**Somerset Youth and Community Service**

**<Name of Youth Club> Guidelines for safeguarding young people**

**Please read the following guidelines carefully – they will help you understand child abuse and what to do if a child or young person tells you about abuse.**

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| **The safeguarding code for staff and volunteers**  **Do:**   * Treat all young people with respect and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner * Always seek the parent or young person’s consent if he or she has a disability and needs personal or intimate care (e.g. assistance to go to the toilet) * Remember that it is OK to touch young people in a way which isn’t intimate, intrusive, disturbing or threatening to him/her or observers, and is in line with our code of conduct * Make sure that any allegations or suspicions are recorded and acted on and tell the young person what you have done * Ensure vigilance and good practice at all times and share concerns at the earliest opportunity   **Don’t:**   * Engage in rough physical games including horseplay * Touch a child in an intrusive or sexual manner * Make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even as a joke. * Do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves (such as going to the toilet or changing clothes). * Ignore a colleague’s behaviour. If it causes you concern, talk to your Safeguarding Lead about it.   **Avoid:**   * Spending time alone with a young person * Giving a young person a lift in your car * Taking a young person into your home   If these situations are unavoidable, get parental permission first. If this isn’t possible, have another volunteer or staff member with you and let the parents know as soon as possible. |

**Forms of child abuse**

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| **Sexual Abuse**  *Both boys and girls can be sexually abused in the following ways:*   * Full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex and groping * Showing young people pornographic images * Asking young people to take part in the creation of images (taking and sending photos) * Grooming in preparation for abuse | *What to look for:*   * Unexplained or untreated bruising or injuries * Stomach pains * Discomfort when walking * Unexplained sources of money * Inappropriate drawings, language or behaviour * Aggressive, withdrawn behaviour or fear of one person |

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| **Physical Abuse**  Physical abuse can be through hitting, shaking, poisoning, biting or burning in ways which cause injury. In certain situations, abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the young person’s body. | *What to look for:*   * Unexplained or untreated injuries * Injuries on unlikely parts of the body * Cigarette burns, bite or belt marks, scalds * Fear of going home, receiving medical advice or parents being contacted * Flinching when touched * Refusal to discuss injury, covering arms or legs. |

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| **Neglect**  Where adults:   * Fail to meet a young person’s basic needs (e.g. food, warmth and clothing) * Constantly and inappropriately leave a young person alone or unsupervised * Fail or refuse to give love, affection or attention * Failure to prevent harm – for example, missed doctors or dentist appointments or allowing someone else to abuse a young person   Neglect might also occur during organised activities if young people are placed in an unsafe environment, are exposed to extreme weather conditions or are at unreasonable risk of being injured. | *What to look for:*   * Poor personal hygiene * Constantly hungry * Inappropriate clothing * Constantly tired * Lonely, no friends * Underweight * No parental support or interest * Dishevelled appearance |

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| **Emotional abuse**  This includes:   * Persistent lack of love of affection * Frequently shouting at young people * Taunting young people * Over protection leading to poor social skills * Exploitation or corruption   Emotional abuse may include situations where parents, coaches or organisers subject young people to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations | *What to look for:*   * Over reaction to mistakes * Sudden speech disorders * Extremes of emotion * Self-harm |

**Other things to look out for:**

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| **Child Sexual Exploitation**   * Children and young people are forced or manipulated into sexual activity in exchange for something – e.g. money, gifts, drugs and alcohol, accommodation, affection, status * It may be seen by the young person as consensual, but its based on power imbalance and limiting the victims options | *What to look for*   * Staying out late and no-one knowing where they are * Going missing for short periods or days at a time * Starting to miss school, college or work * Distancing themselves from family and friends * Changes in behaviour * Increase in drug or alcohol use * Change in academic performance * Being secretive about where they’re going or who with * A change in appearance * Sexualised behaviour * Being collected by a stranger * Having new things (e.g. shoes, clothes, gadgets) they can’t explain |

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| **Criminal exploitation (also known as 'county lines')**  This is where gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone ‘lines’ to supply drugs. ‘*What to look for’* is similar to that mentioned in ‘Child Sexual Exploitation’ |

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| **Domestic Abuse**   * Can be physical, emotional, psychological, verbal, financial or sexual * Domestic abuse happens between adults, but affects the child * Witnessing domestic abuse is recognised as ‘significant harm’ and can be emotional abuse * 62% of children or young people in households where domestic violence happens are also harmed * The perpetrator may also be physically or sexually abusive to the child or young person * Being involved can adversely affect the ability to parent |

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| **Online Abuse**  Text, email and all sorts of social media used against young people for:   * Bullying * Sexual activity * Grooming in preparation for abuse   For most young people, it’s not an option to switch off their phone |  | **Modern Slavery**  Most commonly seen forms of exploitation:   * Sexual * Labour * Domestic servitude   About 33% of cases involve under-18s |

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| **Female Genital Mutilation**  A procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for it.   * It’s frequently a very traumatic, painful and violent act for the victim and can cause long term health problems * It can be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman’s first pregnancy * It is illegal to subject a girl or woman to FGM or transport them so it can happen * 10,000 girls under 15, and 125,000 women, are living with the consequences in the UK * It can be done for cultural reasons (hygiene, purity and control) where families believe it to be beneficial |

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| Treat all the above as you would any other safeguarding concern – talk to your safeguarding lead or child protection officer and refer to Somerset Direct if necessary |

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**What to do if a young person tells you about abuse**

* Most importantly, you should believe them, listen attentively and let the young person know that it was right to tell someone about their worries
* Stay calm and make sure the young person feels safe and knows they are not to blame for what has happened
* Explain that you’ll have to tell someone about the abuse. Tell them what you’re going to do, who you will tell and why
* Establish the basic facts (enough to know there is a concern) but leave detailed questioning to other professionals
* Straight afterwards, make a factual note of what the young person said and the date and time of the conversation
* Seek help from your safeguarding lead, if you have one, or Somerset Direct
* Seek advice before telling parents or carers about the conversation, or letting any person suspected of abuse know what’s happened. You could put the young person in greater danger by doing so
* Don’t worry that you may be making things worse by reporting your concerns – few things are worse than allowing serious child abuse to continue.
* Many children and young people are devastated by the experience of abuse and, in the most serious cases, may be seriously harmed or have their lives threatened.
* Get support for yourself