

Safeguarding Policy, Sept 2009

Introduction

Surrey Youth Focus is an infrastructure body supporting its Members organisations, and does not in the main have direct contact with young people on a regular or frequent basis.

For example Trustees of Surrey Youth Focus will not be in intensive or frequent¹ contact with young people in their capacity as SYF Trustees. They almost certainly will be required to have a CRB check for the organisation they represent.

The one exception is the Youth Development Worker postholder post which does involve direct contact with young people, and for which an enhanced CRB check/ ISA registration is required.

Additionally SYF has a website and uses social media like Twitter, and so there needs to be an awareness of the need to avoid putting young people at risk in relation to the use of photographs on the website, and in using social networking media generally.

Consequently as an organisation working with young people, Surrey Youth Focus (SYF) wishes to ensure it is an exemplar of best practice. The following policy and procedures follow advice set out by the Charity Commissioners², and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

The relevant legislation is listed below³.

Policy Statement

- 1) SYF regards the safety and wellbeing of young people as of paramount importance, and they have a right to be protected from abuse or harm in compliance with national legislation
- 2) This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Trustees.
- 3) SYF will ensure that it recruits safely, consistent with the procedures below.
- 4) Any breach of this policy and procedure will lead to a prima facie disciplinary investigation
- 5) This policy links to others relating to Data protection and confidentiality, and Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

¹ The DCSF defines as : once a month for at least 3 months, or at least 3 times a month or overnight. These definitions are currently under review by the ISA for the Government.

² See details on website at: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/protection.asp>

Procedures and Practice

CRB Checks/ Vetting and Barring: Any member of **staff or volunteer** working directly with young people will be required to have an enhanced CRB check, and from November 2010 any new staff or volunteers must have a prior registration with the ISA before starting work. In addition to this new staff or volunteers will be asked to provide the contact details of two independent referees. **Trustees** are representatives of their own organisations, and in that capacity will have CRB checks; Surrey Youth Focus will view, copy and log the CRB checks of all Trustees and Observers.

Training: adequate training in child protection will be provided to the Safeguarding Officer and Youth Development Worker so that they are aware of the procedures of identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect. In addition to this any new member of staff who will have direct contact with young people as part of their work will be taken through this policy as part of the induction process.

Photography: The NSPCC has issued practical guidance as attached to this note, as has the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board in relation to photos, videos and websites (see links below)

Staffing ratios: SYF has adopted the advice of the NSPCC regarding staffing ratios for voluntary organisations when working with children and young people, and which in turn follows Ofsted guidelines:

Age (years)	Adult to child/ young person ratio
0-2	1 to 3
2-3	1 to 4
4-8	1 to 6
9-12	1 to 8
13 -18	1 to 10

If the group is mixed gender, the supervising staff should also include both male and female workers, and there will need to be a cultural sensitivity if working with young people of varying cultural practices and faith beliefs. Under no circumstances should any SYF member of staff or volunteer work alone with young people.

Code of Conduct:

The Youth Development Worker, or other staff **should not:**

- Be alone with young people.
- Transport young people in a car or minibus without another adult being present or without parental consent.
- Invite young people into their own home.
- Make inappropriate contact with young people i.e. develop relationships outside the work setting.
- Leave young people unattended.

- Leave young people in the presence of adults who are not suitably trained.
- Leave young people in the presence of adults not known to them
- Leave young people in the presence of adults who have not had the relevant CRB checks.
- Show favouritism to young people within the work setting.
- Use inappropriate language and or behaviour.

In addition to this the Youth Development Worker should avoid physical contact with young people. Where this is necessary as part of any activity i.e. coaching or instructing in sports the Youth Development Worker must explain to the young person what physical contact will be required so that no action can be misunderstood on their part.

Safeguarding Officer: The Chief Executive of Surrey Clubs for Young People, a member organisation, is the named person to whom any complaint or concern about Safeguarding issues should be referred. He/ she will deal with the matter in consultation with the Chairman. This will normally involve referral to the Surrey Safeguarding Board initially for investigation.

