# Young Medway

## Safeguarding Statement and Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board.

| | Person responsible | Date |
|---|---|---|
| **Development** | Lee Lucas<br>Adapted Lucy | Nov 2022 |
| **Ratified** | Peter Martin | Nov 2022 |
| **Reviewed** | Kirstie Bottiglieri | Nov 2024 |
| **Signed off** | Board | Feb 2025 |
| **Next review** | Kirstie Bottiglieri | Feb 2026 |
| **Signed off** | Board | 8th June 2026 |

Designated Safeguarding Officer/Trustee: Kirstie Bottiglieri
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If an emergency please contact Medway Social Care 01634 334466

There are further useful contacts in Appendix 2.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the importance of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to the Young Medway, hereafter referred to YM. This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone working on behalf of YM.

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

YM is a charity that works to support organisations that work with children, young people and families and other beneficiaries. Our aim is to support the improvement in lives of those beneficiaries. We believe that every individual who accesses our services should be treated with dignity and respect, have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will. YM is committed to the safeguarding of all children, young people and vulnerable adults coming into contact with the charity, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs.

YM is committed to ensuring that:

- A child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind and that the welfare of the child / young person is paramount.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Every person who accesses our services has a right to a life free from fear, to be treated with dignity and respect and to have their choice respected and not be forced to do anything against their will.

We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in a way that protects them. Working in partnership is essential in promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**Young Medway's Safeguarding Policy follows the following principles:**

- The young person's welfare is paramount.
- A zero-tolerance approach to abuse. There are no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk and children from abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and mistreatment.
- All young people, regardless of age, disability, gender or ethnic origin have a right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- We are committed to working with appropriate agencies including Medway Social Care, and the police etc. to ensure the reporting of abuse is appropriate and in line with local, national and Charity Commission requirements and Information Sharing guidance.
- Confidentiality will be upheld at all times and in line with the Data Protection Act.
- Whilst YM does not work directly with young people, all beneficiaries/members of YM must have the appropriate Safeguarding policies and processes with regular reviewing practices in place including Safer recruitment to qualify as members.

- Discrimination, prejudice and oppressive behaviour or language is unacceptable within all activities of YM and any beneficiaries.

This policy and associated procedures have been produced in line with The Children Act 1989 & 2004, and in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 as well as Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) .

It also has due regard, where appropriate with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 as well as observing Kent and Medway safeguarding children procedures

## 2. Aim of this policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure YM, their beneficiaries and members are aware of and have the appropriate policies and practices in place in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people.

This policy relates to children and young people under the age of 18 and to vulnerable adults over the age of 18. The term 'young people' will be used to include those under 18 years old and vulnerable adults.

The term vulnerable adult refers to a person over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**YM will:**

- Implement procedures to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.
- Listen, value, respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people.
- Recruit Trustees staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are carried out, in line with Statutory Safe Recruitment requirements. All Trustees, staff and volunteers should receive safeguarding training and relevant local safeguarding information regularly.
- Ensure that safeguarding is on the agenda at each trustee meeting
- Provide effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- Share information about child protection safeguarding vulnerable adults and good practice with service users, staff, volunteers and member groups
- Let parents/carers and young people know how to voice concerns or complaints about anything they might be unhappy about.

- Ensure all beneficiaries of Young Medway comply with statutory safeguarding requirements in order to protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of the Young People they come into contact with.
- Stay up to date with developments on safeguarding best practice and reviewing and updating our policies and practices every year

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and Child Protection Responsibilities are set out as follows:

Trustees are accountable for YM safeguarding procedure.

Trustees of YM have a duty of care to their charity, which will include taking the necessary steps to safeguard and take responsibility for those children and vulnerable adults. They must always act in their best interests and ensure they take all reasonable steps to prevent any harm to them. Trustees also have duties to manage risk and to protect the reputation and assets of the charity. [*Charity Commission's Strategy for dealing with safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Issues in Charities*, April 2012] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees#policies-proceduresand-practices-you-need-to-have

In the absence of a CEO, the trustees are accountable for safeguarding within the organisation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure a clear framework for the management accountability for safeguarding is in operation. It is also the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that:

- Staff and trustees are aware of this policy;
- this policy is at the heart of all that we do;
- any breaches of this policy coming to the attention of the trustees are dealt with appropriately.

## 5 Safeguarding Procedures

### a) Designated Safeguarding Lead

There will be a named person for safeguarding who will be responsible for dealing with any concerns about the safeguarding of young people that is brought to the attention of Young Medway. This will include any concerns for adults who may pose a risk of harm to young people. Procedures for sharing this information with the Local Authority Designated Officer will be followed (LADO). This person is currently Kirstie Bottiglieri.

