



YOUTH INITIATIVES

Youth Initiatives is publishing the Summary report findings from a review conducted by Thirtyone:eight, an independent safeguarding organisation, into the handling of allegations of sexual abuse made against a former youth work employee in 1998. This report represents several years of dedicated work, and we aim to be transparent while being mindful of the ongoing live criminal case.

We deeply regret that a robust safeguarding investigation did not occur in 1998. Had such an investigation taken place, the full story of the youth worker's abusive behaviour could have been exposed sooner and he could have been held accountable, sparing past participants from carrying such a painful legacy for so long. We are sorry the survivors have had to wait so long for a full understanding to emerge of what they and others were subjected to.

We profoundly regret that the deeply intertwined private and professional lives of staff in authority created a culture where belief in this charismatic man & in the evolving youth organisation, took precedence over discovering the truth about the danger he posed to young girls. That they did not feel safe enough to disclose the abuse and that they were ever attributed any blame at all was completely wrong.

The PSNI has received the full report, the findings, recommendations and actions to date. As requested we have reviewed and discussed the summary report, the findings, recommendations and action to date with the Charity Commission NI. The published report is coded to ensure GDPR compliance while facilitating transparency.

As highlighted in the review the disciplinary investigation that led to a termination of employment, fell woefully short of the safeguarding investigation needed and meant the full story was not exposed and the pain of abuse suffered was not acknowledged.

Young people in Youth Initiatives' programs had a right to safety, protection, and dignity, which were not met at that time. We apologise for the betrayal of trust, the fear, and the lack of appropriate support that some past participants had to endure during this confusing and difficult period.

We hope that this report goes some way to providing assurance that we, the current Trustees and Management team, better understand the nature of grooming, coercion, and abuse, and are continually trained to be more equipped to act decisively in the future, even if allegations are against a colleague.

We have published our actions taken so far regarding the implementation of the recommendations. We trust this shows our dedication to the robust safeguarding of all future Youth Initiatives participants. We acknowledge the courage of the survivors and their friends in bringing the full story to light and thank those who contributed to this review.

If any of the issues discussed in this report are affecting you and you need to talk to someone, please seek support from any of the helpline numbers listed below.

Thirtyone:eight Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm 0303 003 1111

Lifeline 24hr helpline: 0808 808 8000

Samaritans 24hr helpline - Call 166 123 e:jo@samaritans.org

Domestic and sexual abuse helpline 24hr helpline 0808 802 1414

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 e: help@NSPCC.org.uk

Childline (if under 18) 0800 1111

YOUTH INITIATIVES NI



Creating safer places. Together.

Safeguarding Case Review Summary Report

Youth Initiatives, Belfast

March 2024

Thirtyone:eight

Case Review – Safeguarding Actions, non-recent.

1. Confidentiality Statement

The full report was circulated only to the trustees and senior management team at YI in line with the agreed parameters outlined in the Schedule of Service for this work. A full report was also provided to both survivors with only the redactions they requested. This summary report is intended for those who have contributed to this review and therefore its contents are to be treated with confidentiality. Any wider circulation of it, is to be done in agreement with Thirtyone:eight and the Trustees of YI.

2. About Thirtyone:eight

Thirtyone:eight is a Christian charity providing a range of services to support churches and other faith-based organisations to protect vulnerable people. Our vision is “a world where every child and adult can feel, and be, safe”. We aim to do this by equipping, empowering and encouraging organisations to create safer environments, respond to abuse, and raise their standards of safeguarding practice. Our name is taken from Proverbs 31 v 8: “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable” (CEB).

We are a leading safeguarding organisation within the faith sector and offer a range of services to support organisations, including: a DBS checking service, a variety of safeguarding training courses, policy support, consultancy, safeguarding audits, risk assessments, case reviews and international safeguarding advice. We also play a key role in commissioning pioneering research and leading on public policy initiatives and advocacy across the four nations of the UK.

3. The Reviewers

Jane Bee joined Thirtyone:eight as a Safeguarding Associate having gained extensive experience of safeguarding over a 20-year career working with a Local Authority and as an independent safeguarding consultant. She has a post graduate certificate in child protection, a first-class honours degree in psychology and a diploma in health and social welfare, all of which she draws on in her work.

Jane was also a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) working with the police, children’s care and employers where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff or volunteer working with children. Jane chaired the Southwest LADO group for many years and was elected as the first National LADO Network Chair for its primary year in 2016. Jane is also an accredited lead reviewer by the Social Care Institute for Excellence and has led many reviews where a child has been seriously injured or died.

Katy Jackson is a Safeguarding Advisor at Thirtyone:eight offering consultancy services to churches and charities in relation to safeguarding practice, audits, investigations, training and

supporting the safeguarding helpline. Katy gained a BA(Hons) in History and French and an MA in Social Work from The University of Sheffield. She is the Vice Chair for the England National Standing Committee (NSC) and a Director for the British Association of Social Work and Social Workers (BASW) and has a level 3 award in Leadership and Management from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM). She is registered with Social Work England.

