



**Fun, Learning and
Achievement**

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Sfgdg Policy Part 1

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National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs

Safeguarding & Behaviour Protection

Safeguarding Policy

Part 1 Policy Statement

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National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (England and Wales)

YFC Centre, 10th Street, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LG

tel 024 7685 7200 fax 024 7685 7229 email post@nfyfc.org.uk web www.nfyfc.org.uk

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Section 1 – INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Introduction

Welcome to The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs Safeguarding Policy. This policy provides comprehensive information for everyone involved in YFC to ensure that both individual and collective responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear. Awareness of this policy will assist every level of the organisation (YFC members/supporters/staff, YFC clubs, county federations, area committees/Wales FYFC and the NFYFC) provide an environment that is safe, fun, welcoming and inclusive where the welfare of everyone is prioritised and where everyone is protected from all forms of abuse and neglect

This safeguarding policy applies to **everyone** involved in YFC at all levels or the organisation – YFC clubs, county federations, area committees/Wales FYFC and the NFYFC.

The National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs (NFYFC) is a federation of over 570 individual Clubs, Counties and Areas throughout England and Wales, most of which are independent charities and separate legal entities. NFYFC is one of the largest rural youth organisations in the U.K. with around 23,000 members aged between 10 and 28 years enjoying all the benefits that membership has to offer.



Every member has a right to participate in a safe, fun, welcoming and inclusive environment where their welfare is prioritised and where they are protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.

We recognise that many of those who are engaged in Young Farmers activities are experiencing multiple transitions extending beyond childhood (through adolescence, in education, in location, into adulthood and often into leadership roles) and a range of disadvantages (social, economic, gendered, geographic etc) that may increase safeguarding risks and vulnerability at a time when universal services and support often decrease. Research in practice has highlighted the need for both voluntary and statutory organisations to take a more informed approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults in a way that recognises their developmental needs and emerging evidence that adolescence extends into the mid/late twenties¹. An approach where safeguards and support are withdrawn or reduced as young people turn eighteen is both uninformed and unhelpful. NFYFC is committed to playing its part in supporting and protecting young people and adults throughout their full journey within the organisation.

We recognise that the welfare of all children, young people and adults at risk, is the paramount consideration and that all have equal rights of protection in accordance with the “paramountcy principle” which is embedded in UK legislation. The safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk must always be the top priority for NFYFC, and all Clubs, Counties, Areas and competitions, which are all governed by the requirements of this policy. This is not just NFYFC’s responsibility, but that of **everyone** involved in YFC at all levels. This policy provides comprehensive information for everyone involved in YFC to ensure that both individual and collective responsibilities and lines of accountability are clear. Our Safeguarding Team’s support and guidance should be sought at the earliest stages of any concern arising to ensure that appropriate and informed expertise and support can be offered. It is critically important that all Clubs, Counties, Areas and the National Federation work together to protect people who need help and support. Where Counties, Clubs or Areas do not respond to safeguarding concerns in accordance with this policy (and its procedures) and/or disregard the policy position of the NFYFC, accountability will sit with them and not with the National Federation.

Whilst NFYFC recognises that there are critical differences when seeking to support and safeguard adults, we have made an organisational decision to maintain one unified safeguarding policy in response to the expressed preference of our membership and evidence from research and practice. Risks and vulnerability do not suddenly decrease as young people transition into adulthood, and for many, protection and support decrease considerably. In Wales this is recognised within the *Code of Safeguarding Practice*² which sets out the expectations of individuals, groups and organisations in relation to safeguarding both children and adults. Our approach to safeguarding both children and adults is similarly framed by our values and shared principles.

We have captured the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns for children and for adults into separate documents. See: [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.docx](#)

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is updated and revised in response to statutory guidance, learning from research and practice and from the management of concerns arising within a Young Farmers context. It has been split into specific sections to make it concise, straightforward and easy to use and it is supplemented with a suite of appendices.

