

GODALMING YOUTH SERVICE **SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

SAFEGUARDING WITHIN GODALMING YOUTH SERVICE

This document sets out Godalming Youth Service's safeguarding policy and procedures for the protection of children and young people.

This Policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Godalming Youth Service, including managers, the Youth Service Management Group, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the safety and well-being of all children and young people by actively promoting awareness, good practice and sound procedures.

We believe the safety and well-being of children and young people is of the utmost importance and that they have a fundamental and equal right to be protected from harm regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We fully recognise our statutory responsibility for safeguarding; the safety, protection and well-being of all children and young people that Godalming Youth Service supports and interacts with, is paramount and has priority over all other interests. This includes responding immediately and appropriately where there is a suspicion that any young person under the age of 18 years old or vulnerable adult may be a victim of bullying, harassment, abuse (including physical, sexual, emotional) or neglect.

'Young Person' means those under 18 years old including all of those up to their 18th birthday – as designated a 'child' within the terms of the Children's Act 1989.

Godalming Youth Service encourages a culture of listening to children and engaging them in dialogue, with children seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age, culture and understanding.

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England including the Children's Act 2004 and "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018". [Working together to safeguard children \(PDF\)](#) (Department of Education), 2018 provides the key statutory guidance for anyone working with children and young people. All policies and procedures pertaining to safeguarding will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, with additional reviews implemented should significant learning emerge or statutory guidance change.

Due to Godalming Youth Service being part of Godalming Town Council, an important distinction needs to be made as regards to which parts of the organisation this policy applies to. This policy applies to Godalming Youth Service activities only; non-youth service activities are governed by Godalming Town Council's Safeguarding Policy.ⁱ

Principles

- This policy is based on the legal and statutory definitions of a child (defined as being up to 18 years old).

- The organisation will safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, within the work we do by protecting them from neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- All young people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, mental health status and physical appearance have the right to protection from any kind of abuse. ⁱⁱ
- All young people have the right to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- Young people have the right to expect appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development.
- Working in partnership with young people, their parent(s)/carers and other agencies is essential for the protection of young people.
- Safeguarding children and young people is the responsibility of everyone within the organisation, regardless of their role.
- A timely and appropriate response will be given to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, or poor practice.
- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Leadership Team and any external agencies involved to uphold these safeguarding principles.
- The sharing of confidential information is restricted to the necessary external agencies.
- All personal information about children and young people is shared and stored appropriately in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and Information Sharing Protocols.

Godalming Youth Service recognises its statutory responsibility to ensure the welfare of young people and work with the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)ⁱⁱⁱ to comply with its safeguarding procedures.

Implementation

Godalming Youth Service's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy shall be adopted by the following:

- Godalming Youth Service and its staff, associates, volunteers, young people and management group; and
- all other bodies working in partnership with Godalming Youth Service.

Reporting Procedures

In all cases it is vital to take every action which is needed to safeguard the child, children and young person(s). Immediate action may be necessary in the following situations:

- If emergency medical attention is required, phone the emergency services or take the child/young person to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- If the child or young person is in immediate danger the police should be contacted by calling 999.
- Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure of abuse or harm must be reported immediately or as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence to your Safeguarding Lead.
- Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.
- The Safeguarding Lead must record the concern, with the staff member or volunteer using the appropriate Reporting Form. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the Incident Report or Request for Support referral form is immediately passed onto the most senior person responsible for safeguarding or Surrey Children's Services, C-SPA, details below. This form must be kept strictly confidential and stored securely.
- It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in their absence the person who has overall responsibility for safeguarding to deal with safeguarding matters. If further referral is necessary, it will either be through Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership/Surrey Children's Services or the Police.

The DSL will be responsible for informing the employee who reported the disclosure of any action taken and any outcome if this is appropriate.

It is also the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead to ensure any partner agencies involved with the young person are made aware of the disclosure and the action taken where relevant and where information sharing guidance permits this.

It is important to remember that often only when information held by a number of workers is put together, that a picture of child abuse emerges. All staff and volunteers must adhere to the information sharing protocol published by HM Government, adopted by the Children's Trust and endorsed by SSCP. Details can be found here: [Information sharing: advice for practitioners \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421221/information-sharing-advice-for-practitioners.pdf).^{iv} In addition to this, whilst respecting cultural differences, the basic requirements for children is that they are kept safe across social, ethnic and cultural boundaries.

