



Hereford Yoga CIC Safeguarding Adults Policy March 2026 Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines

Purpose of this policy

This document is for Hereford Yoga CIC (HYCIC) teachers, board members and the general public attending classes, workshops and other events and activities organised or hosted/run by HYCIC.

It aims to provide protection for adults who may be “at risk” or are vulnerable and are attending activities organised or hosted/run by HYCIC and protection for teachers working with “at risk” or vulnerable adults. It sets out information and practices contributing to the prevention of harm of ‘adults at risk’ and a course of action to be followed if harm is suspected.

HYCIC recognises its responsibility to safeguard adults who may be deemed to be “at risk” when visiting classes or involved in other activities organised or hosted by HYCIC to ensure that:

regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background, all vulnerable adults have a positive and enjoyable experience of yoga at Hereford Yoga CIC in a safe and supportive environment.

Context and structure of policy

This policy follows the guidelines of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Framework (HSF) and Iyengar Yoga UK (IYUK). It recognises the specific context of HYCIC in that:

- The company provides services suitable for vulnerable adults
- Training in yoga may involve touching vulnerable adults in order to adjust, to maintain safety or perfect learning of yoga asanas
- There is the potential for teachers and trainers of vulnerable adults in any context to develop overly influential, inappropriate, exploitative, or actively abusive relationships with such adults

- That the safe, supportive, and involved relationship between effective teachers and students of yoga may result in disclosures of abuse

To address the priority of safeguarding vulnerable adults in the specific context of HYCIC, the policy is designed to ensure:

- An emphasis on prevention of the potential for abuse by ensuring tight governance around recruitment of teachers (and where appropriate volunteers)
- The creation and maintenance of an environment opposed to all forms of abuse through its shared values, culture and interventions to prevent the conditions for abuse
- That where abuse is suspected it will be swiftly and effectively reported and addressed.

A culture of prevention at HYCIC

Iyengar Yoga is a practice associated with developing self-confidence, body awareness, boundaried relationships and self-assertion. Appropriate teaching of Iyengar yoga is therefore inherently protective of vulnerable adults. HYCIC has clear policies and procedures to ensure only appropriately qualified and accredited Iyengar teachers are employed. HYCIC actively fosters an open and collaborative community of teachers and discourages closed, exclusive, controlling or otherwise unhealthy relationships to develop between teachers and students of any age. Teacher meetings are held on at least an annual basis.

Carers of vulnerable adults are encouraged to form relationships with the teachers and take an interest in the work of HYCIC and the vulnerable adult's progress and wellbeing. Carers are encouraged to discuss any concerns that may arise and will also be made aware of the safeguarding policy and complaints process.

Designated Members of Staff for Safeguarding (DMS)

HYCIC has two designated "Safeguarding Leads" (Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead) who take primary responsibility for:

- 1/ being a first point of contact for any vulnerable adult protection-related concerns
- 2/ sharing information with the staff team (HYCIC Board and teachers)
- 3/ organising staff induction and training for safeguarding
- 4/ accessing information and liaising with outside agencies to make sure information is up to date
- 5/ collating information when there are concerns about a vulnerable adult and contacting the appropriate professionals to make a referral or to seek further advice.
- 6/ The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will be appropriately trained, and update/refresh training and knowledge every three years.

HYCIC • Safeguarding Lead and Chair (Kate Jones 07711 577563) • Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Alex Cole 07483 248939)

Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board • 01432 260715 (weekdays 9am-5pm) • 0330 123 9309 (after 5pm, weekends and public holidays) • Email: safeguarding@herefordshire.gov.uk

Definitions

An 'adult at risk' is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has need for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs).
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Adults with care and support needs' could include people who:

- Have dementia
- Have learning disabilities
- Have mental health problems
- Have drug, alcohol or substance dependency
- Have physical or sensory disabilities
- Have been bereaved, suffered grief and loss
- Have through age or illness are dependent on other people to help them
- Live with domestic abuse
- Are homeless
- Are refugees or asylum seekers and for any reason may be considered not to have 'mental capacity'.

