand the different ways in which children can be abused. The following definitions show some of the ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the actual or attempted physical harm to a child or young person. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Fabricated or induced illness syndrome is a form of physical abuse where an adult induces or feigns the symptoms of an illness in a child that result in unnecessary medical intervention.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of indecent images or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse can also take place when one child/young person abuses another to gain sexual gratification or to meet their sexual needs. In these circumstances, it is important to consider each of the children needing protection.

'Grooming' – the internet and other technologies such as Social Networking sites have increased the availability of pictures of children being abused. It can also make children using this technology for social networking and instant messaging more vulnerable to abuse.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can seriously damage a child's emotional health and development. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare or humiliate a child or isolating or ignoring them.

Bullying, domestic abuse (hearing or seeing the abuse of another person) are forms of emotional abuse.

Physical neglect/emotional neglect

This occurs where adults fail to meet the basic needs of a child for food, shelter and clothing. It can include children who are consistently left without adult supervision. A child may be emotionally neglected by an adult, refusing to give the child affection and attention. Failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inappropriate caregivers, is also a form of neglect. It can also include a parent who overprotects their child.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as the result of maternal substance abuse. These children are born with Neo-natal Abstinence Syndrome or Alcohol Foetal Syndrome.

There is a higher risk of neglect and all other forms of abuse where children are living in families with problem substance use.

'Substance use in itself may not have a negative impact on a parent's capacity'. It is when substance use adversely affects lifestyle, social behaviour and capacity to discharge their parental responsibilities, that it becomes a matter for concern because it adversely affects the quality of care that their child receives and poses a risk to health and development.

(Protecting Children Living in Families with Problem Substance Use'. From guidelines for Agencies in Edinburgh & the Lothian's August 2005)

Domestic Violence or Abuse

The National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland (2000) defines:

Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse) can be perpetrated by partners or ex partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family and friends). It must be recognised that children are witness to, and may be subject to, the abuse and that there is some correlation between domestic abuse and the mental, physical and sexual abuse of children.

Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic abuse, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover. Domestic abuse is not solely perpetrated by adults; domestic abuse can also be inflicted on a parent by an older child.

Domestic violence affects both adults and children within the family. Domestic violence has an impact on children in a number of ways:

- a) Children are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene.
- b) Children are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent.
- c) Exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress which may express itself in antisocial or criminal behaviour.
- d) Children in violent households are significantly more likely to be exposed to other forms of child abuse. Although separating from a violent partner should result in women and children being safe from harm, the danger does not automatically end. It should be recognised, that the point of leaving an abusive relationship is the time of highest risk for a victim.

Domestic abuse also affects children because it impacts on parenting capacity:

- a) A parent (in most families, the mother) may have difficulty in looking after the children when domestic violence results in injuries or, in extreme cases, death.
- b) Exposure to psychological and emotional abuse has profound negative effects on women's mental health resulting in a loss of confidence, depression, feelings of degradation, problems with sleep, isolation, and increased use of medication and alcohol. These are all factors that can restrict the mother's capacity to meet the developmental needs of her child.
- c) Belittling and insulting a mother in front of her children undermines not only her respect for herself, but also the authority she needs to parent confidently.
- d) A mother's relationship with her children may also be affected because, in attempts to avoid further outbursts of violence, she prioritises her partner's needs over those of her children.

The impact of domestic violence on children increases when directly abused, when witnessing the abuse of a parent, or colluding (willingly or otherwise) in the concealment of assaults. This constitutes abuse of children and must be reported to the authorities. No age group is particularly protected from or damaged by the impact of domestic violence. Key to the safety of women and children subjected to violence and the threat of violence is an alternative, safe and supportive residence.