Organisational Responsibilities

- Godalming Town Council Policy & Management Committee has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy but may designate certain members of staff to manage the Safeguarding Policy and its implementation.
- It is the responsibility of the DSL to take appropriate action following any expression of concern and make referrals to the appropriate agency.
- Godalming Town Council will ensure that the DSL participates in regular safeguarding training on an annual basis so that they are aware of the procedures for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect, and are up to date with any legal changes.
- All staff/volunteers will be made aware of this Safeguarding Policy and related relevant procedures as part of their induction and their contract of employment.
- All staff/volunteers will be informed and have access to regular training as required to update their knowledge on safeguarding. More information can be found here: [SSCP Partnership Training Programme; Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership \(surreyscp.org.uk\)](https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/training-programme)^v
- Godalming Youth Service will work in accordance to guidance and good practice from the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership. More information can be found at: [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership \(surreyscp.org.uk\)](https://www.surreyscp.org.uk)

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Contact Details

Godalming Youth Service adheres to current recommendations which require the appointment of a DSL who will act on their behalf in referring all allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. They will also ensure this policy is implemented, updated at least annually and approved by Full Council and/or the Policy & Management Committee within Godalming Town Council.

Godalming Youth Service – Designated Safeguarding Lead Contact (Youth) Details:

Tom Manning 07706 342513 youthofficer@godalming-tc.gov.uk

Godalming Youth Service is part of Godalming Town Council. Because the town council is involved in many activities besides providing a youth service, there is a separate Safeguarding Officer for non-youth service activities.

Godalming Town Council – Designated Safeguarding Lead (non-Youth) Details:

Suzie Gortler 07765 693746/ community@godalming-tc.gov.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead for Youth Service Responsibilities^{vi}

- Take a lead role in developing and reviewing Godalming Youth Service's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Take a lead role in implementing Godalming Youth Service's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures; ensuring all safeguarding and child protection issues concerning children and young people who take part in Godalming Youth Service's activities are recorded and responded to appropriately.
- Make sure that everyone working or volunteering with or for children and young people at Godalming Youth Service, including the management group members, understands the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and knows what to do if they have concerns about a child's welfare.
- Make sure children and young people who are involved in activities at Godalming Youth Service and their parents know who they can talk to if they have a welfare concern and understand what action the organisation will take in response.
- Receive and record information from anyone who has concerns about a child who takes part in Godalming Youth Service's activities.
- Take the lead on responding to information that may constitute a child protection concern, including a concern that an adult involved with Godalming Youth Service may present a risk to children or young people. This includes:
 - a. assessing and clarifying the information;
 - b. making referrals to statutory organisations as appropriate;
 - c. consulting with and informing the relevant members of the organisation's management; and
 - d. following the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Liaise with, pass on information to and receive information from statutory child protection agencies such as the local authority child protection services, the police and NSPCC.
- This includes making formal referrals to agencies when necessary.
- Seek guidance where needed, from an appropriate organisation such as Surrey Children Services, the police and NSPCC.
- Store and retain child protection records according to legal requirements and the organisation's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- Work closely with the management group to ensure they are kept up to date with safeguarding issues and are fully informed of any concerns about organisational safeguarding and child protection practice.
- Report regularly to the management group on issues relating to safeguarding and child protection, to ensure that child protection is seen as an ongoing priority issue and that safeguarding and child protection requirements are being followed at all levels of Godalming Youth Service.
- Be familiar with and work within inter-agency child protection procedures developed by the local child protection agencies.
- Be familiar with issues relating to child protection and abuse and keep up to date with new developments in this area. Attend regular training on child protection issues and share knowledge from that training with everyone who works or volunteers with or for children and young people at Godalming Youth Service.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- Any new member of staff or volunteer with direct contact with young people will be taken through this Safeguarding Policy as part of the induction process and offered training soon after commencing their post.
- All staff and volunteers to participate in timely and relevant training.

- All staff have a duty to ensure that any suspected incident, allegation or other manifestation relating to child protection is reported using the procedures detailed below in this policy.
- If in any doubt about what action to take, employees must seek advice from the named Safeguarding Lead or in their absence, the Responsible Finance Officer or Town Clerk.