The role of the designated person is to:

- Ensure that Safeguarding Policy and Procedures when required are acted on by Young Medway.
- Ensure they, and other members know how to make contact with social care and police staff responsible for dealing with safeguarding children concerns both during and after office hours.
- Act as a source of advice on safeguarding young people matters within YM, and seek further advice and guidance from Medway Safeguarding Children Partnership as appropriate.
- Ensure that an accurate record is kept of any concerns about a young person or adult and of any conversation or referrals to statutory agencies brought to the attention of Young Medway.
- Ensure that any such record is kept safely and securely. This will be password protected on the YM Google drive and with restricted access.

## b) Safer Recruitment

Young Medway recognises that anyone has the potential to abuse young people in some way and that all necessary steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with them.

Youth services would not exist without the thousands of staff and volunteers who deliver provision. There are many different roles to play in delivering quality services for young people and ensuring we encourage individuals that are suitable to work with young people is essential. Getting the right people in place is key to well organised and quality services delivered in a safe and supportive environment.

Safer recruitment means taking steps to ensure only individuals who are suitable for working with young people, whilst keeping them safe from harm and risks, are appointed. Safer recruitment procedures should be adopted and applied consistently when appointing a staff member, associate or volunteer. Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Due to the fact that YM may work with children and young people, Young Medway is exempt from regulations governing the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore all staff and volunteer applicants for positions within Young Medway are required to disclose all previous criminal convictions, should they be shortlisted for a position. Any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

- All potential candidates for both paid and voluntary positions will be asked to complete an application form.
- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to disclose any criminal convictions.

- Due diligence checks may be carried out to ensure that all gaps of employment are accounted for

YM's recruitment will follow the latest guidelines
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/safer-recruitment

Please read the information here before answering the following questions. If you are unsure whether you need to disclose criminal information, you should seek legal advice or you may wish to contact Nacro or Unlock for impartial advice. There is more information on filtering and protected offences on the Ministry of Justice website.

Nacro - https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/ or email helpline@nacro.org.uk or phone 0300 123 1999

Unlock – http://hub.unlock.org.uk/contact/ phone 01634 247350 text 07824 113848

## Staff and volunteers

YM's Staff Recruitment Policy puts in place procedures to ensure that thorough checks are made prior to appointment of staff, volunteers and freelance consultants, in order to prevent a person using their position to harm a child or vulnerable adults.

For all posts at YM the following vetting checks are carried out prior to confirming the appointment:

- A Self-Disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions and disciplinary or capability procedures.
- Identity documents including photographic identity
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- A minimum of two references are obtained
- Qualification certificates if required for the role
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check if eligible. All appointments to posts involving direct work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS, and agreement to re-check every 3 years

Volunteers and freelance consultants post the same level of risk to clients as paid staff.
Vetting checks include:

- a self-disclosure form to disclose previous spent/unspent convictions
- A minimum of two references are obtained
- DBS check if eligible. All volunteers and freelance consultants working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults will be required to evidence an Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS carried out by a recognised organisation or company (the decision on what constitutes as a recognised organisation is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead Trustee and Chair) and agreement to re-check every 3 years

a. All potential candidates will be interviewed by a panel consisting of a minimum of two trustees or staff and at least 1 of them needs to have Safer Recruitment Training.

b. If a person is thought to be suitable for a role, a minimum of two written references will be taken up and may be confirmed by telephone
c. DBS checks will be required for all roles that might bring individual Trustees, Staff or Volunteers into contact with young people
d. If a DBS disclosure reveals a criminal record, this will not automatically ban the person from the role. Discussions will take place regarding the offence with the applicant and take into consideration the circumstances of the offence, the type of offence, when committed, etc. and assess fairly to ensure fair appointment and selection. This record of conversation and the subsequent decisions taken will be kept on file.

**Induction**
YM's Induction Policy ensures a thorough induction for new staff into the organisation. As part of Induction, the line manager must ensure new staff read key corporate policies, including Safeguarding, Vulnerable adult protection, Data Protection and Confidentiality policies, and understand their personal responsibilities within these, and that any training needs are identified and addressed. An Employee Handbook will be made available. YM ensures that all staff receive regular ongoing line management support and feedback on performance, to ensure that performance meets appropriate standards and training and development opportunities are discussed.

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## c) What you should do if a young person makes a disclosure

1. Stay calm. Do not let your shock show.

2. Explain to the young person that you will have to share the information, that you cannot keep it secret.

3. Listen very carefully to what is being said without interrupting, and allow the young person to speak at his or her own pace.

4. Make it clear to the young person that you are taking what they say seriously.

5. Do not press the young person, ask leading questions or probe for information.

6. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell and recognise that it is difficult to talk about these things.