Spiritual abuse

Spiritual abuse is not covered by the statutory definitions but is of concern both within and outside faith communities including the church. Aspects of spiritual abuse can be recognised under the four categories of abuse such as emotional abuse or physical abuse (e.g. forced healing rituals). Within faith communities, harm can be caused by the inappropriate use of religious belief or practice. This can include the misuse of the authority of leadership or penitential discipline, oppressive teaching, obtrusive or forced healing and deliverance ministries or rituals, any of which may result in children experiencing physical, emotional or sexual harm. If such inappropriate behaviour becomes harmful it should be referred for investigation in cooperation with appropriate statutory agencies.

Careful teaching, supervision and mentoring of those entrusted with the pastoral care of children should help to prevent harm occurring in this way. Other forms of harm include the denial of the right of faith or the opportunity to grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Failure to Thrive

This is where a child fails significantly to reach normal developmental or growth milestones in height, weight etc with no genetic or medical reason for this lack of growth or development. It requires medical input to identify this kind of abuse.

Other abusive behaviour towards children and young people

Within the YMCA we aim to provide a safe environment where children and young people can grow and develop. Consequently, in addition to the above very serious forms of abuse, staff and volunteers should also be aware and on the alert for other forms of abuse. These include:

- Other cultural forms of abuse including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and looking out for the signs of these, underage or forced marriages
- Referring to some physical characteristic, manner of dress or perhaps family background in a way intended to hurt
- Sarcasm
- Blatantly favouring some and excluding others
- Rejecting a member because of some negative family circumstance
- Name calling
- Abusive language and gestures
- Constant criticism
- Racism
- Sectarianism
- Gender bias

See Appendix 4 for some signs which may indicate that a child is being abused.

Appendix 4

SOME SIGNS WHICH MAY INDICATE THAT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED

1 Physical Abuse

- Improbable excuses for injuries (from child or parent/carer)
- Unexplained injuries or burn
- Bite marks
- Pattern of bruising
- Untreated injuries
- Excessive physical punishment
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Frightened around parent/carer
- Aggression
- Crying/putting up a fight when it's time to go home

But need to consider other possible reasons.....

- Additional needs
- Genuine accidental injuries
- Blood disorder
- Mongolian blue spot
- Skin disorder
- Brittle bones

2 Physical Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Unexplained absences-frequent lateness
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem/poor peer relationships
- Stealing/taking food

But need to consider other possible reasons....

- Additional needs
- Parental poverty
- Poor housing
- Parental illness

3 Emotional Abuse

- Low self-esteem
- Indiscriminate affection
- Clinginess
- Sudden speech disorder
- Significant decline in concentration
- Neurotic behaviour – rocking, head-banging
- Becoming 'parental' towards other children
- Delayed physical or emotional development
- Continuing to have regular temper tantrums

- Compulsive stealing
- Extreme passivity/aggression

But need to consider other possible reasons.....

- Additional needs
- Parental separation
- Serious illness of someone in the family
- Death of a significant adult or child in the family/community

4 **Sexual Abuse**

- Lack of trust in adults
- Fear of a particular individual
- Withdrawn
- Sleep disturbances
- Reluctance or refusal to take part in physical activity or to change clothes for games
- Low self-esteem
- Sexual knowledge or curiosity beyond child's years
- Unusual interest in other people's genitals
- Fear of bathrooms or closed doors
- Sexual drawings
- Problems with peer relationships
- Sexually inappropriate/harmful behaviours
- Stealing
- Compulsive masturbation
- Excessive money

Some physical/medical signs

- Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark
- Bruises, scratch marks, bites
- Eating disorder
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pain, itching, bleeding or bruising around the genital area
- Soiling or wetting in previously continent children

But need to consider other possible reasons.....

- Additional needs
- Other, non-abusive events e.g., birth of sibling
- Urinary tract infection

What is sextortion?

Sextortion is a type of cyber extortion. It involves the threat of having sexual information, images or clips shared.

This is done to get money from you. It doesn't always matter if the images actually exist or not.

The extortion often takes place when a victim is asked to take off their clothes in front of a webcam. They can also be asked to perform sexual acts.

The victim believes this to be a private act but it is not. The victim doesn't know that they are being recorded.

