

Safeguarding Policy

Youth Start Limited

Company Number: 16864238

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

Effective Date

1 January 2026

Next Review Date

1 January 2027

Introduction and Purpose

Youth Start Limited is committed to safeguarding young people and vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, and exploitation. This Safeguarding Policy sets out our approach to safeguarding and our procedures for protecting young people and vulnerable individuals who engage with Youth Start.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff members, volunteers, and contractors who work with Youth Start. We are committed to creating a safe environment where young people and vulnerable individuals feel protected and supported.

Youth Start works with young people aged 18-24, many of whom may be vulnerable or at risk of harm. We recognise our responsibility to protect these young people from abuse, exploitation, and harm. This policy sets out how we identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.

This policy applies to all staff members employed by Youth Start Limited, all volunteers engaged by Youth Start, all contractors and third parties who work with Youth Start, and all employers who engage candidates through Youth Start.

Scope

This Safeguarding Policy applies to:

- All staff members employed by Youth Start Limited
- All volunteers engaged by Youth Start Limited
- All contractors and third parties who work with Youth Start
- All employers who engage candidates through Youth Start
- All young people and vulnerable individuals who engage with Youth Start
- All safeguarding concerns and incidents involving young people or vulnerable individuals

This policy does not apply to:

- Safeguarding concerns that do not involve young people or vulnerable individuals
 - Safeguarding concerns that are not related to Youth Start's activities or services
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Legal Framework

Safeguarding must comply with the following legislation:

Children Act 1989 and 2004:

These Acts establish the framework for child protection and safeguarding. Although Youth Start works with young people aged 18-24 (not children), these Acts provide important guidance on safeguarding principles.

Care Act 2014:

This Act establishes the framework for safeguarding vulnerable adults. This is the primary legislation that applies to Youth Start's safeguarding responsibilities.

Equality Act 2010:

This Act requires that safeguarding procedures do not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics.

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR):

These Acts regulate the processing of personal data, including safeguarding information. Safeguarding data must be processed fairly, transparently, and securely.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:

This Act requires that Youth Start takes steps to protect the health and safety of young people and vulnerable individuals.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks:

DBS checks are required for staff members and volunteers who work with vulnerable individuals.

Modern Slavery Act 2015:

This Act requires that Youth Start is alert to signs of modern slavery and human trafficking.

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003:

This Act requires that Youth Start is alert to signs of female genital mutilation (FGM).

Youth Start's Approach to Safeguarding

Youth Start is committed to:

Prevention:

We are committed to preventing harm, abuse, and exploitation. We take steps to identify and reduce risks to young people and vulnerable individuals.



Early Identification:

We are committed to identifying safeguarding concerns early. We train staff members and volunteers to recognise signs of abuse, exploitation, and harm.

Appropriate Response:

We are committed to responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns. We follow clear procedures for reporting and investigating safeguarding concerns.

Support:

We are committed to supporting young people and vulnerable individuals who have experienced abuse, exploitation, or harm. We provide information about support services and help young people access support.

Accountability:

We are committed to being accountable for our safeguarding responsibilities. We keep records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

Partnership Working:

We are committed to working in partnership with other organisations, including local authorities, police, and support services, to safeguard young people and vulnerable individuals.

Definition of Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the process of protecting young people and vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, and exploitation. Safeguarding includes:

Protection from Abuse:

Protecting young people and vulnerable individuals from physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and financial abuse.

Protection from Neglect:

Protecting young people and vulnerable individuals from neglect and deprivation.

Protection from Exploitation:

Protecting young people and vulnerable individuals from exploitation, including sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, and trafficking.

Protection from Harm:

Protecting young people and vulnerable individuals from other forms of harm, including self-harm, substance abuse, and involvement in crime.

Promotion of Wellbeing:

Promoting the physical, emotional, social, and economic wellbeing of young people and vulnerable individuals.

Types of Abuse and Harm

Physical Abuse

Definition:

Physical abuse is the deliberate use of physical force that causes injury or pain.

Signs:

Signs of physical abuse may include: - Unexplained injuries or bruises - Injuries in various stages of healing - Injuries that do not match the explanation given - Frequent injuries - Burns, bite marks, or other distinctive injuries - Flinching when touched - Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover injuries - Poor hygiene or malnutrition - Fearfulness or withdrawal

Response:

If physical abuse is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Not investigate or interrogate - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead - Follow the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy

Emotional Abuse

Definition:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a young person that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development.