¹ Evidence from research into the developing brain undertaken by Cambridge University and Harvard published 13/01/22 in partnership with Developing Human Connectome Project, ENIGMA Developmental Brain Age working group, FinnBrain, Harvard Aging Brain Study, IMAGEN, KNE96, The Mayo Clinic Study of Aging, NSPN, POND, The PREVENT-AD Research Group, VETSA: <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.06.08.447489v3.full>:

² Welsh Government. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Working Together to Safeguard People: Code of Safeguarding Practice: [43871 Working together to safeguard people: national action plan on preventing and responding to child sexual abuse](#) (accessed 26/02/25)

This policy sets out our safeguarding principles, values and commitments and the procedures which put these into practice. This includes:

- What safeguarding means within YFC
- How we safeguard those who engage with us including safe recruitment procedures. [005-25-SGP Safe Recruitment Policy Aug25.docx](#)
- How to report a safeguarding concern or disclosure relating to a child or young person (under 18) [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.docx](#).
- How to respond to a safeguarding concern or disclosure relating to an adult. [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.docx](#)

Background

The Children Act 1989 defines children and young people as anyone up to the age of 18 years.

Under UK legislation and guidance children and young people are afforded rights to additional protection and support to promote their welfare. The Children and Families Act 2014 extended the support and protection available to Looked After Children (children in the care of the Local Authority / care leavers) up to 21 years of age and for those with a recognised disability up to 25 years of age through the transition into early adulthood.

Social and scientific research (including research undertaken by both Harvard and Cambridge Universities) indicates that the adolescent brain does not fully mature until approximately 25-30 years of age, with full social and cognitive maturity for many extending into the thirties. The changes in the brain as a person transitions into adulthood can affect behaviour, risk assessment and vulnerability. The age at which an individual becomes an adult in developmental terms is different for everyone and the period of potentially increased safeguarding risks as young people transition away from universal services (school) and familiar local communities extends to cover Young Farmers' full membership. We are a children's charity and the implications of this emerging and informed understanding of the transition into adulthood is something we take very seriously and reflect in evidence-based policies and practice.

Twenty-five years after the Children Act 1989 established children's statutory rights to support and protection, the Care Act 2014 extended these rights to **adults at risk**. During that time research and evidence from practice have expanded society's understanding of the factors which potentially increase risks of harm and abuse, particularly the risks which originate outside of the family context (see Duty of Care section).

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance defines adults at risk (formerly referred to as vulnerable adults) as a person over 18:

'Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness', and
'Who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'.

We recognise that adults may not self-identify as being vulnerable/at risk when this is related to the context and circumstances in which they find themselves. NFYFC has reflected this understanding by choosing to use the terminology *'adult who may be additionally vulnerable'* because statutory language can be stigmatising and can create barriers to understanding and engagement for a range of reasons. At NFYFC we recognise that any one of our members, volunteers or staff may be additionally vulnerable at any time irrespective of age or recognised risk factor. The issues which combine to create risk and vulnerability may be intersectional and complex. By working together in partnership at all levels of Young Farmers and by keeping the individual's voice central to all risk assessment and decision-making we are more able to ensure that our responses to concerns are informed, defensible and contribute to better

outcomes for our members. Organisations like NFYFC have both a legal and a moral duty of care to ensure that every individual's rights to be supported and protected from harm are prioritised in the delivery of inclusive activities and services for all members.

We acknowledge that everyone has their own unique lived experiences, including experiences of discrimination and oppression and that we must consider the range of intersectional factors (individual, contextual, relational and transitional) that can marginalise people, thereby creating increased risk and vulnerability. We recognise that some people experience significant barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help. NFYFC also recognises that social inequalities, isolation, health, wellbeing, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. These factors can vary at different points in people's lives, and any individual can become additionally at risk according to the context in which they find themselves and as a result of other factors relating to their lived experience. As a charity committed to supporting positive outcomes for all young people involved in our activities, this policy forms part of our visible and expressed commitment to ensuring that diversity is valued and celebrated, with equality and inclusion supported in everything we do, and these considerations are central to effective safeguarding practice in YFC.

Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance³

- **The Children Act 1989** enshrines in law the key principle that the welfare of children is paramount. This is echoed in the statutory guidance "Working together to Safeguard Children 2023"
- Article 19 of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** provides the right for all children to be safe from abuse, exploitation and risks to their wellbeing.
- **The Care Act 2014** (England) and the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** provide a statutory framework to safeguarding adults with care and support needs that may be at risk of abuse or neglect. Adults who lack mental capacity will automatically be deemed vulnerable but some adults with capacity may nonetheless be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2023)**: the framework for safeguarding children and young people in England⁴ is set out in this statutory guidance. The guidance applies explicitly to community and charitable organisations and to anyone working within them, whether paid or a volunteer and states in Chapter 4, page 128

"...they should have appropriate arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. Many of these organisations ... will be subject to charity law and regulated either by the Charity Commission and/or other 'principal' regulators. Charity trustees are responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from, or working with, their charity, are not harmed in any way through contact with it. The Charity Commission for England and Wales provides guidance on charity compliance which should be followed."