Katy has a range of experience and has worked in a variety of settings in roles within the statutory and voluntary sector, including the local authority and the voluntary housing sector. Katy has worked in direct practice with children and adults as a social worker and has managed a social work team for the safeguarding and assessment referrals coming into Adult Social Care.

4. About Youth Initiatives

Youth Initiatives (YI) was set up in 1991 to work with young people in Poleglass, West Belfast. They established cross community working during the time of troubles, which brought together Catholic and Protestant young people for the first time. The work included street work, sports, music and drama and outreach to schools. Many of the initial staff were youth workers and had experience of working together in a Christian Community. Thirty young people were brought together and formed a Project Leadership Team to begin youth volunteering which has grown over the years. YI now has a Headquarters, six semi-autonomous Community Hubs and a Youth Initiatives Regional Office.

Governance takes the form of a Board of Trustees made up of six members. Below this sits a Senior Leadership Team led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). YI is a charity registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) and is funded by statutory organisations, trusts and donations.

5. Referral Summary

Thirtyone:eight was approached by YI to undertake a case review relating to the handling of concerns about a previous youth worker (referred to as 015 throughout the review) who engaged in inappropriate relationships with two girls (one who was 15/16 at the time and the other, aged 18) in the youth group operated by YI in 1998. YI are seeking to explore their own handling of the concerns, while also taking into account the context of Northern Ireland and safeguarding at the time.

The youth leader (015) is American and was a member of the Brotherhood of Servants of the Word, a religious community of Lay members who are celibate. The concerns centre around whether YI should or could have prevented the relationships developing and whether appropriate actions were taken at the time the concerns were reported.

In 1998, when made aware of the concerns, YI senior staff in place at the time, advise that police and social services were consulted regarding required actions. YI also sought advice from Labour Relations Agency regarding employment law. The youth leader (015) was dismissed from his post as youth worker by YI and sent back to the United States of America (USA) by the Servants of the Word where the Brotherhood is based. YI were advised that those overseeing 015 in America had been informed of the situation and that 015 would not be working with children or young women.

Following on from the news breaking in the USA in 2020 regarding criminal allegations against the former Director 016, and his subsequent conviction in 2022, allegations against 015 resurfaced and support for survivors and information sharing and records regarding the case of 015 have been called into question. This case review aims to explore the context and the culture of the organisation between the years of 1995 – 2000 with specific focus on 1998, when the situation was brought to the attention of YI.

6. Terms of Reference - Objectives of the assessment

The key questions this review will seek to answer are:

1. Did Youth Initiatives do everything it could to address the issues raised by the two survivors when they were reported in 1998?
2. Were all known allegations raised robustly investigated, and any associated risks identified, well managed?
3. Were all the processes adopted in line with Youth Initiatives policy and guidance (including relevant Northern Ireland statutory regulation and requirement) at the time and undertaken in acceptable timescales?
4. What factors influenced the content and timing of the survivors' disclosures?
5. What organisations/statutory agencies were associated with YI and had a role in safeguarding young people and the work of YI in the community in 1998? Are there any further actions that could have been taken to further safeguard others?
6. Were those directly involved well communicated with and kept appropriately informed at all stages of the process?
7. Were those directly involved suitably cared for and supported by Youth Initiatives during the process and afterwards?
8. What was appropriately communicated to the staff at the time after the youth worker's dismissal and does this raise any concerns around the culture of transparency within the organisation at the time?
9. If there are any outstanding risks to those connected with Youth Initiatives have sufficient safeguarding measures been taken?
10. What lessons need to be learned by Youth Initiatives and what measures if any, still need to be implemented to help prevent any such incidences from reoccurring?

7. Methodology

The process entailed initial scoping conversations between YI and Thirtyone:eight between May and July 2023 to agree the terms of reference for the work and timescales. On 3rd August, the reviewers attended a briefing to discuss the context in NI at the time and to hear information regarding the three main religious communities, Sword of the Spirit¹, Servants of the Word² and the Charis Community³. A schedule and terms of reference for the case review was agreed and provided.

¹ <https://swordofthespirit.net/>

² <https://servantsoftheword.org/>

³ <https://www.chariscommunity.co.uk/>

Relevant documentation relating to the time was received by the reviewers

Thirtyone:eight provided a survey, distributed by YI which could be completed by anyone with information they wished to share. Eleven responses were received and of these, six contained a written response leading to four additional interviews.

Consent forms were sent to and received from those who were agreeing to interview, and fourteen interviews were arranged. All were completed by Jane Bee, the lead reviewer with support from either Susan Stephen or Katy Jackson.