7. Let the young person know what will happen next, who you will report the information to, and what will happen once it has been reported.

8. Do not make any promises to the young person.

9. Act immediately – do not delay.

10. Do not take sole responsibility – seek advice as soon as possible.

11. Keep a detailed record of the incident and your concerns by completing an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 1). Make sure that you record exactly what happened and what was said in the young person's own words, without interpreting it into your own words.

## c) What you should do if you are concerned about the practice of another professional or member

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Young Medway's Whistleblowing Policy.

1. Do not attempt to address the practice or behaviour without first having discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Chair (unless this an incident where immediate harm is caused - then please call 999 or duty social workers on 01634 334466
2. Take detailed notes including witnesses, date and times, location and a write up of events. Please avoid emotive language or opinions - it is not our responsibility to judge, simply to raise concerns.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead may make the decision to refer to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where appropriate.
4. Volunteers, staff and trustees need to remember that they are representatives of Young Medway and the Code of Conduct.
5. Confidentiality must be maintained in all discussions and conflicts of interests need to be disclosed.

## e) Procedures to follow when making a referral

1. Refer concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leader without delay.

2. In the absence of this officer, then refer concerns to the Chair, Ben Cooper, who will be responsible for making the phone call to children's social care.

3. If no Young Medway members are available, the person discovering or being informed of the abuse should immediately inform children's social care.

When contacting children's social care:

1. Make it clear you are making a referral about child protection.

2. Make a record of:

- The name and position of the member of staff in children's social care or police officer to whom the concerns were passed
- The time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.

See Appendix 1 – A Quick Guide to Procedures

When you are making a referral regarding child protection concerns, it is important to have the following information wherever possible readily available for the duty social worker:

- Name, date of birth, ethnic origin, gender of the young person, address and telephone numbers;
- The reasons for your concern;
- Injuries and/or other indicators observed;
- The young person's first language;
- Details of any specific needs of the young person e.g. disability;
- Details of family members, if known;
- Other agencies, professionals involved;
- Family doctor

Lack of any of the above should not delay referral if concerns are immediate.

The Incident Report Form can be found in Appendix 1. This form will enable us to record the important information as highlighted above.

Following the referral of a child, the referrer and the Social Care Service must be clear about who will be taking what action.

Not all young people are able to express themselves verbally. In this instance, where there are concerns, an Incident Report Form (Appendix 1) should be completed and the same procedures for making a referral followed.

### f) Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a "need to know basis" only. It is important to note that safeguarding information needs to be kept confidential, even from other staff, volunteers and trustees if they do not need to know,

Information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with Data Protection legislation.

## 6. Allegation against Young Medway Members

- YM will make immediate decisions on whether or not any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from duty. These decisions should be made with a minimum of 3 trustees in agreement or in consultation with LADO as appropriate.

- Irrespective of the findings of the relevant LADO or Police enquiries, YM will assess all individual cases under its misconduct/disciplinary procedures, to decide whether or not a member of Young Medway can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled with other staff or volunteers.

This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, Young Medway will make an informed decision based on available information that could suggest, on a balance probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of all young people will always remain paramount.

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of a Young Medway member towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated. The LADO will be informed where the incident occurred. The situation will be explained to the Young Medway member (if deemed appropriate) who is at the centre of the allegation. They may be asked to cease working on a temporary basis until the matter is formally resolved, and after investigation this could lead to dismissal and further action being taken. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided for the person who the allegation has been made against. LADO will be informed of any other roles that the member holds in the community that gives links to young people, children or vulnerable adults.

## Appendix 1 – Incident Report Form

All accidents, complaints, misunderstandings, or allegations or suspicions of abuse should be recorded as close as possible to the time of the incident. Details of incidents should be recorded in as much detail and as accurately as possible. Any disclosures of abuse being made by young people should be a reflection of what was actually said. Do not try and interpret any of the information, just record what was said or witnessed.

**1. YOUR DETAILS**

Your name:

Your Position: Contact No:

**2. YOUNG PERSON'S DETAILS**

Young person's name: Date of birth:

Young person's address:

What is the young person's ethnic origin?