- **Working Together to Safeguard People: code of safeguarding practice (2022)**: the framework for safeguarding children and adults in Wales is set out in the statutory guidance. The same principles as set out above are covered in the guidance.

³ For a fuller summary of relevant legislation, please refer to [003-25-SGP Appx 2 Legislation Aug25.docx](#)

⁴ Although the majority of the NFYFC policy is based on English guidance and legislation, in the light of the common principles and similar approaches taken by all British nations, most elements of this document are fully applicable to all individual members and affiliated YFCs. Any necessary differences will be highlighted in the procedures and reference made to any complementary Welsh policy/procedures.

- **The Equality Act 2010** Introduced additional protections in law for protected characteristics to reflect the evidence that these factors create increased risks of harm and abuse. A protected characteristic is something about you that may make you subject to discrimination because of that characteristic. The risk of experiencing abuse has been shown to be greater for those who are disabled, from minority ethnic groups and/or who are lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBTQ+).

If there are concerns about discriminatory abuse this should always be taken very seriously, recorded and highlighted in referrals. The ten protected personal characteristics are:

1. Age
 2. Disability (*this includes non-visible disability, neurodivergence and communication differences*)
 3. Gender reassignment
 4. Marriage and Civil partnership
 5. Pregnancy and Maternity
 6. Race
 7. Religion and belief
 8. Gender
 9. Sexual Orientation
- The **Sexual Offences Act 2003** provides a comprehensive legislative framework for sexual offences. It covers offences against adults (including people with mental disorders), as well as offences against children and sexual offences within the family. The Act also covers specific offences relating to the abuse of trust which apply when the child is under 18. These offences include:
 - sexual activity with a child
 - causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity
 - engaging with sexual activity in the presence of a child
 - causing a child to watch a sexual act.

Legislative changes which were enacted in July 2022 extended the **Positions of Trust** offences within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to include concerns and roles within a faith, voluntary and sport sector context. All Young Farmers' leaders, officials and committee members are held to be in Positions of Trust and are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct and safeguarding standards irrespective of whether they are paid or volunteers.

Any safeguarding concerns relating to any individual in a Position of Trust or power in a Young Farmers context must be taken seriously and the advice of the statutory agencies will be sought.

Key messages:

- **Context:** abuse can take place within a family, institutional or other community setting but can also take place in a virtual environment e.g. online chatrooms or involve some other type of electronic communication and is usually carried out by someone who is known to the individual being abused. Young Farmers must always ensure that activities at Club level and at events are appropriately risk assessed, and that welfare planning is strongly informed by safeguarding expertise.
- **Peer on peer abuse:** while harassment and abuse are often perpetrated by an individual in a position of trust or power (perceived or actual), young people may also be subjected to abuse from their peers. It is likely that we have all seen cases of peer-on-peer abuse and previously passed it off as a "bit of banter" or a "rite of passage" before you are accepted into a group, but this is not acceptable. It is most likely to include bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse in intimate relationships between peers; physical abuse; sexually harmful behaviours and sexual violence; non-consensual sexual activity; upskirting; initiation/hazing type violence and rituals; sexual harassment, and non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos. To prevent and tackle peer on peer abuse, Young Farmers take a contextual approach to understanding and responding to the experiences of our members outside of a family context which cause them distress or harm.

- **Failure to listen or to take allegations seriously:** minimisation and denial of a person's experiences are all highlighted as recurrent themes where young people are brave enough to speak up about things that are impacting them. Often changes in a young person's behaviour indicates that something is wrong, and we should not wait until they feel brave enough to tell before recognising and responding to concerns.
- **Responding to Low-Level Concerns:** organisations and individuals should not work to statutory thresholds, or wait until they are certain, if they are to respond effectively to concerns. It is recognised that people who have regular contact with young people and others at risk are well-placed to notice signs of abuse (see [002-25-SGP Appx 1 Respons Committs Aug25.docx](#) and [004-25-SGP Appx 3 Defns Categories of Abuse Aug25.docx](#)). This is particularly important where a child or adult is unable or finds it difficult to recognise and/or share concerns and is reliant on adults to be alert to the possibility that they may be experiencing abuse.

