

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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1. YMCA Black Country Group Safeguarding Policy Statement

"The YMCAs vision is of an inclusive Christian movement, transforming communities so that all young people truly belong, contribute and thrive."

For the purpose of this policy YMCA Black Country Group follows the national statutory guidance 'Working Together 2013' and aims to create and maintain a safe and secure environment for all staff, trustees, volunteers, residents and visitors to our facilities. In particular the Association is fully committed to safeguarding all children, young people and vulnerable adults that come into contact with our work.

We believe that all children, young people and vulnerable adults have an absolute right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, race, religion, ability, gender, language, background or sexual identity and consider their welfare is paramount.

We recognise that safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part.

We will: -

- Take every reasonable step to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are protected where our staff, trustees, volunteers and all associates are involved in the delivery of our work.
- Enable all our staff and those who work with us to make informed and confident risk-based decisions regarding safeguarding.
- Create an environment where staff and volunteers feel able to raise any safeguarding concerns.
- Expect everyone (staff, trustees, volunteers and anyone working jointly with YMCA Black Country) to have read, understood and adhere to the policy set out below and related procedures.
- Respond appropriately to any allegation, report or suspicion of abuse.

2. Safeguarding Children and YMCA Black Country Group

The law in England and Wales defines children and young people as any child or young person that has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

YMCA Black Country Group defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as:

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence & sexual exploitation
- Safe from accidental injury & death
- Safe from bullying & discrimination
- Safe from crime & anti-social behaviour
- Have security, stability and are cared for
- The safety and security of a family life and a stable home

3. Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse

YMCA Black Country Group recognises that child abuse is a very difficult and emotive issue for trustees, staff, volunteers and contractors to deal with. However, YMCA BCG expects all trustees, staff, volunteers and contractors to respond positively to any allegations of child abuse involving any young person under the age of 18.

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

- a) Physical abuse
- b) Emotional abuse
- c) Sexual abuse
- d) Neglect

Abuse of a child within these four categories of abuse may take many forms, and may also involve more than one category of abuse. A description of the definitions

and signs of abuse can be found at **Appendix A: NSPCC Fact Sheet 'The Definitions and Signs of Child Abuse'**.

Any trustee, staff member or volunteer concerned about a possible incident of child abuse should not hesitate to report this to their line manager and the YMCA BCG Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). The DSO is also able to give advice on queries, questions or anxieties regarding child abuse.

A flowchart setting out the procedure to be followed where trustees, staff or volunteers are concerned that a child may be being abused is attached at **Appendix B**.

4. Description of YMCA Black Country Services

YMCA Black Country Group (formerly known as West Bromwich & District YMCA) includes its subsidiaries YMCA Wolverhampton, YMCA Black Country Social Enterprises, First Base Walsall and its associated company YMCA West Bromwich and District Community Enterprises. YMCA Black Country Group operates services in the local authority areas: Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall, Dudley and South Staffordshire.

YMCA BCG operates a wide range of services included supported housing for young people and vulnerable adults, supported lodgings, a drug counselling and support service, nursery education and childcare services, youth services, community services, health and fitness services, shops, cafes, training services and volunteering opportunities.

YMCA BCG provides services to an estimated 600 children and young people each year and employs over two hundred staff and volunteers across a range of Black Country locations.

YMCA BCG is governed by a Board of Trustees, supported by a Chief Executive and Executive Management Team.

5. Recruitment, Induction and Training

YMCA BCG will take all necessary and reasonable steps during the recruitment process to ensure that all trustees, staff and volunteers undertaking work on behalf of the organisation are suitable individuals to work with children, including the requirement for all staff and volunteers working directly with children to have an enhanced Disclosed and Barring Service check prior to commencing work. Furthermore, the YMCA BCG will ensure that appropriate induction and safeguarding children training opportunities are provided to all trustees, staff and volunteers so that they have the sufficient skill and knowledge to safeguard the children and young people in their care.

6. The Role of Designated Safeguarding Officer

YMCA Black Country Group has a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). The role of the DSO is to:

- Support staff and the Board of Trustees in the formulation of Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures.
- Provide advice and support to trustees, staff and volunteers when they have a concern regarding a safeguarding children issue.
- Liaise and act as a point of contact between YMCA BCG and the Local Children's Safeguarding Boards, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) and the statutory agencies involved in the safeguarding of children across the Black Country and any other area of operation.
- Monitor and report to the YMCA Board on any safeguarding children incidents within YMCA BCG services.
- Work alongside the Human Resources Department to organise a programme of safeguarding induction and training and development for trustees, staff and volunteers.
- Work alongside the Human Resources Department and operational managers to support safer recruitment of staff and volunteers.

The DSO role is generally filled by the Executive Head of Childcare & Family Support, based at the YMCA BCG Temple Street office in Wolverhampton (01902 371550). In their absence the DSO role is deputised by Executive Head of Housing and Youth, or another officer designated by the Chief Executive.

To contact the DSO please refer to an up to date version of Appendix B in the Safeguarding Procedure or contact the HR Department.

7. Allegations Against Staff/ Whistle-blowing

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

- YMCA BCG staff must ensure that the safety and welfare of the child or children affected is paramount immediately following an allegation being made.
- The YMCA BCG Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) should be notified of all details relating to the allegation at the earliest possible opportunity and they will advise on the action to be taken.
- The DSO will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the full details of any allegation that a member of staff or volunteer may have behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence in relation to a child, or has behaved towards children in a way that indicates that they are unsuitable to work with children. The LADO will advise the organisation on what steps to take.

Additional guidelines for dealing with allegations against staff can be found within the YMCA BCG Child Protection Procedures. Guidance and support for handling allegations against staff can be sought from the DSO and the HR department.

Staff may also consider the use of the YMCA BCG Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure where they have serious safeguarding concerns regarding the behaviour, actions or lack of actions by volunteers, trustees or another staff member's behaviour.

8. Confidentiality and Recording Information

Children and young people have the right to confidentiality unless YMCA BCG considers that they are at risk of serious harm. Trustees, staff and volunteers should be mindful of the YMCA BCG Confidentiality Policy before sharing any information about any child or young person. In addition, any information recorded regarding safeguarding issues must be stored securely and every effort made to maintain confidentiality.

Details of any suspected abuse should only be discussed with those staff and external agencies that is appropriate and necessary to do so.

A standard YMCA BCG pro-forma exists for recording all suspected child abuse (**Appendix C**). This must be used to record all allegations and suspicions of abuse across YMCA BCG service at the earliest possible opportunity, and a copy must be provided to the Designated Safeguarding Officer within two working days.

9. Reference to Other Relevant YMCA Black Country Group Policies and Procedures

YMCA Black Country Group Policies and Procedures that need to be read in conjunction with this Safeguarding Children Policy are:

Policies:

- Staff Recruitment, Training and Development Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Trustee Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Computer Policy
- Mobile Phone and Camera Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Social Networking Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Procedures:

- YMCA Black Country Group Safeguarding Children Procedures
- DBS Procedure

10. Policy and Procedures Review

The Safeguarding Children Policy will be reviewed and re-approved annually by the YMCA Black Country Board.

YMCA BCG Safeguarding Children Procedures will be reviewed and re-approved on an annual basis by the Executive Team.

Departmental Safeguarding Children Procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the relevant Project Managers. All changes to Safeguarding Children Procedures must be approved by the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Dylan Harrison, DSO, March 2014