

Safeguarding standards for the youth sector



Contents

Introduction	2	From compliance to culture to culture plus	10
Young people, youth work and the youth sector	3	The standards:	11
The definition of safeguarding	4	1. Ensure a clear safeguarding policy and interconnected organisational policies and procedures	11
Role of safeguarding in the youth sector	5	2. Proactive safeguarding systems, governance and oversight	14
Active participation	5	3. Working together (inter and intra-agency collaboration)	17
Relationships	6	4. Training and reflection	19
Current legislation, statutory guidance and standards specific to safeguarding in the youth sector	7	5. Empower young people's voices	21
Culture of safeguarding in the youth sector	8	Helpful links and further reading	24
Why do we need standards in the youth sector?	8		
Who should apply these standards?	9		

Introduction

The Safeguarding Standards have been designed to support good safeguarding practices for those working with children and young people in the youth sector.

For the purposes of this guidance, the youth sector includes all individuals and organisations that are delivering positive activities and youth work that is recognised as forming part of the local offer. Local authorities have a duty to provide youth work to young people aged from 13 to 19 years old.

Youth work often works with children and young people from the age of 8 and up to 25 years for those with additional needs. In safeguarding terms, older young people aged 18 to 25 years are termed 'adults at risk'.¹

This standards guidance document may also be of interest to commissioners and funders of youth work to help inform their decision-making around safer working practices.

The implementation of these safeguarding standards will support good practice for safeguarding young people, adults at risk, volunteers, paid staff working with young people, and organisations including charities. Safeguarding is everyone's business.² We have a moral and ethical duty of care, alongside legal responsibilities and accountability to protect and support the wellbeing and safety of the young people we work with. The youth sector Safeguarding Standards aim is to create a culture of safeguarding across every part of an organisation.

We recognise that good safeguarding practice will also include risk assessments and risk management for activities. These will not be explored in depth in this guidance, but you can find specific information and support on the National Youth Agency's (NYA) Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub and the Health and Safety Executive website.^{3,4}

Young people, youth work and the youth sector

The National Youth Agency (NYA) is the professional, statutory, regulatory body for youth work in England. It sets and maintains the standards for training and practice for those working with young people through youth work.

With support from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) the NYA provides safeguarding training, support, advice and guidance to the youth sector as part of the NYA's Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub.⁵

Youth work is a distinct educational process, applied across a variety of settings, to support a young person's personal, social and educational development.

Youth work supports young people to:

- explore their values, beliefs, ideas and issues
- develop their voice, influence and place in society
- acquire a set of practical or technical skills and competencies
- realise their full potential.

Youth work supports young people aged 8 to 19 years (or up to 25 years old with additional needs). If you or your organisation works with individuals outside this age group, you will benefit from looking at other more relevant safeguarding resources. Links for these can be found in the appendix.

“

Youth work happens in a variety of spaces and places, and the trusted adults that deliver this can range from volunteers, and part-time or full-time professionally qualified practitioners.

”

Youth work happens in a variety of spaces and places, and the trusted adults that deliver this can range from volunteers, and part-time or full-time professionally qualified practitioners. This can be in traditional youth work settings such as youth clubs or detached projects in communities, and in allied sectors such as the uniformed sector⁶, health, arts, sport and faith-based organisations.

Not all youth sector providers call themselves youth workers or uniformed leaders, however providers apply the same principles and values to their work with young people.

For the purposes of these standards, the term youth work and youth worker applies to all projects, programmes and providers whereby trusted adults build supportive relationships with children and young people, and deliver informal education or positive activities. This guidance is intended to inform the practice of all people working with young people through this relational practice.

The definition of safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting children and young people from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's and young people's health or development
- ensuring children and young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

Child protection is part of the safeguarding process.⁷ It focuses on protecting the individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child or young person.

The National Occupational Standards for Youth Work states that safeguarding is taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's, young people's and vulnerable adult's welfare are minimised.⁸ Where there are concerns about welfare, all agencies must take appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures, and in full partnership with other local agencies such as the health and social care.

This definition should be extended to include all individuals (paid or unpaid) that are working with children, young people or adults at risk.

Role of safeguarding in the youth sector

While working with children and young people, safeguarding should be at the forefront of all ways of working, in other words, their welfare is paramount.

The NYA's National Curriculum for Youth Work stresses how good youth work is underpinned by the principle that the welfare of children and young people is the top priority.⁹ The Children Act 1989 is clear that the welfare of the child is paramount and should remain the focus of any professional intervention.¹⁰ While an understanding of cultural context is necessary, this should not get in the way of measures to protect the child from significant harm. Anti-racism should also be centred in this practice. Practitioners should avoid making any judgements that are based on racial or cultural profiling or assumptions. All causes for concern should be treated on their own merits and passed to appropriate services to prioritise and action.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance emphasises the need for all agencies (including the youth sector) to work together locally and nationally to keep children and young people safe.¹¹ This should be used alongside the Out-of-school settings: voluntary safeguarding code of practice.¹² Where there are variations in the guidance you should utilise the one that applies most closely with the work that you are undertaking.