Has the young person got any special needs, e.g. a disability? If yes, please give details:

**3. PARENT/CARERS DETAILS**

Parent/Carers name: Contact no:

Parent/Carers address:

Relationship to young person:

**4. DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT / DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

Name of person disclosing information:

Time and date of incident / disclosure:

Name of person about whom allegation has been made (if given):

Details of the incident, allegation or disclosure. Please ensure the account is factual; DO NOT include opinions/assumptions of either yourself or others. Include dates, times, incidents and any other

potentially useful information. If the disclosure has come from a young person, use their words. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

6. ACTION TAKEN

Details of actions taken so far:

Details of actions you intend to take:

Name and contact details for witnesses to the incident:

7. DETAILS OF WHOM THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PASSED TO

Name: Position:

Organisation: Contact no:

Date and time that the information was forwarded:

Agreed action:

Name: Position:

Organisation: Contact no:

Date and time that the information was forwarded:

Agreed action:

Your signature:

Date:

## Appendix 2 – Useful contacts

**Social care:** **Medway Details**

**Social Care 01634 334466**
**Emergency Out of Hours 03000 41 91 91**

https://www.medwayscp.org.uk/mscb/

**Medway LADO: 01634 331065**

**Police**

- Medway Council's children's social care service - 01634 334466
- Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) - 01622 694856
- NSPCC Child Protection Helpline - 0800 800500

Monitoring Procedures

Young Medway's Safeguarding Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually unless there are

- Any changes in Legislation
- Any changes in youth governance
- The result of a significant case

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board.

Date

Changes made

Review date

# Appendix 3 Facts about abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child or young person has suffered from, or is at significant risk of suffering from, ill-treatment or impairment of development, by any person who knowingly colludes with or fails to prevent the ill-treatment of the child or young person by not ensuring reasonable standards of care and protection.

- All staff and volunteers should be aware that abusers are not just strangers. They can include parents, carers, family members, friends, people in positions of trust and authority, other children or young people, or anyone who has contact with children and young people.
- Children and young people who are abused are often abused by an adult they know and trust.
- Disabled children and young people are more vulnerable to abuse; they are more dependent on intimate care and occasionally they may be less able to tell or escape from abusive situations.
- Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of different cultural and religious beliefs often mean that children and young people from these communities and families may be more vulnerable to abuse going undetected.
- It is important to remember that, although most abusers are men, women also abuse, and that abusers come from all social and ethnic backgrounds and professions.

## 1. Definition of Abuse

Working together to safeguard children 2018 defines abuse as:

*"A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children."*

There are four major types of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

There are other types of abuse that fit into these categories and are key areas for children and young people in the UK. These include but are not restricted to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Extremism, contextual safeguarding, mental health, domestic abuse and homelessness (Working Together guidance 2020)

## Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms or deliberately induces illness in a child.

## Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or nonpenetrative acts. They may include noncontact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## Abuse of Position of Trust

The power and influence a member of staff or someone in a leadership role has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. Therefore, staff are expected to act within appropriate boundaries with young people, in relation to all forms of communication. Staff should be mindful of any physical contact and should not have intimate or sexual relationships with young people.

*"It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people."* (Sexual Offences Act 2003

## Emotional Abuse

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- Telling a child they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- A child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying
- Causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger
- Exploitation or corruption of a child

## Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in

the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur:

- During pregnancy as a result of substance abuse
- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing

- Failing to provide shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

### Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory Abuse includes racist, religious, sexist, homophobic, and disablist abuse.

### Peer on Peer abuse including Cyber Bullying

Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and nonintimate), friendships and wider peer associations. Peer-on-peer abuse can and does happen in a whole range of settings that children attend, however it often goes unseen.

Online peer-on-peer abuse is any form of peer-on-peer abuse with a digital element, for example, sexting, online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.

Settings should not wait until an incident of peer-on-peer abuse happens before taking action. We expect any provider caring for children to create an environment in which children and staff show respect for one another. It should be clear that peer-on-peer abuse will never be accepted or dismissed as 'children being children'. Children and Young people should know what language and behaviour are acceptable and what to do and who to speak to if they are worried or feel unsafe.

## 2. Indications of Abuse

The signs of abuse are not always obvious, and a young person may not tell anyone what is happening to them. Individuals are often scared that the abuser will find out, and worried that the abuse will get worse. Quite often they think that there is no-one they can tell or that they will not be believed. Occasionally, individuals do not even realise what is happening to them is abuse. It is key for the organisation's associates and volunteers to be able to recognise signs of abuse.

Knowing the signs to be aware of is essential for recognising a real or potential problem. However, the presence of any one sign in itself may not necessarily mean abuse is occurring, and conversely, a young person who is being abused may show none of the obvious signs. Such factors make the issue of child abuse more complex, but all concerns and suspicions should be reported and acted upon accordingly.

***Indications that a young person may be being abused include:***

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her

- Someone else (young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another young person
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or emotions such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden bursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour, sexually explicit talk inappropriate to the young person's age
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would be expected
- Difficulty in making friends
- Uncharacteristic eating disorders, depression and suicide attempts
- The young person may become withdrawn, introverted and depressed and have low self-esteem and lack of confidence

***It is not the responsibility of YM to decide whether or not child abuse is occurring, but it is YM's responsibility to act on those concerns and take appropriate action, should they be brought to YM's attention.***