

Candidate Support & Welfare Policy

Youth Start Limited

Company Number: 16864238

Registered Office: 370 Osmaston Park Road, Derby, DE24 8FB

Website: youthstart.co.uk

Effective Date

1 January 2026

Last Updated

1 January 2026

Introduction

This Candidate Support & Welfare Policy sets out Youth Start Limited's commitment to supporting the wellbeing and welfare of all young people participating in Youth Start's mentorship and employment programme. Youth Start recognises that young people may face a range of challenges, including personal difficulties, mental health concerns, financial hardship, and barriers to employment. Youth Start is committed to providing holistic support to help young people overcome these challenges and achieve their potential.

This policy applies to all young people participating in Youth Start's programme, from initial contact through to completion of the 12-week mentorship period and beyond. It outlines Youth Start's approach to assessing support needs, providing practical and emotional support, signposting to external services, and monitoring wellbeing.

Youth Start is committed to creating a supportive environment in which all young people feel safe, valued, and able to access the support they need to succeed.

Purpose of This Policy

The purpose of this Candidate Support & Welfare Policy is to:

- Ensure that all young people receive appropriate support to participate fully in Youth Start's programme
- Assess and identify support needs early
- Provide practical and emotional support to young people
- Signpost young people to appropriate external services and support
- Monitor wellbeing and identify emerging concerns

- Promote mental health and emotional wellbeing
 - Support young people to overcome barriers to employment
 - Ensure that support is person-centred, respectful, and non-judgmental
 - Comply with UK safeguarding legislation and best practice
 - Promote positive outcomes and progression for all young people
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Scope and Application

This policy applies to:

- All young people participating in Youth Start's mentorship and employment programme
- All staff members and mentors involved in supporting young people
- All aspects of support provision, including initial assessment, ongoing support, crisis support, and exit support
- All interactions between Youth Start and young people

This policy covers support in relation to:

- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
 - Financial hardship and poverty
 - Housing and homelessness
 - Family and relationship difficulties
 - Substance misuse and addiction
 - Domestic abuse and violence
 - Safeguarding concerns
 - Disability and additional support needs
 - Bereavement and loss
 - Employment barriers and challenges
 - Education and training needs
 - Social isolation and loneliness
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Legal Framework

Youth Start operates in compliance with the following UK legislation:

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004:** Provides framework for safeguarding and supporting children and young people
- **Care Act 2014:** Requires local authorities to provide support to adults with care needs
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005:** Protects the rights of people who lack mental capacity
- **Equality Act 2010:** Requires fair treatment and prohibits discrimination
- **Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR:** Protects personal data and requires fair and transparent processing

- **Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014:** Sets standards for safeguarding
 - **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:** Requires vetting and barring of individuals who work with vulnerable groups
 - **Mental Health Act 1983:** Provides framework for mental health support and treatment
 - **Domestic Abuse Act 2021:** Provides framework for supporting victims of domestic abuse
 - **ACAS guidance:** Provides best practice guidance on supporting vulnerable workers
 - **Charity Commission guidance:** Provides guidance on safeguarding in charities
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Defining Support Needs

Categories of Support Need

Youth Start recognises that young people may have a range of support needs. Support needs are categorised as follows:

Tier 1: Universal Support

All young people receive universal support as part of Youth Start's standard programme. This includes:

- Mentorship and guidance
- Employment support and job search assistance
- Skills development and training
- Regular contact and communication
- Information and signposting

Tier 2: Targeted Support

Young people with identified support needs receive targeted support in addition to universal support. This may include:

- Additional mentorship or coaching
- Financial support or advice
- Housing support or advice
- Mental health support or signposting
- Disability support or reasonable adjustments
- Family or relationship support

Tier 3: Intensive Support

Young people with complex or multiple support needs receive intensive support. This may include:

- Frequent contact and check-ins
- Crisis support and intervention
- Coordination with external services
- Specialist support or referral
- Safeguarding intervention if required

Identifying Support Needs

Support needs are identified through:

- Initial assessment during recruitment and induction
- Ongoing conversation and relationship building with mentors
- Regular check-ins and reviews
- Feedback from young people about their needs
- Observations by mentors and staff
- Information provided by employers or other agencies
- Self-referral by young people

Initial Assessment and Support Planning

Initial Assessment

When a young person joins Youth Start's programme, an initial assessment is conducted to identify any support needs.