“

Young people are experts in their own lives and lived experiences.

”

Active participation

Youth work is underpinned by key values. These include being youth-led, and the active participation of young people in shaping all of their experiences and decisions about their own lives. Young people are experts in their own lives and lived experiences. Through the support of trusted adults and in line with Standard 5, they should, wherever possible, be equipped to make informed decisions about safeguarding and safer working practices. All policies and procedures that an organisation has should be accessible to the young people involved in the project or service.

Relationships

Youth work is a relational practice. Skilled, trained, trusted adults build relationships with children and young people that facilitate their personal, social and educational development. The journey is shaped by the young person, either individually or collectively, and has no adult predetermined outcomes.

This sets it apart from other allied professional relationships that have a specific outcome that has been preconceived before engagement. For example, a teacher's primary focus is to guide young people through the completion of a curriculum and syllabus of learning that is set.

Youth work should create opportunities for young people to explore and learn about things that they choose.

Youth work has a unique set of professional and relational boundaries, which often mean youth workers are party to open information sharing and disclosures from young people. Navigating the boundaries of this to keep young people safer and protect the trusted, developing relationships is part of the skill of a youth worker. Youth workers must work with young people to create a trusting and safe environment, where they feel comfortable if they need to raise concerns.

It may be a legal duty in future legislation for professionals to report child sexual abuse and face criminal sanctions for not doing so. This is under the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).¹³ The IICSA highlighted the importance of those that work with children and young people being aware of the indicators of child sexual abuse and reporting concerns promptly.

Keeping young people safe must always be the top priority.



Current legislation, statutory guidance and standards



Specific to safeguarding in the youth sector

The legislation and guidance relevant to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people includes the following:

- The Children Act 1989 (updated 2004)¹⁴
- Working together to safeguard children (2018)¹⁵
- The Health and Social Care Act (2008)¹⁶
- Care Act (2014)¹⁷
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)¹⁸
- The Charity Commission, ‘Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees’, 2017¹⁹
- Department for Education, ‘Keeping children safe in education’ 2015, Published on GOV.UK²⁰

There are other standards and guidance which should be read in conjunction with this document to help shape and inform good practice.

Depending on the environment in which you work, there may be specific additional guidance to consider. For example, refer to those detailed below for sports-based providers.

- Out-of-school settings: voluntary safeguarding code of practice²¹
- Standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport²²
- Safeguarding and child protection standards of the voluntary and community sector’, 2019²³
- Specific faith standards (for example, the Ten standards by thirtyone:eight).²⁴

Culture of safeguarding in the youth sector

Over a decade of funding cuts and challenges has led to a complete evolution of the current workforce picture of youth work as documented by the NYA and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs (APPG).²⁵

The voluntary and community sector has stepped up and into the gap left by statutory service cuts. This has created a rich and diverse offer to young people, with place-based community provisions providing a wide range of activities, experiences and informal education opportunities. This diverse workforce needs the same safeguarding training, support, guidance, and resources as statutory services in order to keep all children and young people safe. All young people should be supported by robustly trained workers and safeguarding should underpin the delivery of all work. This is irrespective of the area, organisations accessed, or the level of support required.

This guidance intends to provide an opportunity for the standardisation of best practice, providing a baseline of understanding and requirements in safeguarding that can be understood by parents or carers, volunteers, professionals and young people.



All young people should be supported by robustly trained workers and safeguarding should underpin the delivery of all work.



Why do we need standards in the youth sector?

In the absence of consistency regarding safeguarding guidance across the sector, there is potential for increased risks that may impact negatively on children and young people.

Pre-existing safeguarding guidance and legislation have not been created with a focus on youth sector delivery and can sometimes be open to interpretation. The lack of joined-up clarity in safeguarding between children and young adults, particularly when they reach the age of 16 to 18 years and beyond (known as transitional safeguarding) can leave some with increased vulnerabilities that can be avoided.

These safeguarding standards for the youth sector will help in holding people or organisations to account for any bad, harmful and neglectful practices. In the absence of clear legislation for safeguarding within the youth sector, these standards provide the framework that people such as parents or carers, funders and providers can use.

They promote and support a cultural shift in safeguarding practices in the youth sector. We want to move away from compliance or tick-box safeguarding practices to one of embedding a culture of safeguarding across everything an organisation does, which is embraced and upheld by all staff and volunteers.

Who should apply these standards?

These standards apply to all those working with children and young people, regardless of your role, title or the size of the organisation. The standards have been co-created with the wide experience and expertise of people from across the youth sector.

