



Oaken Grove Community Centre
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Y-06 Substances Policy

Version	Date of change	Changed by	Trustee approval	Notes
1.00	28/12/2018	KBG		Transferred to new template
1.2	01/09/2021	ASB	✓	Updates and branding updates
1.3	19/08/2022	ASB		Yearly updates
1.4	04/09/2023	AS		Complete policy update
1.5	09/08/2024	AS	✓	Updates for trustee approval

HWYCA's Youth Provision Staff will offer support and guidance relating to the dangers of controlled or illegal substances (tobacco, vaping alcohol, and drugs). Youth Workers will deliver workshops to increase awareness of controlled or illegal substances, the effects of use, support in quitting or reducing, as well as referring young people onto further sources of information and support. This service is designed to support young people in making positive decisions about their health, whilst also keeping them informed about the effects of controlled or illegal substances. This policy should be strictly followed by all Youth Workers, ensuring that the team is offering a fair and consistent service.

In line HWYCA's policy on smoking and vaping at Oaken Grove Community Centre, young people over the age of 16 may be permitted to smoke or vape outside of the Community Centre at the bike shelter with permission from Youth Staff and at the discretion of the Youth Manager. This is to encourage those who choose to smoke or vape to come back into services without feeling like they have been kicked out of the Community Centre. This may only take place during sessions with the Outreach team. For any other groups on site such as Wednesday Youth Group, smoking or vaping is not permitted and the behaviour policy should be followed, including warnings and a call home if young people are seen to be smoking or vaping on site. Should any young people smoke or vape inside the building during any group, they should be immediately asked to leave the session and staff should consider allowing for a break week as a consequence. In this instance, staff should also consider calling home to speak with a parent/caregiver as this would be deemed unacceptable behaviour within the Community Centre.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Recording of Information

Youth Workers should record the names and ages of the young people who are accessing services related to substance use for monitoring purposes and if necessary safeguarding or emergency services follow ups. This record should be kept in a safe space and in line with GDPR.

A record should be kept of the number of young people accessing substance services such as leaflets or signposting. Notes should also be kept regarding any conversions taking place, be it informally or through targeted sessions on substance misuse. Names are not necessary in either case.

Youth Workers should also record any instances of young people accessing services under the influence so an accurate record can be established of what further support the Youth Provision needs to put in place. This should include date, names and any information about which substance they have used. This may also be used in future should a safeguarding referral need to be made.

Any information that is collected with names should be stored in a confidential, lockable filing cabinet. Only youth staff members with a full and enhanced DBS may have access to this information, and it must always remain locked.

Confidentiality and Disclosures

All Youth Workers must ensure that the young people are made aware of confidential practice, and the times when confidentiality must be broken. This information should be given at the start of a substance awareness session. All substance awareness services accessed and conversations with Youth Workers will be held as confidential, unless the situation falls under any of the circumstances below or the Youth Worker believes there is a Safeguarding risk, at which point the Safeguarding Policy should be followed.

- The young person is in a life threatening situation (including life threatening self-harm)
- Inaction might place them or someone else in a life threatening situation
- If a young person is threatened by an abuser
- Where the rights of other young people who have not been consulted would be infringed
- Where someone else could be harmed

Early Intervention Approach

If a young person attends any Outreach Youth Session under the influence of controlled or illegal substances, the Youth Workers must ensure their safety and wellbeing to start, and may offer them a safe space to be in. Community Ties considers its Outreach Team a form of Early Intervention and therefore Youth Workers should be mindful when approaching the subject to allow an opportunity to work with the young person on making healthy choices and decisions regarding substance use.

Youth Workers should use their discretion on contacting parents about a young person's use of a controlled or illegal substance and work with the young person on gaining their consent first to allow for open communication on this challenging subject. It is not mandatory to contact parents if the young person is deemed not at immediate risk, and Youth Workers should strongly consider if speaking with a parent is the correct action for Early Intervention. If in doubt, the Senior Youth Worker should first speak with the Delivery Coordinator and Youth Manager to decide what the Provision's duty of care needs to be. Youth Workers must immediately ring a relevant parent/carer if the young person is showing signs of distress or if emergency services have been called. Should the young person prove to be a threat to the safety of staff and or other young people, the police should be called immediately and should they show signs of ill health due to the substance use, emergency services should be called.

