

Safeguarding Procedure Y Canberra Region

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, please contact the Police by calling 000.

If you are unsure if it is an emergency, please contact the Police Assistance Line by calling 131 444.

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PURPOSE

At the Y, our Safeguarding Vision is to ensure that all Children and Young People are empowered to feel safe and be safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities.

The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure that all Y People are supported to embody this vision by responding to, and reporting, all safeguarding concerns in a way that shows them that we take their safety – as well as our moral and legal responsibilities – seriously.

STAY SAFE, TELL SOMEONE PROGRAM

The Y's Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program has been developed in consultation with over 500 Children and Young People throughout Australia. The Program, which is informed by nudge theory, empowers Children and Young People – as well as Y People – to tell someone when they see, hear or feel something that worries or concerns them.

This Procedure provides the formal process to ensure that the right people are informed and the right actions are taken when a Child or Young Person does speak up.



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SCOPE

This Procedure applies to all Y People. This includes all Board Members, Managers, Staff of all levels, Volunteers and Contractors.

POLICY STATEMENT

Y Canberra Region commits to creating and maintaining an environment that ensures all people involved in Y activities, programs or services act in the best interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing.

We respect and support the diverse needs of all children and young people including those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, are from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), have a disability or identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex or Asexual (LGBTQIA+). Children and young people's ideas and responses to diversity are influenced by what they see and hear around them. This is why we ensure diversity and inclusion is reflected in everything we do at the Y.

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Managing Disclosures

Respect

Take their disclosure seriously. Avoid denial or distrustful responses. They need to feel believed- the disclosure is not the time to investigate.



Listen

Let them guide the conversation. Try not to interrupt or finish their sentences. If you are unsure, ask them further open questions.



Don't

Don't make promises or assumptions.

We cannot guarantee what will happen next and promises can lead to disappointment.



Reassure

Let them know they're allowed to speak up and that they're doing the right thing! We are here to help. Let them know the next steps.

If in doubt, contact the Safeguarding Team or your Manager

Write

Make sure to write notes as soon as possible afterwards. Include direct quotes of the exact words that they used if possible.



Managing Disclosures

Listen. Let them lead the conversation. Ask open questions. "What do you mean by that?"
Respect. Let them feel believed. Avoid denial as this could discourage them in future.
Avoid making promises or assumptions.
Reassure. Let them know they're doing the right thing. "You're allowed to speak up."
Write. Make a record of the disclosure as soon as possible, including direct quotes if possible.



Fold or cut along the dashed lines to keep the card-sized version in your lanyard or wallet.

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PREPARING TO MAKE A REPORT

Information to have at hand when making a report:

The relevant child protection agency will ask the Y Person to provide as many details as possible. They will want to know about the events that led to the report and how that has impacted on the child or young person. A Confidential SOLV report should also be completed and will assist with gathering and providing this information. The information supplied assists in determining the assessment by the agency of your concerns.

Information regarding the child or young person:

Name including aliases; age; date of birth; home address.

Information about the parents/guardians:

Name; address; phone contact; custody or care details.

Details of concerns/risk of significant harm:

This could include outcome from the Mandatory Reporting Guide (MRG) (NSW)

Observations:

Provide as much detail as possible such as dates, specific details (example: a bruise – colour, size location on body, photos may be taken with a Y device under management supervision, uploaded to SOLV as a Confidential Report and then images immediately deleted from all devices)

Details of any disclosure:

What the child or young person said to you.

Whether the child or young person is aware of the report:

Did you let the child or young person know that you would be contacting the agency?

Other information:

This could include conversations with parents/guardians, recorded observations of yourself or other Y Persons over a period of time, a description of the observations.

Contact details:

Your contact details.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

It is imperative to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any person involved in a child protection matter including the child, family and anyone involved in an investigation.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

When responding to allegations against a Y Person, the Y also has a responsibility to ensure that Y People are treated fairly and that the rights of each individual are respected during any such investigation as well as during any applicable disciplinary process.