Whether or not a person is "at risk" or "vulnerable" in these cases will vary according to circumstances. It should be noted that a person with a physical disability is not necessarily vulnerable or at risk, though they could be. Also, people who are generally emotionally and psychologically stable in most aspects of their lives may, on occasion find themselves vulnerable or at risk, for example when they have been bereaved or suffered grief and loss. Each case must be judged on its own merits.

What is 'mental capacity'?

Whether a person has mental capacity is a matter of specialist assessment. However, it may be useful to know that mental capacity is the ability to make a particular decision. An adult may be at risk if they are unable to make a decision due to illness, disability, poor mental health, dementia, a learning disability or something else that may impair their judgment.

A person may be deemed to be 'without capacity' if they cannot:

- Understand the decision
- Retain the information
- Weigh up the information

- Communicate their decision...about matters such as finance, social care or medical treatment

Policy Guidance

Harm can occur in our dealings with others in classes and other formal face-to-face activities; it may not be deliberate. It can also occur in personal friendships, especially where one may be seen by the other to be in a position of trust and authority because of their greater experience. We recognise that this may happen even where the more experienced person does not see her/himself as in a position of authority.

Protecting those with psychological disorders

We are aware that those attending Iyengar yoga classes and workshops may include adults experiencing psychological disorders ranging from mild to severe. We recognise that we do not have the professional skills to diagnose or help people with psychological disorders in our capacity as Iyengar yoga teachers. If a situation arises however where we believe a person to be at risk of suicide or self-harm, or to pose a risk to others, we will alert our Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will refer to local mental health services and/or the police as appropriate.

What is “Abuse”?

The term ‘Abuse’ covers a number of ways in which a person may be deliberately harmed (legally or illegally), usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust or authority over them, or who may be perceived by that person to be in a position of power, trust or authority over them; The harm may be physical, psychological or emotional, or it may exploit the vulnerability of the person in more subtle ways. However, harm can also occur less consciously, through naivety or lack of awareness.

Types of abuse

The 2014 Care Act identifies nine types of abuse, all of which have a psychological/emotional aspect:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Domestic abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Financial or material abuse

People who might abuse

Abuse may happen anywhere and may be carried out by anyone, e.g:

- Teachers, students, and employees/employers

- Parents
- People you consider good and trusted friends
- Informal carers, family, friends, neighbours
- Strangers

What to do if you have a concern

All allegations or suspicions should be taken seriously and reported to the HCYC Safeguarding Leads. Vulnerable adults themselves, carers, teachers, directors and members of the public can raise any concerns or potential referrals with either of the Safeguarding Leads or directly make a referral for safeguarding to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Board, if they prefer to do so.

Referrals should be made using the most up to date form on the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) website. Referrals will contain:

- details of the concern/allegation
- name, address, and d.o.b.
- details of setting and who involved
- any other relevant information including ethnicity, specific vulnerability issues etc

Where allegations are made against anyone working on behalf of or closely connected to HCYC, The Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead will work together to manage the situation which would usually result in the immediate suspension of the member of staff from any direct contact with children or vulnerable adults. If the concern involves a Safeguarding Lead, then the other lead could be contacted, or advice sought from HSAB, using the contacts listed at the end of this policy. Any upheld allegations will be dealt with according to HSAB procedures and the law, including notification of the DBS.

What to do if an adult alleges abuse:

Stay calm.

Listen patiently.

Reassure the person they are doing the right thing by telling you.

Clarify issues of confidentiality early on. Make it clear that you may have to discuss their concerns with others, on a strictly need-to-know basis, if at all possible, with their permission

Explain what you are going to do.

Write a factual account of what you have seen and heard immediately.

Do not:

Appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry.

Press the individual for details.

Make comments or judgments other than to show concern. Your responsibility is to take them seriously, not to decide whether what they are saying is true.