Assessment Process:

- A confidential conversation with the young person to understand their circumstances, challenges, and support needs
- Questions about housing, financial situation, family circumstances, health, education, employment barriers, and personal circumstances
- Observation and professional judgment by staff conducting the assessment
- Recording of information in a confidential support needs assessment form
- Discussion with the young person about findings and support available

Confidentiality:

- Information gathered during assessment is confidential and stored securely
- Information is shared only with those who need to know to provide appropriate support
- Young people are informed about what information will be shared and with whom
- Young people have the right to request that certain information is not shared

Support Planning

Based on the initial assessment, a support plan is developed for each young person.

Support Plan:

- Identifies the young person's support needs and priorities
- Sets out the support that will be provided by Youth Start
- Identifies external services or support that may be needed
- Sets out how support will be reviewed and monitored
- Involves the young person in planning and decision-making
- Is reviewed regularly and updated as circumstances change

Young Person Involvement:

- Young people are involved in developing their support plan
 - Young people have the opportunity to discuss their needs and preferences
 - Young people are given a copy of their support plan
 - Young people are encouraged to ask questions and raise concerns
 - Young people can request changes to their support plan
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Types of Support Provided

Mentorship and Guidance

All young people receive mentorship and guidance from a trained mentor.

Mentorship Support:

- Regular one-to-one meetings with a mentor
- Guidance on employment, skills, and career development
- Support with confidence building and personal development
- Listening and emotional support
- Practical advice and problem-solving
- Signposting to other services and support

Employment Support

Youth Start provides practical support to help young people find and maintain employment.

Employment Support:

- Job search assistance and guidance
- CV writing and interview preparation
- Application support and follow-up
- Workplace induction and integration support
- Ongoing support in the workplace
- Support with workplace challenges or difficulties
- Progression and development opportunities

Financial Support and Advice

Youth Start recognises that financial hardship can be a barrier to employment and participation.

Financial Support:

- Information and advice about benefits and financial support available
- Signposting to financial advice services
- Support with budgeting and financial planning
- Information about emergency financial support or grants

- Support with debt or financial difficulties
- Assistance with travel costs or other employment-related expenses where possible

Housing Support

Youth Start recognises that housing instability can affect young people's ability to participate and progress.

Housing Support:

- Information and advice about housing options
- Signposting to housing support services
- Support with housing applications or issues
- Information about emergency accommodation
- Support with homelessness prevention
- Liaison with housing services and local authorities

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Support

Youth Start is committed to supporting young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Mental Health Support:

- Regular check-ins on mental health and wellbeing
- Listening and emotional support from mentors
- Information about mental health and wellbeing
- Signposting to mental health services and support
- Support with managing stress, anxiety, and low mood
- Crisis support and intervention if required
- Liaison with mental health services where appropriate

Mental Health Services:

Young people can be signposted to:

- NHS mental health services (GP, counselling, therapy)
- Crisis support services (Samaritans, Mind, Rethink)
- Specialist services (eating disorders, substance misuse, self-harm)
- Online support and resources
- Peer support groups and communities

Disability Support and Reasonable Adjustments

Youth Start is committed to supporting young people with disabilities and additional support needs.

Disability Support:

- Assessment of support needs and reasonable adjustments
- Provision of reasonable adjustments to enable participation
- Information and advice about disability support services
- Signposting to specialist services and support
- Liaison with health and social care services
- Support with accessing benefits and financial support
- Advocacy and representation where needed

Family and Relationship Support

Youth Start recognises that family and relationship difficulties can affect young people's wellbeing and participation.

Family Support:

- Listening and emotional support
- Information and advice about family support services
- Signposting to family counselling or mediation services
- Support with managing family relationships
- Information about support for young carers
- Liaison with family services where appropriate

Substance Misuse Support

Youth Start recognises that substance misuse can be a significant barrier to employment and wellbeing.

Substance Misuse Support:

- Information and education about substance misuse
- Listening and non-judgmental support
- Signposting to specialist substance misuse services
- Support with reducing or stopping substance use
- Information about harm reduction and safe practices
- Liaison with substance misuse services where appropriate
- Support with managing triggers and maintaining recovery

Substance Misuse Services:

Young people can be signposted to:

- NHS substance misuse services
- Specialist drug and alcohol services
- Peer support groups (Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Rehabilitation and recovery services
- Online support and resources

Domestic Abuse Support

Youth Start is committed to supporting young people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse Support:

- Confidential listening and emotional support
- Information about domestic abuse and healthy relationships
- Safety planning and risk assessment
- Signposting to specialist domestic abuse services
- Support with accessing emergency accommodation
- Information about legal rights and options
- Liaison with domestic abuse services and police where appropriate

Domestic Abuse Services:

Young people can be signposted to:

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247)
- Local domestic abuse services
- Refuge and emergency accommodation services
- Legal advice services
- Counselling and therapy services
- Police and criminal justice support

Bereavement and Loss Support

Youth Start recognises that bereavement and loss can significantly affect young people's wellbeing and participation.