The offender will then threaten the victim. They may demand money. They may threaten to share the images or videos on social media or share publicly.

What can you do to reduce the likelihood of it happening?

Here are some tips:

1. Be cautious when using the internet. Only activate your camera when you want to. Make sure it is 'off' at all times or use a webcam cover. Never allow yourself to be duped into activity that you will later regret.
2. If using video chat apps, be alert to the fact that 'contacts' are not always who they say they are. If you allow a relationship to develop, be guarded if unusual requests are made of you.
3. If you use online chat rooms looking for a person to chat with, be careful. Be careful about any getting into a relationship and if you are asked to move to a different chat platform.
4. If you are chatting with somebody using a webcam, be guarded on what you say and do.
5. Relationships are quick to develop. End any that you are not comfortable with. Stay in control of what you do.
6. You may make mistakes, have doubts or need support or advice. If so, contact the police or a support agency immediately.
7. Remember, what goes on the internet, stays on the internet, forever.

What to do if you're a victim of sextortion

Here are a few points to follow if you are a victim:

Do not panic. The police will take your case seriously. They will deal with it in confidence. You will not be judged.

Do not pay. Some victims who have paid hear no more about it, others pay and are asked for more money. In some cases, even when money is paid the offenders posts the videos or images anyway

Do not talk any further to the offenders. Take screen shots of any communication. Keep it as evidence.

Make a note of all details provided by the offenders. Screenshot their social media profile as evidence.

Deactivate your social media account. Report the matter to the platform and deactivate your social media account rather than shut it down. This helps the police to gather evidence. The account can also be reactivated at any time. This means your online memories are not lost forever.

Access help to take down intimate images or videos shared online: Revenge Porn Helpline www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse - www.stopncii.org

Report the matter to the police and your online service provider.

Remember that you're the victim of organised criminals. You're not alone and confidential support is available:

NSPCC Helpline - 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk

CEOP - www.ceop.police.uk

Revenge Porn Helpline www.revengepornhelpline.org.uk

Advice for young people - www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse - www.stopncii.org

Appendix 6

Applications process for paid staff and volunteers working with children and young people covered by this policy as per definition in section 1.

	Paid Staff, including part time and regular sessional staff of YMCA Scotland	Volunteers engaged with YMCA Scotland	Consultants for whom we raise invoices to run individual sessions
1. Preparation of job descriptions	<p>A job description should be produced for all posts</p> <p>Each job description should be risk assessed, in order to establish whether a PVG Scheme disclosure is required for the post and whether this comes under regulated work with children and/or protected adults. This risk assessment should take into account the access that each post holder will have to children and young people. It is important that <u>all</u> staff and volunteers working face to face with children and young people should undergo a disclosure check</p> <p>When the post is advertised, the necessity of a PVG should be included in the advert.</p>		<p>Using a template, a task description/ brief should be produced for all regular consultants.</p> <p>This task description /brief should be risk assessed re access to children and young people.</p> <p>Any information advertising the post should include whether a disclosure is required.</p>
2. The Applications process	A standard staff application form should be completed, which is anonymous, but coded.	A standard/customised Volunteer application form should be completed and coded.	n/a
	All posts whose risk assessment shows that a PVG Scheme Record is required, should have in their application packs an internal YMCA Scotland criminal records disclosure form and a freepost envelope. Both should be coded in line with the application form.	All posts whose risk assessment shows that a PVG Scheme Record is required should have with their application form an internal YMCA Scotland criminal record disclosure form and an envelope. This should be handed in with the application form to the staff member leading the interview.	n/a