Signs:

Signs of emotional abuse may include: - Low self-esteem or self-confidence - Excessive fear or anxiety - Withdrawal or isolation - Aggression or challenging behaviour - Developmental delays - Difficulty forming relationships - Self-harm or suicidal thoughts - Excessive compliance or passivity

Response:

If emotional abuse is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Offer reassurance and support - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead - Follow the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy

Sexual Abuse

Definition:

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a young person in sexual activity that they do not consent to, do not understand, or are unable to consent to due to their age or capacity.

Signs:

Signs of sexual abuse may include: - Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotional state - Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour - Withdrawal or isolation - Difficulty walking or sitting - Torn or stained underwear - Sexually transmitted infections - Pregnancy - Self-harm or suicidal thoughts - Disclosure of sexual abuse

Response:

If sexual abuse is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Not investigate or interrogate - Not examine the young person - Record what the young person has said (using their own words where possible) - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead immediately - Follow the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy

Financial Abuse

Definition:

Financial abuse is the misuse of a young person's money, property, or assets without their consent.

Signs:

Signs of financial abuse may include: - Unexplained loss of money or possessions - Young person being unable to access their own money - Young person being forced to sign documents or hand over money - Young person being given inadequate pocket money or allowance - Young person being forced to work without payment - Young person being in debt or having unexplained debts

Response:

If financial abuse is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead - Follow the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy

Exploitation

Definition:

Exploitation is the abuse of a young person's vulnerability or dependence for the purpose of gaining advantage or benefit.

Types of Exploitation:

Exploitation may include: - Sexual exploitation (including grooming and sexual abuse) - Labour exploitation (including forced work and trafficking) - Criminal exploitation (including involvement in drug dealing or crime) - Modern slavery and human trafficking

Signs:

Signs of exploitation may include: - Unexplained absences from work or training - Involvement with older individuals or groups - Unexplained money or gifts - Withdrawal from friends and family - Changes in behaviour or emotional state - Poor hygiene or appearance - Involvement in risky behaviour - Disclosure of exploitation

Response:

If exploitation is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Not confront the person suspected of exploitation - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead immediately - Follow the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy

Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour

Definition:

Self-harm is the deliberate injury of oneself, usually as a way of coping with emotional distress. Suicidal behaviour is behaviour that may result in death or serious injury.



Signs:

Signs of self-harm or suicidal behaviour may include: - Unexplained cuts, burns, or bruises (usually on wrists, arms, or legs) - Wearing inappropriate clothing to cover injuries - Preoccupation with death or suicide - Talking about wanting to die or harm themselves - Giving away possessions - Withdrawal or isolation - Changes in eating or sleeping habits - Increased risk-taking behaviour

Response:

If self-harm or suicidal behaviour is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Take the young person's concerns seriously - Not dismiss or minimise their feelings - Offer reassurance and support - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead immediately - Help the young person access support services

Substance Abuse

Definition:

Substance abuse is the misuse of drugs or alcohol in a way that causes harm to the young person or others.

Signs:

Signs of substance abuse may include: - Unexplained changes in behaviour or mood - Poor hygiene or appearance - Withdrawal or isolation - Involvement with individuals or groups associated with substance abuse - Unexplained money or possessions - Involvement in crime or risky behaviour - Health problems or overdose

Response:

If substance abuse is suspected, staff members should: - Listen to the young person without judgment - Not judge or criticise - Offer reassurance and support - Record what the young person has said - Report the concern to the Safeguarding Lead - Help the young person access support services

Safeguarding Procedures

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Who to Report To:

All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for managing safeguarding concerns and coordinating the response.

Safeguarding Lead:

Nick Calin (contact@youthstart.co.uk, 07470435603) is the Safeguarding Lead.

How to Report:

Safeguarding concerns can be reported: - In person to the Safeguarding Lead - By telephone to the Safeguarding Lead - By email to the Safeguarding Lead - In writing to the Safeguarding Lead

Confidentiality:

Reports of safeguarding concerns are treated confidentially. Information is only shared with those who need to know in order to protect the young person.

No Retaliation:

Staff members and volunteers who report safeguarding concerns in good faith will not be subject to retaliation or disciplinary action.

Initial Assessment

Receiving the Report:

When a safeguarding concern is reported, the Safeguarding Lead will: - Listen carefully to the person reporting the concern - Record the details of the concern (including the date, time, and nature of the concern) - Ask clarifying questions if necessary - Reassure the person reporting the concern

Assessing the Concern:

The Safeguarding Lead will assess whether the concern indicates a safeguarding issue that requires further action.