Young people under the influence of controlled or illegal substances who attend Wednesday Youth Group should be made aware that they cannot attend group under the influence. Staff should use their best judgement in sending the young people/person away. After an initial conversation with the young person and visual observation of their overall health and wellbeing, if the young person seems in distress or of ill health, they should be brought into the Community Centre and put in a private space where a Youth Worker can begin ringing the relevant emergency services and parent/caregiver. Given the age range of this group, the safety of the other young people must be considered a priority, and therefore if the young person is not in distress or ill health, they will not be permitted to attend under the influence. Youth Workers should encourage any young person attending

Wednesday Youth Group who is over the age of 13 and engaging in the use of controlled or illegal substances to attend an Outreach session where more targeted work can be done to support better and healthier choices.

If a young person under the age of 13 shows signs of being under the influence of any substance this should be treated as an emergency with a call to emergency services and parents/guardians immediately, and safeguarding procedures should be followed.

Disclosing Sensitive Information

If a young person discloses any concerning or worrying information to a Youth Worker (compliant with the guidelines above), including but not limited to use, supply, or distribution of controlled or illegal substances, this information should be passed onto the staff responsible for Safeguarding. The young person must be informed that the information will be shared, ideally before the disclosure itself has taken place, and a statement should be written using the words of the young person.

Any disclosure must be taken seriously, and with sensitivity. No promises should be made to the young person, other than an offer of appropriate support. In the event that a disclosure is made, this should be passed onto the Safeguarding Team detailed below and the Safeguarding Policy should be followed going forward.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Alysha Smith Contact Number: 07804500684

Safeguarding Named Person: Mairi Taylor-Gibson Contact Number: 07975941344

Informing Parents

When it is appropriate, Youth Workers should encourage a young person to confide in a parent or guardian about substance use or misuse, however a young person's wishes and rights to confidentiality must be respected. Particular care should be taken when the parent of a young person is personally known to a staff member. Young people must have the right that anything that they say or do within a Youth Work unit should not be passed home, unless their behaviour threatens the safety of other young people, staff and volunteers, or themselves, or the Safeguarding Team deems it appropriate to inform a parent for the safety of the young person.

It is not essential for a young person to consent to their parents being informed of substance use if the Safeguarding Team deems the young person at risk. In the first instance, if a parent seeks disclosure of confidential records or information relating to their young person's disclosed or witnessed substance use, Youth Workers should approach the young person in a sensitive and unbiased manner to request consent to share and encourage the young person to speak with their parents. If a young person declines their parent access and the Safeguarding Team has not deemed them at risk, the Safeguarding Team will explain this to the parent and ask that they follow up with the young person.

Young People Accessing Information and Services

Privacy

Services or discussions of a sensitive nature should be delivered in a private and secure location. If a Youth Worker is working alone with a young person, at least one other Youth Worker must be aware of their location.

Access to Stop Smoking Packs

It should not be assumed that a young person that smokes has made the decision to quit. If a young person requests a quit smoking pack, youth workers should signpost the young person to the nearest pharmacy which offers the free NHS service. Any stop smoking information provided to young people should be delivered through the NHS materials.

Access to Intervention and Substance Abuse Support

Should a young person request support in an ongoing battle with alcohol or substance misuse, Youth Workers must refer the young person onto a relevant agency with the young person's consent. Depending on their individual needs, the young person could be referred into a number of services outlined in the Youth Signposting information and MASH should only be used if the young person is deemed at significant risk. If the young person is over 14 years of age, they may consent to a referral into support services without the consent of a parent.

Training

All the youth staff delivering content referencing substance misuse must be trained to do so. Youth Workers must provide young people with relevant and up to date information regarding controlled or illegal substances. Youth staff should use the provided substance misuse kits during these sessions and must have training to deliver this work. Youth Workers must also have an understanding of youth wellbeing issues (including substance misuse, sexual health, homelessness, mental health issues and risky behaviours). Only Youth Workers with an enhanced DBS check dated within the last 2 years may work alone with a young person. Volunteers should not be left alone with a young person for any reason, even if the volunteer has accessed the relevant training courses and is DBS checked.

Disclosure to Young People

Although it is valuable when working with young people to share with them some of your own life experiences, youth workers should be cautious when expecting any young person to keep confidence. Explicit information regarding a Youth Worker's opinions or experience of controlled or illegal substances and should never be disclosed to a young person. Youth workers must keep all discussions with young people factual, and supportive.