



Yoga Fellowship
of Northern Ireland

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Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

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Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland: Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure

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1. Safeguarding Policy

1.1. Policy Statements

The Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland (YFNI) is recognised by Sport NI as the umbrella body for Yoga in Northern Ireland. As Yoga has grown in popularity, so too has YFNI. At our core remains our guiding philosophy as a not-for-profit organisation, which exists to promote a greater understanding of Yoga and its safe practice through experience, education, study and training. This policy on safeguarding children forms an important part of that safe practice.

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child who accesses 'Yoga' provided by any of YFNI's trained teachers (this includes yoga classes, events, workshops etc.).

Furthermore, we recognise that we have, as 'Teacher Members', Yoga teachers trained by other Yoga training organisations, and these will benefit from access to this policy document for information and guidance, as will our other members, who may not be Yoga Teachers, but benefit from its contents and protection measures.

In addition, in keeping with our role as a lead body in Yoga, this document will be made publicly available on the YFNI website as guidance for Yoga teachers, practitioners, and interested members of the public, including parents and guardians of children applying to join Yoga classes for children.

Ultimately, YFNI's primary responsibility is to disseminate the policy and its requirements to its own trained teachers.

We will also require that any external Yoga teachers hired to teach at YFNI events must adhere to this policy and its requirements, and that of our allied policy on 'Safeguarding Adults at Risk'. Where YFNI hires a Yoga teacher to teach children, or adults at risk, it will ensure beforehand that that teacher has -received or will receive- relevant safeguarding training which complies with the standards set out in the YFNI codes of conduct for teachers (see the YFNI Website).

It should be noted that YFNI is not an employer but is run by a voluntary committee of yoga teachers and those teachers trained by YFNI are bound individually by this policy and all policies and procedures as published by the YFNI.

YFNI does not tolerate the abuse of children in any of its forms. YFNI is committed to the following key principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- All participants regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, language or sexual identity, have the right to protection from harm;
- All allegations, suspicions of harm and concerns will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately; and

- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children.

In achieving these principles YFNI will:

- Provide a training module on safeguarding children and adults at risk on any YFNI teacher training courses and encourage attendance by YFNI-trained teachers at relevant refresher courses (See Paragraph 1.6);
- Inform YFNI-trained teachers of their responsibilities as regards safeguarding children;
- Signpost all YFNI-trained teachers to the relevant safeguarding information (See paragraph 1.6); and
- Ensure there is a named lead person to promote safeguarding awareness and practice within YFNI.

1.2. Policy Definitions

1.2.1. What is the definition of a child?

Children are defined in the Children (NI) Order 1995 as people under the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this policy the legal definition applies. The term, 'parents', is used in this policy as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.

1.2.2. What is abuse?

Types of abuse

There are five types of recognised abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect and exploitation. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child.

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. 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 opportunity 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 is 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: is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person or taking 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, engaging 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.

Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice arise when the needs of children are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported. Examples of poor practice may include shouting, excessive training, ridicule of errors, ignoring health and safety or duty of care responsibilities.

1.2.3.Bullying

The person displaying bullying behaviour can be a parent who pushes too hard, or a teacher with a 'win at all costs' attitude or another intimidating child. It should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying behaviour should not be ignored and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. The person displaying bullying behaviour can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the person directly experiencing the bullying behaviour.

It is the way that bullying incidences are dealt with which makes the difference between life being tolerable or becoming a misery for the person experiencing bullying behaviour.

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (www.endbullying.org.uk) defines bullying as *"behaviour, that is usually repeated, by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others."*

Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft);
- verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling); and
- emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from activities and social acceptance of peer group).

Wherever possible YFNI will take all practicable steps to prevent bullying behaviour at events over which it has organisational control, and to respond to incidents when they occur. A preventative approach to bullying means that we will safeguard the welfare of our committee members, our teachers and other members, and indeed anyone who attends our YFNI events. It also means that YFNI is playing its part in creating an environment and society in which people treat each other with respect.