We encourage the sharing of low-level concerns to ensure that early interventions create a safer and more positive experience for everyone involved in Young Farmers activities.

Low-level concerns may arise about a participant or about the behaviour of a peer or someone in a Position of Trust. A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with code of conducts, including inappropriate conduct outside of Young Farmers' activities
- doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for referral to be made to the local authority.

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour. This includes:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- being over-friendly with participants
- having favourites
- taking photographs of children and young people on their mobile phone
- engaging with a young person on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

- **The psychological effects of abuse can be life-long:** the impact of abuse, even where it is non-recent, is likely to be current, especially if the individual has not been able to disclose the abuse or access support. The impact of trauma upon young people's development and wellbeing is well documented. Anyone who has been abused as a child or young person may find it difficult or impossible to trust, to regulate their emotions, and to maintain stable relationships. It may be extremely hard for them to share what has happened and they will undoubtedly feel very vulnerable doing so. They may use substances to help them cope (alcohol or drugs) and experience mental health problems, eating disorders or self-harm.
- **Non-recent concerns must be viewed as current risks and concerns.** If someone discloses non-recent harm or abuse, these concerns must be taken very seriously because both the impact and risks may remain current (for the individual and for others).
- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility:** Although Young Farmers can provide significant opportunity to someone who is motivated to abuse, YFCs can also offer a safe place for those experiencing abuse in a family or institutional setting outside of YFC. We are wholly committed to supporting improved opportunities and outcomes for our members, and safeguarding is the golden thread through everything we do to achieve this. The effectiveness of safeguarding across Young Farmers is dependent on ensuring everyone is informed, engaged and receives appropriate training and support to fulfil their role and responsibilities confidently and competently.
- **Effective information sharing is a vital part of safeguarding:** Data protection law is not a barrier to sharing information in the interests of safeguarding, where it is necessary to protect a child or adult at risk from harm.

It is always important to share concerns at the earliest stage with Designated Safeguarding Leads (at Club and/or at NFYFC level) in order to draw down advice and support. Due regard must be given to ensuring personal information is stored and processed in accordance the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. The prevention of harassment and abuse in YFC requires a systematic and coordinated approach, working together across the YFC community and with key statutory authorities and other relevant organisations.

- **A culture of zero-tolerance of abuse is essential:** all YFCs have an important leadership role in embedding a zero-tolerance culture and approach towards all forms of abuse and taking steps to prevent other forms of harm which aligns with the values and principles underpinning this policy. This includes:

- Poor or unsafe practice
- Discrimination and victimisation
- Bullying, harassment or hazing, and
- Radicalisation and extremism.

Ensuring that Codes of Conduct are promoted and that members sign up to indicate that they understand and agree to abide by them is critically important in ensuring that expectations of behaviour are understood and enforced.

NFYFC Shared Values

Respect and Integrity:

‘Doing the Right Thing’

WE WILL:

Treat others with kindness, empathy, and honesty
Take responsibility to act fairly, ethically and build trust
Foster inclusive friendships so everyone feels welcome and valued
Show courage as ambassadors of our positive culture

Collaboration and Learning:

‘Working Together to Achieve’

WE WILL:

Encourage teamwork, cooperation and active communication
Listen to others and value diverse perspectives and differences to enrich our learning experience
Create a fun, safe and supportive environment where everyone can learn together
Empower ourselves and others to connect, learn, share and grow

Ambition and Inspiration:

‘Being The Best We Can Be to Make a Difference’

WE WILL:

Take pride in high standards and be role models to inspire others
Strive to overcome barriers and open new opportunities with resilience and adaptability
Take ownership of our impact on ourselves, our community and our environment
Confidently amplify the voices of rural youth and the communities in which they live

Section 2: Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

IFYFC believes that everyone has the right to participate safely in YFC activities in an environment free from abuse and neglect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race – including colour, nationality or ethnicity – religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or background, political or other belief, appearance and physical ability.

IFYFC recognises our legal duty of care⁵ for our members and volunteers. We believe that the wellbeing of children, adults at risk and other members should be central to everything we do and recognise the need to ensure that we meet our responsibility to promote their welfare.