Training and Development

Godalming Youth Service will ensure that all members of staff/volunteers have timely and relevant safeguarding training. The DSL will ensure this happens, drawing especially on the following resources:

- training for the Safeguarding Manager can be accessed from [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership](#). Staff and volunteers can also access a range of multi-agency safeguarding training. We draw on the [Safeguarding Training Pathway](#) to guide our approach.
- The National Youth Agency provides training that aims to support Youth work specific safeguarding via their [Safeguarding & Risk Management Hub](#).
- In some instances, and where required by organisational needs, extra training will be sourced from reputable organisations.

Monitoring Procedures

Godalming Youth Service's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy should be reviewed annually. The following situations may also trigger a review of the policy:

- any changes in legislation;
- any changes in youth governance;
- the result of a significant case; and
- new learnings that emerge locally.

If at any time the organisation becomes aware of knowledge that will strengthen our approach to safeguarding children, policy improvement and iteration should be implemented at the earliest opportunity

Definitions of Harm and/or 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.”^{vii}

For the purpose of this policy, Godalming Youth Service has defined harm as:

- *Neglect* – the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and physiological needs of the young person that results in serious impairment of their health and development, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and failure to respond to basic emotional needs, such as being cared for when sick.
- *Abandonment* – leaving a child alone and unattended in circumstances that are inappropriate for their age and/or level of ability.
- *Emotional Abuse* – persistent, emotional ill treatment that has a severe adverse effect on the emotional development of children and young people. It may involve conveying to them that they are not wanted, not loved or worthless. It may involve inappropriate expectations (such as taking on the responsibility of an adult within the family) being placed on the young person leaving them frightened and unable to cope. It may also involve the threatening, exploitation or corruption of

children and young people. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

- *Physical Abuse* – hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, throwing, scalding, burning, poisoning, drowning, suffocating, or other action intended to cause physical harm or ill health to the child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer covers up the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child or young person within their care.
- *Witnessing Ill Treatment (including domestic abuse of another person)* – this may impact the health or development of a child or young person.
- *Sexual Abuse or Sexual Exploitation* – forcing or enticing a child or young person to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the child or young person is aware or has knowledge of what is happening. It includes child prostitution, encouraging children or young people to watch or participate in the production of pornographic material, online grooming, encouraging children and young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual acts include penetrative such as rape and non-penetrative acts such as touching or stroking. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children on children.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 defines 'consent' as '*if he agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice*'. The Act, removes the element of consent for many sexual offences for:

- Children/young people under 16 (including under 13).
- Children/young people under 18 having sexual relations with a person of trust (for example: teachers, youth workers, foster carers, police officers).
- Children/young people under 18 involved with family members over 18.
- Persons with a mental disorder impeding choice or who are induced, threatened or deceived.
- Persons with a mental disorder who have sexual relations with care workers.

In relation to young people under the age of 13, consent is irrelevant. The law says '*a child under the age of 13 does not, under any circumstances, have the legal capacity to consent to any form of sexual activity*'^{viii}.

The police must be informed immediately of any sexual activity involving a child under 13 years of age.

There are four major types of abuse (see SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS for definitions):

- 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)^{ix}.

Key areas will be covered in staff training, but it is important for staff to be aware of safeguarding areas that may affect specific programmes. The DSL will review new programmes and activities to ensure any key areas are flagged in the risk register and will identify any additional training needs if necessary.

Recognising Abuse

It is part of everyone's role at Godalming Youth Service to do everything possible to keep young people safe from abuse. There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the young person's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others. Training is important to support staff and volunteers to recognise abuse, and we seek to meet this need through our training matrix and continued engagement in training.

Signs of Abuse

Signs which may indicate abuse include:

- sexually explicit language and actions;
- unexplained bruising and injuries;
- sudden changes in behaviour, such as absences, withdrawal or having unexplained material goods;
- something a child has said; and
- a change observed over a long period of time e.g. losing weight or becoming increasingly dirty/unkept.

Such signs do not necessarily mean a child or young person is being abused. Equally, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. It is not a member of staff's responsibility to decide if it is abuse, but it is their responsibility to act on such concerns and report it accordingly.

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.

It is crucial that associates and volunteers are able to recognise signs of abuse. This training need is addressed in Godalming Youth Service's training matrix, but most importantly Godalming Youth Service is committed to undergoing ongoing professional development to continually improve child protection practice.