You can get further information on challenging bullying from the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) website: <https://thecpsu.org.uk>

For more help and advice for young people visit Childline's website: <http://www.childline.org.uk>

1.3. Key Roles

The organisational lead for safeguarding in YFNI (who must also be a Committee Member) is the Safeguarding Officer. However, it should be noted that all YFNI-trained teachers and YFNI committee members have a responsibility to act on concerns of possible abuse and should inform the relevant authorities and/or the Safeguarding Officer.

The Safeguarding Officer has the responsibility to decide whether it is appropriate to raise a safeguarding concern with the local Health and Social Care Trust Gateway Team, on behalf of YFNI, or to respond to the concerns in an alternative manner.

In the absence of the Safeguarding Officer, the YFNI Chair or Vice-Chair(s) should be contacted. Contact names and numbers for the Safeguarding Officer, Chair and Vice-Chair(s) are contained in the Appendices.

1.4. Safe Practice

- YFNI is committed to working within best practice as established by AccessNI (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks>)
- YFNI has procedures in place to deal with allegations of abuse made against YFNI-trained teachers, and members (see reporting procedures).

1.5. Teaching Yoga to Children

YFNI-trained teachers who teach children must ensure that they have received the required safeguarding training courses and that they have completed the requisite documentation via Access NI. (Sample Consent Forms can be accessed on the YFNI Website).

Requirements for Classes other than Dedicated Children's Classes and Post-Natal Yoga

As babies and young children attending yoga classes with their parents/carers are

not in the care of the teacher, the standard practice is that teachers of such classes do not have to be Access NI checked. However, in keeping with best practice, 'YFNI-trained teachers and Committee Members' should undergo Safeguarding Training.

Adult Classes with under 18s in Attendance

When a parent or carer does not accompany their young person to a yoga class, the teacher should undergo an Access NI check if the child is under 16 years of age. 16- and 17-year-olds may attend adult yoga classes unaccompanied without the teacher undergoing an Access NI check.

YFNI-Trained Teachers Teaching Children for an Organisation other than YFNI

Any YFNI-trained teacher teaching for another organisation, for example a school, health club, or a gym, must follow that organisation's own Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The teacher is required to:

- Ask for a copy of the organisation's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- Ask for the name and contact details of the "referral" person within the organisation (this may be the Safeguarding Officer or other similarly named officer);
- Know the organisation's procedures with reference to photographic images and hands on adjustment.

1.6. Safeguarding Training

YFNI is committed to ensuring that all YFNI-trained teachers and YFNI committee members have access to training on safeguarding children, at a level commensurate with their roles. Safeguarding Training should be undertaken every three years.

All teachers working with under 18s are required to undergo, and keep updated, recognised Safeguarding Training. Such training will enable individuals to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of suspected poor practice/ concerns of possible abuse.

Sport NI delivers two face to face 3 hour workshops:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport; and
- Designated Safeguarding Children Officer

In addition to this Sport NI offers a free online refresher course:

<http://courses.sportni.net/>

YFNI-trained teachers should contact Sport NI for information on training:

workshops@sportni.net Tel: 028 90 381222

1.7. Prevention

YFNI has the following code and advice documents available which will help minimise the risk of abuse or harm occurring. YFNI-trained Teachers and YFNI committee members are required to familiarise themselves with the content of

these documents. These can all be found in the YFNI website.

- YFNI Code of Ethical Practice for Teachers
- Advice about Safeguarding Training

2. Safeguarding Children Procedures

2.1. Responding to an Allegation/Concern

YFNI recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. Anyone who has contact with children and hears disclosures or allegations, or has concerns about potential abuse or neglect, has a duty to pass those concerns on appropriately.

YFNI will ensure that any allegations made against YFNI-trained teachers and committee members will be dealt with swiftly. Where a teacher or committee member is thought to have committed a criminal offence the police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the police should be contacted immediately.

Where the allegation involves alleged abuse of a child, a concern should be raised following the process outlined below.

The Safeguarding officer will ensure that the YFNI Disciplinary Procedures are co-ordinated with any other enquiries taking place as part of the ongoing management of the allegation.

2.2. Responsibilities of YFNI-Trained Teachers and Committee Members

If any YFNI-trained teacher or committee member has reason to believe that abuse is or may be taking place they have a responsibility to act swiftly on this information. It does not matter what your role is, doing nothing is not an option.