These standards apply to all youth work delivery such as building-based, street-based or digital or online activities – using a variety of youth work methods and approaches.

“

The standards have been co-created with the wide experience and expertise of people from across the youth sector.

”



From compliance to culture to culture plus

Compliance

Culture

Culture plus

Safeguarding processes can be seen as prescriptive and a tick-box exercise. Sometimes they are perceived as a chore or a barrier to working with young people. These standards will support individuals and organisations to move from a compliance-based approach to an embedded culture of safeguarding where processes are looked at as part of the fabric of what an organisation does, rather than a process to be applied on top of day-to-day activities.

Compliance as a term means achieving minimum requirements. Therefore, we can use the term compliance in this context to mean meeting the basic, minimum required standard for safeguarding practice. Achieving that means that you and your organisation is actively thinking about the welfare of young people, and considering what preventative measures can be put in place. However, we should all aspire to ensure that our safeguarding practices require us to do our very best to achieve what is a safeguarding culture or 'culture plus'.

This will ensure that we are achieving best practice in safeguarding in a sustainable and future-proofed way within our organisations – not just because we have to or are legally required to but because we are compelled to and are driven by these good standards.

These standards challenge individuals and organisations to go one step further, beyond culture, to consider 'culture plus' where you can maintain the standard of culture and further integrate safeguarding in your organisation – making it part of your identity and values.

Examples of how you can achieve this can be found in the standards part of this document.

Organisations that are operating and demonstrating culture plus standards are demonstrating the very best practice in safeguarding.

The standards:

1 Ensure a clear safeguarding policy and interconnected organisational policies and procedures

What?

A safeguarding policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children and young people. It also provides a framework, within which procedures can be developed. Your safeguarding policy needs to have a clear definition of safeguarding, child protection and adult protection; must outline clearly what each workers roles and responsibilities are in preventing harm to young people and also what to do if harm arises or is disclosed.

Organisations working with young people will need a clear safeguarding policy and procedures for staff and young people to understand, this should include an accessible young person friendly version.

The safeguarding policy should not sit in isolation to other policies. The organisation should also have a range of other interconnected policies. For instance, a safer recruitment policy, staff conduct policy, a whistle-blowing policy, lone working policy. Having interconnected policies builds on basic safeguarding and leads to a more robust approach.

Why?

Policies make responsibilities clear to all workers and stakeholders. A safeguarding policy makes clear to staff what is required of them in relation to the welfare and protection of children, young people and adults. It helps to create a safer, thriving, and positive environment, evidencing that the organisation is taking its duty of care seriously.

It is important that all policies and associated procedures are part of a process of implementation, execution and regular review.



A safeguarding policy makes clear to staff what is required of them in relation to the welfare and protection of children, young people and adults.



How?

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>The safeguarding policy is clearly written and easy to understand by all stakeholders.</p> <p>The policy clearly describes the organisation's understanding and definitions of all forms of harm and abuse and covers your or your organisation's commitment to safeguard all children, young people and adults who access your services.</p>	<p>The policy has been drafted with staff who deliver services.</p> <p>There is evidence to show that staff team fully embrace and understand the policy and are able to implement, execute and review it effectively.</p>	<p>The organisation (or responsible individual) has consulted with young people, guardians and allied professionals during the creation of the policy and its implementation, execution and review.</p>
<p>The safeguarding policy is reviewed yearly.</p> <p>Earlier reviews should be undertaken if there is a significant change in legislation; change in organisations roles and responsibility or when learning has taken place through experience (or a significant safeguarding incident).</p> <p>Earlier reviews should also happen if the needs of the young people attending change.</p>	<p>The policy and procedures are jointly reviewed by staff, senior management and the governance team.</p> <p>The organisation has named officers responsible for ensuring oversight at the highest level of management and governance.</p> <p>Staff understand how to raise concerns and make suggestions and improvements in relation to the policy.</p>	<p>There are co-created opportunities to scope out with 'allied professions' examples of good practice policies and procedures that can enhance the approach and commitment to safeguarding.</p>
<p>The policy has been signed off by senior members of the organisation or trustees where applicable.</p>	<p>Systems are in place at a management level that are overseen through governance.</p>	
<p>The safeguarding policy is readily available and accessible for staff and is part of their induction.</p>	<p>The policy is available on the organisation's website or social media page; or posters or internal information is made available signposting to the designated safeguarding lead (the named person responsible).</p> <p>Policy is made available if needed in a different language or in an accessible format.</p>	<p>The policy is proactively given to carers and other relevant associated adults and young people, encouraging them to ask questions and engage with it.</p>
<p>All externally contracted work is expected to adhere to the organisation's safeguarding policy and this is regularly monitored.</p>	<p>The policy is shared with sponsors, donors and funders.</p>	<p>Joint policy is agreed across partners. Or, all partner organisations have made a commitment to safeguarding, and this is clearly identifiable in partnership agreements.</p>

