



helping young  
people through  
life's maze

## **WESLEYAN REFORM UNION YOUNG PEOPLES DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR WORK WITH AND THE PASTORAL CARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE (UNDER 18's)**

The Home Office has produced a set of recommendations and guidelines to give all voluntary groups a framework for action to promote the welfare of children and young people, in particular to prevent abuse taking place. Called "Safe from Harm", the recommendations and guidelines do not have the force of law but recommend the steps that should be taken to safeguard everyone under the age of 18. These Government recommendations came as a result of the Children Act 1989:

Below is the policy statement the Wesleyan Reform Union Young Peoples Department.

### **1. A policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children.**

The Young Peoples Department (YPD) of the Wesleyan Reform Union (WRU) is committed to good practice through our core values of professionalism and being person centered. We therefore make the following statement in response to Government guidelines:

As a Christian organisation committed to presenting the reality of God to young people, we affirm our belief in the God given value of each young person with whom we work or have contact. In recognition of God's wholehearted commitment to them, we will also treat each individual with value and dignity and aim that none suffers physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual abuse of any kind. If at all possible it is the responsibility of each one of us to safeguard young people against physical, sexual, spiritual<sup>1</sup> and emotional abuse and to report any abuse discovered or suspected.

The YPD is committed to offering support, resources and training for those who work with young people. While it is the responsibility of individual churches to work to an appropriate policy when working with young people and vulnerable adults, it is the intention of the YPD to provide a robust support package for everyone we partner with. This document is available, upon request, to anyone or any church within the WRU.

The YPD will encourage places where itinerant teams visit to appoint a local person to

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<sup>1</sup> "Spiritual abuse happens when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower, thus causing spiritual wounds." Ken Blue: Healing Spiritual Abuse. IVP 1993.

whom cases of suspected abuse should be referred.

Within the YPD we will respond to questions of suspected abuse internally through the church child protection officer. Local ministries and events will appoint a designated person to co-ordinate any situations.

This statement will be reviewed on a regular basis (annually) and applies at any event or where ministry is undertaken in the name of the YPD.

All staff and volunteers who work or volunteer for the YPD will be expected to sign a declaration stating whether or not they have ever accepted an official caution from the police, been convicted or are currently the subject of criminal charges. (Disclosing such information may not bar an individual from being appointed.)

It is assumed that within a church setting there will be a Minister or a designated supervisor where information can be passed onto if required. In some cases this may mean that the designated child protection officer is required rather than a church leader or event supervisor. This policy will state "Minister or supervisor" but also means, when appropriate, a designated child protection officer.

## **2. Plan of work for the pastoral care of and work with young people.**

**All activities should avoid any situation where abuse could result. All young people should be treated with respect and dignity.**

- 2:1 Any form of ministry is to take place in public. Personal conversations are to include someone of the same sex and with a minimum of three people present if at all possible. Both public ministry and personal conversations are to be within the guidelines laid out in (Appendix 1). If one-to-one conversations are to be conducted (such as in the case of mentoring) it should be done only with the permission of the Minister or event leader. It should take place in a public venue where both parties are in the open and clearly visible.
- 2:2 When giving lifts to young people, if only one is left in a four door car, that young person should normally sit in the rear seats. *Lifts must only be given where the driver is insured for use of the car for business purposes.*
- 2:3 Initiating physical contact with young people is to be avoided. If physical abuse is threatened, then workers should seek assistance in the first instance and if physical violence is used against you then you may defend yourself using the minimum of force (more information on this is available from the Government website and from your local police station).
- 2:4 In school lessons and assemblies a member of the school staff should be present. For after school or lunchtime events, an agreement is to be negotiated with the school as to whether or not they wish a staff member to be present (although a member of staff should always be on call). The recommended minimum is that two YPD workers or volunteers should be present during such events.
- 2:5 In youth work (bus, club, group etc.) ensure there are always two workers or volunteers present and if young people need to be escorted off the premises, that this is done wherever possible through verbal encouragement! If more than verbal encouragement is needed, the church Minister or recognised supervisor should be aware of this.

- 2:6 When out on the streets it is strongly advised to work in pairs. It is the responsibility of the team leader to set up procedures so that in depth conversations are conducted where two people of the same sex are involved.
- 2:7 Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a young person, even in "fun", any scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting or comments about a young person's attributes or attractiveness of a young person should not occur.
- 2:8 Hugging is to be discouraged among the staff and volunteers when young people are present. Although the worker should not initiate physical contact, it is important that if young people choose to initiate that they are responded to appropriately, e.g. a side arm hug. Physical contact should be age appropriate.
- 2:9 Residential work: see attached guidelines (Appendix 2.)
- 2:10 Parental/guardian consent must be obtained for any activity undertaken where the young person is involved in extended time out of their home. Communication of what is happening should always be made available to parents/guardians.
- 2:11 An agreed system of recording activities and in depth conversations with young people (one-to-one or otherwise) should be implemented. These should be completed as agreed with the Minister or supervisor.
- 2.12 YPD workers and volunteers will avoid favouritism and special friendships. Do not develop an exclusive relationship with a group member if you are a leader, however small the age gap. Do not be over eager to befriend particular young people. Crushes with group members are strongly discouraged and an intermediary should be involved if necessary.

