

Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark

Terms of Reference



Purpose and Scope

The **Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark** aims to recognise and promote safe practices within organisations providing youth services in Milton Keynes. It serves as an assurance mechanism, ensuring that correct safeguards are in place to protect children and young people. The mark signifies adherence to safeguarding standards. For background information on the mark please see annex 1 at the end of the document or visit [Milton Keynes Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/milton-keynes-youth-provision-safe-practice-mark)

Objectives

The objectives of the Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark are as follows:

1. **Assurance:** To provide assurance that all children and young people who use the centres are robustly safeguarded at all times.
2. **Standardisation:** To standardise the practice of setting up and running youth provision services in Milton Keynes.
3. **Annual Assessment:** To review and renew the mark on an annual basis, ensuring ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements and responsibilities.

Responsibilities

1. Safe Practice Mark Panel

The panel, made up of qualified and designated safeguarding lead training youth workers and social workers, responsible for administering the Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark, shall:

- **Criteria Definition:** Establish clear and measurable safeguarding criteria that organisations must meet to qualify for the mark.
- **Application Review:** Evaluate applications for the mark, ensuring alignment with established standards.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** Upon resubmission, annually review organisations' safeguarding policies, procedures, and practices.
- **Support and Guidance:** Provide support to organisations seeking the mark, including guidance on safeguarding best practices.

2. Organisations Seeking the Mark

Organisations applying for the Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark shall:

- **Application Process:** Follow the defined application process, submitting the required evidence of compliance with safeguarding, and associated standards
- **Annual Renewal:** Commit to annual renewal and re-evaluation of safeguarding practices.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Ensure the presence of an appropriate and trained designated safeguarding lead within the organisation.
- **DBS Checks:** Verify that appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are conducted for staff and volunteers.
- **Training:** Provide safeguarding training for all relevant staff and volunteers

Evaluation and Review

The Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark shall undergo regular evaluation:

- **Annual Assessment:** The Safe Practice Mark Panel in partnership with MK LADO and MK MASH shall assess the effectiveness and impact of the mark annually.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Stakeholders may provide feedback on the implementation and relevance of the mark – please email YPSafepractice@milton-keynes.gov.uk to do this.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Based on feedback and emerging safeguarding trends, the criteria may be adjusted.

Confidentiality and Transparency

- **Confidentiality:** All information submitted during the application process shall remain confidential.
- **Transparency:** The criteria, evaluation process, and decisions shall be transparent to stakeholders.

LADO or Police Investigation

In the event that an organisation holding the Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark becomes the subject of a LADO or police investigation, the following steps shall be taken:

1. **Immediate Notification:** The organisation must promptly notify the Safe Practice Mark Panel, within 24 hours, if they become aware of any investigation involving allegations of harm or abuse related to children or young people. This notification should include relevant details such as the nature of the investigation, individuals involved, and the timeline.
2. **Temporary Suspension:** The Safe Practice Mark Panel and MK LADO reserves the right to temporarily suspend the organisation's use of the mark during the investigation. This suspension will remain in effect until the investigation concludes and a determination is made. A suspension letter will be sent out within 24 hours of MKCC hearing about the investigation.
3. **Collaboration with Authorities:** The organisation shall fully cooperate with the LADO, police, and any other relevant authorities. This includes providing requested information, facilitating interviews, and adhering to relevant safeguarding protocols.
4. **Review and Reinstatement:** Once the investigation concludes, the Safe Practice Mark Panel will review the findings. If it is found that the allegations are not substantiated the mark *may* be reinstated. However, if serious safeguarding failures are identified, the mark may be permanently revoked.
5. **Transparency:** The Safe Practice Mark Panel will communicate transparently with stakeholders about the investigation process and its impact on the organisation's status.

Revocation for Misrepresentation

If an organization is discovered to have provided false or misleading information during the application process for the Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark, the following actions will be taken:

1. **Investigation:** The Safe Practice Mark Panel will write to the organisation to inform them that there will be a thorough investigation into the alleged misrepresentation. This may involve reviewing submitted documents, interviewing relevant personnel, and seeking external verification.
2. **Notification:** The organisation will be promptly notified of the investigation and the specific concerns related to misrepresentation.
3. **Temporary Suspension:** During the investigation, the use of the Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark will be suspended. The organisation will be informed of this suspension.

4. **Review and Decision:** Based on the findings of the investigation, the Safe Practice Mark Panel will make a decision. If substantial evidence supports the claim of misrepresentation, the mark will be permanently revoked, this will be communicated via a letter from the panel. We will aim for completion in no later than 8 weeks, sooner where appropriate, however in some investigations this may take longer given their complexity.
5. **Appeal Rights:** The organisation has the right to appeal the decision within the specified timeframe (as outlined in the Appeals Process section). However, if the appeal upholds the finding of misrepresentation, the revocation remains in effect.