How? (Continued)

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>All relevant organisational policies are linked to the safeguarding policy (for example, the equity, equality, diversity and inclusion policy aligns itself with the safeguarding policy to make sure that all young people irrespective of background, religion, race, and sexuality will have access to a safe environment). There are clear links to the recruitment policy, so all applicants will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.</p>	<p>Staff can identify links between policies and safeguarding – embedding one safeguarding voice and messaging throughout the organisation.</p>	
<p>The safeguarding policy demonstrates commitment to recruiting staff safely and is clearly linked to a safer recruitment policy.</p> <p>It reflects safer recruitment legislation.</p> <p>If concerns about an applicant's history are revealed through the disclosure and barring checks, the recruitment process in place ensures that any actions taken are relevant and proportionate.</p>	<p>Policies recognise and reflect the value of lived experiences, and reflect this in recruitment and safeguarding practices that are proportionate and manage risk appropriately.</p>	



2 Proactive safeguarding systems, governance and oversight

What?

This standard is about maintaining good systems and procedures for safeguarding, being clear about roles and responsibilities of staff including governance and creating opportunities for organisations and individuals to evaluate their work.

Procedures are required to support the implementation of the policies and give workers clear guidance on what to do in different circumstances. They clarify the responsibilities and roles of workers and provide guidance on how to escalate concerns internally and externally where applicable. Every organisation irrespective of size should have a named person for safeguarding – they are often called safeguarding leads or designated safeguarding leads (DSL).



Every organisation irrespective of size should have a named person for safeguarding – they are often called safeguarding leads or designated safeguarding leads (DSL).



Why?

Safeguarding should be embedded throughout your organisation and effective procedures – supported by proactive governance – enable this to happen. An effective safeguarding procedure will ensure that safeguarding is a fundamental element of the organisational work, and that your systems are both proactive and responsive to the changing needs of young people.

For safeguarding to be effective, procedures and systems need to be regularly reviewed and monitored. Procedures help to ensure a prompt response to concerns about a child's or young person's or adult's safety or wellbeing. They also help you and your organisation to comply with the relevant legislation and guidance. Regularly monitoring and evaluating before things go wrong supports the safeguarding system's effectiveness. Post any safeguarding concern, it is important that a space is provided for system and policy review. This will enable appropriate and effective learning to take place.

Governance and named safeguarding leads are key to supporting these procedures and systems.

How?

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>There is an identified member of staff in the organisation responsible for safeguarding.</p> <p>All staff in the organisation know who this individual is.</p>	<p>Other workers are identified and supported if interested in a safeguarding lead professional development pathway.</p> <p>The DSL develops approaches that support the learning and development of all staff, including those in administration and governance roles.</p>	<p>The DSL supports the development of safeguarding practice throughout the organisation and youth work programmes. For example, within relationships and sexual health information in the context of delivery.</p>
<p>Young people are provided with information, advice and guidance on keeping themselves and their peers safe.</p>	<p>Young people are part of the development process for relevant training and systems.</p> <p>Young people actively engage in the development of youth work activity and the provision of information, advice and guidance.</p>	<p>Young people review the organisation's safeguarding approach.</p> <p>Young people are involved in the evaluation of information, advice and guidance, and work with the organisation to develop strategies.</p>
<p>Procedures on reporting concerns to children and adults protection agencies are made clear for workers.</p> <p>They are readily available and easy to access.</p> <p>Reporting procedure flowcharts should be provided to all staff and displayed.</p>	<p>Reporting flowcharts should be shared with all partners as part of the contract or agreement process.</p>	
<p>The organisation has arrangements in place to provide support to young people and workers during and following an incident, allegation or complaint.</p>	<p>The organisation has made information available to young people, their parents or carers, about what is likely to happen following a disclosure, in a format and language that can be easily understood and accessed by everyone.</p>	
<p>There is a clear process and system for recording safeguarding concerns, incidents and referrals which can be accessed only by those that need to.</p>	<p>Safeguarding concerns, incidents and referrals are reviewed by senior leaders on a regular basis.</p>	<p>The organisation supports the creation of peer learning opportunities with other practitioners.</p> <p>The organisation works with partners to identify and share information about local and national safeguarding trends and protective factors.</p>