### **3. Procedures for protecting children and young people for all staff and volunteers.**

All staff and volunteers will receive this policy when they join the YPD.

All YPD workers, volunteers and committee members may come into contact with young people in the course of their duties. Because of this, all new staff and volunteers will have CRB checks completed. This will be re-done every 3 years. The YPD will conduct a CRB check for those conducting youth work that are paid on a contract for services or for sessional work (rather than employed or voluntary). Other 'consultants' who represent YPD but do not necessarily conduct youth work may also be required to complete a CRB check. The Wesleyan Reform Union safeguarding officer can give guidance on this.

One-off volunteers undertaking tasks for YPD will be subject to the same procedure as staff. This requirement may be waived if the person is known to the YPD and will not have unsupervised access to young people in the course of the task. 'Known to YPD' means that at least two people who are staff, YPD committee members, staff workers or people who have significant connections with the YPD could, if asked, provide references for the person. One-off applies to volunteers giving not more than one day's time for their volunteering. One-off volunteers will include those who accompany staff on a speaking engagement, help at a YPD day or evening event. Once someone is volunteering with the

YPD on a regular basis, 'regular' meaning more than three times a year, then they will be subject to the YPD guidelines for volunteers in this document.

The YPD is not responsible for the selection, approval or appointment of those working with children or young people in any affiliated church or group. These groups and churches are responsible for appointing people to work with children and young people according to their own policies for protecting children and young people.

#### **4. Appointment of staff and volunteers**

In all cases the YPD will conduct a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure (CRB check) on all staff and volunteers. Where face-to-face work with children and young people is part of their normal role then work cannot start until the CRB disclosure has been received and is considered satisfactory.

The appointment of staff and volunteers will follow the relevant WRU recruitment and selection and probationary procedures. These are available from the General Secretary and include what to do in relation to application process, interviews, references and proof of identity etc.

Those recruiting staff or volunteers from overseas should follow the guidance on the CRB website <http://www.crb.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=2243>. Where the country of origin is not listed you should contact that country's representative in this country, see the list on the FCO website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/london-diplomatic-list-june>. If there is any difficulty contact a member of the Safe From Harm Committee for advice. Volunteers from overseas that come to work with us must register with the local Police.

If CRB disclosures are held by the Wesleyan Reform Union, they will be kept separately and securely in a lockable, non-portable storage container with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the intermediary church or organisation to store the CRB disclosures appropriately.

Where a CRB disclosure has any information on it a risk assessment should be completed prior to the worker coming into contact with young people through YPD activities.

All staff and volunteers will have a written job description.

#### **5. Management/Supervision**

There shall be a system of line management within the YPD to provide supervision and accountability.

This will include monitoring ongoing work with young people and for staff, line management in accordance with WRU policies and guidelines.

Line management practice will normally involve regular meetings with the appropriate line manager in order to review and plan their work. The supervisor should be aware of each staff member's working and personal relationships with the young people in their care.

It is expected that each supervisor will take time to observe the member of staff or volunteer whilst he/she is working with young people.

Ideally, supervisors should keep a brief written record of each supervision meeting and of any things of note that are observed.

It is expected that records of contact with young people would be kept by the worker in accordance with those requested by the line manager.

The record should cover the number of young people in attendance; the activities done or the issues covered in conversation; and unusual events such as fire alarms or young people escorted off the premises.

## **6. Training.**

The YPD committee should provide training or information on where to obtain training for staff or volunteers of the YPD.

## **7. Identifying Abuse - signs, symptoms and how to respond.**

Procedures if abuse is suspected, discovered or disclosed:

The most important thing to remember is that when a young person discloses that abuse of any nature is taking (or has taken) place, they are divulging a secret. It is not the place for this document to provide guidance for counselling in this scenario, but please make sure that the young person knows that YOU believe them. Many situations have arisen where the first person to be told of such events failed to demonstrate that they believed the young person in the first instance and this led to the abuse being covered up for years.

