



**Young Farmers'
Clubs of Ulster**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This policy was approved by the
Board of Directors of the Young
Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Date: 6th March 2018

Signed: Michael Reid

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster
457 Antrim Road,
Belfast,
BT15 3BD

Tel: (028) 9037 0713

Website: www.yfcu.org.uk

Policy Details

Document Details**Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster**

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Approval Date

6th March 2018 Management Board Meeting

Date for next Review

April 2020

Accountability

All employees, members and volunteers of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Overview of Policy

To make sure that we reduce the risk of abuse of a child or young person and individual in the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) this policy applies to all staff, elected officials, volunteers and members to make sure that the organisation has a culture embracing safeguarding of children and young people throughout all of its work.

The policy of the YFCU is to safeguard all children and young people who come into contact with the YFCU by protecting them from physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and exploitation. The YFCU is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members and young volunteers who should at all times show, and be shown, respect and understanding regarding their rights, safety and welfare and should conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the principles of the YFCU.

It is also within the policy to develop staff, elected officials, volunteers and members awareness of Child Protection and Safeguarding issues and to review the policies regularly.

Section 1

Introduction to Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) was founded in 1929 and is an open, non-political body operating by means of an association of individual clubs throughout Northern Ireland. YFCU is the largest rural youth organisation in Northern Ireland. It provides a support network to young people to the rural community and offers members a range of training opportunities, competitions, travel and exchanges.

YFCU is an organisation for young people run by young people between the ages of 12 and 30 years old. Executive County and Club officials are all elected annually within the membership.

Vision:

The Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster's vision is of a robust rural community which recognises and values all young people as key stakeholders.

Mission:

Our mission is to encourage individual development. Creativity, initiative and contribution for the benefit of members, the Association, industry and community.

Introduction to policy

This policy document sets out the position and responsibilities of YFCU in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

The policy provides specific guidance and procedures for responding to a range of specific incidents where abuse is known or suspected. The policy provides guidance to all YFCU staff, members and volunteers across Northern Ireland.

YFCU recognises that young people attend YFCU events for enjoyment, social contact and personal development. They should be safe within this environment. Staff, elected officials, volunteers and members who are appointed to work and supervise children and young people should be confident in their knowledge of appropriate policies and procedures in relation to child protection and safeguarding. They should be confident and informed of reporting procedures including Designated Officers within YFCU.

The policy is divided into three sections:

Section 1 Safeguarding children and young people in YFCU: Context and overview	Sets out the context for the policy including an introduction to YFCU in Northern Ireland and a brief synopsis of legislation (domestic and international) regarding safeguarding children and young people.
Section 2 Safeguarding children and young people YFCU: Policy and procedures	Provides clear guidance for staff in relation to responding to specific incidents and circumstances where abuse or neglect of children is suspected. It highlights the importance of positive initial response when dealing with disclosure and sets out circumstances when referral to social services will be necessary.
Section 3 Safeguarding children and young people in YFCU: Promoting a safeguarding environment and culture	Outlines the safeguarding culture that exists across Northern Ireland and the need to maintain, promote and develop this, recognising that safeguarding goes beyond child protection and is a holistic concept that encompasses, early intervention, prevention and protection as well as the promotion of safeguarding messages in all areas of service provision.

Section one

Safeguarding children and young people in YFCU – Context and overview

1.1 Legislative framework

YFCU recognises that obligations and responsibilities to safeguard children and young people are clearly set out and enshrined in both international and domestic law. YFCU is fully committed to utilising this legislation to guide its work in safeguarding children and young people.

1.1.1 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

YFCU fully endorses all rights set out for children and young people in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**. This international human rights treaty provides the overarching international framework to guide development of legislation, policy and practice to ensure all children and young people can avail of the 41 separate articles which together make up the Convention.