If a child discloses abuse to you directly, you should follow this course of action:

- Assure them that you are taking the concerns seriously;
- Do not be judgmental or jump to conclusions;
- Listen carefully to what they are telling you, stay calm, get as clear a picture as you can, use open ended questions;
- Do not start to investigate or ask detailed or probing questions;
- Explain that you have a duty to tell the Safeguarding Officer; and
- Reassure the child but do not make promises to keep a secret, though you will maintain confidentiality; the child needs to know you may need to share this information.

Your responsibilities are:

1. To take action to keep the child safe if possible.

If an urgent police presence is required to keep someone safe then call 999 and ask for police.

Does the young person need urgent medical assistance? If they do, then call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

2. If a crime has occurred, be aware of the need to preserve evidence.
3. Always inform the Safeguarding officer. You cannot keep this information secret, even if the person asks you to. But reassure them that you will maintain confidentiality and only those who need to know to help safeguarding a child will be informed, this may be the HSCT or PSNI.
4. Clearly record what you have witnessed or been told, record your responses and any actions taken.

If consulting with the Safeguarding Officer will lead to an undue delay and thereby leave a person in a position of risk, you should 'Raise a Safeguarding Concern' yourself with the statutory authorities or phone 999 immediately.

2.3. Allegations of Previous Abuse

Responding to Non-Recent Allegations of Abuse

It is possible that non-recent allegations of abuse can be made any time after the actual incident. This may be because of a change in circumstances for either the survivor or the alleged perpetrator. Any non-recent allegations must follow the current YFNI safeguarding procedures. If there are grounds for concern then statutory authorities must be informed (PSNI or HSCT Gateway Teams). The following points should also be considered:

- Clearly establish with the adult complainant if there may be any children currently at risk of harm from the person they are alleging abused them as a child.
- Advise the adult complainant to inform the PSNI. Encourage them to do so while acknowledging the brave steps they have already taken in beginning to talk about their experience as a child. It is important that the person knows that there is a likelihood that an abuser will not have stopped abusing after their individual abuse ended and if the person harmed them they could be continuing to cause harm to others. This should be done without reinforcing the inappropriate guilt the survivor may already have for not coming forward earlier.
- If the complainant refuses to talk to the statutory authorities but has provided you with enough identifying factors **then this information MUST be shared with the PSNI**. This breach of the complainants' confidence is only appropriate if there is any potential that the alleged perpetrator is still a risk to children or could face prosecution. Remember, the welfare of any children currently at risk is paramount. This must take priority over any request of confidentiality from the person providing you with the information/ complaint. This should be explained to them at the earliest possible stage
- Offer support to the complainant while making a formal complaint to the PSNI.
- Signpost the complainant to support agencies that can provide counselling for example: NEXUS <http://www.nexusni.org/>
 - Belfast 028 9032 6803
 - Derry 028 7126 0566

- Enniskillen 028 6632 0046

When an adult complainant chooses not to report the matter to the police and you have already discussed the possibility of any child still being at risk you **MUST** follow YFNI reporting procedures and inform the PSNI or Gateway Team immediately of any identifying features of the allegation including the name of the alleged abuser. The person making the complaint should be informed that this is the organisation's moral and legal responsibility (under the Criminal Law Act 1967). If the individual wishes to remain anonymous this should be respected but again explaining that without any further co-operation there may be little action the Police can take to protect others. Encourage them to talk directly to the Gateway Teams, if not the Police, in order to enable social services to consider if there is any action they can take to protect children at risk, as their threshold for intervention is lower than the evidence required for any criminal justice prosecution .

2.4. Raising a Safeguarding Concern

Raising a safeguarding concern means reporting abuse to the local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) under the Safeguarding Children procedure; anyone can raise a safeguarding concern.