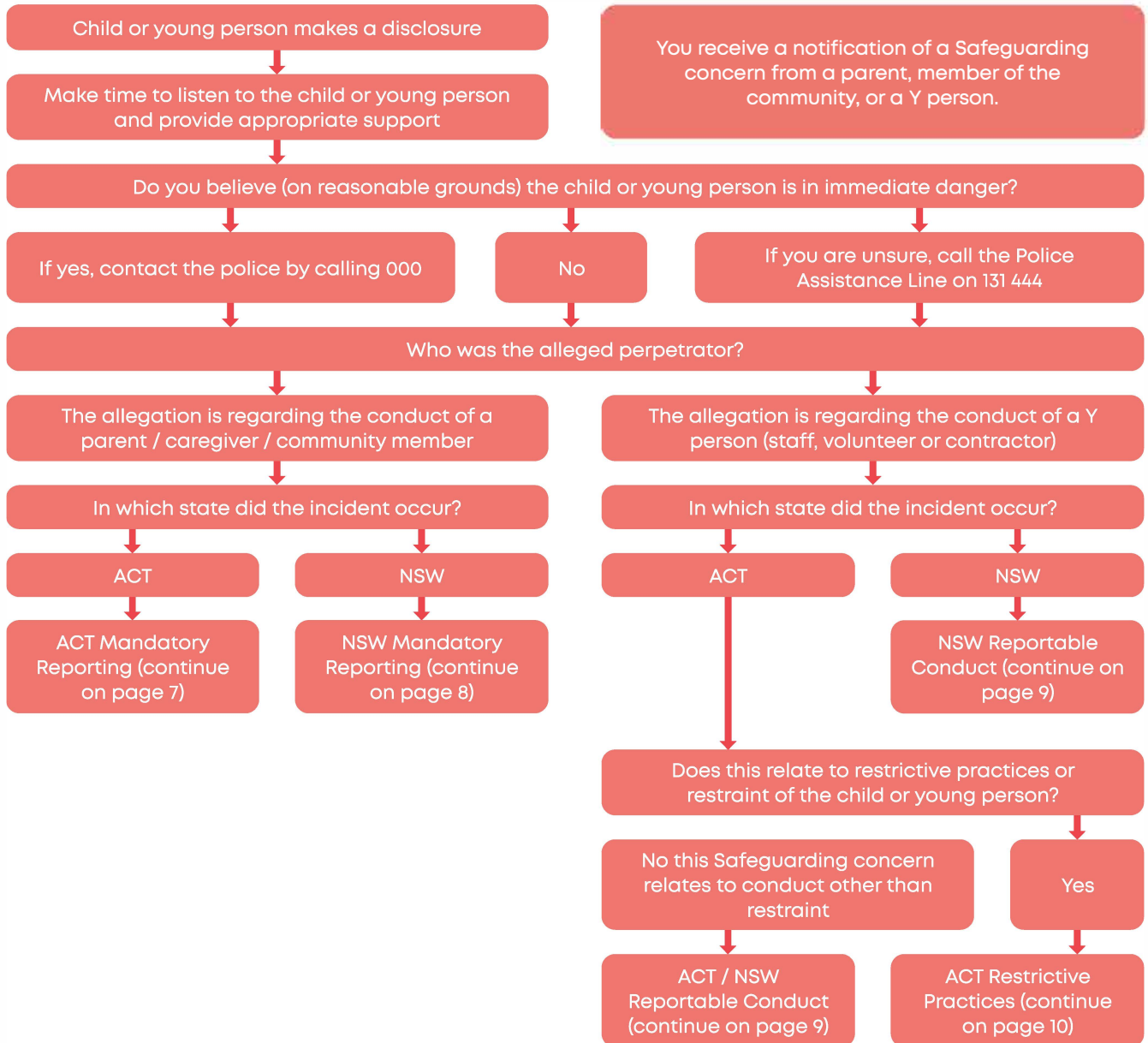
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Safeguarding Procedure

How to use:

Follow the flow chart to identify the appropriate reporting process.

If you are unsure and need clarification on this process, or categorising incidents, please contact your manager or the Safeguarding team.