YFCU fully endorses all rights as contained in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Of particular relevance to this policy are:

Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence): Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 34 (Sexual exploitation): Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. This provision in the Convention is augmented by the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Article 39 (Rehabilitation of child victims): Children who have been neglected, abused or exploited should receive special help to physically and psychologically recover and reintegrate into society. Particular attention should be paid to restoring the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Source

Unicef FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

1.1.2 The Children Order NI (1995)

The Children Order NI (1995) provides a framework for the care and protection of children in Northern Ireland. It is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. This YFCU Safeguarding Children and Young People policy and procedure is based on the five key principles of the legislation:

- 1 **Paramountcy** of the welfare of the child;
- 2 **Partnership** with child, parents and agencies;
- 3 **Protection** of children;
- 4 **Prevention** of abuse; and
- 5 The recognition of **parental responsibility**.

YFCU fully endorses the key principles of the Children Order NI 1995 and seeks to implement these in its response to safeguarding, in particular it recognises that:

- The child's welfare is paramount and must over-ride all other considerations.
- Intervention should be child-centred, involving a measured approach, minimising the potential for abuse, trauma or disruption to the child and maximising the child's involvement in the process.
- Parents have the right to respect, consultation and involvement in matters which concern their family.
- A proper balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the rights and needs of parents.
- Multi-disciplinary/multi-agency information sharing, collaboration and understanding is essential to the safeguarding of children and to the promotion of their well-being.

YFCU believes and clearly understands that while families have the right to confidentiality, any information about child welfare issues should be shared on a need-to-know basis. Information shared for the health or protection of the child or the protection of others is not a breach of confidentiality or professional ethics but is a legal requirement to protect children and young people. Staff must be mindful of the criminal aspects of all cases under consideration.

1.1.3 The Human Rights Act (1998)

The Human Rights Act (1998) incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK legislation and sets out States responsibilities in relation to upholding the rights sets out in the ECHR. The Act makes a remedy for breach of a Convention right available in UK courts, without the need to go to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. In particular, the Act makes it unlawful for any public body to act in a way which is incompatible with the Convention, unless the wording of any other primary legislation provides no other choice. It also requires the judiciary (including tribunals) to take account of any decisions, judgment or opinion of the European Court of Human Rights, and to interpret legislation, as far as possible, in a way which is compatible with Convention rights.

1.1.4 The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 provides the legislative framework for the establishment of a Disclosure and Barring Service and other requirements relating to the recruitment and employment of individuals who work with children and vulnerable adults. It defines "regulated activity" with children and young people and prevents persons on barred lists from engaging in regulated activity.

1.1.5 The Children's Services Cooperation Act NI (2015)

The Children's Services Cooperation Act NI (2015) is the most significant legislative development relating to children and young people in Northern Ireland for many years. The Act places a requirement on public authorities, organisations and individuals providing services to children and young people to cooperate with each other to meets the needs of

children and young people by developing and implementing shared approaches. The Act is clearly focused upon 8 overarching outcomes and the promotion of integrated working to deliver these. Overall the Act provides as statutory framework to improve the well-being of children and young people in a manner which enables them to realise their rights. It also places a further statutory duty on Government to adopt a Children and Young People's Strategy outlining how this will be achieved. The Act has 8 overarching outcomes as follows:

- 1 Physical and mental health
- 2 The enjoyment of play and leisure
- 3 Learning and achievement
- 4 Living in safety and with stability
- 5 Economic and environmental well being
- 6 Making a positive contribution to society
- 7 Living in a society which respects their rights
- 8 Equality of opportunity and good relations

Section two

Safeguarding children and young people in YFCU – policy and procedures

This section of the policy document provides specific advice and guidance to all in YFCU across Northern Ireland in relation to responding to specific safeguarding concerns and circumstances.