Bereavement Support:

- Compassionate listening and emotional support
 - Information about bereavement and grief
 - Signposting to bereavement support services
 - Support with managing grief and loss
 - Flexible arrangements during bereavement
 - Information about memorial and remembrance
 - Liaison with bereavement services where appropriate
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Monitoring Wellbeing and Early Intervention

Regular Wellbeing Check-ins

Youth Start conducts regular check-ins with all young people to monitor wellbeing and identify emerging concerns.

Check-in Process:

- Regular contact with young people (at least weekly during mentorship period)
- Conversations about how young people are feeling and coping
- Observation of changes in mood, behaviour, or engagement
- Asking about any emerging concerns or difficulties
- Recording of wellbeing information
- Escalation of concerns to appropriate level of support

Warning Signs and Concerns

Mentors and staff are trained to recognise warning signs that may indicate a young person is struggling.

Warning Signs:

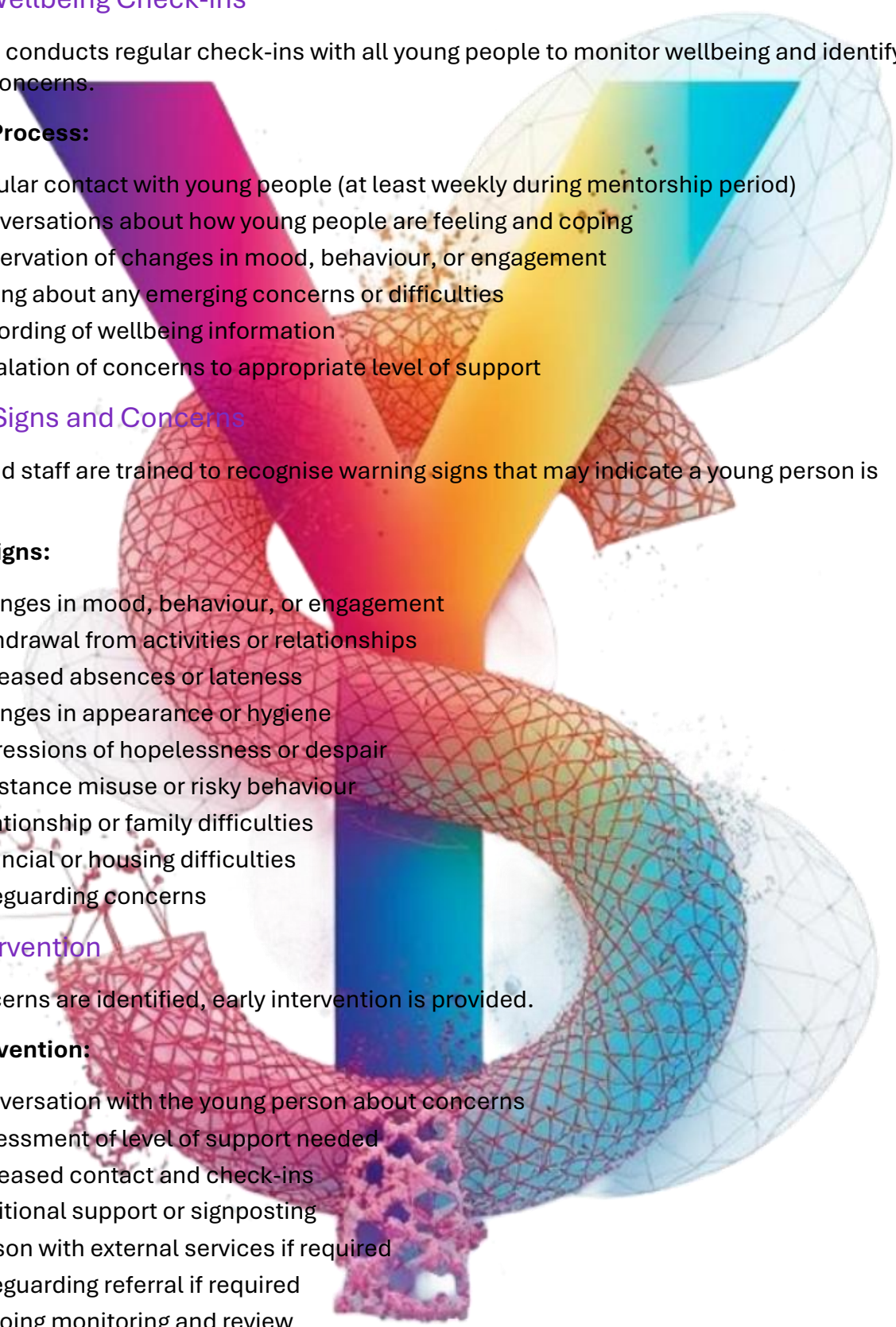
- Changes in mood, behaviour, or engagement
- Withdrawal from activities or relationships
- Increased absences or lateness
- Changes in appearance or hygiene
- Expressions of hopelessness or despair
- Substance misuse or risky behaviour
- Relationship or family difficulties
- Financial or housing difficulties
- Safeguarding concerns