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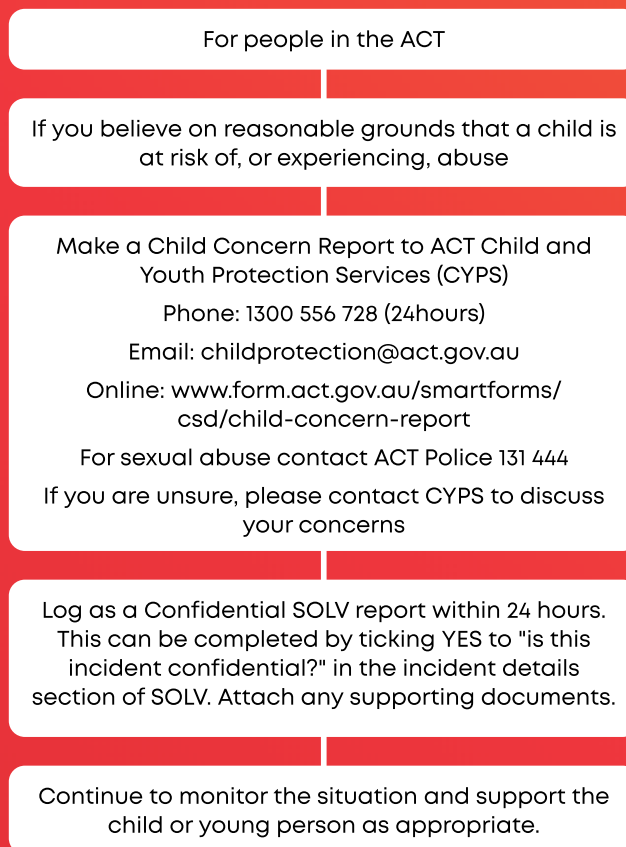
Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legal requirement for certain professionals to provide information to authorities if, through the course of their work (paid or unpaid), they believe on reasonable grounds a child may be experiencing or at risk of abuse.

It is important to remember in your role at the Y, you as an individual need to report any concerns or disclosures of abuse. The Safeguarding Team is available to support you when making reports, however it is your legal responsibility as a mandated reporter to ensure you report any belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is at risk.

The below flowchart will assist you to identify the process.

Mandatory Reporting is the legislative requirement for selected individuals whom have regular contact with children and young people to report concerns of child abuse and/or neglect.



Report to Child Youth Protection Services



Safeguarding at the Y Canberra Region



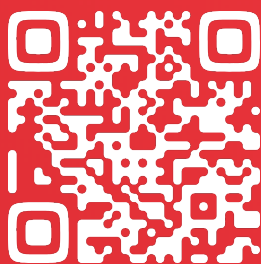
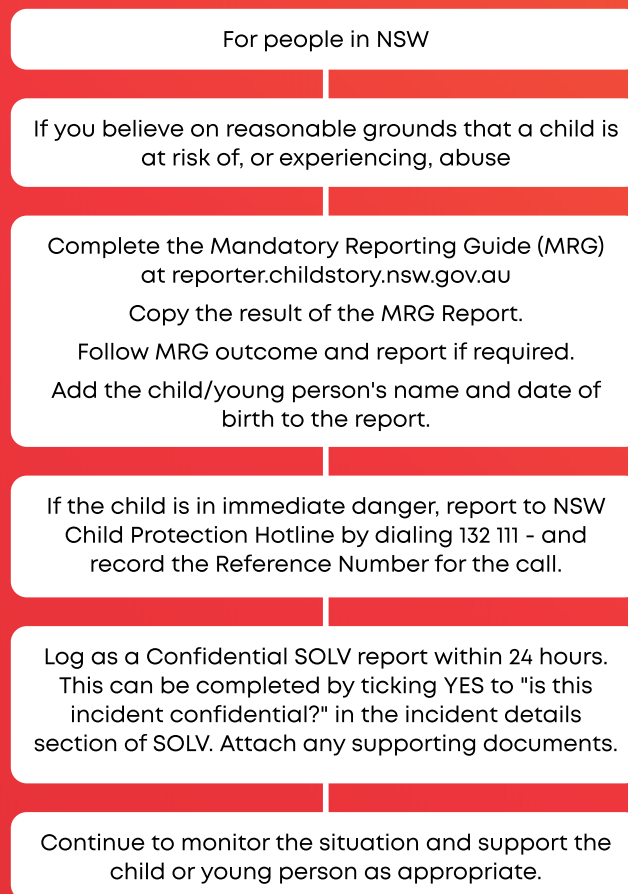
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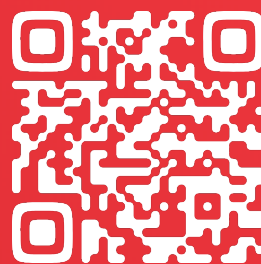
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The below flowchart will assist you to identify the process.

Mandatory Reporting is the legislative requirement for selected individuals whom have regular contact with children and young people to report concerns of child abuse and/or neglect.