Vulnerable Young People

Godalming Youth Service has a responsibility to be aware that some children and young people who take part in our activities may experience difficulties that adversely affect their lives at home and/or within their lives outside of the organisation and therefore be at risk of harm.

Particularly vulnerable groups could include:

Children and young people with a disability (disability can take many forms including)

- physical disability
- sensory disability
- learning disability

Research indicates children and young people with a disability are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. They may find it more difficult to recognise abuse. Disclosing abuse is difficult for any child; for a child with disabilities, it may be especially difficult, for the following reasons:

- their life experience may be limited, therefore struggle to recognise inappropriate behaviour;
- communication difficulties can make it hard to report abuse or they may not be able physically to leave an abusive situation or they receive intimate physical care and, therefore, the abuse may seem 'normal' or their self-esteem and self-image are poor;
- they may not be aware of how or to whom they can report abuse.

Children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE)

Young people at risk of, or engaged in, sexual exploitation may not see themselves as victims. Workers need to be aware of young people who may be at risk.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is defined in government guidance documents (2017) as follows:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”^x

Often the exploitative situation includes contexts and relationships where young people receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of their performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised by the child's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

There are strong links between children who go missing and the internal trafficking, between towns, of young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Children and young people from loving and supportive families can be at risk of exploitation and workers must be careful not to stereotype specific groups of children as potential victims.

Children and young people affected by gang activity

Young people who become involved in gangs are at risk of violent crime and are, therefore, deemed vulnerable and in need of safeguarding. The nature and characteristics of gangs vary but generally:

- are predominantly young males;
- begin offending early and have extensive criminal histories;
- are often territorially based or linked to a particular religion or culture; and
- deal in drugs as a way to make money.

Girls tend to be less willing than boys to identify themselves as gang members but are often drawn into male gangs as girlfriends of existing members. They (and sisters of gang members) are at particular risk of being sexually exploited or abused, but this risk can also affect male gang members.

Youth workers have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of these young people and to prevent further harm both to themselves and to other potential victims. As the young person

may be both a victim and a perpetrator, it is vital that workers recognise their needs and provide support. To this end, Godalming Youth Service requires all workers to complete training in relation to gangs and violence, and in relation to child sexual exploitation.

Children and young people missing education

The law requires all children and young people between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education. Children and young people who are not attending school or not being home-educated may be particularly vulnerable.

The local authority's children's services will be keen to be informed if you know about children and young people who are not either in school or receiving education at home, or if you have any concerns about children or young people who have gone missing from your area or neighbourhood, so that they can make sure that they are safe and that they receive an appropriate education. Raise your concerns with the DSL within the organisation, who can then make a referral.

Young people who are homeless

Homeless young people are not just those who are sleeping on the streets. Young people may be 'sofa surfing', staying on the floors and sofas of friends or family, in temporary hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation or in unsuitable or unsafe accommodation.

There are many reasons why young people are homeless but, whatever the reason, insecure housing is likely to have a debilitating impact on their lives and increase their vulnerability.

Children and young people who are experiencing domestic abuse

In a house where domestic abuse occurs, the children and young people are being abused too. Children and young people may be aware of the abuse of a parent, through hearing or seeing incidents of physical violence or verbal abuse. They may also continue to witness and/or hear abuse during post-separation contact visits.

Research shows the risks of children and young people being directly physically or sexually abused are markedly increased, in homes where domestic violence occurs.

The impact on such children and young people may be demonstrated through aggression, anti-social behaviour, anxiety or depression.

Young Carers

A young carer is a child or young person whose life is restricted by the need to take responsibility for another person. The person might be a parent, a brother or sister, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision. Young carers can become isolated, with no relief from the pressures at home, and no chance to enjoy a normal childhood. They are often afraid to ask for help as they fear letting the family down or being taken into care.

Godalming Youth Service seeks to identify when a young person is a young carer and to be aware of the needs of young carers in general. We intentionally build our expertise in this area to offer young carers support and/or signpost them to a charity specifically for young carers, ordinarily Surrey Young Carers. If their needs are more serious or urgent these concerns must be shared with the DSL within the organisation. All staff are required to complete Young Carer Aware training as part of their training matrix.

Children and young people whose parents/carers misuse substances

Although there are some parents/carers who are able to care for and safeguard their children despite their dependence on drugs or alcohol, parental substance misuse can cause significant harm to children at all stages of their development.