Promise to keep secrets.

Confront the alleged perpetrator.

Attempt to investigate a criminal allegation. This is the job of the police and to attempt this could prejudice a court case and put the person in danger.

What to do next

- Your first concern is the safety and wellbeing of the person bringing the allegation. Do not be distracted from this by loyalty to the person who has been accused or your desire to maintain the good name of Iyengar yoga or your centre. It is important to maintain objectivity.
- If you think the person is in immediate danger phone social services or the police straight away. A telephone referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.
- Every person has a legal right to privacy under the International Convention on Human Rights; therefore, if possible, you need to get the person's consent to share the information they have given you, within the limits described here. However, if necessary, it is legal to pass on information without their consent if you believe they are at risk of significant harm.
- Tell the HYCIC Safeguarding officers.
- Make detailed factual notes about the discussion as soon as possible, including the time, date and location. Give them to the safeguarding officers. The Safeguarding officers only will keep them either locked away or password protected.
- Do not attempt to investigate a criminal allegation. This is the job of the police, and to attempt this could prejudice a court case and put the person in danger.

Criminal Allegations

The Safeguarding Officers will report criminal allegations to the police. They will report that there has been a Safeguarding incident, that the HYCIC has addressed it according to its safeguarding policies and the police have been informed.

Secure, confidential record-keeping

HYCIC understands its responsibility for secure and careful record-keeping. The Safeguarding Lead will keep a detailed log of all safeguarding-related incidents as well as conversations and actions related to them. These are kept either in a locked cabinet or safe or in a password-protected electronic file on our computer system. It is the Safeguarding Lead's duty to investigate and decide upon a suitable method to store records with sufficient security. Access to these records is only for the Safeguarding Lead and one or two others approved by HYCIC. HYCIC understands that many abuse cases come to light 10 or more years later, so we are required to keep its Safeguarding records safe for at least 10 years. This will include relevant documents and related correspondence. All such documents will be securely retained.

Reviewing our policies annually

All HYCIC safeguarding policies will be reviewed annually and the review recorded in the minutes of the board meetings.

Prevent Duty

Exposing or involving vulnerable adults in extremist beliefs and/or terrorism is in itself a form of abuse and is covered by this policy. Training associated with this policy will include an

awareness of Prevent Duties and the need for specific and timely referral to police when warranted.

Whistleblowing

Anyone connected to the centre who has ANY CONCERNS ABOUT MISCONDUCT of board members or teachers is encouraged to raise them with the Safeguarding Leads or the Director of the company. These concerns do not need to be directly related to safeguarding issues. Concerns so raised will be dealt with in line with Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding raises issues of confidentiality which must be clearly understood by all concerned. Board members and teachers have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with others, particularly investigative agencies and social services. If any vulnerable adult or their carer confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies. Within that context, the confiding individual must, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Where possible, consent must be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority. Where a disclosure has been made, staff must let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result. Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all, and the wishes and feelings of vulnerable adults taken into account as far as possible within the wider framework of safeguarding legislation and processes.

Routine and Emergency Contact details:

- HYCIC • Safeguarding Lead and Chair (Kate Jones 07711 577563) • Deputy Safeguarding Lead (Alex Cole 07483 248939)
- Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board • 01432 260715 (weekdays 9am-5pm) • 0330 123 9309 (after 5pm, weekends and public holidays) • Email: safeguarding@herefordshire.gov.uk • Post: Safeguarding Team, Herefordshire Council, Elgar House, Holmer Road, Hereford HR4 9BD
- Emergencies If someone is injured or in immediate danger: • Telephone: 999 - police, fire, ambulance If there is no emergency but you think a crime may have been committed: • Telephone: West Mercia Police on 101 – referrals can also be made online with West Mercia Police.
- A further useful list of contacts (e.g. domestic violence, modern slavery) can be found here: <https://herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/partner-resources/useful-contacts>

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