Use the Mandatory Reporter Guide



Safeguarding at the Y Canberra Region

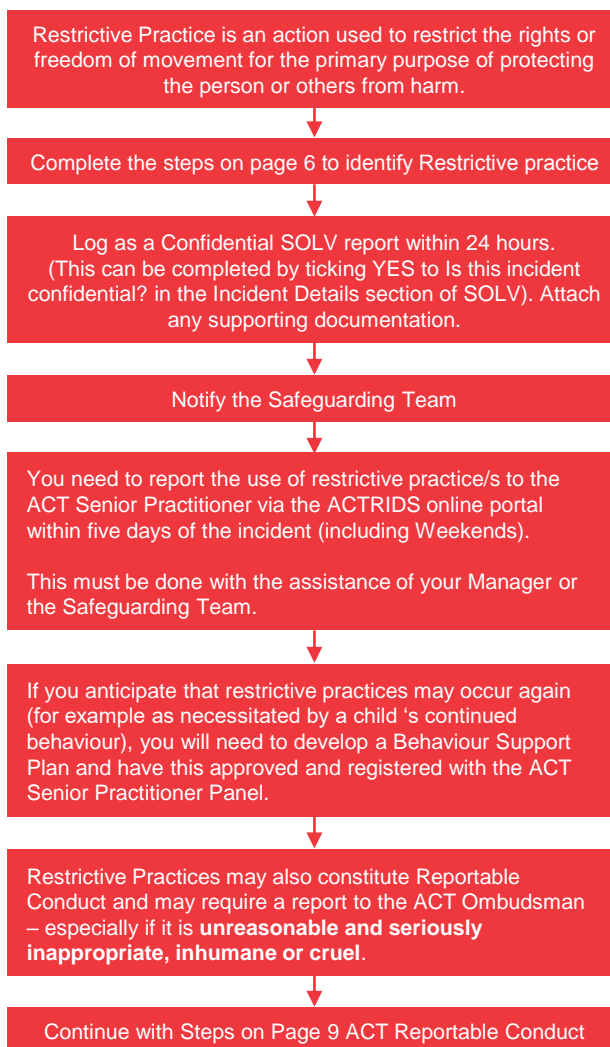
REPORTABLE CONDUCT PROCESS

Allegations or convictions of abuse or misconduct towards children or young people by an employee or volunteer.



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RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES (ACT)



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INVESTIGATIONS

Y Canberra Region's People and Culture team and the relevant business unit manager will investigate allegations involving Y People in accordance with the *Y Canberra Region Incident Management Policy and Procedure*. There may be occasions where the investigation is conducted by an external agency.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The Y will assist in addressing the support needs of those impacted by the allegation including: the child and their family; the person against whom the complaint is made by, for example, offering professional counselling; other Y People impacted by the allegations.

Y People have the right to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) during and after the Mandatory Reporting Process.

The EAP provides professional, confidential, free counselling, 24hrs a day, 7 days a week.
Phone: 1300 361 008

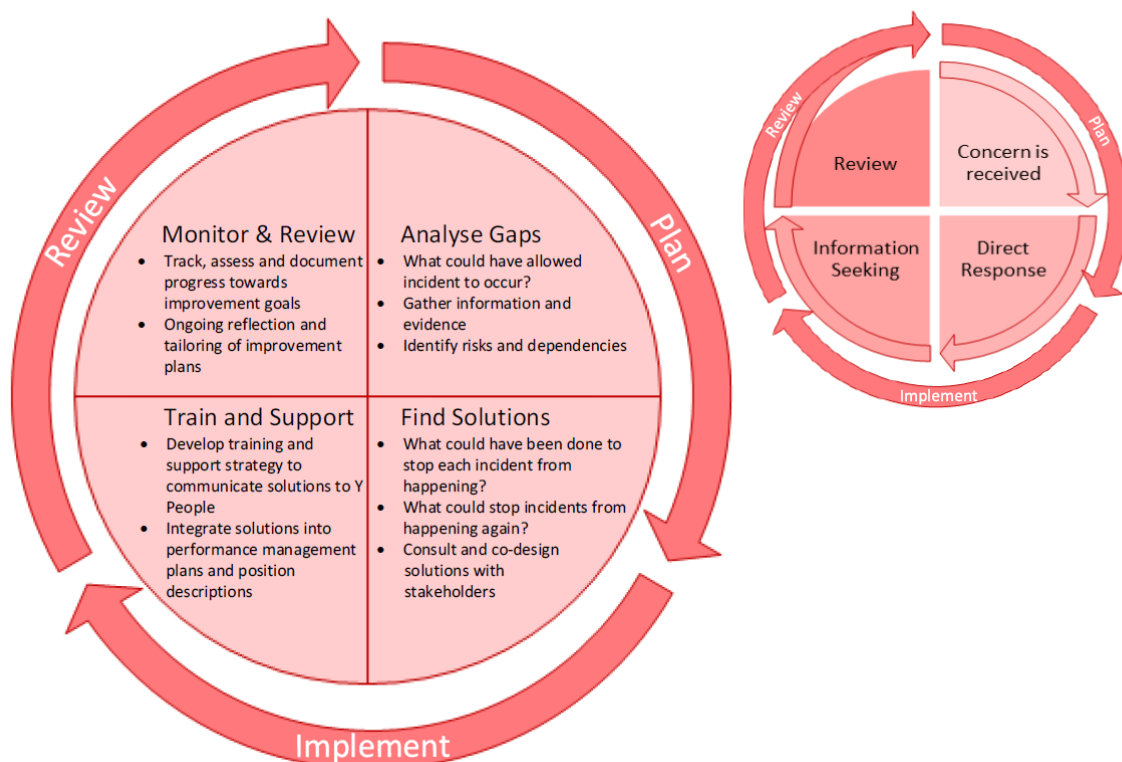
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REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Each concern is an opportunity for the Y to improve its safeguarding practice, so it is important to ensure that we review how we responded to each concern.