Immediate Action:

If there is immediate danger or risk of serious harm, the Safeguarding Lead will: - Contact the emergency services (999) - Inform the young person's emergency contact (if appropriate) - Take steps to ensure the young person's immediate safety

Investigation

Investigation Process:

If a safeguarding concern is substantiated, the Safeguarding Lead will: - Gather information from relevant parties - Speak to the young person (in a safe and supportive environment) - Speak to witnesses (if appropriate) - Speak to the person suspected of causing harm (if appropriate and safe to do so) - Review any relevant records or documentation

Confidentiality During Investigation:

Information gathered during the investigation is treated confidentially. Information is only shared with those who need to know.

Support During Investigation:

The young person is provided with support during the investigation. This may include: - Emotional support and reassurance - Information about the investigation process - Information about support services - Regular updates about the investigation

Reporting to External Agencies

When to Report:

If a safeguarding concern indicates that a young person has been abused, exploited, or harmed, or is at risk of abuse, exploitation, or harm, the Safeguarding Lead will report the concern to external agencies.

External Agencies:

External agencies that may be contacted include: - Local authority children's services (if the young person is under 18) - Local authority adult safeguarding services (if the young person is 18 or over) - Police (if a crime has been committed) - National Safeguarding Hub (if trafficking or modern slavery is suspected)

Reporting Process:

The Safeguarding Lead will: - Contact the relevant external agency - Provide information about the safeguarding concern - Cooperate with any investigation conducted by the external agency - Keep records of the report and any response from the external agency

Young Person's Consent:

Where possible, the Safeguarding Lead will discuss reporting to external agencies with the young person before making the report. However, the young person's consent is not required if there is a risk of serious harm or if the young person lacks capacity to consent.

Support and Aftercare

Support Plan:

Once a safeguarding concern has been identified, the Safeguarding Lead will develop a support plan for the young person. The support plan will: - Identify the young person's needs - Set out what support will be provided - Identify external support services that may be helpful - Set out how progress will be monitored

Ongoing Support:

Youth Start will provide ongoing support to the young person, including: - Regular check-ins to see how the young person is coping - Information about support services - Help accessing support services - Emotional support and reassurance

Feedback:

The Safeguarding Lead will keep the young person informed about the outcome of any investigation or report to external agencies (to the extent that is appropriate and in the young person's best interests).

Prevention and Early Identification

Staff Training and Awareness

Safeguarding Training:

All staff members and volunteers must receive safeguarding training when they join Youth Start. Training covers: - Definition of safeguarding - Types of abuse and harm - Signs and indicators of abuse and harm - Safeguarding procedures - How to respond to disclosures - Confidentiality and data protection

Regular Training:

Safeguarding training is refreshed annually to ensure that staff members and volunteers are up to date with safeguarding issues and best practice.

Specialist Training:

Staff members who work directly with young people may receive specialist training on topics such as: - Trauma-informed practice - Working with vulnerable young people - Recognising signs of exploitation - Mental health awareness

Creating a Safe Environment

Code of Conduct:

All staff members and volunteers are required to comply with Youth Start's Code of Conduct, which sets out standards of behaviour and conduct.

Supervision:

All staff members and volunteers receive regular supervision. Supervision provides an opportunity to discuss safeguarding concerns and to receive support and guidance.

Policies and Procedures:

Youth Start has clear policies and procedures in place to protect young people, including: - Recruitment and selection procedures - Background checks - Confidentiality and data protection - Health and safety procedures - Complaints procedures

Physical Environment:

Youth Start takes steps to ensure that the physical environment is safe, including: - Ensuring that premises are secure - Ensuring that there are appropriate facilities - Ensuring that young people are supervised appropriately

Identifying Young People at Risk

Risk Assessment:

Youth Start carries out risk assessments to identify young people who may be at risk of harm. Risk assessments consider: - The young person's background and circumstances - Any previous safeguarding concerns - Any indicators of abuse, exploitation, or harm - Any protective factors

Early Intervention:

If a young person is identified as being at risk, Youth Start will: - Develop a support plan - Provide mentorship and support - Help the young person access support services - Monitor the young person's wellbeing

Safeguarding and Recruitment

Background Checks

DBS Checks:

All staff members and volunteers who work with young people must undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Scope of DBS Checks:

DBS checks cover: - Criminal convictions - Cautions and warnings - Barred list information

Barred List:

Staff members and volunteers who are on the barred list are not permitted to work with young people.



Recruitment Decisions:

Recruitment decisions take into account the results of DBS checks. A criminal conviction does not automatically prevent someone from working with young people, but Youth Start will consider: - The nature of the conviction - How long ago the conviction occurred - The young person's age at the time of the conviction - Whether the conviction is relevant to working with young people - Any other relevant information

Recruitment Procedures

Safeguarding Questions:

Recruitment procedures include safeguarding questions to assess candidates' commitment to safeguarding and their suitability to work with young people.

