



Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy

Policy Statement

YMCA Awards is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk who engage with qualifications, assessments, and services associated with YMCA Awards.

As an Awarding Organisation and Assessment Organisation, YMCA Awards recognises its responsibility to set clear safeguarding expectations, maintain appropriate oversight of third parties, and act on safeguarding concerns that may arise in connection with the delivery or assessment of its qualifications and Assessment Organisation services.

This policy is informed by relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and Working Together to Safeguard Children, and reflects safeguarding principles applicable across the education and skills sector.

While YMCA Awards is not a training or education delivery provider, it does undertake learner-facing activity through its Assessment Organisation services. YMCA Awards therefore has regard to this guidance both in setting safeguarding standards and expectations for approved centres, employers, and partners, and in relation to its own assessment activity where learners are directly involved.

This policy sets out YMCA Awards' safeguarding principles, role, and expectations, and explains how safeguarding concerns may be raised and managed within the scope of its awarding and assessment activities.

YMCA Awards reserves the right to modify this policy from time to time at its discretion and in line with legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, directors, workers, contractors, agency staff, and individuals acting on behalf of YMCA Awards
- All approved centres, employers, and third parties involved in the delivery or assessment of YMCA Awards qualifications
- All learners and apprentices registered on YMCA Awards qualifications or engaging with Assessment Organisation services

This policy framework should be read alongside the Centre Agreement and other relevant published policies.

Where YMCA Awards staff or representatives engage directly with learners as part of services we provide, safeguarding awareness, reporting, and escalation arrangements apply in line with this policy.

YMCA Awards' safeguarding role

YMCA Awards undertakes learner-facing activity through its Assessment Organisation services, and therefore holds direct safeguarding responsibilities in that specific context, alongside its wider Awarding Organisation oversight role.

Accordingly:

- Primary safeguarding responsibility for training delivery and learning environments rests with centres, employers, and delivery partners
- Centres and employers must maintain safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures appropriate to their learners and context

- Centres and employers must appoint a designated safeguarding lead and ensure staff are appropriately trained
- YMCA Awards does not replace statutory safeguarding agencies, employers, or training providers

In relation to its awarding and Assessment Organisation activities, YMCA Awards' safeguarding role is to:

- Set safeguarding expectations through published policies and contractual arrangements
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding awareness and reporting arrangements for staff and representatives who engage directly with learners
- Provide routes for safeguarding concerns to be raised
- Review safeguarding information that may impact learner welfare, qualification integrity, or centre approval
- Take proportionate regulatory or contractual action where safeguarding concerns indicate risk, non-compliance, or systemic weakness
- Escalate concerns to appropriate statutory bodies, employers, centres, or regulators where required

YMCA Awards does not undertake criminal investigations and does not act as a statutory safeguarding authority.

Safeguarding principles

YMCA Awards is guided by the following safeguarding principles:

- The welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk is paramount, and safeguarding considerations take precedence where there is a concern about harm or abuse.
- Everyone has the right to live, learn, and be assessed in an environment that is safe and free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm, and to be treated with dignity and respect.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all those working with or on behalf of YMCA Awards, including centres, employers, and partners, have a role to play in protecting learners.
- Safeguarding concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately, with concerns raised promptly and managed in line with the roles and responsibilities of the organisations and individuals involved.
- Safeguarding arrangements must promote equality, inclusion, and fairness, recognising that risk may arise from personal circumstances, vulnerability, or context, and that additional support may be required.
- A culture of openness, vigilance, and accountability is essential, ensuring that concerns can be raised without fear and that appropriate action is taken when needed.

Legal and regulatory framework

This policy is informed by, and has regard to, relevant UK legislation and statutory guidance, including (but not limited to):

Children and young people

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and associated statutory guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

Adults at risk

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

Safer recruitment and suitability

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance

Equality, rights, and information sharing

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers

Prevent and wider safeguarding context

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Prevent duty guidance
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on forced marriage
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation

YMCA Awards expects approved centres, employers, and partners to comply with all applicable safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance relevant to their role and context.

Key definitions

Safeguarding

Action taken to protect children, young people, and adults at risk from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm, and to promote their wellbeing. Safeguarding includes prevention, early identification of concerns, and appropriate response and escalation.

Child / young person

Anyone under the age of 18. This definition applies regardless of living arrangements, employment, education, or level of independence.

Adult at risk

A person aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and/or support (whether or not those needs are being met),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

Learner / apprentice

An individual registered on a YMCA Awards qualification or engaging with YMCA Awards Assessment Organisation services, including apprentices undertaking assessment activity.

Abuse

A form of maltreatment which may involve a single act or repeated acts. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, financial, discriminatory, institutional, neglectful, or exploitative, and may occur in person or online.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which may result in serious impairment of health or development.