Appeals Process

1. Grounds for Appeal

Any organisation that has been denied the Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark or has had the mark revoked may appeal the decision. Grounds for appeal include, but are not limited to:

1. **Procedural Errors:** If the organisation believes that procedural errors occurred during the assessment process.
2. **New Evidence:** If the organisation can present new evidence that was not previously considered during the initial evaluation.
3. **Disagreement with Assessment:** If the organisation disagrees with the assessment outcome based on the established criteria.

2. Appeal Submission

1. The organisation must submit a formal appeal in writing to the Safe Practice Mark panel within **30 days** of receiving the decision.
2. The appeal should clearly state the grounds for appeal, provide relevant details, and include any supporting documentation.

3. Appeal Review

1. The Head of Service for Quality Assurance, Performance, and Youth Justice (referred to as the "Appeals Officer") shall review the appeal.
2. The Appeals Officer will consider the original assessment, any new evidence, and the organisation's arguments.
3. The Appeals Officer may seek additional information from the organisation or other relevant parties.

7.4. Decision

1. The Appeals Officer will make a final decision within **30 days** of receiving the appeal.
2. The decision will be communicated in writing to the organisation.
3. If the appeal is successful, the Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark will be reinstated. If unsuccessful, the original decision stands.

7.5. Confidentiality and Transparency

1. All appeal proceedings shall remain confidential.
2. The Appeals Officer will ensure transparency by providing a summary of the decision (without revealing sensitive details) to the Oversight Committee.

Upholding Standards of Other Organizations

Organisations that have been awarded the Youth Provision Safe Practice Mark bear the responsibility of upholding high standards within their own operations and influencing others to do the same. Here are the key duties related to maintaining and promoting these standards:

1. **Lead by Example:** Marked organisations should serve as role models for other youth service providers. By consistently adhering to safeguarding criteria, they demonstrate best practices and inspire others to follow suit.
2. **Collaboration and Sharing:** Organisations with the mark should actively collaborate with other local youth services. This includes sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences related to safeguarding. Regular forums, workshops, and networking events can facilitate this exchange.
3. **Advocacy:** Marked organisations have a duty to advocate for robust safeguarding practices across the sector. They can participate in awareness campaigns, contribute to policy discussions, and encourage other providers to seek the mark.
4. **Training and Support:** Organisations should support their peers by offering training sessions, workshops, or guidance on safeguarding. This could involve sharing effective strategies, providing templates for policies, or hosting joint training events.
5. **Reporting Concerns:** If a marked organisation becomes aware of another provider's inadequate safeguarding practices, they should report it to relevant authorities including the Safe Practice Mark Panel. Upholding standards includes ensuring that all youth services prioritise safety.
6. **Promotion of the Mark:** Organisations should proudly display the Youth Provision Safeguarding Mark on their websites, social media, and within their premises (if they choose to do so). This not only highlights their commitment but also encourages others to seek the mark.

Remember that upholding standards is not only about meeting criteria but also actively contributing to a safer environment for children and young people. Marked organisations play a vital role in shaping the overall safeguarding landscape.

Annex 1 - Background information about the mark

Purpose

- Provide assurance to Milton Keynes of youth provision that has correct safeguards in place
- Offer community and voluntary sector organisations support from MKCC Safeguarding services
- Standardise practice of setting up and running youth provision in MK

What is it

- Organisations can gain the Safe Practice Mark overseen by Milton Keynes City Council on behalf of the MK Youth Provision forum
- Annual process of completing the form and submitting the associated evidence to MKCC for review and approval

Requirements of the mark

- All paid and unpaid staff and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people to have a valid DBS check recorded correctly by the organisation that is refreshed and reviewed every three years.
- All paid and unpaid staff and volunteers to have up to date Safeguarding training. This should be a minimum of a 3-hour course each year.
- The organisation has a dedicated and appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The organisation's safeguarding, allegations and social media use policies approved by Milton Keynes

Council Safeguarding Team

- The organisation has other required policies in place:

- 1) Equality and diversity policy
- 2) Health and Safety policy
- 3) Data protection and confidentiality policy
- 4) Behaviour management policy
- 5) Complaints policy

Benefits of having the mark:

- Free access to Safeguarding and DSL training through MKCC training programme
- Your organisation to be confirmed as having the mark on MKCC webpage that will be circulated and advertised across MK
- Having the Mark will make an organisation eligible for specific MKCC funding streams, when available, including the homework club fund. Some Parish/Town Councils may choose to only give grants for youth activities to organisations who have achieved this mark
- Ability to display Safe Practice mark on marketing and publicity material

Oversight

- The MK Youth Provision Forum will maintain oversight of the award in partnership with the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance for MKCC

Process