Dealing with Concerns about a YFNI-trained Teacher

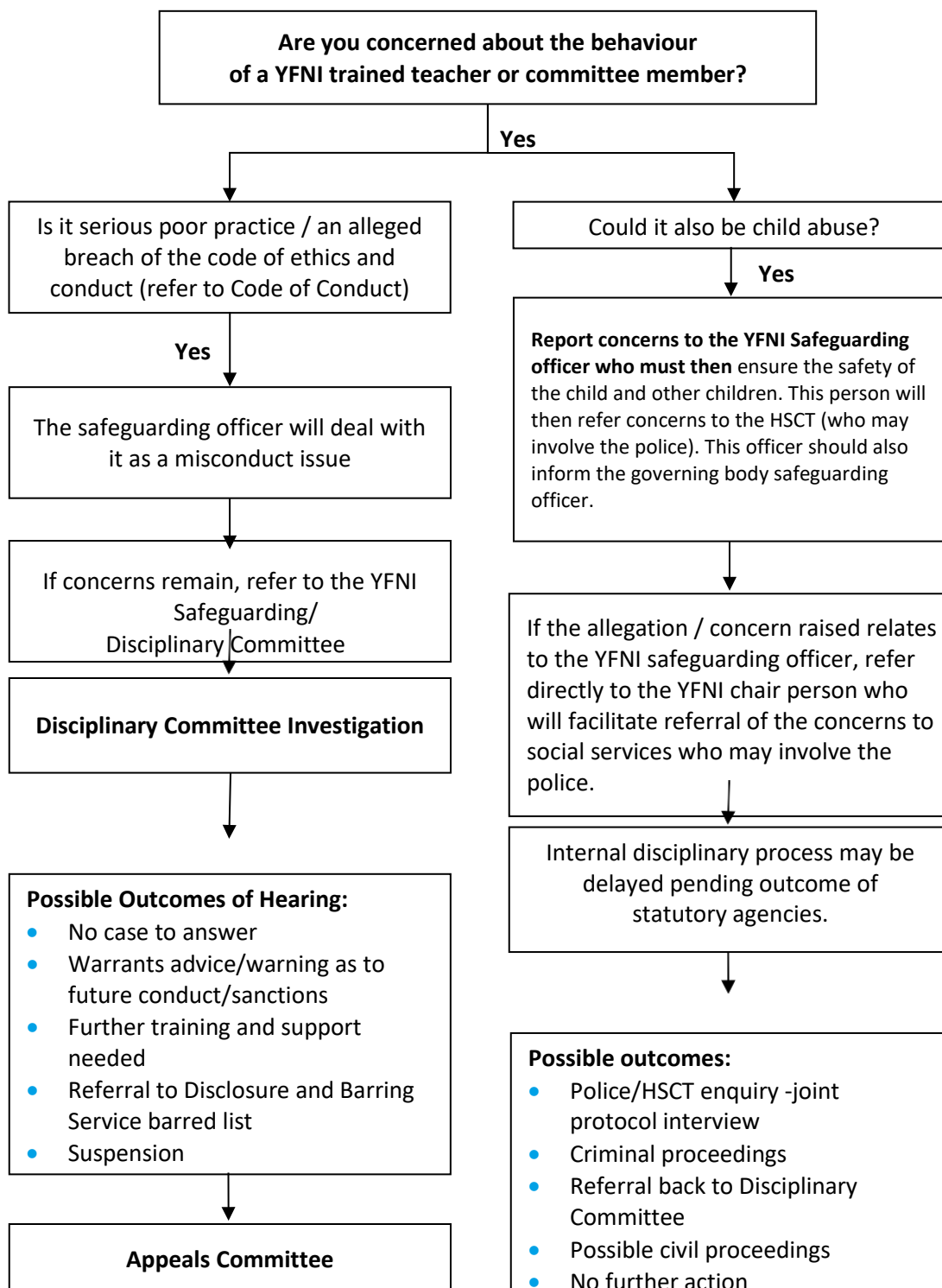
The vast majority of people who work with children are well motivated and would never harm a child. Unfortunately, a few do, and it is essential that YFNI creates a culture that encourages everyone to be willing and comfortable to voice their concerns, particularly those about someone with whom they may work or whom they know. Again, the YFNI Safeguarding procedures should be followed.

During any investigation, support should be given both to the individual who voices concerns and to the suspected person who may have caused harm. Once the investigation is completed, YFNI must decide what action, if any, is necessary to prevent a similar situation arising again.