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>Arrangements are in place to monitor the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures through specific measures or integration into existing systems for quality assurance, risk management, audit, monitoring and review.</p> <p>For example, an organisation regularly checks safeguarding recording to improve practice – in line with the organisations safeguarding process and procedures.</p>	<p>There is a system of regular reporting to senior leaders on safeguarding in the organisation.</p> <p>Information on safeguarding issues and practices are shared sensitively to enhance good practice.</p>	
<p>There is a named and known safeguarding member at governance level.</p>		
<p>In the absence of trustees, a named senior responsible staff member has oversight of safeguarding, including ensuring there is a named DSL.</p> <p>The board of trustees, or senior leadership team (SLT), monitor safeguarding from a strategy level, and hold senior leaders, or peers, to account in relation to safe practice.</p>	<p>Trustees or SLT reflect with responsible staff around safeguarding learnings.</p>	
<p>Lessons learned are reported to key stakeholders and independent bodies. For example, the local children’s safeguarding partnership or police.</p>	<p>Spaces are created where staff can feel safe to communicate openly and honestly about experiences; opportunities for further support are explored.</p> <p>Lessons learnt are included in organisational annual reports where appropriate and used for further learning.</p>	
	<p>The organisation has worked with partners to ensure that there are shared expectations around safeguarding.</p>	<p>The organisation has worked with partners or contractors to share safeguarding learning.</p>

3 Working together (inter and intra-agency collaboration)

What?

The youth sector has an essential role to play in interagency safeguarding and supporting the actioning of child protection procedures to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Interagency working is collaborating with other agencies to ensure that young people are safeguarded, and their wellbeing and rights promoted. For example, working with education, social care, police, health providers.

Intra-agency working is collaborating across departments or sections to ensure that young people are consistently safeguarded throughout an organisation.

The understanding of other sector and agency roles, approaches and responsibilities will enable good practice across sectors and agencies. Workers should be open to listening and learning alongside colleagues from outside their organisation, while maintaining the values and ethos of youth work.

Why?

Young people are in contact with a range of services and agencies throughout their lives, and each of these agencies will, through these interactions, gain information about them. Joint working enables all services involved to share relevant information to ensure that patterns are noticed, concerns are shared, and responses are coordinated.

Embedding this approach will improve safeguarding practice in your organisation. Through their skills and approaches, such as active listening, youth workers can support and empower young people to amplify and understand their agency in safeguarding. Given the relational approach that youth work takes, it is vital that youth workers share risks and concerns from a young person's perspective to support any procedures to keep them safe.

You should adopt the principles set out in the Department for Education's statutory framework 'Working together to safeguard children'.²⁶

“

Given the relational approach that youth work takes, it is vital that youth workers share risks and concerns from a young person's perspective to support any procedures to keep them safe.

”

How?

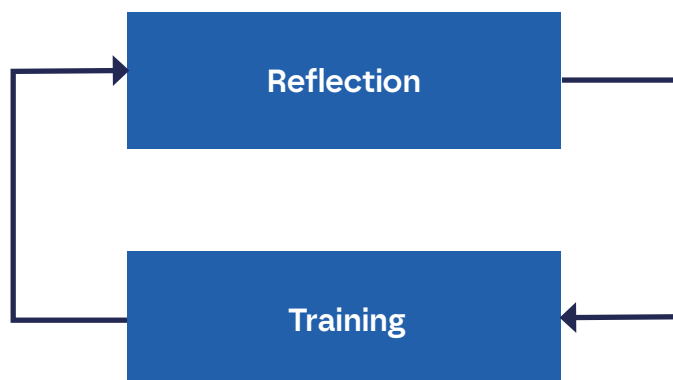
Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
Workers within the organisation understand how safeguarding roles and responsibilities are aligned across the youth sector. For example, the role of a youth worker alongside other safeguarding practitioners within multiagency teams.	The organisation proactively works with the local community or relevant community to be safeguarding vigilant.	
The organisation shares information when needed in a timely manner; supports joint decision making; identifies risk towards a young person or group or context.	Systems exist between agencies for reflecting on and growing safeguarding culture.	Systems exist between agencies for reflecting on and growing a safeguarding culture. Implementation of multi-agency reflective spaces, encouraging broader learning opportunities.
The organisation works with local children's safeguarding partnership and adult safeguarding teams to promote the youth sector's role in safeguarding.	Relationships are built at local, regional and national levels with relevant child protection agencies.	There is engagement in networking spaces to highlight good practice.
The organisation promotes the voice and views of young people in multiagency safeguarding forums.	There is suitable training for practitioners to understand how to include the voices of young people in safeguarding.	Youth workers proactively advocate the voice of the child across relevant agencies, underpinned by the Lundy model ²⁷ of youth participation. The Lundy model is based on the key concepts of space, voice, audience and influence.
Contact details for the local authority social care teams – both children and adult – and the local authority designated officer are available for all staff.	There are lists of contacts and building relationships for specialist advice and information. For example, the local child exploitation prevention team if this is identified as a local need or area of concern.	
Staff know the roles, boundaries and limitations of their role in safeguarding and work to a culture of asking for help to keep children and young people safe. This includes reaching out for specialist support.	There is a check and challenge culture across work with others agencies. All staff are empowered to challenge, and there is an organisational culture of this across the whole organisation.	Regular multi-agency meetings at a local or national level to embed an organisation-wide culture of check and supportive challenge to enhance better practice.