2.1 General procedures for dealing with incidents of abuse

- In all instances, concerns, suspicions or allegations of abuse will be reported to the **Designated Child Safeguarding Officer**, who will assess the situation and decide on an appropriate course of action. YFCU has a Designated Child Safeguarding Officer and staff are made aware of this upon induction and through training. Details are also displayed on staff notice boards within the office.
- YFCU understands that it may not always be appropriate or necessary to ask social services to investigate, if YFCU can deal with the problem effectively by intervening at the earliest possible stage, using sound professional judgement, arranging the provision of practical support and carefully monitoring the situation with robust risk assessment tools. **At all times, however, the welfare of the child will be the paramount consideration.**
- YFCU is committed to promoting the supportive nature of social service intervention with families and to working in partnership with social services to ensure best practice, promote efficiency in referral and ensure family's needs are being met.
- Before taking formal action, YFCU understands it may sometimes be helpful to discuss concerns or a possible referral with social services to gain clarification on actions deemed necessary. YFCU can also contact the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000) to discuss concerns.
- Where a referral to social services is deemed necessary, Designated Child Safeguarding Officer will report concerns to the Gateway Team in their local Health and Social Care Trust (hereafter in this policy referred to as 'social services'). The Designated Child Safeguarding Officer will remain the key liaison personnel to follow up and work with social services regarding the referral.

2.2 Procedures for dealing with previous abuse (when child is no longer in danger)

- In such circumstances, intervention by social services may not be necessary and some other form of help may be more appropriate such as counselling, group therapy or a referral to a family centre.
- It will be important to inform the child of the need to refer to social services. It will also, in such circumstances, be necessary to inform the parent/carer of the abuse and the need for referral to social services, particularly if they are not aware of it.

2.3 Procedures dealing with disclosure of recent or continuing abuse

If a child discloses recent or continuing abuse to staff, elected officials, volunteers or members, it is crucial that the staff member responds sensitively and in line with this YFCU Safeguarding Children and Young People policy. Extensive research repeatedly highlights the importance of initial response, emphasising that if disclosure is met with understanding and acceptance, the healing begins immediately. In responding to disclosure YFCU **Staff, elected official, volunteer or member** will follow the four key steps of **respond, reassure, record and report**:

Respond	Staff, elected official, volunteer or member will endeavour to: Stay calm and listen carefully to everything the child/young person has to say. Give the child/young person 100% attention Explain the boundaries of confidentiality
Reassure	Staff, elected official, volunteer or member will endeavour to: Let the child/young person know they were right to talk about it Let them know that what has happened is not their fault Assure the child/young person the issue will be taken seriously Let the child/young person know what will happen next
Record	Staff, elected official, volunteer or member will endeavour to: Keep a factual record of the disclosure using the incident form. Record facts and not opinions. Use the child/young person's words where possible.
Report	Staff, elected official, volunteer or member will endeavour to: Discuss immediately with the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer who will decide upon the most appropriate course of action.

2.4 Discussions with parent/carer

- Concerns should be discussed with the parent/carer and, if necessary, they should be encouraged to make her own referral to social services. **However, this should only be done if such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.** Where there is a reluctance to report, the welfare of the child must be the primary consideration and will always override consent. Where this is the case, the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer will make a prompt referral to Social Services.
- If there is a need to ensure the immediate protection of the child, a referral will be made to social services without delay.

2.5 Procedures when dealing with alleged disclosures of abuse by the parent/carer

- If a child discloses abuse by the parent/carer, the person in whom the child confided should report this immediately to the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer who will advise on the best course of action. It may be appropriate to bring this to the attention of the parent/carer. **However, this should only be done if such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.**
- If a referral is to be made to social services, the parent/carer should be informed. It may be possible to encourage them to speak to social services herself. **However, this should only be done if such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm.**
- YFCU will aim to support (within limitations of the organisation) the parent/carer and, if necessary, will outline their support needs to social services.
- If there is a conflict of interest between the welfare of the child and the wishes of the parent/carer, **the welfare of the child must take priority.**