APPENDICES

CONCERN ABOUT YFNI -TRAINED TEACHERS BEHAVIOUR - REPORTING GUIDELINES

(Note HSCT = Health and Social Care Trust)

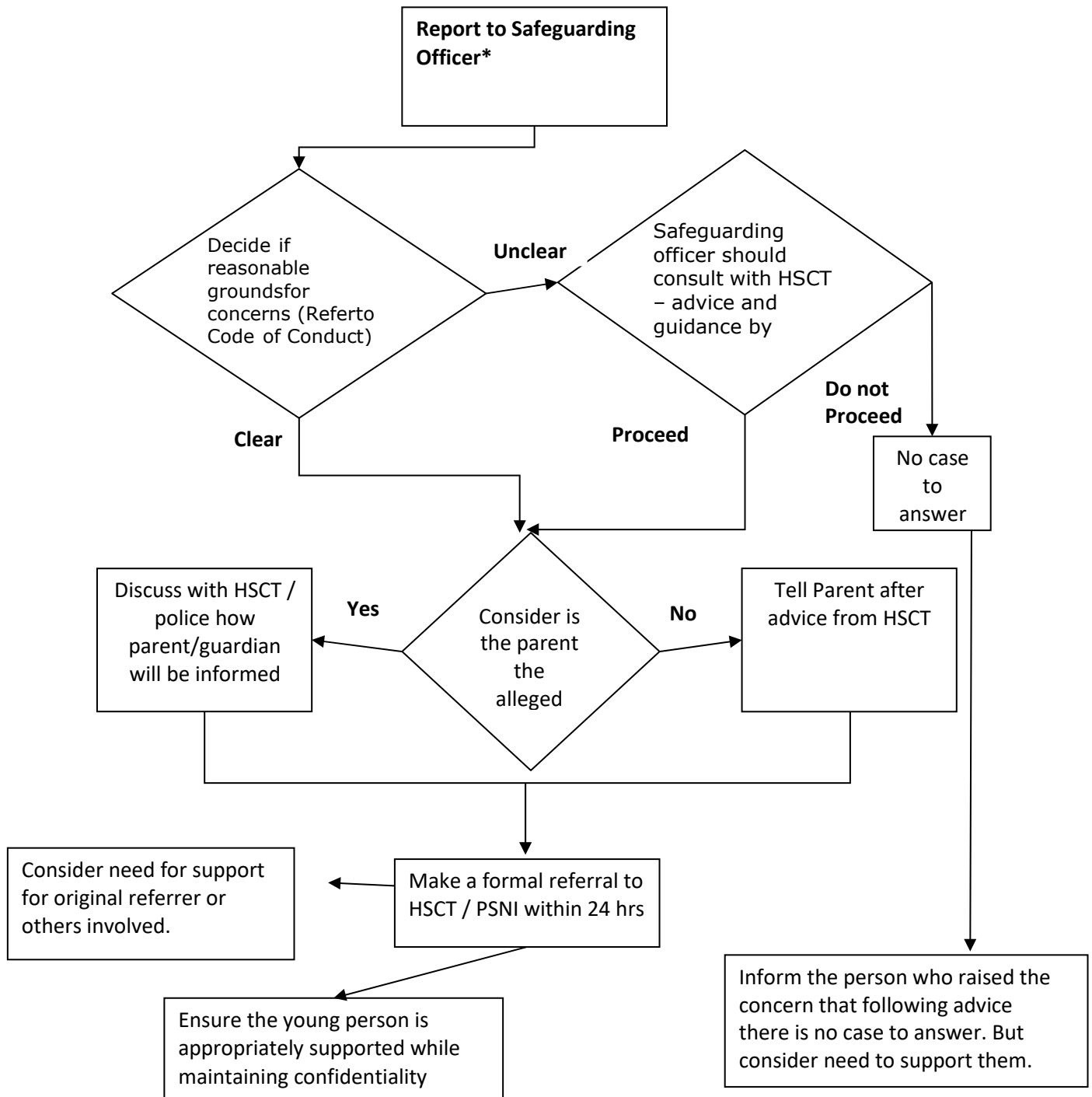


If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns you should contact the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Team direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000). At any stage during the process in the left- hand column the issue can be referred externally either formally or informally for advice. Following the external (right column) outcome the matter may be referred back to the YFNI Committee.