We accept our responsibility to ensure that we and our affiliated clubs and counties have effective safeguarding arrangements in place and respond appropriately to any incidents of harassment, abuse and poor practice that arise relating to the activity they provide. All clubs and counties must ensure that any suspected abuse of children or adults at risk (or perceived risks of significant harm) are reported to the Police and/or Children's or Adult Services without delay in line with the applicable reporting procedure and any local arrangements.

Principles underpinning effective safeguarding practice

Safeguarding practice is strongly value-driven and underpinned by the principles set out in UK wide legislation and statutory guidance. See: [003-25-SGP Appx 2 Legislation Aug25.docx](#)

IFYFC and Wales YFC are committed to creating and maintaining a culture and activities that make everyone feel protected, included and welcomed, and ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all members is prioritised throughout our organisation and affiliated clubs.

Where there are serious concerns about immediate risk of harm, immediate action should be taken without delay. Always follow the reporting procedures in **Part 2** of this policy but consider the following principles:

Children

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the statutory guidance '*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)*' and Welsh Government procedures '*Working together to safeguard people: code of safeguarding practice*' are clear that safeguarding children must be the paramount consideration in all circumstances and is everybody's responsibility, including those who are employed or volunteer with children and young people in any capacity.

The Children Act 1989 established several fundamental principles to safeguard and promote the welfare of children:

- **Empowerment:** Ensuring that children are empowered to express their views, participate in decisions affecting them, and have their voices heard.
- **Protection:** Prioritising the safety and protection of children from harm, abuse, or neglect.
- **Prevention:** Taking proactive measures to prevent harm and address risks before they escalate.
- **Proportionality:** Balancing interventions appropriately based on the child's needs and circumstances.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborating with various agencies, professionals, and families to provide holistic support.

⁵ **Duty of Care** can be defined as a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others. It is the legal responsibility of organisations and individuals (paid or voluntary) supporting the delivery of their services/activities to avoid any behaviours or omissions that could reasonably be foreseen to cause harm to stakeholders.

- **Accountability:** Holding responsible parties accountable for safeguarding children effectively.

Adults

The Care and Support statutory guidance (updated 18 February 2025) sets out the following principles which underpin safeguarding practice which effectively seeks to support and protect adults who may be additionally vulnerable or at risk:

- **Empowerment** – Adults being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
'I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly help to inform what happens'.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
'I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help'.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
'I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed'.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
'I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want'.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
'I know that staff and volunteers will treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that the YFC staff and volunteers will work together with professionals where necessary and with me to get the best result for me'.
- **Accountability** - Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.
'I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they'.

These principles should inform all responses and actions in relation to safeguarding and underpin NFYFC's safeguarding policy and approach.

Although all safeguarding concerns are received and managed by NFYFC through the central safeguarding team, there are some key differences relating to capacity and consent which must be considered when taking action to safeguard and support adults. It is important to ensure that appropriate signposting and referral pathways for supporting and protecting adults are understood. NFYFC can support and advise Clubs and Counties to ensure that informed, appropriate and defensible safeguarding decisions are made in the interests of adults. We encourage low thresholds for contacting NFYFC so that the voice and wishes of any vulnerable individual can be central to any assessment of risk and decision-making. Where there is delay in sharing concerns and a crisis or emergency arises, risks of significant harm are increased and the need for urgent action may undermine the possibility of adults at risk being engaged in genuine partnership and participation in relation to decisions which impact them.

For further information, please go to these supporting documents

- Safeguarding procedures: [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.pdf](#)
- Definition / categories of abuse: [004-25-SGP Appx 3 Defns Categories of Abuse Aug25.pdf](#)
- Roles and commitments: [002-25-SGP Appx 1 Respons Committs Aug25.pdf](#)
- Legislation: [003-25-SGP Appx 2 Legislation Aug25.pdf](#)
- Safe recruitment: [005-25-SGP Safe Recruitment Policy Aug25.pdf](#) & [006-25-SGP Sfgdg Recruit of ExOffenders Policy Aug25.pdf](#)
- DBS & safeguarding training checklist: [DBS and SG training - checklist Aug25.pdf](#)

Objectives

- The overall aim of this policy is to contribute to the protection and safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk, as well as staff, volunteers and members of all ages so that everyone can take part in YFC without fear of harassment and abuse.