References:

References are obtained from previous employers and are used to assess candidates' suitability to work with young people.

Interviews:

Interviews include questions about safeguarding and candidates' experience of working with young people.

Safeguarding and Employers

While Youth Start recruits and places young people with employers, employers have their own safeguarding responsibilities.

Employer Safeguarding Responsibilities:

Employers are responsible for: - Providing a safe working environment - Protecting young people from abuse, exploitation, and harm - Reporting safeguarding concerns to Youth Start - Complying with safeguarding legislation and best practice

Youth Start Supervision:

Youth Start supervises employer compliance with safeguarding requirements. We: - Provide guidance to employers on safeguarding best practice - Monitor the young person's wellbeing during the placement - Respond to any safeguarding concerns raised by the young person or employer - Take action if employers fail to meet safeguarding requirements

Placement Monitoring:

Youth Start monitors placements to ensure that young people are safe and well. Monitoring includes: - Regular contact with the young person - Regular contact with the employer - Observation of the working environment - Assessment of the young person's wellbeing and safety

Safeguarding Records and Confidentiality

Record Keeping

Safeguarding Records:

Youth Start keeps detailed records of all safeguarding concerns, including: - The date and time of the concern - The nature of the concern - The young person's response - Actions taken - Outcome of any investigation - Support provided

Secure Storage:

Safeguarding records are stored securely in our CRM system (ZohoCRM) and on a password-protected USB backup drive.

Restricted Access:

Access to safeguarding records is restricted to authorised staff members only. Staff members are required to treat safeguarding information confidentially.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality Obligation:

All staff members and volunteers have a confidentiality obligation in relation to safeguarding information. Information is only shared with those who need to know in order to protect the young person.

Exceptions to Confidentiality:

Confidentiality may be breached if: - The young person consents to disclosure - Disclosure is required by law - Disclosure is necessary to protect the young person or others from harm - Disclosure is necessary for safeguarding purposes

Data Protection:

Safeguarding information is processed in accordance with data protection law. Young people have the right to access information held about them, subject to safeguarding considerations.

Data Retention

Retention Period:

Safeguarding records are retained for 6 years after the young person's engagement with Youth Start ends, or longer if required by law.

Secure Deletion:

Safeguarding records are securely deleted after the retention period has expired.

Responsibilities

Safeguarding Lead:

Nick Calin (contact@youthstart.co.uk, 07470435603) is responsible for: - Overseeing safeguarding at Youth Start - Receiving and assessing safeguarding concerns - Coordinating investigations - Reporting to external agencies - Providing support to young people - Monitoring safeguarding compliance - Providing safeguarding training and guidance

All Staff Members and Volunteers:

All staff members and volunteers are responsible for: - Understanding safeguarding responsibilities - Recognising signs of abuse, exploitation, and harm - Reporting safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Lead - Complying with safeguarding procedures - Maintaining confidentiality - Supporting young people who have experienced harm

Employers:

Employers are responsible for: - Providing a safe working environment - Protecting young people from harm - Reporting safeguarding concerns to Youth Start - Complying with safeguarding legislation and best practice

Young People:

Young people are encouraged to: - Speak up if they are concerned about their safety or wellbeing - Report safeguarding concerns to Youth Start staff - Access support services if they need help

Related Policies

This Safeguarding Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Background Checks Policy
- Employment Contract Policy
- Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy

Changes to This Policy

We may update this Safeguarding Policy from time to time to reflect changes in safeguarding legislation, our practices, or best practice guidance. We will notify relevant staff members and individuals of material changes and provide updated guidance as necessary.

Relevant Legislation

This Safeguarding Policy is based on the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

- Modern Slavery Act 2015
 - Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
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External Resources and Support

National Safeguarding Hub:

For concerns about trafficking or modern slavery: www.nationalsafeguardinghub.org.uk

NSPCC:

For advice and support on child safeguarding: www.nspcc.org.uk

Samaritans:

For support with mental health and suicidal thoughts: 116 123

Childline:

For young people who need support: 0800 1111

Local Authority Safeguarding Services:

Contact your local authority for safeguarding concerns.

Police:

For emergencies or serious crimes: 999

Contact Information

If you have safeguarding concerns or questions about this policy, please contact:

Safeguarding Lead:

Nick Calin

Email: contact@youthstart.co.uk

Telephone: 07470435603

Youth Start Limited

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