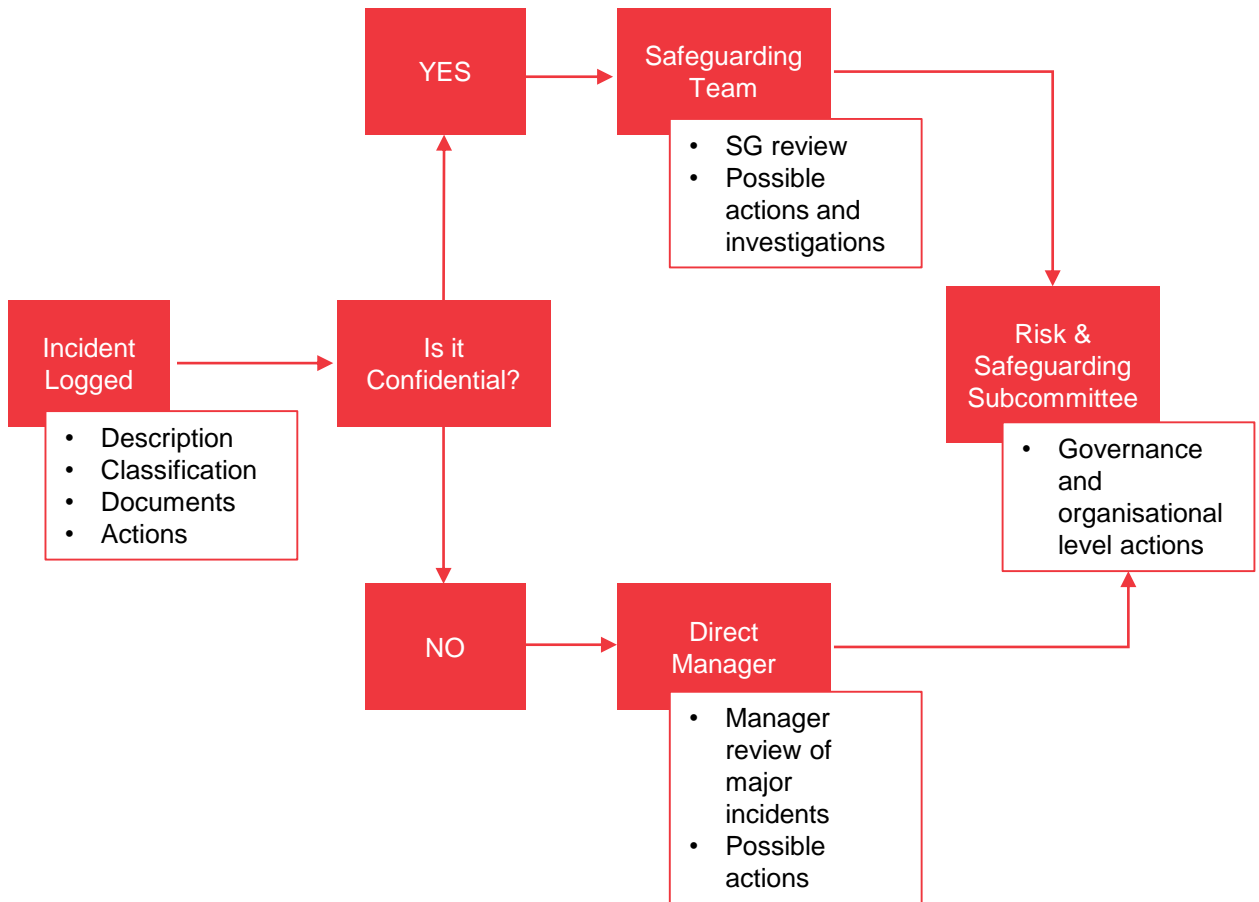
This is enabled by considering what we did, what we could have done, what resources were available and what we think *should be* available next time. This is achieved through utilisation of the Lessons Learned Tool. In doing this, we can identify patterns and improve the resources and support available to Y People who work hard to reduce the amount of times these concerns happen.