Where a parent has enduring and/or severe substance misuse problems, the children in the household are likely to be at risk of, or experiencing, significant harm primarily through emotional abuse or neglect.

The child or young person's daily life may revolve around the parent's/carer's substance misuse and they may be assuming inappropriate responsibilities within the home.

Children and young people whose parents/carers have learning disabilities

Parental learning difficulties do not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs. But, where it is known parents/carers do have learning disabilities, workers should be particularly aware of the developmental, social and emotional needs of the children and young people in the family.

Risk of harm or to well-being could be:

- a child having caring responsibilities inappropriate to their age, such as looking after siblings;
- a child experiencing neglect; and
- a child with a mother with learning disabilities, who may be targeted by men to gain access to children, for the purpose of sexually abusing them.

Godalming Youth Service also recognises that parents/carers with learning difficulties may need to have information about programmes and activities explained to them verbally and may need support when forms need to be completed.

Children and young people whose parents/carers have a mental illness

Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child or young person's care and developmental needs. However, studies show the chance of child death through abuse or neglect where parental mental illness is present, is greatly increased.

In a household where a parent has enduring and/or severe mental ill-health, children are more likely to be at risk of, or experiencing, significant harm.

Risk of harm or to well-being could be:

- parental aggression or rejection;
- having caring responsibilities inappropriate to his/her age;
- witnessing disturbing behaviour arising from the mental illness (e.g. self-harm, suicide, uninhibited behaviour, violence); and
- being neglected physically and/or emotionally by an unwell parent.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children

Children who have come to the UK without parents or relatives, are some of the most vulnerable children in our society. They are alone in an unfamiliar country, at the end of what has most likely been a long, perilous and traumatic journey. They may have experienced exploitation or persecution in their home country, or on their journey to the UK. Some may have been trafficked, and many more are at risk of being trafficked or being exploited in other ways, some of which are covered here, such

as becoming homeless, becoming involved in gang activity and being out of education. Such children and young people should be living in foster care or supported accommodation.

Asylum seeking children also have a greater risk of going missing or experiencing mental health issues. Reasons for this could be:

- difficulties in communication;
- frustration at not understanding the asylum-seeking process and not feeling believed/supported;
- worries for family members that they may have lost touch with since leaving their country/during the journey to the UK;
- exploitation by the traffickers, who they may now owe money to;
- post-traumatic stress disorder; and
- isolation and loneliness.

The local authority should be aware of an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child's needs and is responsible for their safety and wellbeing. Any safeguarding concerns should be reported to them to ensure the young person's safety.

Any concerns relating to particularly vulnerable children and young people must be raised with Godalming Youth Service's DSL as soon as possible. Do not make assumptions that another agency or local authority provision is already managing this because the young person is already known to them.

Safe Recruitment

Youth services would not exist without the many 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 who 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.

Safe 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. Safe 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.

When recruiting staff or volunteers, the following steps will be taken to support safe recruitment:

- draw up a role profile which highlights the key responsibilities;
- draw up a person specification to define the skills and experience required for the role;
- be clear about the aims and philosophy of our organisation in our advert/information;
- emphasise the Council's stance on safeguarding children and young people and equal opportunities;
- use application forms to collect information on each applicant;
- ensure that more than one person from our organisation looks at each application form; and
- ask for original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence.

For volunteers, this is supported by our Volunteering Policy & Procedures that will be made available to all prospective volunteers.

Promoting good practice when delivering young people's activities

Raising awareness of what safeguarding means for everyone will create a safer environment for young people. Encouraging volunteers, staff, parents/carers and trustees to get to know the safeguarding policy and procedures will increase the likelihood of good safeguarding practice.

We make these documents available to all staff, and also require staff to complete National Youth Agency training that further supports delivering safe activities, events and site management. This is done to complement formal safeguarding training available through the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, ensuring that Godalming Youth Service's youth work delivery embeds effective safeguarding practice to promote appropriate behaviour of those supervising young people's activities.

Good practice guidelines

All staff, associates and volunteers should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people and themselves. This includes:

- adopting Godalming Youth Service's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures;
- promoting Godalming Youth Service's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy to those they manage, their teams and any associates or volunteers they may work with;
- wherever appropriate, conducting one to ones with young people in an open environment, where others are present;
- treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity;
- always putting the welfare of young people before organisational aims;
- building and maintaining a safe and appropriate relationship with young people;
- empowering young people to share in decision-making processes;
- attending training as required;
- positive role modelling for young people; and
- developing and adopting a Group Agreement with young people, all of whom agree to adhere to these principles. Where these are breached, there should be clear sanctions implemented through our 'Three Strike' warning and behaviour contract system.