The objectives of this policy and procedures are to:

- Raise awareness of NFYFC's commitment to safeguarding
- Promote a culture of safeguarding
- Contribute to safe, positive and enjoyable experiences and activities for all members
- Ensure that everyone in YFC understand and meets their moral and legal responsibilities to protect and safeguard children, young people and adults at risk from harm.
- Clarify expectations of conduct and behaviour
- Support implementation of effective measures that reduce risk and minimise the likelihood of incidents of harassment and abuse.
- Ensure that everyone in YFC understands that any form of bullying is unacceptable and must not be tolerated.
- Raise the awareness of everyone involved in Young Farmers' activities at all levels of their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and adults at risk, including their duty to report concerns without delay
- Ensure that everyone knows what to do if they are concerned about someone's safety or welfare
- Promote a culture where everyone feels able to raise concerns without fear of recrimination
- Emphasise the need for everyone to take responsibility for responding positively to all concerns without delay, including those which might appear low-level or relate to an individual or environment outside YFC
- Support appropriate, confident and consistent management of concerns in line with relevant statutory frameworks by ensuring accessible and visible support through designated safeguarding staff, safeguarding procedures and signposting to external sources of support
- Ensure that YFC can contribute effectively to multi-agency safeguarding assessments and responses
- Ensure that sensitive and confidential information is recorded, retained and shared in accordance with statutory guidance in the interests of safeguarding and protecting young people and adults at risk
- Set out arrangements for accessible support and protection for young people and adults at risk who reach out to NFYFC in relation to safeguarding and welfare issues

Scope of the Policy

This policy and associated standards and guidelines are mandatory and applies to all members, those in positions of responsibility (officers), volunteer helpers (leaders, advisory, committee members, presidents and vices, ambassadors and parents/carers) and staff involved in YFC and all those who are working with or on behalf of NFYFC such as directors, stewards, judges, officials or administrators whether employed, contracted or voluntary.

In addition, the policy applies to non-members who attend YFC events and activities, including but not limited to visitors/guests, trainers and invited speakers, agents, medical personnel and to any individuals acting on behalf of NFYFC.

The policy applies to affiliated club, county and area YFCs involved in the delivery of YFC activities.

Where there are devolved nation variations arising from differences in legislation and government guidance, these should be discussed and agreed with NFYFC. [003-25-SGP Appx 2 Legislation Aug25.docx](#) sets out key UK Home Nation Legislation and Guidance which informs this policy and procedures.

Any individual or organisation that is providing a service to NFYFC, even within a third-party capacity, must also demonstrate that they comply with these standards.

Duty of care

The Children Act 1989 defines children and young people as anyone up to the age of 18 years. Under UK legislation and guidance children and young people are afforded rights to additional protection and support to promote their welfare. The Children and Families Act 2014 extended the support and protection available to Looked After Children (children in the care of the Local Authority / care leavers / those who are care experienced) up to 21 years of age, and for those with a recognised disability up to 25 years of age through the transition into early adulthood.

The Children Act 2004 places duties on organisations and individuals who work with children to ensure their activities and any services they contract out to others are accomplished in accordance with the requirement to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of children.

As highlighted previously, current social and scientific research and evidence indicates that the adolescent brain does not fully mature until approximately 25 years of age, with full social and cognitive maturity for many extending into the thirties. The changes in the brain as a person transitions into adulthood can affect behaviour, risk assessment and vulnerability. The age at which an individual becomes an adult in development terms is different for everyone and the period of potentially increased safeguarding risks as young people transition away from universal services (school) and familiar local communities extends to cover Young Farmers' full membership (aged 10 to 28).

We are a children's charity and the implications of this relatively new understanding of the transition into adulthood is something we take very seriously in relation to our safeguarding responsibilities.

The Federation's charitable status was confirmed in December 2024 by the Charity Commission after a long-term project to convert NFYFC from a Friendly Society with Special Authority to a Company limited by Guarantee with Charity registration.

The new legal status of the organisation brings full recognition as a charity with the protections of the company limited by guarantee.