The graphic below shows how the review of each concern feeds into the larger continuous improvement cycle and informs our future-focused business planning in areas such as training and policy review.



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INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SOLV) PROCESS



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DEFINITIONS

Child or young person	The Y considers a child or young person to be a person under the age of 18 years, including all Y people e.g.: staff and volunteers.
Y People / Y Person	Includes paid employees, volunteers, Board Directors, student placements and any consultants or contractors engaged by the Y Canberra Region
Client	Any user of Y Canberra Region services including children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians and facility users.
Sexual Abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult involves a child or young person in any sexual activity. Sexual abuse also occurs when a child or young person involves another child or young person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit and can include making sexual comments to a child or young person, engaging children or young people to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child or young person's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse. Encouraging a child or young person to view pornographic magazines, websites, videos and committing sexual acts in the presence of children and young people is also sexual abuse.
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child or young person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child or young person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

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DEFINITIONS

Physical Abuse	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child or young person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally, or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child.</p> <p>Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking. It also includes giving children or young people harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child or young person at risk of being hurt.</p>
Neglect	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a child or young person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention to the extent that the child or young person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available to the family.</p>
Witnessing Family Violence	<p>Witnessing family violence is a specific form of emotional and psychological abuse. This occurs when children or young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children and young people. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
Sexual Exploitation	<p>Sexual exploitation occurs when children or young people are forced into sexual activities that are exploitation then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children or young people who are forced into prostitution.</p>

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DEFINITIONS

Harm	<p>Harm, to a child or young person, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child or young person’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation; a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Bullying	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats) Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting) Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating) Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Grooming	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child or young person with a view to abusing them at some stage.</p>
Nudge Theory	<p>Nudge theory is a flexible and modern concept for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding how people think, make decisions, and behave, Helping people improve their thinking and decisions, Managing change of all sorts, and <p>Identifying and modifying existing unhelpful influences on people</p>

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Y People including paid employees, volunteers, Board Directors, student placements, and consultants or contractors engaged by Y Canberra Region.

Department / Area	Role / Responsibility
Board Members	Current members of the Y Canberra Region governing body (Board) are responsible to maintain and ensure this policy and the strategic direction of the Y Canberra Region.
CEO	Lead the governance of all Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.
Managers	Ensure effective implementation of the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Ensure all applicable Y People undertake the relevant training for Mandatory reporters. Offer EAP if deemed necessary.
Safeguarding Team	Review and update the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Provide advice and guidance if Y People are placed on leave during investigation
People and Culture	Support all applicable Y People undertake the relevant Safeguarding training for on commencement. Offer EAP if deemed necessary
Coordinators / Directors	Ensure that reporting occurs in a timely manner and that all Y People are offered support during the process.
Y People – Employees, Volunteers, student placements, consultants and contractors	Adhere to all Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Seek assistance for support if unsure of the reporting process or any question relating to the safety or wellbeing of children

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

(LINKS TO PROCEDURES, LEGISLATION, FORMS AND WORK PRACTICES)

- Y Canberra Region Safe Behaviour Policy 2021
- Y Canberra Region Incident Management Policy 2020
- Y Canberra Region Interactions with Children Policy 2020
- SOLV Incident Management System
- Keeping Children & Young People Safe, November 2019
- ACT Ombudsman Act 1989 (Reportable Conduct)
- Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- ACT Senior Practitioner Act 2018

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To be reviewed every 2 years or as legislation is reviewed and updated.

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