3. The Interview Panel	Each Interview Panel should have one counter signatory on it. Counter signatories will also have had training in the area of criminal records and equal opportunities.	Volunteers should be interviewed by two people – at least one of whom should have had training in equal opportunities and disclosures.	n/a
	<p>The applications administrator should receive all free post envelopes separately. Once the short list has been made, the envelopes for those candidates should be handed over to the panel.</p> <p>If the short listing takes place in a different location to the applications administrator, arrangements should be made to ensure envelopes are confidentially passed onto the panel.</p>	n/a	n/a
4. Short listing	<p>The counter signatory should open the envelopes to see if there are any disclosures which require the panel to gain more information. This should be based on the panel agreeing that the disclosure is relevant to the post. The counter signatory should share any information verbally with other panel members.</p> <p>All other envelopes must be shredded by the applications administrator.</p>	Before the interview takes place, the lead interviewer should open the PVG Scheme disclosure form and assess if there are relevant disclosures which require more information.	n/a
5. Interview preparation	The Interview panel should agree questions for any candidates regarding disclosures BEFORE the day of the interview – to allow enough time to prepare.		n/a

	<p>This will enable the panel to make a fair and informed decision about the candidate. Questions should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the last offence was committed • Whether there are any outstanding charges • How the charges were received – ie the background to the offence. For example – what did the candidate do to receive a conviction for a theft • What the candidate should be asked what they would change if they were under the same circumstances again. (This is aimed at revealing attitude, taking responsibility for the offence and motivation to change) 		
6. Offering the post	<p>Once candidates have been interviewed, the panel can decide to whom they wish to offer the post, subject to a formal PVG scheme check.</p> <p>If the candidate has a PVG disclosure an update with CRBS must be completed</p>	<p>Once the candidate has been interviewed, the panel can confirm or reject their application to volunteer, subject to a formal PVG scheme check. If the candidate has a PVG disclosure an update with CRBS must be completed</p>	n/a
7. Disclosures procedure	<p>The Counter Signatory on the panel will contact the candidate and ask them to complete a PVG form. No firm offer can be made until the form has been returned to the YMCA from CRBS.</p>	<p>A Counter Signatory will contact the candidate and ask them to complete a PVG form. No confirmation of volunteering can be made until the form has been returned to the YMCA from CRBS.</p>	<p>A Counter Signatory will contact the consultant and ask them to complete a PVG form. No access to groups can take place until the form has been returned to the YMCA from CRBS.</p>
	NB The taking up of references for all posts still applies.		
	<p>If the form is returned with additional information, the Counter Signatory must recommend either yes, no or re-interview the candidate. The Counter Signatory can not discuss information from the PVG with other panel members.</p> <p>If the Counter Signatory is not sure how to proceed, they can discuss the matter with another Counter Signatory or the Lead Signatory.</p> <p>In the event of a candidate being re-interviewed, the Counter Signatory MUST NOT discuss disclosure information with either the panel or the candidate.</p>	<p>If the form is returned with information relevant to the work, the counter signatory must recommend whether to engage the consultant or not.</p> <p>The counter signatory MUST NOT discuss PVG Scheme Membership information with the consultant</p>	

	If the panel is still unsure, it is possible to approach Disclosure Scotland for guidance.		
8. Final decision	A final decision can be made to either confirm the appointment, or to confirm that the appointment will not take place. If the decision not to appoint has been made on the basis of PVG Scheme Membership information, the candidate should be referred to Disclosure Scotland. PVG Scheme Membership information MUST NOT be discussed with the candidate.		
	In the event of the appointment not taking place, the interview panel can decide to offer the post to another suitable candidate (continue from point 6), or re-advertise the post (continue from point 1).	In the event of the volunteer not being appointed, the panel should tell the volunteer. It may be appropriate to re-advertise the post.	In the event of the consultant not being offered work, the Counter Signatory should either tell them directly, or inform the staff member for whom the work would be taking place.
	Internal Criminal Records disclosure Information should be kept with other interview notes in the Personnel files for six months, then shredded.	Internal Criminal Records disclosure information should be kept with other interview notes in a locked and secure place for six months, then shredded.	Internal Criminal Records disclosure information should be kept with other interview notes in a locked and secure place for six months, then shredded.
	All Disclosure Information will be kept as per the Storage and Handling of Information policy		