4 Training and reflection

What?

Training in safeguarding is the process through which all stakeholders gain the knowledge they need to implement policy and follow procedures. Reflective practice is the process by which the policies and procedures are monitored and tracked for effectiveness. Training and reflective practice ensure policy and procedure are at the forefront of the minds of all stakeholders and are a dynamic feature of the running of the organisation.

Reflection on safeguarding practice and delivery can be carried out through supervision which is understood as a vital activity for keeping up with the professional demands of youth work, such as managing casework, continuous development of knowledge and skills, and the safeguarding of ethical practice.



Young people need to be involved in the reflective learning cycle from a delivery perspective and also in order to contribute to their lifelong learning and personal development.

Practice standardisation meetings should be part of an organisational approach to ensure safeguarding standards are understood and maintained.

Supervision enables individuals and groups to reflect, identify gaps in knowledge and develop best practice. Quality supervisory practice supports youth workers through the provision of a space for communication, to explore and develop practice, and to be open and responsive to safe delivery. Safeguarding should be a standing item on supervision agendas.

Why?

This standard supports the youth work principle to support young people and colleagues to reflect on their learning, and professional and ethical conduct. It also supports the professional to develop clear boundaries in all interactions with children and young people, colleagues and other professionals. Through reflection of practice and delivery, staff can apply clear ethical decision-making to protect children, young people and adults, and inform all practice. Using a model such as Gibbs reflective cycle (1988)²⁸ may be a useful tool to enable reflection, assessment, practice and planning.

How?

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>All staff attend annual safeguarding training that is relevant to their role and responsibilities, and the context of delivery.</p> <p>There are training records for all staff, and continuous professional development opportunities are in place (for monitoring of training and expiration of certifications).</p>	<p>There are clear safeguarding training development pathways that enable staff to extend their learning and practice.</p> <p>The organisation supports workers to keep a copy of training plans, course attendance records and course evaluations and regularly monitor this as part of workforce safeguarding training plans and supervisions.</p>	<p>Training offered recognises current trends that young people face, including language, culture and context.</p> <p>Young people are involved in design and delivering training.</p> <p>Young leaders or volunteers have safeguarding training that is age-appropriate, relevant to their role and bespoke.</p> <p>All staff are engaged in assessment and identification of their own training needs relating to safeguarding through supervision.</p>
<p>Workers with specific responsibilities for safeguarding (for example, DSLs) have access to regular additional training relevant to the role, and supervision.</p> <p>Safeguarding is a standing item on all supervision agendas.</p>	<p>Workers with specific responsibilities for safeguarding (for example, DSLs) have access to specialist support if needed – for instance therapeutic support or clinical supervision.</p>	<p>All team members are able to access therapeutic developmental supervision to enable them to critically reflect on safeguarding practices.</p>
<p>Appropriate opportunities are given to reflect on safer practice, for instance in response to a safeguarding incident, a cause for concern, new research, policy or national news stories.</p>	<p>Staff attend at least one youth-work specific safeguarding forum per year. (peer review, external event, local authority forum or group supervision).</p>	<p>Safeguarding considerations are part of all session plans, recording and evaluations.</p> <p>Safeguarding considerations are part of staff supervision agendas and appraisals.</p>
<p>All workers have the opportunity for reflective supervision that includes the opportunity to discuss safeguarding.</p> <p>Adequate records are kept by the supervisor or supervisee that reflect appropriate safeguarding recording processes.</p>	<p>Peer supervision is available across the organisation, along with training opportunities and reflective spaces.</p>	<p>There are learning reviews and opportunities for whole organisational reflective learning. Learning reviews and opportunities for the organisation to reflect as a whole.</p>

5 Empower young people's voices

What?

Encouraging young people's voices within safeguarding is to amplify the views and experiences of young people in your organisation's safeguarding culture. When you encourage the voice of young people, you make a commitment to listen and act upon their thoughts, feelings and experiences. This can be achieved by embedding youth participation principles and ethics into all your policy and systems development.

Young people should play an active role in decision-making regarding the safeguarding processes and systems of your organisation. For this to be successful young people should be equipped with relevant skills and some safeguarding knowledge.

Young people should be able to advocate for safer spaces, activities and trusted adults for themselves and their peers. This can be achieved through age-appropriate knowledge and training on the law, the expectations of adults and their duty of care towards them, and an understanding of reporting processes.



When you encourage the voice of young people, you make a commitment to listen and act upon their thoughts, feelings and experiences.



Why?