Safeguarding Lead (YMCA Awards)

The named individual within YMCA Awards responsible for receiving and considering safeguarding concerns raised to the organisation, ensuring appropriate recording, and determining proportionate

escalation in line with this policy. The Safeguarding Lead does not undertake frontline safeguarding or statutory investigations.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The individual within a centre or employer who has responsibility for coordinating safeguarding activity, receiving and responding to safeguarding concerns, and liaising with statutory agencies as appropriate. Approved centres and employers are required to appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with their statutory safeguarding duties.

Assessment Organisation services

Assessment activity delivered by or on behalf of YMCA Awards in which YMCA Awards staff or representatives engage directly with learners, including end-point or other summative assessment contexts. These services do not include the delivery of training or education.

Safeguarding concern

Any information, disclosure, allegation, or observation that suggests a child, young person, or adult at risk may be experiencing, or be at risk of, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm.

YMCA Awards roles and responsibilities

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has overall accountability for safeguarding within YMCA Awards. This includes ensuring appropriate safeguarding policies, systems, and oversight arrangements are in place and that safeguarding risks are identified, reviewed, and managed at an organisational level.

Head of YMCA Awards

The Head of YMCA Awards is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding expectations are embedded across all awarding and Assessment Organisation activities, and that appropriate arrangements are in place for the receipt, consideration, and escalation of safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding Lead (YMCA Awards)

YMCA Awards appoints a Safeguarding Lead who:

- acts as the primary point of contact for safeguarding concerns raised to YMCA Awards
- ensures concerns are recorded accurately and securely
- considers safeguarding information and determines proportionate next steps
- liaises with centres, employers, regulators, or statutory agencies where appropriate

Employees, contractors, and representatives

All employees, contractors, and representatives of YMCA Awards must:

- be familiar with this policy
- remain alert to potential safeguarding concerns
- raise safeguarding concerns promptly and appropriately
- not investigate safeguarding concerns themselves

Centre, employer, and partner responsibilities

Approved centres, employers, and partners retain primary responsibility for safeguarding learners within their provision.

They are expected to:

- maintain safeguarding and child protection policies appropriate to their learners and context
- appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- ensure staff are trained and aware of safeguarding responsibilities
- create safe learning, training, and assessment environments
- act promptly and appropriately on safeguarding concerns or disclosures
- comply with applicable safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Centres and employers must notify YMCA Awards where safeguarding concerns:

- relate to learners registered on YMCA Awards qualifications, or
- may impact learner welfare, assessment integrity, or qualification delivery.

Failure to meet safeguarding expectations may result in action being taken in line with YMCA Awards' [published policies](#).

Raising safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding concerns may arise through:

- disclosures by learners or apprentices
- observations by staff, assessors, or representatives
- complaints or whistleblowing
- quality assurance or assessment activity
- information from centres, employers, or third parties
- external quality assurance monitoring

Safeguarding concerns should be raised as soon as possible.

Immediate risk of harm

Where there is an **immediate risk of harm**, concerns must be **referred without delay** to the appropriate statutory authority (for example, the police or local authority safeguarding services). This does not remove the requirement to notify YMCA Awards where the concern relates to a learner registered on a YMCA Awards qualification or Assessment Organisation services.

Reporting concerns to YMCA Awards

Safeguarding concerns relating to learners registered on YMCA Awards qualifications, or arising in connection with Assessment Organisation services, must be reported to YMCA Awards without delay.

Concerns can be reported by:

- emailing awards.support@ymca.co.uk, for the attention of the **Safeguarding Lead**, or
- submitting a report via the **Contact YMCA Awards form** in Y-Connect

Concerns may be raised by centres, employers, learners, apprentices, YMCA Awards staff, or third parties. Individuals reporting concerns should not investigate the matter themselves.

YMCA Awards' response to safeguarding concerns

When safeguarding information is received, YMCA Awards will:

- ensure the concern is received by the Safeguarding Lead
- record the concern and any linked correspondence accurately and securely in Y-Connect
- consider the nature, seriousness, and context of the concern
- determine proportionate and appropriate next steps

This may include:

- seeking further information from the reporting party or relevant centre or employer
- referral back to the centre or employer where they hold primary safeguarding responsibility
- escalation to statutory safeguarding agencies where appropriate
- regulatory or contractual action
- notification to regulators where required

YMCA Awards does not undertake criminal investigations and does not act as a statutory safeguarding authority.

Information sharing and confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively, shared on a need-to-know basis, and processed in accordance with data protection legislation and data retention policy. Information may be shared without consent where there is a lawful safeguarding basis to do so.

Training, monitoring, and review

YMCA Awards ensures that staff and representatives receive safeguarding awareness appropriate to their role, including where they engage directly with learners through Assessment Organisation services.

This policy is approved by the Board of Directors, reviewed regularly, and updated in response to changes in legislation, regulation, or safeguarding best practice.