2.6 Procedures when there are suspicions of abuse/neglect

- If Staff, elected official, volunteer or member suspects that abuse or neglect is happening, she should discuss this as soon as possible with the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer.
- YFCU will:
 - assess whether action is needed urgently
 - monitor the situation carefully
 - keep a factual record of all incidents or cause for concern
 - work with the parent/carer to ensure the child's needs are understood and met.
- If there is an injury or bruising, it is essential to discuss how this happened with the parent/carer/carer. This should be recorded. If the injury does not appear to be consistent with the explanation given, or if there are still concerns, this should be discussed with the Designated Child Protection Officer and if necessary a referral should be made to social services.
- In cases of emotional abuse or neglect, the concern may not be confined to an isolated incident, so it is very important to monitor over a period of time. If concerns continue, a meeting should be set up with the parent/carer to discuss the situation and any support needs. A decision may be reached to work with the parent/carer over a stated period of time.
- If staff, elected official, volunteer or member witnesses abuse by the parent/carer, they may intervene and challenge the behaviour if it is safe to do so. The situation should be calmed down and the child should be offered comfort and reassurance. As soon as possible a meeting should be set up with the parent/carer, at which it will be made clear that this behaviour is unacceptable. This will be recorded. If concerns continue, appropriate action will be taken and a referral to social services will be made if considered necessary.

2.9 Procedures when there are concerns a child has been seriously injured

- If a child has been injured, YFCU will ensure the child is immediately taken to hospital or to a doctor. Ideally this should be done by the parent/carer with a staff member accompanying her to provide support, but anyone who has care of the child may do what is reasonable to safeguard the child's welfare (Children (NI) Order 1995).
- If there is any indication that the injury is non-accidental or due to neglect, the consultant or GP is likely to order an investigation. The Designated Child Safeguarding Officer will be notified and if necessary, a referral to social services will be made.
- YFCU will record the injury that the child has sustained as soon as possible, noting anything that was said about how this happened.

2.10 Procedures when a child is abusing other children/adults

Where it is suspected a child is the perpetrator of abuse, YFCU will:

- inform the child and the parent/carer that this behaviour is abusive and unacceptable
- in partnership with the parent/carer, work with the child to enable her/him to cope with emotions and to relate to other people more positively
- monitor the situation, risk assess and keep factual records
- take further action if necessary to protect the abused child

2.11 Procedures when dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

All YFCU staff are expected to obey a strict code of conduct when working within a family home where there are children and young people. Staff must ensure that children and young people are treated with utmost respect at all times and that all efforts are made to promote a culture which respects their rights. All allegations of abuse by a staff member will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. YFCU will:

- ensure any such allegation is reported immediately to the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer, CEO and the Board of Directors, who will decide what action is necessary
- keep a record of any allegations of child abuse made against any staff member
- fully investigate any allegation of inappropriate behaviour by a staff member
- upon investigation, and if considered necessary, a referral to social services will be made, explaining the situation clearly. Social services will advise on appropriate action.

It may be necessary (temporarily or otherwise) to suspend the Staff, elected official, volunteer or member (whoever the allegation is made against) while the investigation is carried out. Where a decision is taken by the organisation to dismiss, suspend or transfer (temporarily or otherwise) to a non contact with child or young person positio, YFCU must make a referral to Social Services who will advise on next steps.

2.12 Professional boundaries and contamination of evidence

- YFCU is fully aware of its professional boundaries when dealing with safeguarding concerns and appreciates the need to focus upon effective referral and partnership working.
- **YFCU fully understands its role is not to investigate situations of abuse but to act upon suspicions, allegations and disclosures promptly and in line with best practice and refer to social services where necessary.**
- YFCU fully understands the risks involved with contaminated evidence, especially when dealing with young children and particularly in cases involving allegations of sexual or physical abuse. For this reason, YFCU will:
 - give the child time and reassurance so they can say what happened in their own words
 - avoid asking repeated questions
 - avoid asking intrusive or leading questions
 - avoid making judgemental comments
 - avoid jumping to conclusions a) by asking who the child is talking about ('Dad' may refer to a stepfather), and b) by checking the meaning of any words that are unclear
 - avoid further discussion of the abuse with the child and without delay talk to the Designated Child Safeguarding Officer.

