

# Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group



## Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy

### **Adopted January 2024**

This policy outlines expectations of behaviour for members of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group and how to report any concerns about a member's behaviour.

This policy also contains guidance on safeguarding.

## **PART ONE: CODE OF CONDUCT**

**As a member of the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Study Group (YVBSG) you must:**

- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Contribute towards a friendly and constructive atmosphere.
- Listen to and respect other YVBSG members, householders and members of staff at events such as the Annual Day School and Recording Conference.
- Promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect.
- Treat everyone fairly and without prejudice or discrimination.
- Ensure language is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour and report any concerns without delay to the secretary of the group.
- Report any allegations/suspicious of abuse or fraud.
- Respect everyone's right to personal privacy and ensure that any personal information is kept secure and not disclosed.
- Ensure any YVBSG equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose. Wear relevant PPE and check that it is in proper working order.
- Always be alert for hazards and potential hazards that might cause accidents to you or others.
- Inform a team leader or member of the committee if you feel uncomfortable, for whatever reasons, carrying out the task that you have been assigned.
- Comply with the law when undertaking YVBSG business; this includes copyright law.
- Pay any monies due for attending YVBSG events in accordance with directions from the event organiser.

**You must not:**

- Allow concerns or allegations to go unreported.
- Put yourself or others at risk.
- Act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive.
- Bring the reputation of the YVBSG into disrepute.

**The YVBSG Committee, collectively and individually, will:**

- Act legally and properly - by acting with integrity, honesty, within the law and our constitution, and in the group's best interests at all times.
- Create a safe space in which everyone is encouraged and feels able to speak.

- Positively challenge each other but avoid being confrontational. Ask open questions that will help us work together to explore/test an idea.
- Think, then speak, what can I say succinctly that will most help the committee?
- Feel able to ask the questions that need to be asked; there is no elephant in the room or, if there is, we're all working together to get it out.
- Act strategically by thinking about the longer term.
- Focus on solutions by talking about the past only to learn from it, avoid talking about what we can't do and, instead, focus on what we could do.
- Welcome differing viewpoints - respect each other's right to hold a different opinion and recognise our own right to do so too.
- Everyone has something to give and something to learn.
- No one person is allowed to dominate the conversation to the exclusion of others.
- Give permission to everyone else to remind us when we inadvertently stray from the above.
- Accept our responsibility for ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

## **Consequences**

Should any member of the YVBSG deviate from the code of conduct, this should be reported to the secretary of the group who will convene a meeting of the committee to discuss next steps. (Should the concerns be about the secretary, these should be reported to the chair of the YVBSG.)

Options available include, but are not limited to:

- Accepting an apology from a member for deviance from the code of conduct.
- Suspension from the YVBSG.
- Cessation of YVBSG membership.
- Referral to the police if criminal activity is suspected.

## PART TWO: SAFEGUARDING

During our YVBSG activities we meet both members of the group and members of the public. To safeguard ourselves, we should ensure that we are not left alone with a child, young person and/or vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations may be about something that is going on now, something that may happen in the future, or something that happened in the past. Concerns or allegations about abuse in the past (called non-recent abuse) will be treated as seriously as abuse concerns or allegations which may be happening now.

There may be a situation whereby a member of the YVBSG may have concerns, or be made aware of concerns, regarding a child, young person and/or adult, such as when:

- A child, young person and/or adult discloses abuse;
- Someone discloses concern for a child, young person and/or adult;
- Someone notices signs of potential abuse of a child, young person and/or adult;
- A child, young person and/or adult makes a disclosure about their own behaviour towards another child, young person and/or adult;
- Someone witnesses concerning behaviours during a YVBSG event or during building recording.

### **Guidelines for responding to a person disclosing abuse**

Whenever a child, young person and/or adult reports that they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing harm to others, the initial response should be limited to listening carefully to the child, young person and/or adult. If someone makes a disclosure this might be the only time they will tell someone about what is happening.

#### **Respond**

Do:

- Listen.
- Take what is said seriously.
- Only use open questions (open questions begin with words like: who, what, when, where and how. Open questions cannot be answered with a 'yes' or 'no').
- Remain calm.
- Take into account the person's age and level of understanding.
- Check, if face to face, whether they mind you taking notes while they talk so you can make sure you capture the information accurately. At the end you can check with them that you have understood everything correctly.
- Offer reassurance that disclosing is the right thing to do.
- Establish only as much information as is needed to be able to tell the statutory authorities what is believed to have happened, when and where.
- Check out what the person hopes to result from the disclosure.
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information).
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Investigate.
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do a physical or medical examination.

### **Record**

- Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
- Record the date, time, place and the actual words used.
- Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.
- Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

### **Report**

- If there is immediate danger to a child/adult, contact the police. Ring 999.
- Otherwise avoid delay and take action: talk immediately, within 24 hours, to your social services for the area in which the child lives.

We would never investigate any allegations of abuse, but always pass on concerns.

## **How do I know a child or young person is being abused?**

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

The term 'child' is used to include all children and young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Child abuse is categorised as:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect

## **Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation About a Child**

- If a child is at risk of immediate harm, take yourself out of danger and call the police. Ring 999.
- Referrals of suspected abuse are made to children's social care for the area where the child is living or is found. If a crime has also been committed, the police should also be contacted.

## **How do I know that an adult is being abused?**

Some adults are particularly vulnerable to being hurt or abused because they have a disability, illness, or impairment, and need help and support. Being dependent on others can sometimes make them vulnerable and at risk of abuse, very often from people they know.

## **What is meant by adult abuse and neglect?**

Adult abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse happens when a person who is unable to protect themselves is ill-treated or neglected. It may be a one-off incident or may happen repeatedly over time.

Anyone can harm an adult who is not able to protect themselves – for example, a partner, relative, friend, neighbour or care worker – and the abuse may take place anywhere, in a public or private place.

Adult abuse is categorised as:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse – this is often called hate crime.
- Institutional abuse
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect

## **Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation About an Adult**

If an adult is at risk of immediate harm, take yourself out of danger and call the police. Ring 999.

Referrals of suspected abuse are made to adult social care for the area where the adult is living or is found. If a crime has also been committed, the police should also be contacted.