### Risk Assessment – Working from Home & the use of WhatsApp, Skype & other remote communications to deliver Youth Work during COVID-19

Assessment Date – 7th April 2020 Assessed by: - Shez Hopkins Approved By:-

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **HAZARD OBSERVED** | **RISK BEFORE CONTROL MEASURES** | **PERSONS AT RISK** | **CONTROL MEASURES** | **COMMENTS**  **ACTIONS** | **RESIDUAL RISK RATING** |
| **Online bullying occurs on the chat when Youth Worker is offline**  **Young person bullies another young person on the chat while Youth Worker is present** | Contributes to poor mental health for those involved or witnessing bullying.  Can lead to child suicide in worst-case scenario.  Potential reputational damage to organisation if parents became aware of incident(s).  Bullying can lead to the victim leaving the group and not returning to any of our services. | Young People  Youth Workers  Organisation reputation | * Boundaries are set via a code of conduct for young people & are reminded of these regularly. * Young people agree to the code of conduct & identify themselves to the youth workers leaving an “I agree” confirmation before they can take part. * Sanctions for online bullying are made clear to young people in the agreement. * Process in place that means both the young person being bullied and the perpetrator talk to a youth worker outside of the group chat. This would be logged detailing what happened, and hopefully resolve the issue. * Parents are contacted when necessary when bullying occurs on online groups. * Ensure that all young people know that if bullying is witnessed, it should be reported to the Youth Workers via email or as a private message. * Level Two Facebook page has a list of useful links and contact numbers for mental health organisations. | Difficult for the youth worker to comfort the victim or address the negative behaviour of the young person bullying in online environment.  Weekly reminders of the code of conduct. Publish code of conduct on website and Facebook. |  |
| **Young person shares online that they are going to hurt themselves or someone else.** | Risk of suicide or attempted suicide.  Distressing Upsetting for those witnessing incident including youth worker. | Young People | * Clear policy and procedures in place so youth workers understand how to report this and tackle this situation online. * Procedures are in place for contacting parents. * Procedure is in place to offer young person support outside of the group chat. * Youth worker promotes online support services and national helplines. * Organisation’s Facebook page has list of useful links and contact numbers for mental health organisations. * Referral system in place for mentoring & counselling services (online and telephone). * Youth Workers are clear on their role and who is responsible for reporting to police, social services or parents and who will make a record of the incident. * Youth Workers follow safeguarding procedures outlined in organisation’s safeguarding policy. * Supervision provided for youth workers |  |  |
| **Young person posts inappropriate or explicit material on the chat so everyone can see.** | Distressing for young people reading the chat  Potential reputational damage to organisation if parents became aware of incident(s).  May result in young person being criminalised. | Young people  Youth Workers  Organisation reputation | * Boundaries are set via the code of conduct for young people are reminded of these regularly. * Sanctions are made clear to the young people * Youth Workers aware of their roles with regards to safeguarding, recording and reporting the incident. * Systems are in place for recording the safeguarding issue – staff to follow clear guidelines in organisation’s safeguarding policy. * Procedure is in place for contacting parents. * If material is of a sexual or violent nature, police and social services may need to be contacted. |  |  |
| **Young person messages another young person privately sending inappropriate or explicit material** | Distressing and upsetting for young person receiving material.  Potential reputational damage to organisation if parents became aware of incident(s).  May result in young person being criminalised. | Young people  Youth Workers  Organisation reputation | * Boundaries are set via the code of conduct for young people are reminded of these regularly. * Sanctions are made clear to the young people * Youth Workers aware of their roles with regards to safeguarding, recording and reporting the incident. * Systems are in place for recording the safeguarding issue – staff to follow clear guidelines in organisation’s safeguarding policy. * Procedure is in place for contacting parents. * If material is of a sexual or violent nature, police and social services may need to be contacted. |  |  |
| **Young person reports seeing / hearing a child or parent / carer being abused verbally, physically, emotionally or sexually by parent / carer / sibling / other significant adult** | Distressing and upsetting for young person(s) witnessing it.  Danger of continuing abuse for person experiencing the abuse. | Young people  Staff | * Youth workers promote online support services and national helplines * Organisation’s Facebook page has list of useful links and contact numbers relating to abuse. * Referral system in place for mentoring & counselling services (online and telephone). * Youth Workers are clear on their role and who is responsible for reporting to police, social services or parents and who will make a record of the incident. * Youth Workers follow safeguarding procedures outlined in organisation’s safeguarding policy. * Supervision provided for youth workers |  |  |
| **Young person is upset from a comment and leaves group and doesn’t return** | Young person may not be contactable after the incident and issue cannot be resolved.  Potential reputational damage to organisation if parents/carers became aware of incident. | Young people  Organisation reputation | * Young people are reminded of the code of conduct regularly. * Sanctions are made clear to the young people. * Procedure in place for contacting the child that was upset outside of the group chat. * If the young person is still upset after contact with youth workers outside of the group chat, then parents may be contacted. * Incident would be captured in youth workers session notes and any actions required noted. |  |  |
| **Young person’s disability or lack of device suitable for WhatsApp means they cannot communicate / be part of the group** | Young person(s) may feel isolated and left out | Young People  Organisation reputation | * Youth workers to prepare supportive packs for young people unable to be part of the group chat. * Additional support and check-ins are undertaken with more vulnerable young people such as those with learning needs or physical disabilities. * Process in place for communicating with parents | Explore alternative methods of communication: phone call, email, letter. Consider supplying a device to vulnerable young person.  Possibly share resources via school websites/virtual classroom platforms.  Staff could be allocated specific vulnerable young people, in addition to mentees, to monitor. |  |
| **Confidentiality breech due to working from Home** | Confidentiality breech as others in the household could have access to confidential material or overhear conversations. | Young people  Staff  Organisation reputation | * All staff working from home, in line with Government Guidelines. * Staff wherever possible use their work computer / phone. If they need to use their own phone then staff will block / hide their number. * All notes will made & stored electronically on word documents & files will be password protected. * Case studies will be fully anonymised. * Staff will use a confidential space when making phone calls to young people. |  |  |
| **Staff isolation** | Loneliness, feeling out of the loop, feeling underproductive with work load / feeling overwhelmed with work load, Depressed, Unable to sleep / switch off from work | Staff  Young people | * Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager & Principal Youth Worker in touch with staff at least three times a week via wither phone call, email or WhatsApp. * Staff encouraged to share how they are feeling & reassured over uncertainties connected to their work. | Staff encouraged to post on the group WhatsApp regularly to support each other.  Staff furnished with appropriate mobile phones where needed.  Guidance for staff who are unfamiliar with Social Media.  Regular supervision. |  |
| **YP asks for a friend unknown to Level Two to be allowed to join the group** | The friend is not actually known to them in person and is a predator trying to access a group of young people | Young people  Organisation reputation | Only young people known to Level Two staff and who have contact details logged with Level Two will be permitted to join the groups. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the youth worker, in consultation with PM/DPM/PYW. | Prime access to young people, an attractive prospect for a predator. Please all be vigilant. |  |
| **Staff being contacted out of hours** | The groups become a helpline 24/7. Staff overwhelmed and mental health suffers unduly. | Staff | Clear boundaries set for use of the group, including times and appropriate topics for sharing on a group chat. Confidentiality.  Signposting to the Samaritans, the Police, ChildLine for out of hours services | Staff need a break for their own wellbeing. We do not offer a 24/7 service normally so we should not do this because we are on-line |  |