If a young person wants to talk to you about some form of abuse follow the following guidelines as much as is possible and appropriate to your situation. General points are:

- accept what the person says
- keep calm
- be honest
- look directly at the young person
- do not appear shocked
- let them know you may need to tell someone else
- assure them that they are not to blame for abuse
- never ask leading questions
- never push for information
- do not fill in words, finish their sentences or make assumptions
- be aware that the child may have been threatened

In the work of the YPD it is our duty to work to prevent abuse taking place. There are several forms of abuse:

### **Types of abuse:**

- **Physical** - when an adult kicks, beats, or punches and children's bodies are hurt or injured.
- **Emotional** - where children don't receive love and affection, may be frightened by threats or taunts, or are given responsibilities beyond their years.
- **Sexual** - where adults (and sometimes other children) use children to satisfy sexual desires; touches a young person's private parts in a way that makes the child feel

worried or unhappy; showing the young person rude pictures or videos; sexual abuse can be anywhere in the range from visual contact to sexual penetration.

- **Neglect** - where adults fail to care for children and protect them from danger, seriously impairing health and development; when an adult leaves a young person alone for long periods of time.
- **Spiritual** - when a leader with spiritual authority uses that authority to coerce, control or exploit a follower causing spiritual wounds.

If any young person or child comes to you and talks about past or present abuse situations, keep a hand-written narrative of the conversation immediately after you have spoken with that person.

If you suspect that a young person may be the victim of such abuse the following procedure must be followed:

For national YPD projects/events: the team/project/holiday leader/YPD worker must inform the designated child protection officer or the Wesleyan Reform Union child protection officer. If these people are unavailable the local authorities (such as the Police or Social Services) should be informed. The General Secretary should be made aware of the investigation.

In addition, any disclosures within events in local churches should be reported to the designated person.

It is important to keep reporting channels as short as possible and this should not prevent or delay any reporting to relevant authorities (the local Police or Social Services). If the person to whom the abuse was disclosed believes that the designated person has not taken appropriate action they may speak to the authorities themselves.

The young person must be kept informed at all times of what is being done, what is likely to happen, and should be prepared for such an eventuality before they disclose such information. Where the abuse is current this will need to be reported to the authorities normally by the designated person. However, it is also important that the young person is aware that no action is likely to be taken by the authorities without the young person being listened to and all decisions reached will take account of the wishes and feelings of the young person. (1989 Children Act).

When the situation is reported to the authorities then it is likely that the following may be included:

\* A strategy discussion involving Social Services, Police Child protection team, other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the young person has talked.

\* A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted; if so, it will then be planned. If the Social Services decide to pursue this the investigation is likely to include:

- \* An informal talk with the child.
- \* A formal police (+/- social services) video recorded interview
- \* Medical examination
- \* Preliminary family assessment.

The authorities are likely to be more proactive in situations where other young people could also be at risk.

If there is sufficient concern, a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child and help the family. There may be criminal

prosecution of the abuser.

Note: Ensure records of action taken are recorded on a Safe from Harm Abuse disclosure form.

### **8. Accusations of abuse against YPD staff or volunteers**

If any member of staff or volunteer is accused of abuse then the YPD will co-operate with other agencies in the enquiry.

During the course of the enquiry it is recommended that the staff or volunteer concerned is not involved in face to face youth work and that they take a period of special leave during which any salary continues to be paid. If the enquiry is not concluded within a month or two this action may need to be reassessed.

YPD staff and volunteers must report any allegation made about themselves or others to their supervisor or his/her delegated representative.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Guidelines for talking and praying with young people.**

**These are not a set of rules just for the sake of it. There is a good reason why they are there, for your own protection and the person you are dealing with.**

1. Always talk and pray with someone in a group of more than two if at all possible. One to one contact may take place only in a public place and your supervisor must agree should this become something that needs to continue with that person.
2. Always same sex - i.e. 2 males - male, 2 females - female, when involved in praying with young people. If for any reason this is impossible then it should happen in a public place and be agreed with your supervisor.
3. Always pray and talk in an open space where others are around, privacy is a factor, but don't go alone.
4. Confidentiality is vital - they will need to know that you will not go to others and talk about their problems. However, do not promise to keep a secret. You may need to tell someone in authority. If that is so, tell them who it will be and what you will say - in order to build trust. In British law the responsibility for any investigation is with the Social Services, Police or the NSPCC and it is not for workers to carry out these preliminary investigations.
5. Keep calm and be honest. Don't feel you have to know all the answers. If you don't know, find someone who does and ask them.
6. Don't be afraid to ask for advice we are not out to prove anything to anyone, we want the best for them. If you feel out of your depth or unsure, ask someone to help you.
7. Don't keep bringing it round to your own experience, i.e. 'yes, I remember when that happened to me and ...' Testimony is good, but listen.
8. Don't make promises you can't keep.
9. Don't appear shocked or appalled.
10. Be sensitive, don't say things like - 'I can't believe it, why didn't you tell anyone before?' or - 'no, you didn't, did you?'
11. Don't laugh at them.
12. Don't minimise or trivialise the issue, even if it may not seem important to you. If they need to talk about it, it is important.
13. Be aware of your body language, the way you are reacting. Always encourage and affirm, don't judge or condemn.
14. Don't feel you have to wrap it up straight away, some things need talking through more. Talk that through with a leader or prayer co-ordinator. Don't offer to do it on your own, or offer the availability of someone else before checking it out with them.
15. If you are told about anything illegal you must tell your supervisor (or his/her delegated representative) straight away. There is no general legal duty to report an offence to the Police.
16. Don't take on board other people's problems as if they were your own. Remember, empathy is standing in someone else's shoes, with your feet firmly in your own.
17. Do not under any circumstances touch someone inappropriately when praying or talking with them. Do not initiate hugging - whether same sex or opposite sex. Remember we need to be above reproach.
18. Allow young people privacy when going to the toilet or changing.
19. Follow up, check how they are doing the following week.
20. Fill in a form straight away. Give it to the supervisor/Minister/leader. We don't need to know all the intricate details, but the general issue.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Residential Work:**