The main objective of this standard is to ensure that safeguarding is not 'done to' young people but 'done with' them. Listening to young people is fundamental to working with them and ensuring the work is relevant and meeting their needs.

Safeguarding risks change as society does and young people's knowledge and experience is essential to understanding the shifting landscape and devising appropriate measures in response. Young people have the right to express their own views, the right to freedom of expression and the right to participate freely.²⁹ The Lundy model of youth participation³⁰ provides a good framework for ensuring youth voices and leadership. Created by child rights expert, Professor Laura Lundy, this model is an international recognised model that is based in four key concepts, and has been adopted by local, national and international organisations.



How?

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>An accessible and young person friendly version of the organisation's safeguarding policy is shared with young people before registration or membership. (Consider the age and the needs of the groups that you are working with, as the level of understanding might vary.)</p>	<p>Process is in place to consult with young people as part of review of safeguarding policy and procedures.</p> <p>This should include young people's lived experiences of safeguarding.</p>	<p>Young people co-design safeguarding policies and procedures.</p>
<p>Young people are provided with information, advice and support through youth work activity to reduce the risk of harm, including how to report harm and to whom.</p> <p>Young people are equipped to challenge dangerous, harmful or inappropriate practices and feel able to disclose and whistle-blow.</p>	<p>Young people are supported in an age-appropriate manner.</p> <p>Young people are provided with jargon-free materials related to safeguarding and supported to understand and be able to navigate formal safeguarding systems.</p>	<p>Young people work alongside the organisation in creating relatable safeguarding content for other children and young people.</p>
<p>The organisation has a process for dealing with complaints.</p> <p>All stakeholders, including young people, are aware of and able to understand this process.</p> <p>There are various methods of enabling complaints to be heard, not just in a written format. Clear processes for the recording and documentation of these are in place.</p>	<p>The organisation has consulted with young people as part of the initial development or ongoing review of this system to make it fit for purpose, relatable and relevant.</p>	<p>The organisation has bespoke youth-led training packages to raise awareness of the importance of youth-accessible services and safeguarding.</p>
<p>The organisation provides young people with information about their safeguarding rights and state who they can contact if they are worried.</p>	<p>The organisation operates rights-based practice across all of their safeguarding work. This means that their approach is based on empowering young people to know their rights and works with empathy, trust, and belief in the human dignity of every person.</p> <p>Young people are supported to advocate and challenge on their own behalf and for their peers.</p>	<p>Young people are actively supported to engage in safeguarding practice across partnerships, including in the local safeguarding partnership.</p>

How? (Continued)

Compliance	Culture	Culture plus
<p>Systems are adapted to support the needs and wishes of young people.</p> <p>This might include accessible materials, advocacy or provision of direct support.</p> <p>The Equality Act says there's a duty to make reasonable adjustments to prevent disadvantage.³¹</p>	<p>The organisation works with young people and professionals to understand their additional needs or vulnerabilities. This might include the development of training, new materials and opportunities for young people and staff to evaluate and inform practice.</p>	<p>Young people are supported where they wish to lead on social action programmes that respond to the safeguarding need of peers, to ensure their voices are heard and that practice is equitable.</p>
<p>Risk assessments relating to safeguarding are available and conducted for activities, transport, accommodation and spaces, and shared with young people as part of safety briefings.</p>	<p>Risk assessments are created jointly with young people to enable their views in this process.</p>	
<p>Young people are aware of the named safeguarding person (DSL) in the organisation and have various methods in which they can communicate with this person.</p> <p>There should always be another named contact in case concerns arise about the DSL.</p>	<p>Young people have worked jointly with the organisation to complete a mapping exercise to identify community guardians, taking a Contextual Safeguarding approach</p> <p>Contextual Safeguarding recognises that young people can be subjected to violence and abuse in the different relationships they form in neighbourhoods, schools, and online (beyond family) and seeks to understand and respond to these contexts in order to better protect them.</p>	

Resources and links

National Youth Agency Safeguarding and Risk Management Hub, nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub

Youth Work One, youthworkone.org.uk

Department for Education, gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Department for Education, gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice/keeping-children-safe-during-community-activities-after-school-clubs-and-tuition-non-statutory-guidance-for-providers-running-out-of-school-settings

The Charity Commission, gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

NSPCC safeguarding standards and guidance, learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/safeguarding-child-protection-standards

HSE: Information about health and safety at work, hse.gov.uk

Disclosure and Barring Service, gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Contextual Safeguarding Research Durham University, contextualsafeguarding.org.uk

Transitional Safeguarding from adolescence to adulthood, Research in Practice, researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-from-adolescence-to-adulthood

Lundy Model of Participation and Lundy Voice Model Checklist, European Commission, commission.europa.eu/document/e4dd1d64-473b-4a2a-9de2-e2e1648fd52d_en

Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm, tce.researchinpractice.org.uk

Standards for safeguarding children in sport, CPSU, thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport

Our Ten standards, Thirtyone:eight, thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards

Reshet Safeguarding Commitments, reshetnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Reshet-Safeguarding-Commitments.pdf



Thank you

Thank you to all the members of the NYA Safeguarding Advisory Group:

Sally Carr MBE Chair, Officials from the Department for Education, Katy Jackson and Ian Carpenter Thirty One Eight, Dr. Roy Graham Reshnet, Catherine Taylor DBS Partnerships Team, Charlee Bewsher Regional Youth Work Units, John Downs Street Games, Laura Badley UK Youth, Chloe Holness and Emily Heath London VRU, Cate Meredith NSPCC, Michelle North Child Protection Sport Unit, Katie Ashton Home Office, Richard Simpson Barnado's, Caroline Adams Norfolk Police, Isabelle King National Safeguarding Youth Forum, Maria Cassidy NWG, Andy Pippen, Bournemouth University

Special thanks to the NYA Young Assessors.

Endnotes

- 1 An adult at risk is 'any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support' (Care Act 2014 England).
- 2 HM Government, [gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2), 2018. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 3 National Youth Agency, [nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub](https://www.nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub), 2023. Published on [nya.org.uk](https://www.nya.org.uk)
- 4 Health and Safety Executive, [hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm), 2023. Published on [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
- 5 NYA, [nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub](https://www.nya.org.uk/skills/safeguarding-and-risk-management-hub), 2023. Published on [nya.org.uk](https://www.nya.org.uk)
- 6 This includes Army cadets, Sea Cadets, Scouts, Girlguiding, Volunteer Police Cadets, Fire Cadets, Royal Airforce Air Cadets, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, St John Ambulance.
- 7 Safeguarding children and child protection, NSPCC Learning, [learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection](https://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection)
- 8 NYA, [nya.org.uk/national-occupational-standards-and-english-youth-work-policy-new-document-published](https://www.nya.org.uk/national-occupational-standards-and-english-youth-work-policy-new-document-published), 2020. Published on [nya.org.uk](https://www.nya.org.uk)
- 9 NYA, [nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum](https://www.nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum), 2023. Published on [nya.org.uk](https://www.nya.org.uk)
- 10 gov.uk, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 11 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2), 2015. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 12 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/consultations/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code-of-practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code-of-practice), 2018. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 13 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, [iicsa.org.uk/final-report](https://www.iicsa.org.uk/final-report), 2022. Published on [iicsa.org.uk](https://www.iicsa.org.uk)
- 14 gov.uk, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 15 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2), 2018. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 16 gov.uk, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/14/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/14/contents). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 17 gov.uk, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 18 gov.uk, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 19 The Charity Commission, [gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees), 2017. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 20 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2) 2015. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 21 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/consultations/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code-of-practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code-of-practice), 2018. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 22 Children Protection in Sport Unit, [thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport](https://www.thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport), 2018. Published on [thecpsu.org.uk](https://www.thecpsu.org.uk)
- 23 NSPCC, [learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/safeguarding-child-protection-standards](https://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/safeguarding-child-protection-standards), 2019. Published on [learning.nspcc.org.uk](https://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk)
- 24 Thirtyone:eight, [thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards](https://www.thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/who-we-are/our-ten-standards). Published on [thirtyoneeight.org](https://www.thirtyoneeight.org)
- 25 NYA, [nya.org.uk/resource/appg-inquiry-into-youth-work-report-2019](https://www.nya.org.uk/resource/appg-inquiry-into-youth-work-report-2019), 2019. Published on [nya.org.uk](https://www.nya.org.uk)
- 26 Department for Education, [gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2), 2018. Published on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)
- 27 qub.ac.uk/Research/case-studies/childrens-participation-lundy-model.html
- 28 [ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle#:~:text=One of the most famous,analysis%2C conclusion and action plan](https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20most%20famous,analysis%2C%20conclusion%20and%20action%20plan)
- 29 [gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on,a%20comprehensive%20set%20of%20rights](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-uncrc-how-legislation-underpins-implementation-in-england#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20on,a%20comprehensive%20set%20of%20rights)
- 30 The Lundy Model of Participation Checklist, Blog, Participation People, [participationpeople.com/how-to-implement-the-lundy-model-of-participation-across-your-organisation-a-checklist](https://www.participationpeople.com/how-to-implement-the-lundy-model-of-participation-across-your-organisation-a-checklist)
- 31 UK Government, [legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents). Published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

National Youth Agency

9 Newarke Street, Leicester LE1 5SN

Company registration no. 2912597

Register charity in England and Wales no. 1035804

nya.org.uk