Relationships 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).

Godalming Town Council's Code of Conduct defines appropriate behaviours for all staff and volunteers and is to be adhered to at all times. This is complemented by the Youth Service Staff Conduct Policy that provides additional youth context-specific guidelines.

Supervision Ratios

Godalming Youth Service ensures that an appropriate staff to young person ratio is implemented which enables effective supervision of young people and effectively manage the associated risks.

The national guidance states that the level of supervision should take account of:

- the age and ability of the young people;
- the activity being undertaken;
- children's growing independence;
- children's need for privacy;
- the geography of the facility being used; and
- the Risk Assessment for the specific project.

Within Godalming Youth Service, our usual ratio is one worker for every ten young people. Our approach is outlined fully in Godalming Youth Service's Supervision Ratio Guidance document, which is also reviewed termly based on the latest contextual information.

PARTICIPATION CONSENT

Written Consent to participate in activities led by Godalming Youth Service is obtained before the events, with consent forms processed to identify specific needs and important information. Information provided on for the consent of the activity will not be kept longer than necessary.

Any young person under the age of 18 should have consent from a parent or guardian where possible, and any exceptions to this are to be recorded in the Risk Assessment for each project.

Media Consent

Media consent is obtained from all parents and young people. Materials will not be kept longer than two years and young people can withdraw consent at any time.

Different Types of Activity Consent

Shadowing the established practice in education, we recognise a distinction between centre-based activities (e.g. coming to a youth drop-in during the afternoon) and off-site activities (e.g. taking a group to a swimming pool). Our policies in regard to each are outlined below:

Centre-Based

We require completed consent forms (written or digital) for all young people who access the youth centre. However, we recognise that they may not be able to provide this when they first arrive. Therefore, we allow young people to access their first session by providing a parental contact number, then give them a physical form to take home.

Off-Site

We require completed consent forms (written or digital) for all young people who wish to participate in any off-site activities. Young people will not be allowed to participate in the activity without a completed consent form.

Guidelines on Young People and Use of the Internet and E-Safety

The internet is significant in the distribution of indecent photographs/pseudo photographs of children and young people. Adults often use the Internet to establish contact with young people to "groom" them for inappropriate or abusive relationships.

As our project provides service users with direct access to the internet, we seek to have protocols in place to ensure safe use. Many websites contain offensive, obscene or indecent material such as:

- sexually explicit images and related material;

- advocating of illegal activities; and
- advocating intolerance for others.

Recognising our duties to act in ways that provide a safe online environment, Godalming Youth Service has sourced web filters for the internet connections we provide that are compliant with the government's Friendly Wifi Scheme^{xi}. The web filter is updated regularly to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and is in use on all Godalming Youth Service devices.

However, we also recognise that the widespread availability of personal fast mobile 4G/5G internet on young people's devices limits the effectiveness of these filters. For these reasons, group agreements and ground rules address personal phone usage by young people and internet access. We also recognise that youth work is a form of social education and seek to impart social learning to young people regarding issues emerging from illicit or dangerous online activity.

Guidelines regarding staff conduct

Godalming Youth Service's Staff Conduct Policy and Social Media Policy address how staff authorised to use the internet should use these facilities. All staff must not download pornographic or any other unsuitable material on Godalming Youth Service technical equipment or distribute such material to others. In addition, users must not upload any material to the internet that could be considered inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful of others.

Disciplinary action will be taken against staff in breach of this policy. Where this is done unintentionally, the user must exit the website and/or delete all material immediately. Breach of this will be treated as gross misconduct. Where exemption is required, because of the nature of the work of the member of staff, written permission must be given in advance with the manager.^{xii}

In the event of staff accessing or distributing child pornography

When a worker or volunteer is discovered to have placed child pornography on the internet, or accessed child pornography, the police will be contacted immediately as will the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)^{xiii}. LADO will normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of young people. The individual's access to young people using the Youth Service will cease during the investigation, and we will follow guidance from the Surrey LADO throughout the investigation.

RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

Within Godalming Youth Service, we recognise part of our responsibility for safeguarding is to ensure that concerns and any relevant information is passed onto children's social care services, the independent (LADO) and in emergencies, the police. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish whether a child or young person is at risk of harm.

How to respond to a disclosure from a young person^{xiv}

If a young person discloses, they, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them, the person receiving this information should:

- remain calm and in control;
- reassure the young person by telling them they have done the right thing;
- take what the young person says seriously;
- listen carefully to what is said;
- keep questions to a minimum – only ask for clarification and no leading questions;
- don't promise to keep it a secret. Let the young person know you will need to share the information with other professionals to keep them and/or other young people safe;
- record what is said on your Incident Report; and

- tell the young person what will happen next.

In all cases consider the welfare of the young person who has disclosed as the highest priority. If there is a concern the young person is in immediate danger:

- contact the police and explain the situation to them;
- stay with the young person;
- if necessary, move to a safe place away from immediate harm and that no situation arises which could cause any further concern;
- call for immediate medical attention if the young person requires it;
- contact the DSL to let them know what is happening and ask for further advice and guidance;
- make a factual record of events as soon as possible by using the Incident Form; and
- do not investigate further, share confidential information with others, or take any further action unless authorised to do so. The police will now be in charge and anything you do without their authorisation may harm their investigation.

If a young person is not in immediate danger but a disclosure has been made:

- follow the disclosure process as above. Send the incident form to the DSL at Godalming Youth Service within 24 hours and notify your manager that you have done so;
- the DSL will then contact you to talk through this if necessary; and
- the DSL will inform you of next steps to be taken and you will receive support from your manager.

Emergency: If a young person is in immediate danger you should contact the police on 999.

Non-emergency: If there is no immediate danger or advice or information is needed the DSL can contact the relevant LADO or Children's Social Care Team. If the concern is about a young person, contact the relevant LADO for the local authority where the incident occurred. If the concern relates to a staff member, the LADO of their registered place of work should be contacted (the details can be found on the Surrey Safeguarding Partnership Board website)^{xv}.

Responding to Concerns

If there are any concerns about a young person, an Incident Form should be completed and emailed to the DSL at Godalming Youth Service (youthofficer@godalming-tc.gov.uk). This form will be used if an incident occurs that causes concern for the safety of a young person who is not in immediate danger. The DSL will then advise of next steps.

Recording of a Safeguarding Concern

If anyone has concern about a child or young person's welfare or safety, it is vital all relevant details are recorded. This must be done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or other agencies.

Keep an accurate record of:

- the date and time of the incident/disclosure;
- the date and time of the report;
- the name and role of the person to whom the concern was originally reported and their contact details;
- the name and role of the person making the report (if this is different to the above) and their contact details;
- the names of all parties who were involved in the incident, including any witnesses to an event;
- what was said or done and by whom;
- any action taken to investigate the matter;
- any further action taken (such as a referral being made); and
- the reasons why the organisation decided not to refer those concerns to a statutory agency (if relevant).

The report must be factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such. The record should always be signed and dated by the person making the report.

With regard to storing this at Godalming Youth Service, Godalming Town Council has a system that enables us to save documents remotely to prevent physical tampering or unauthorised access. An encrypted safeguarding log will be retained on this system, with a password known only to the Youth Service Officer, Responsible Finance Officer and Town Clerk.

IF AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A STAFF MEMBER

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of a staff member towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated. The LADO will be informed where and when the incident occurred. The situation will be explained to the staff 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 against the member of staff. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Support will be provided for the person who the allegation has been made against.

If an Allegation is Made About the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Any concerns involving the DSL directly should be reported to the Senior Manager, in our context this is the Town Clerk. It is important that all staff are aware of staff reporting structure, and to this effect signage is available within our buildings.

Malicious Allegations

An allegation may be classified as malicious. Care should be taken in dealing with such an outcome, as some facts may not be wholly untrue. Some parts of an allegation may have been fabricated or exaggerated but elements may be based on truth.

Where a preliminary enquiry/investigation was undertaken and the allegations were deemed to be malicious, a record should be made stating that:

- An allegation was made (but not what the allegation was).
- Date the allegation was made.
- The allegation was fully investigated.
- The outcome was that it was found to be malicious or unsubstantiated and that no further action was taken.

Please refer to LADO guidelines for classifications of outcomes following investigations.