The Care Act 2014 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 extend statutory rights for support and protection to adults at risk. There are many factors which can increase the vulnerability of those involved in Young Farmers activities including:

- Social isolation
- Mental health issues
- Illness
- Neurodiversity, communication and learning differences
- Substance abuse (alcohol and/or drugs)
- Bullying and harassment
- Exploring sexual or gender identity
- Poverty
- Transport
- Residential events
- Familial contexts/closed communities where it is difficult to report a concern
- Relationship / family breakdown and conflict
- Disability
- Relocation / movement away from established networks of support
- Alcohol and substance use
- Social inequalities and disadvantages
- Political polarisation
- Prejudice and discrimination

(This list is not intended to be exhaustive)

Therefore, organisations such as YFC have a legal duty of care to their members.

- Paid and volunteer staff have a duty to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to the local authority Children's Social Care, Police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other agencies as necessary.
- Each club and county YFC has a duty of care towards its members and must adopt and implement the Safeguarding Policy as a condition of its affiliation.
- All NFYFC members must comply with the YFC Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy.

To meet its safeguarding duty of care, each YFC must:

- Implement and follow the policies and procedures in the Safeguarding Policy in full and refer to it as required.
- Promote and raise awareness of the Safeguarding Policy to all their members and their parents/carers.
- Ensure all their members are aware of their own responsibilities and the procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns about a child or adult's safety or welfare.
- Promote a culture of listening to children and adults at risk.

Duty to report

Anyone involved in YFC can contact the NFYFC Welfare, Safeguarding & Behaviour Team, or their Club or County DWSO for advice or guidance on safeguarding concerns. If for any reason these teams or individuals are unavailable, or if failure to take immediately action may place a child or adult at risk of harm, then immediate contact should be made with local Police, Children's Social Care, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, Adult Social Care, or other agencies as appropriate.

Guidance on how to respond if someone discloses abuse or other concerns to you and be found in **Part 2: Procedures for Responding to Concerns**. See [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.pdf](#)

Positions of Trust

Abuse of trust - The Sexual Offences (Amendments) Act 2003 introduced the offence of abuse of trust. This offence covers intimate and sexual relationships between a person over the age of 18 years (adult) and a person under that age (child) where the adult is in a 'Position of Trust' in relation to the young person. Legislative changes which were enacted in July 2022 extended the positions of trust offences within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to include concerns and roles within a faith, voluntary and sport sector context in England and Wales.

NFYFC's policy extends this protection to all participants irrespective of their age. All Young Farmers' leaders, officials and committee members are held to be in Positions of Trust and are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct and safeguarding standards irrespective of whether they are paid or volunteers.

Someone in a Position of Trust is a person in a position of authority or responsibility over another person. Those in positions of trust may have a considerable amount of power and influence on a young person's life. For example, a young person may become dependent upon the support offered by a committee member/key volunteer, particularly if they are additionally vulnerable (for example, when suffering ill health, isolated from friends and family, bereaved, exploring their sexuality or gender identity etc).

Those in a Position of Trust can have a positive influence on the welfare of a young person or adult at risk, by providing role models or someone to turn to if they have a concern, but it is important to have clear boundaries in place to ensure that abuse and exploitation cannot take place. It is vital for all those in such positions of responsibility to understand the power they may have over those in their care, and the responsibility they must therefore exercise. This means that those in positions of trust should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information relating to vulnerable individuals for their own or others' advantage. Such information should only be used or shared to meet the needs of vulnerable people.
- Use their influence or power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine vulnerable individuals.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote inappropriate relationships with participants/members or participants of any age; professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.

Any safeguarding concerns relating to any individual in a Position of Trust or power in a Young Farmers context must be taken seriously and the advice of the statutory agencies (LADO and/or Police) will be sought. The relevant Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO) is the person who should be notified when it has been alleged that a professional or volunteer who works with children or Adults at Risk has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or Adult at Risk, or may have harmed a child/ Adult at Risk
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/ Adult at Risk;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she or he may pose a risk of harm to children/ Adults at Risk, or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children or Adults at Risk

Any individual holding a Position of Trust who enters into an intimate relationship with a member - or is suspected of behaving in a way that may indicate that they are grooming a member over time with a view to developing such a relationship - may be subject to disciplinary action. Any internal action will be held pending the outcome of statutory agency investigation and advice. This policy position is in keeping with best and accepted practice across the voluntary sector.

This is explained further within the [005-25-SGP Safe Recruitment Policy Aug25.docx](#).

Part 2: PROCEDURES...See: [001a-25-SGP Sfgdg Part 2 Policy Procedures Aug25.docx](#)

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