Early Intervention

When concerns are identified, early intervention is provided.

Early Intervention:

- Conversation with the young person about concerns
- Assessment of level of support needed
- Increased contact and check-ins
- Additional support or signposting
- Liaison with external services if required
- Safeguarding referral if required
- Ongoing monitoring and review



Crisis Support and Intervention

Crisis Support

Youth Start provides crisis support when a young person is in immediate distress or danger.

Crisis Support:

- Immediate contact and listening support
- Assessment of risk and safety
- Emergency signposting to crisis services
- Support with accessing emergency services (police, ambulance, A&E)
- Liaison with emergency services and crisis teams
- Follow-up support and monitoring
- Safeguarding referral if required

Crisis Services:

Young people can access:

- Samaritans: 116 123 (24-hour emotional support)
- Crisis Text Line: Text SHOUT to 85258
- NHS 111: Non-emergency medical advice
- NHS 999: Emergency services
- Local crisis teams and mental health services
- Emergency accommodation services

Safeguarding Referral

If a young person is at risk of harm or abuse, a safeguarding referral is made to appropriate authorities.

Safeguarding Concerns:

- Child abuse or neglect (if under 18)
- Adult abuse or neglect (if over 18)
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Trafficking or modern slavery
- Self-harm or suicide risk
- Substance misuse
- Criminal activity or gang involvement

Safeguarding Process:

- Immediate assessment of risk and safety
- Confidential discussion with the young person (where safe to do so)

- Referral to local authority children's services or adult safeguarding team
 - Referral to police if criminal activity suspected
 - Documentation and record-keeping
 - Support for the young person throughout the process
 - Liaison with other agencies as required
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Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Confidentiality

Youth Start is committed to maintaining confidentiality and protecting young people's privacy.

Confidentiality Principles:

- Information shared by young people is confidential
- Information is shared only with those who need to know to provide appropriate support
- Young people are informed about what information will be shared and with whom
- Young people have the right to request that certain information is not shared (except in safeguarding situations)
- Information is stored securely and protected from unauthorised access
- Information is retained only for as long as necessary

Information Sharing

Information may be shared with external agencies in certain circumstances.

Information Sharing:

- With young person's consent (in most circumstances)
- Without consent if there is a safeguarding concern or risk of harm
- With parents or carers (if appropriate and in young person's best interests)
- With employers (with young person's consent)
- With other support services (with young person's consent)
- With statutory agencies (police, social services) if required by law

Data Protection:

- All information sharing complies with UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
 - Young people are informed about data sharing practices
 - Young people have the right to access their information
 - Young people have the right to request correction of inaccurate information
 - Young people have the right to request deletion of information (subject to legal requirements)
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Support for Young People with Complex Needs

Multi-Agency Working

For young people with complex or multiple support needs, Youth Start works with other agencies to provide coordinated support.

Multi-Agency Approach:

- Assessment of all support needs
- Development of coordinated support plan
- Regular liaison and communication with other agencies
- Shared information and updates (with consent)
- Coordinated provision of support
- Regular review and adjustment of support

Partner Agencies:

Youth Start may work with:

- Local authority children's services or adult services
- Health services (GP, mental health, substance misuse)
- Housing services
- Education and training providers
- Employment services
- Police and criminal justice services
- Domestic abuse services
- Specialist support services

Advocacy and Representation

Youth Start may provide advocacy or representation for young people who need support in accessing services or asserting their rights.