Whistleblowing

Godalming Town Council has a separate Whistleblowing policy which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Data Protection and Management of Confidential Information

Godalming Youth Service is committed to the safe and secure management of confidential information. All personal information, including volunteer information, is stored securely and can only be accessed by those that require it to carry out their role. Only relevant information is stored and this is regularly reviewed and outdated information destroyed appropriately. Godalming Youth Service is also committed to the rights of children and young people to confidentiality. However, where a worker feels that the information disclosed by a child or young people should be referred to their line manager for investigation by an appropriate agency, the young person should be told that

confidentially cannot be kept. Signs and posters that explain our approach in this area of practice are displayed throughout our buildings, and flyers are available if engaged in detached youth work.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

These documents were especially influential in shaping this policy, although many documents were accessed in writing this policy.

NSPCC - [Nominated Child Protection Lead or Designated Safeguarding Officer Template](#)

Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership – [Safeguarding Policy Template](#)


National Youth Agency – [Safeguarding for Youth Work](#)

USEFUL CONTACTS AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS


- **Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Tom Manning, 07705 342513
- **C-SPA (Children’s Single Point of Access)** 0300 470 9100
- **Children’s Services Helpline** 0300 200 1006
- **Out of hours Emergency Duty Team** 01483 517898
- **Child Line** 0800 11 11
- **NSPCC Helpline** 0808 800 5000

DISCLOSURE FLOWCHART

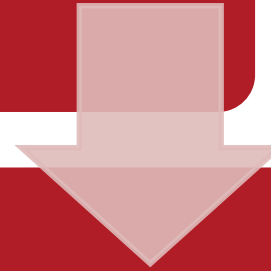
You are approached by a child, young person or adult at risk with a disclosure that they or someone else are being, or have been harmed, abused or neglected.



Make a written note of the information/observations, and include a record of the time, date and person present. Use the Incident Reporting Proforma if possible (copies available in youth centre offices, outreach and off-site bags)



Inform the Youth Service Officer as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact them, contact the Finance Officer.



The Youth Service Officer will evaluate the incident and/or make a referral to relevant agencies

CP PROFORMA TEMPLATE

Date & Times Disclosure Became Known	Date Reported to Youth Service Officer
Date This Proforma Completed	Person Completing Report
What did the child or young person say <i>word-for-word</i>? (use quotations for verbatim accounts where possible)	
Which person(s) was/were present when the disclosure was made?	Date & Time Reported to Children's Services (if applicable)
What actions have been recommended or requested by children's services?	Youth Service Officer Comments & Suggestions
Is there any additional information, eg: a case number given to us or additional services available? Please sign and date below	

Staff Member completing form Sign

Date:

Youth Service Officer Sign

Date:

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- i Godalming Town Council's Safeguarding Policy is available here: <https://godalming-tc.gov.uk/safeguarding/>
- ii Based on the [Equalities Act 2010](#)
- iii <https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/>
- iv Information regarding Surrey specific implementation is available here: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/your-privacy/protocol-for-multi-agency-staff/surrey-multi-agency-information-sharing-protocol>
- v The safeguarding partnership training offer is available on Olive (Surrey's LMS). The link for registration and booking is: <https://surreycoun.plateau.com/learning/user/portal.do?siteID=SCA&landingPage=login>
- vi Adapted from the NSPCC's role description for child protection leads
- vii <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- viii <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/rape-and-sexual-offences-chapter-7-key-legislation-and-offences>
- ix <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- x Statutory Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591512/HO_DfE_consultation_response_on_CSE_definition_FINAL_13_Feb_2017_2_.pdf
- xi An overview of this scheme can be found here: <https://www.friendlywifi.com/>
- xii An example might be testing the sufficiency of the Youth Service web filter. In these instances, it would likely be the Youth Service Officer who undertook testing whether, for example, pornographic content is blocked. The Friendly Wifi filter does this extensively without needing to attempt access, so it is difficult to anticipate a situation where permission would be needed.
- xiii Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - The LADO Service manages allegations against individuals who work or volunteer with children in Surrey. <https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/qkyqql/safer-workforce-and-managing-allegations-against-staff-carers-and-volunteers/managing-allegations-against-people-that-work-or-volunteer-with-children>
- xiv Adapted from and reinforced by this guidance <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/what-to-do-child-reveals-abuse/>
- xv <https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/professionals/dealing-with-allegations-against-people-working-with-children/>