Section three

Safeguarding children and young people in YFCU - Promoting a safeguarding environment and culture

YFCU believes that safeguarding children and young people goes beyond child protection and should be embedded fully in the ethos and culture of an organisation. Rural will strive to ensure safeguarding is given primary consideration within all of the service provisions available.

3.1 Recruitment, selection and supervision of staff

- Best practice in recruitment and selection of staff is adhered to within YFCU. This is clearly set out in both the Recruitment and Selection Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy. Both policies are observed and adhered to in relation to recruitment and selection of all staff.
- Pre-employment checks are carried out on all prospective staff working in a regulated position whose normal duties will include caring, training, advising, counselling, supervising or being in sole charge of children, or the supervision of an individual in a 'regulated position' to ensure that prospective staff are not disqualified from working with children in line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. Although YFCU does not work directly with children they do come into contact with children when they are doing home visits and within the Social Farming project.
- All staff will be subject to a probationary period and will not be confirmed in post unless the CEO is confident that the individual is suitable for the post and can be entrusted with the child/ren. All staff attend regular supervision sessions with the CEO where any concerns or queries regarding safeguarding can be clarified. Safeguarding is promoted as a standing item and shared language at team meetings.
- All staff will undergo induction training within their respective place of employment and core training provided by YFCU. At induction, staff will be made aware of the policies and procedures governing the work of the organisation.

3.2 Governance and Staff training

- YFCU is completely committed to ensuring all staff and volunteers, including Trustees of the Organisation (Board of Directors), complete mandatory safeguarding training on a regular basis to ensure all are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people and are fully aware of the organisations safeguarding children and young people policy and procedures. This is in line with Government policy and recommendations presented by the Safeguarding Board NI.

It is essential that all voluntary, charitable and community based organisations have child protection policies and procedures in place and that their staff and volunteers receive training and support in their use. ¹

Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that staff and volunteers have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competence to effectively safeguard and protect children and young people...Organisations have a responsibility to ensure that staff and volunteers have the appropriate knowledge, skills and competence to effectively safeguard and protect children and young people.²

- All staff are made aware of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures and their roles in relation to safeguarding through the provision of training every three years as per guidance and recommendations set out by the Safeguarding Board NI. ³ All staff receive basic safeguarding training and Designated Child Safeguarding Officer receive Designated Officer Training. Details of relevant training opportunities in the area of supporting children and safeguarding from harm will be circulated to all staff. Regional events are coordinated to promote sharing of learning and best practice.

3.9 Monitoring and review

- YFCU seeks to ensure this policy is an evolving document which is reviewed on a regular basis to identify areas for improvement and, where appropriate, to make changes. Staff will be involved in ongoing review and their expertise will be harnessed in the policies ongoing development.
- The policy will be regularly benchmarked against external developments at a government level in relation to legislation, policy and strategy to ensure its contents are up to date, accurate and based upon best practice guidelines.

¹ Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. March 2016.

² SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2015 – 2018, SBNI Education and Training Committee: September 2015

³ Ibid

Appendix 1 – Definitions of types of abuse

N.B The following text and definitions of abuse have been taken directly from the policy document Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland produced by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. March 2016.

YFCU endorses these definitions

Types of Abuse

Harm can be suffered by a child or young person by acts of abuse perpetrated upon them by others. Abuse can happen in any family, but children may be more at risk if their parents have problems with drugs, alcohol and mental health, or if they live in a home where domestic abuse happens. Abuse can also occur outside of the family environment. Evidence shows that babies and children with disabilities can be more vulnerable to suffering abuse.

Although the harm from the abuse might take a long time to be recognisable in the child or young person, professionals may be in a position to observe its indicators earlier, for example, in the way that a parent interacts with their child. Effective and ongoing information sharing is key between professionals.

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect; and
- Exploitation.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Exploitation ⁴ is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

⁴ Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register, professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing CPR categories as children who have been exploited will have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.