EXTERNAL CONCERNS FLOW CHART

When the concern is about possible abuse outside the club/organisation

(Note HSCT – Health and Social Care Trust)



Sharing Concerns with Parents

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. He/she may have experienced an upset in the family such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

***Note:** If a child requires immediate medical attention arrange this and ensure that the media is informed that there may be a child protection concern or allegation.

When it is Not Appropriate to Share Concerns with Parents

There are circumstances in which a young person might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the suspected abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the person in charge and the HSCT or the Police, who will advise on contacting parents.

Document the concern and any actions or decisions taken

Ensure all actions and decisions are fully recorded. It is possible that your records may be required as part of an enquiry, be as clear and accurate as you can. Record the reasons for your decisions and any advice given to you in making these decisions.

Ensure that appropriate records are maintained, including details of:

- the nature of the safeguarding concern/allegation
- the decision of the organisation to raise a concern or not

How to Raise a Safeguarding Concern

To raise a safeguarding concern:

Contact your local HSCT Gateway team and tell them you wish to raise a safeguarding concern. (Contact Details in Appendix D)

The person you speak to will ask you for details about the allegation/concern. If you have reported the incident to the police, tell the person this as well.

You will be required to complete a form outlining your concerns, the advisor will give you details of how to do this.

REMEMBER: If you suspect that someone is being abused and they are in **immediate** danger you should ring the PSNI on **999**.

The safeguarding concern will be allocated to an appropriate team, who will then contact you to discuss the concerns further.

Information should be provided to the individual. This could be about other sources of help or information that could enable them to decide what to do about their experience, enable them to recover from their experience and enable them to seek justice.

YFNI Named Safeguarding Leads and Contact Details

Safeguarding Officer 2022/23 Committee	Amy Morgan	info@yfni.co.uk
Chair 2022/23 Committee	Michael McCann	info@yfni.co.uk

Please note the above email is monitored by different volunteers and confidential messages or any concerns about a named person should not be sent to this shared in box. Identify who the communication is for, and they will contact you. Alternatively, you can contact the NSPCC on help@nspcc.org.uk if it is a child safeguarding concern.

Useful Contacts

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

Paul Stephenson	028 90 351135
E-mail: paul.stephenson@NSPCC.org.uk	www.thecpsu.org.uk

Health and Social care Trusts

Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for on-going professional liaison for advice on concerns.

- Northern HSC Trust Tel: 03001234333
- South Eastern HSC Trust Tel: 0300 100 0300
- Southern HSC Trust Tel: 0800 783 7745

- Belfast HSC Trust Tel: 028 9050 7000
- Western HSC Trust Tel: 028 7131 4090

Regional Emergency Social Work Service available 5.00pm to 9.00am, Monday to Thursday and 5.00pm on Friday to 9.00am on Monday. There is a 24 hour cover over public holidays. 028 95049999

First Aid Contacts

St John Ambulance	0870 010 4950	www.sja.org.uk
British Red Cross	028 9024 6400	www.redcross.org.uk

General Contacts

Access Northern Ireland	www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni 0300 200 7888
Behaviour Management	www.parenting-ed.org
Bullying	www.kidscape.org.uk www.bullying.co.uk
Childline UK	www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111
Domestic Violence	www.womensaidni.org
Health	www.kidsallergies.co.uk

Internet Safety	www.iwf.org.uk
NI Commissioner for Children & Young People	www.niccy.org
NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000	www.nspcc.org.uk
Parents Advice	www.parentsadvicecentre.org
Police (Public Protection Units)	Tel: Police exchange 028 90650222
Special Education Needs	www.throughtheroof.org
Sport NI	www.sportni.net 028 90381222
Suicide and self-harm	Lifeline 0808 808 8000 www.lifelinehelpline.info www.samaritans.org
Volunteer Now 028 9023 2020	www.volunteernow.co.uk