Reporting concerns, suspicions and allegations:

- **If you suspect a young person is, or has been abused:** Discuss your concerns with the Safeguarding Officer. If he/she is not available it is essential that you seek advice from the Surrey County Council's Children's Services immediately: Tel: 0300 200 1006 or in emergency dial 999 for the Police.
- **If a young person is about to disclose abuse:** If a young person discloses abuse whilst activities are being provided, provision needs to be made for the member of staff to be able to talk to the young person. Suitable levels of supervision must be maintained for the other young people whilst this occurs. **Further advice on what to do is contained in the Toolkit for youth workers, as below.**
- **What to do after a disclosure:** All information relating to an incident of child abuse is strictly confidential. It should only be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer, Surrey Children's Services and the Police. If a disclosure reveals a Young Person is in danger or at imminent risk of significant harm telephone the Children's Services or the Police with your concerns immediately. Make notes; ideally this should be whilst the young person is disclosing information to you, however it is not always practical to do so. Stopping a young person to make notes may deter the young person from disclosing further information. Therefore it is important that once a disclosure has been made you immediately record details of the disclosure including the following:
 - Name of the young person
 - Parent / Carer's Details
 - The Child's Address
 - Relevant Phone Numbers
 - What is said to have happened or what has seen to have happened
 - When it occurred
 - Who else was there?
 - What was said or done by those involved

- Whether there is any actual evidence e.g. bruises, bleeding, changed behaviour
- Who has been told about it
- Who was concerned?
- Was the young person able to say what happened?
- Whether the parents have been advised.
- Actions taken
- You must sign and date the record ensuring it is legible.

The written report needs to be sent to the Surrey Children's Services within 48 hours. You should retain your own copy, ensuring it is sealed, marked confidential, and stored in a safe and lockable place.

Parental/carer permission should ideally be immediately obtained before the report is submitted to the Children's Services or the police. The child's parents/carers should be advised of the process to be followed and provided with support during this process. BUT – This only applies in cases where the allegation is NOT against the parent or carer, or in cases where contacting them will NOT bring evidence in court into disrepute or put the young person at further risk. (E.g. cases involving another family member or friend of family)

If the child's parent or carer refuses a referral you MUST legally still contact the appropriate agencies and submit the report.

Throughout this process ensure you seek supervision and support from the Safeguarding Officer.

Dealing with child abuse can be one of the most difficult and distressing areas of working with young people.

Do not underestimate how it may make you feel.

How to manage allegations made against staff: If an allegation is made, or suspicions occur regarding anyone working with young people you must report it immediately to the Safeguarding Officer. If the allegations relate to the person in charge of Safeguarding you should report to the next most senior person.

Surrey Youth Focus will then put into place the following procedure:

- Make a detailed factual record of the allegation and action taken.
- Consider suspending the person involved, taking into account the risks to other young people and to the worker involved.
- Contact the parents of the young person, advise them of the process to be followed and provide appropriate support.
- Advise the relevant external bodies.
- Ensure that all information relating to the allegation remains confidential.'

Review: This policy will be kept under review by the Safeguarding Officer on an annual basis as part of the annual report on Risk in September each year.

Key references/links:

Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board has detailed policies and guidance at:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE/RTF/Guidance+and+protocols+for+safeguarding+children?opendocument>

Every Child Matters safeguarding site:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/safeguarding/>

NSPCC site especially useful re practice on taking photographs:

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/trainingandconsultancy/Consultancy/HelpAndAdvice/helpandadvice_wda47843.html

From NSPCC Consultancy Services

Using photographs and images of children on websites and in other publications

Advice for community groups and other organisations working with children on using photographs and images of children

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on websites and other publications.

Photographs can be used as a means of identifying children when they are accompanied with personal information, for example, - this is X who is a member of the *Something Club* and who likes Westlife. This information can make a child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to "groom" that child for abuse. Secondly the content of the photo can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. There is evidence of this adapted material finding its way onto websites, consisting of child abuse images.

Organisations and those providing services or activities to children and young people need to develop a policy in relation to their use of images of children and young people on their websites and in other publications. They will need to make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent their activity, without putting children at increased risk. You should ensure that parents are aware of and support your policy. If organisations are aware of the potential risks and take appropriate steps any potential for their misuse can be reduced.

NSPCC advice to organisations:

- consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity.
- avoid the use of both the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph. Restricting naming to first name only reduces the risk of inappropriate and/or unsolicited attention from people.
- if the child is fully named, avoid using their photograph; if a photograph is used, avoid fully naming the child.
- ask for parental permission to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware of the way the image of their child is representing the organisation or activity. A **Parental consent form for use of images of children (PDF, 27KB)** is one way of achieving this
- consider asking for the child's permission to use their image. This ensures that they are aware of the way the image is to be used to represent the activity. A children's permission form is one way of achieving this

- to reduce the risk of inappropriate use, only use images of children in suitable dress. With regard to the actual content it is difficult to specify exactly what is appropriate given the wide diversity of activities offered by organisations. However there are clearly some activities - swimming, gymnastics and athletics for example - when the risk of potential misuse is much greater than for others. With these activities the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. For example shots of children in a pool would be appropriate, or, if poolside, waist or shoulder up