Open Access Policy

Part of the BYO Volunteering and Participation Policy Suite

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1. Introduction

Open access provision refers to programmes where children and young people may come and go freely, with no requirement for participants to be brought to or collected from sessions by an adult. BYO CIC operates open access sessions designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of our community.

Safeguarding Framework: All open access provision operates within our comprehensive **Safeguarding Policy Framework** and follows **Child Protection Procedures** to ensure young people's safety and well-being.

Professional Standards: All staff and volunteers working in open access provision must meet the standards outlined in our **Code of Conduct Policy** and **Volunteering and Placements Policy**.

2. Open Access Provision

2.1 Core Principles

BYO CIC offers open access sessions across our locations with the following key features:

- **Flexible attendance** - participants can come and go as they choose
- **No formal childcare** provided during sessions
- **Age-appropriate programming** for children and young people (typically ages 8-24)
- **Professional supervision** by appropriately vetted and trained staff
- **Safe environment** maintained through robust safeguarding procedures

2.2 Operational Framework

All BYO CIC provision operates on an open access basis unless otherwise specified (such as closed trips or targeted programmes).

Staff Responsibilities:

- Provide appropriate supervision and support
- Maintain safe environment as per Health and Safety Policy
- Follow Safeguarding Policy Framework procedures
- It is not staff's responsibility to prevent participants leaving

Participant Freedom:

- Young people can arrive and leave freely during session times
- No requirement for adult accompaniment (age-appropriate)
- Choice and control over level of participation

Behaviour Expectations: All participants must follow our **Code of Behaviour Policy** during open access sessions.

2.3 Registration and Consent

General Open Access:

- Registration forms should be completed by parents/carers
- Clear explanation of open access nature provided
- **Implied consent** applies where participants attend and registration forms are subsequently issued but not returned

Important: Parents/carers can access this policy on our website to understand our open access approach before registering their children.

Data Protection: All registration information is handled according to our **Data Protection Policy**.

3. Safeguarding in Open Access Settings

3.1 Enhanced Safeguarding Considerations

Open access environments require particular attention to:

Environmental Factors:

- Multiple entry/exit points
- Varying group composition
- Informal atmosphere
- Less structured supervision

Participant Vulnerability:

- Young people may attend without parental knowledge
- Varying levels of support at home
- Potential for exploitation or harm
- Risk of exposure to inappropriate influences

3.2 Safeguarding Measures

Staff Deployment:

- **Minimum staffing levels** maintained at all times
- **Strategic positioning** to monitor all areas
- **Clear sight lines** and visibility maintained
- **Regular headcounts** and awareness of who is present

Risk Management:

- **Dynamic risk assessment** throughout sessions
- **Immediate response** to concerning behaviour
- **Clear boundaries** and expectations maintained
- **Safe spaces** available for one-to-one support

Reporting Concerns: All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately following our **Child Protection Procedures**.

3.3 Managing Safeguarding Incidents

If safeguarding concerns arise:

1. **Ensure immediate safety** of all participants
2. **Contact DSL** immediately if serious concerns
3. **Document concerns** appropriately
4. **Follow Child Protection Procedures** as required
5. **Consider session safety** and whether to continue

Contact Details:

- **DSL**: Joshua William Hall (07925 328 728)
- **Deputy DSL**: Hassan Alexander Kingsley (07597 874 222)
- **Emergency**: 999 if immediate danger

Alternative Reporting: If you feel unable to report through normal channels, see our Whistleblowing Policy for alternative options.

4. Targeted Support and Closed Programmes

4.1 Specialist Programmes

For any **specialised or targeted support programmes**, enhanced procedures apply:

Requirements:

- Completed consent forms mandatory before participation
- Formal referral processes for agency referrals
- Individual risk assessments where appropriate
- Enhanced staffing ratios if needed
- Closed session format (no open access)

4.2 Vulnerable Participants

Additional support may be provided for:

- Participants with additional needs
- Those experiencing difficulties at home
- Young people at risk of exclusion
- Participants referred by statutory agencies

Inclusion: Support is provided in line with our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy** to ensure all young people can participate safely.

Volunteer Support: Additional support may be provided through our **Volunteering and Placements Policy** framework.

5. Benefits of Open Access Provision

Open access provision offers unique opportunities for participants by:

5.1 Personal Development

- **Physical, social and personal** development experiences
- **Confidence building** and social skills development
- **Independence and autonomy** development
- **Choice and control** over engagement
- **Boundary testing** in safe environments

5.2 Social Benefits

- **Interaction** with people of various ages, abilities and backgrounds
- **Community connections** and local networks
- **Peer support** and friendship building
- **Inclusive environment** welcoming all backgrounds

5.3 Practical Advantages

- **Flexible timing** that suits participants' schedules
- **Accessible provision** without barriers to entry
- **Responsive programming** to participant needs and interests
- **Freedom to participate** at own comfort level

Anti-Bullying: We maintain a safe, welcoming environment through our **Anti-Bullying Policy** to ensure all participants feel included.