Advocacy Support:

- Representation at meetings with other agencies
- Support with making complaints or appeals
- Signposting to independent advocacy services
- Support with accessing benefits or financial support
- Support with legal matters or criminal justice processes



Exit Support and Progression

Transition Planning

As young people approach the end of their mentorship period, transition planning is undertaken to support ongoing progression.

Transition Planning:

- Discussion about next steps and future goals
- Planning for ongoing support and progression
- Identification of any ongoing support needs
- Signposting to ongoing support services
- Maintenance of contact and support where appropriate
- Celebration of achievements and progress

Ongoing Support

Youth Start may continue to provide support to young people after the end of the formal mentorship period.

Ongoing Support:

- Continued contact and check-ins
- Support with employment progression and development
- Signposting to ongoing support services
- Alumni network and peer support
- Mentorship or coaching opportunities
- Celebration of achievements and milestones

Exit Support

When a young person exits the programme, appropriate exit support is provided.

Exit Support:

- Final review of support provided and outcomes achieved
 - Discussion about ongoing support and services
 - Signposting to ongoing support services
 - Provision of contact information and resources
 - Celebration of achievements and progress
 - Feedback and evaluation of the programme
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Staff Training and Development

All staff members and mentors involved in supporting young people must receive appropriate training.

Mandatory Training

Support and Welfare Training:

- Understanding support needs and vulnerability
- Mental health awareness and first aid
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Domestic abuse awareness
- Substance misuse awareness
- Disability awareness and reasonable adjustments
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Crisis support and intervention
- Trauma-informed practice

Ongoing Development

- Annual refresher training
- Specialist training on specific topics
- Supervision and support
- Reflective practice and learning
- Access to external training and resources

Responsibilities

All Staff and Mentors

All staff members and mentors are responsible for:

- Understanding and complying with this policy
- Identifying support needs and concerns
- Providing appropriate support and signposting
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Recording information appropriately
- Escalating concerns to appropriate level
- Participating in training and development
- Reflecting on their practice

Mentors

Mentors are responsible for:

- Building supportive relationships with young people
- Regular check-ins on wellbeing
- Identifying support needs and concerns
- Providing practical and emotional support
- Signposting to external services
- Maintaining confidentiality and appropriate boundaries
- Reporting concerns to managers or designated safeguarding lead
- Participating in supervision

Managers

Managers are responsible for:

- Overseeing support provision
- Ensuring staff are trained and supported
- Investigating and responding to concerns
- Making safeguarding referrals
- Coordinating with external agencies
- Monitoring outcomes and effectiveness
- Providing supervision and support to staff
- Reviewing and updating support plans

Senior Management

Senior management is responsible for:

- Overseeing implementation of this policy
- Ensuring compliance with safeguarding legislation
- Providing resources and support for welfare provision
- Monitoring outcomes and effectiveness
- Reviewing and updating this policy
- Promoting a culture of support and wellbeing

Monitoring and Review

This Candidate Support & Welfare Policy is reviewed annually to ensure that it remains current and effective. The review considers:

- Changes to UK safeguarding and welfare legislation
- Feedback from young people and staff
- Monitoring and evaluation findings
- Incidents or concerns relating to support and welfare
- Best practice guidance from safeguarding bodies
- Changes to Youth Start's programme or operations

Youth Start will monitor:

- The number and types of support needs identified
- The support provided and outcomes achieved
- Young people's satisfaction with support
- Safeguarding concerns and referrals
- Staff training and development
- Effectiveness of signposting and external services
- Progression and outcomes for young people

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this Candidate Support & Welfare Policy, or if you wish to report a concern about a young person's welfare, please contact Youth Start Limited using the following contact details:

Youth Start Limited

Registered Office: 370 Osmaston Park Road, Derby, DE24 8FB

Email: contact@youthstart.co.uk

Telephone: 07470435603

Website: youthstart.co.uk

Safeguarding Concerns:

If you have a safeguarding concern about a young person, please contact:

- Local authority children's services or adult safeguarding team
- Police (999 for emergencies, 101 for non-emergencies)
- Nick Calin (contact@youthstart.co.uk) or designated safeguarding lead

Relationship with Other Policies

This Candidate Support & Welfare Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Mentorship Standards Policy
- Candidate Privacy Notice
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints & Dispute Resolution Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Diversity & Inclusion in Mentorship Policy
- Code of Conduct

Last Updated: 1 January 2026

Next Review Date: 1 January 2027