**The following are guidelines based on respect for the individual and legal requirements. They are not intended to restrict the diverse opportunities presented by residential work, merely safeguard all concerned from the potential of abuse.**

In residential work, do not invade the privacy of young people unnecessarily. Leaders are to knock before entering dormitory accommodation and except for emergencies to enter the accommodation of young people of the same sex only.

Separate accommodation for the sexes and for leaders. The latter if possible.

Keep age groups together in dormitories/rooms/tents.

In residential work there must be same sex leaders as the young people attending.

For residential work longer than 90 days, or where a young person under 18 is employed by the organisation and living away from home, the organisation shall register with the local Social Services as an organisation which takes young people away, and shall register both with the SS department and the location's SS department when using a specific venue.

Disclosures during the residential: If there is an incident on site it should be reported to the local police. If the disclosure is of current or past disclosure which has not taken place at the residential then it should be reported to the local social services of the young person concerned.

Where minibuses are used it is expected that all drivers and leaders will adhere to the legal (and where appropriate, local authority) regulations.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Internet and the web**

New Media is defined in this document as any technology that is used to communicate a message, e.g. websites, mobile phones and such things as cd-roms and DVD's.

A conversation in this context can be an exchange of emails or text messages.

#### **1 What needs to be included in any information we provide.**

- We need to be transparent in all our information. Every website we create or have influence over needs to have a section clearly labelled as a reference to our Safe From Harm Policy. This section will spell out what our policy is and what our working practices are.
- All our sites will have the YPD logo clearly visible which links to the WRU site.

#### **2 Best Practices of those using New Media.**

- Everyone involved in using New Media will have read and understood the Safe From Harm Policy.
- Under no circumstances are personal details to be exchanged in a public forum. If someone posts personal details in a public forum then the post must be deleted or modified to remove the details, a note explaining this will then be posted.
- No meetings are to be arranged. This is a rule that can only be broken if the meeting is supervised in a public place. The Minister or line manager of the worker must be informed of the meeting and approve of it.
- As a general guideline, YPD workers and volunteers should avoid texting young people at all. If at all possible a record of any sms, mms or email conversations should be kept and archived.
- Anyone working with young people or children should be aware of the positive and negative aspects of using social media, such as Facebook. Online social media can be a powerful tool in children's and youth work but it also has its risks. Generally, it is better to have a church / club Facebook page rather than allowing young people access to personal profiles. This means that online communication through social media sites can be safe and fully accountable.
- YPD workers and volunteers should use their real names for chat purposes.
- No conversation is to be entered into that involves sexual or pornographic websites, if they do come up in conversation either ignore the comment or terminate the conversation immediately, unless you feel the young person is vulnerable or 'at risk'.
- Any photographs used on our websites will be such that no young people will be identifiable. Any photographs will be vetted to make sure they are acceptable. Images of young people participating in any sporting activity have the potential for greater abuse by paedophiles wishing to manipulate the digital image and create pornographic material, with this in mind any images we put on our websites will be such that the possibility of manipulating it will be minimal.
- Above all the over-riding attitude is a concern for the people we are working with, for their well being and salvation. As long as we are working for their good then what we do and how we approach our work will dictate our working practices for the good.

**APPENDIX 4**  
**Information**

The General Secretary: 0114 272 1938  
[gen.sec@thewru.co.uk](mailto:gen.sec@thewru.co.uk)

Useful phone numbers: Churches Child Protection Advisory Service - 0845 120 4550  
Local Social Services – visit yellow pages or call police  
Police - call 999