6. Attendance Recording and Monitoring

6.1 Recording Principles

While maintaining the **open access nature** of sessions, BYO maintains attendance records for:

Safety Purposes:

- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Accounting for participants during incidents
- Health and safety compliance

Safeguarding Purposes:

- Monitoring participant patterns and well-being
- Identifying concerning changes in attendance
- Supporting individual participants as needed

Legal and Administrative:

- Insurance requirements
- Funding and reporting obligations
- Data for service planning and improvement

6.2 Recording Methods

Simple and Non-Intrusive:

- **Sign-in/sign-out** system encouraged but not enforced
- **Staff awareness** of who is present during sessions
- **Regular informal** headcounts
- **Minimal paperwork** to preserve accessibility

Confidentiality:

- Records stored securely as per **Data Protection Policy**
- Access restricted to appropriate staff
- Information shared only where necessary for safeguarding

7. Session Management and Safety

7.1 Health and Safety Responsibilities

Staff must:

- **Maintain safe environment** as per **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Conduct ongoing risk assessments** during sessions
- **Respond to incidents** appropriately
- **Know emergency procedures** and evacuation routes

Participants should:

- **Follow safety guidelines** and staff instructions
- **Respect others** and equipment
- **Report concerns** to staff
- **Understand boundaries** and expectations

7.2 Session Suspension or Termination

BYO reserves the right to suspend or terminate sessions due to:

Safety Concerns:

- Weather conditions that compromise safety
- Facility issues or unavailability
- Health and safety incidents
- Equipment failures or hazards

Safeguarding Concerns:

- Child protection matters (which may remain confidential)
- Concerning behaviour that puts others at risk
- Incidents requiring external agency involvement
- Environmental factors that increase vulnerability

Other Circumstances:

- Staff unavailability below minimum levels
- External factors making safe operation impossible
- Emergency situations requiring evacuation

Staff Authority:

- Staff have full authority to end sessions for safety reasons
- Right to remove themselves from unsafe situations
- Responsibility to prioritise participant safety at all times

8. Managing Challenging Behaviour

8.1 Behaviour Management

Approach:

- **Positive behaviour support** as per **Code of Behaviour Policy**
- **Clear expectations** communicated to all participants
- **Consistent approach** across all staff
- **De-escalation techniques** used where appropriate

8.2 Serious Behaviour Issues

When behaviour becomes concerning:

- **Immediate safety assessment** for all participants
- **Clear boundaries** reinforced
- **Individual support** provided where possible
- **Parents/carers contacted** if needed
- **Exclusion considered** for serious safety risks

Escalation may include:

- **Temporary exclusion** from sessions
- **Safeguarding referral** if concerns about welfare
- **Multi-agency involvement** for persistent issues
- **Individual support planning** for reintegration

Peer-to-Peer Issues: Serious incidents between participants are managed through our Managing **Allegations of Peer-to-Peer Abuse** procedures.

9. Staff Training and Development

9.1 Essential Training

All staff working in open access provision must have:

Safeguarding Training:

- **Basic safeguarding awareness** as per **Safeguarding Policy Framework**
- **Child Protection Procedures** understanding
- **Recognising signs** of abuse and neglect
- **Reporting procedures** and emergency contacts

Operational Training:

- **Open access principles** and approach
- **Behaviour management** techniques
- **Health and safety** requirements
- **Emergency procedures** and incident response

9.2 Ongoing Development

Regular updates on:

- **Safeguarding developments** and best practice
- **Inclusive practice** and diversity awareness
- **Mental health** and well-being support
- **Community needs** and responsive programming

Professional Standards: All training aligns with our **Code of Conduct Policy** and professional development requirements.

10. Partnership and Community Engagement

10.1 Working with Families

Family Engagement:

- **Clear communication** about open access approach
- **Regular updates** through newsletters and social media
- **Open dialogue** about concerns or suggestions
- **Support for families** experiencing difficulties

10.2 Community Partnerships

Local Connections:

- **School liaisons** for supporting young people
- **Community groups** and local organisations
- **Statutory agencies** for safeguarding and support
- **Local authority** youth services coordination

10.3 Information Sharing

Appropriate information sharing:

- **Safeguarding concerns** with relevant agencies
- **General progress** with families (with consent)
- **Service data** for planning and development
- **Good practice** with partner organisations

Data Protection: All information sharing follows our **Data Protection Policy** requirements.

11. Quality Assurance and Review

11.1 Monitoring Effectiveness

Regular review of:

- **Participant feedback** and satisfaction
- **Incident patterns** and safeguarding concerns
- **Staff feedback** and development needs
- **Community engagement** and accessibility

11.2 Continuous Improvement

Annual review includes:

- **Policy effectiveness** and relevance
- **Training needs** analysis
- **Resource requirements** assessment
- **Community needs** evaluation

11.3 External Review

Consultation with:

- **Participants and families** on service quality
- **Partner agencies** on collaborative working
- **Local authority** on compliance and standards
- **Safeguarding experts** on best practice

12. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Safeguarding Policy Framework**
- **Child Protection Procedures**
- **Adult Safeguarding Procedures**
- **Code of Conduct Policy**
- **Code of Behaviour Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**
- **Volunteering and Placements Policy**
- **Data Protection Policy**
- **Managing Allegations of Peer-to-Peer Abuse**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**
- **Complaints Policy**

13. Key Contacts

Internal Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Joshua William Hall (07597 874 222) **Deputy DSL**: Hassan Alexander Kingsley (07597 874 222) **Main Office**: 0121 448 7378

Emergency Contacts

Emergency Services: 999 **Police Non-Emergency**: 101 **Birmingham Children's Services**: 0121 303 1888

Support Services

Childline: 0800 1111 **NSPCC**: 0808 800 5000 **Family Support Services**: Available through local authority

14. Policy Support and Review

This Open Access Policy is fully supported by BYO's leadership team and Board of Directors. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current, effective, and responsive to community needs.

Review considerations:

- Legislative changes affecting open access provision
- Safeguarding developments and best practice
- Community feedback and participant needs
- Staff experience and operational learning

Document Control:

- This policy balances open access principles with robust safeguarding requirements
- Regular training ensures all staff understand both accessibility and safety priorities
- Continuous monitoring ensures policy effectiveness and participant safety

Reviewed by:

[signature]

Hassan Kingsley
Date: 27/06/2025
Next Review Date: 27/06/2026

This policy forms part of BYO's commitment to safeguarding and should be read alongside our complete Safeguarding Framework.

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