8. Background and Context

In the 1990s, NI continued to be beset with troubles which affected Belfast and those who lived there. West Belfast was predominantly Catholic, Nationalist and Republican whereas East Belfast was predominantly Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist. Areas were regularly patrolled by the paramilitary and the police were not welcome. There was a high level of drug and alcohol abuse, car theft and violence, in addition to actions undertaken by the paramilitary in the area.

Due to this context, YI is described as unique in its ministry at that time. Many of the those who became participants in YI were members of prayer groups supported by the Community of the King. It was reported to the Reviewers that YI was at first greeted with suspicion both because the Brothers from Sword of the Spirit and Servants of the Word engaging in the first instance, the founders (015 & 016) and the previous Chief Executive Officer were American, but also because they were promoting an ecumenical approach which was new. Despite this, many of those who met them were impressed. The Brothers are celibate which added a relatable dimension and a level of dedication to their ministry.

YI has always been a separate Trust to Servants of the Word and Sword of the Spirit, but the links were strong, and which provided a strong background to the work being carried out. Between 1991 and 1997, YI was part of the European Outreach Trust which is Sword of the Spirit's Communities Trust. YI became a charity in its own right in 1997.

YI introduced a Wednesday evening prayer group called The Source which was new and different and many young people at the time described it as "exciting" and "crazy". They felt it was a way of engaging which they had not had before and it included and welcomed young people from all areas of Belfast, all backgrounds and all religious and political beliefs. Prior to this, many of those who were participants in YI described social life in Belfast at the time as being fairly non-existent and many joined all available activities offered.

Legislation relating to the protection of children in NI in the 1990s included the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which came into force on 4th November 1996 and remains in use today. It replaced the Children and Young Person's Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 which had increased the age of consent in NI to 17 years old. This was not changed until 2008 when the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order came into force and reduced the age of consent to 16 years old.

At the time of the allegations made against the youth worker (015) the age of consent was 17 years old in NI as the Children (Northern Ireland) Order was in place. The Order outlines how

children are expected to be protected and cared for by statutory services whenever issues arise concerning their wellbeing.

While abuse of a position of trust did not exist at the time of these allegations, the Children and Young Persons Act (NI) 1968 showed at Section 22 (indecent conduct with a child) that “22. – (1) Any person who commits an act of gross indecency (defined as unlawful sexual contact between an adult and a child which falls short of full sexual intercourse) with or towards a child, or who incites a child to such an act with him or another, shall be guilty of an offence”.

Safeguarding and Child Protection within NI and society as a whole was far less developed than it is now. Nevertheless, legislation was in place and societal thinking was beginning to change.

9. Findings:

For ease of reading, the findings from this review are headed using the key questions from the terms of reference for the case review.

9.1 Did Youth Initiatives do everything it could to address the issues raised by the two survivors when they were reported in 1998?

The allegations were first reported on 3rd of October 1998 by a Survivor (005) and then, when asked, by another Survivor (007) on the 4th of October 1998. Youth workers reported on to the managers who contacted the Labour Relations Agency and a solicitor for advice on disciplinary process. Advice was that a report to the police should also be made.

A disciplinary hearing was held and 015 was dismissed for gross misconduct, sent to London by Servants of the Word and then back to the USA to be placed under the remit of the Brotherhood. Reassurance was given that he would not be able to work with children or young women in the future.

The day after the hearing, YI contacted the RUC and Social Services and reported that the youth worker (015) was alleged to have been involved in inappropriate relationships with two young women within YI which involved inappropriate touching. YI advised the police that the survivors, who were by now above the age of consent, did not wish to press charges.

A year later it became clear that the allegations had in fact been sexual. YI again contacted Social Services and the police but were advised that because the youth worker (015) was out of the country, and the survivors were adults at the time and did not wish to raise a complaint, there was no further action to be taken.

However, the reviewers believe there are potentially some gaps in the actions taken which could have been considered:

- Other young people or staff were not asked whether they had noticed anything or had any concerns to raise. Several participants of YI from this time said that they were actively asked not to discuss the matter between themselves.

- Support from YI for the two survivors differed and only recently have YI come to realise that the youth worker (O15) did breach a position of trust and that the perceived age of the young women when this started had perhaps been given too much of a bearing.
- It does not appear that YI and the Brotherhood in the USA communicated well regarding the further allegations/concerns raised a year after the initial disclosures.
- There were strong links between Sword of the Spirit, Servants of the Word, the Charis Community and YI. Many relationships were interlinked, and staff were line managed by lifelong friends which made objectivity difficult.

9.2 Were all known allegations raised, robustly investigated and any associated risks identified, well managed?

YI appear to rely on what was deemed to have been 'known' as coming solely from the disclosures made by the two survivors and did not at the time, or since, put together what was really known, had already been reported and discussed and what might still be gathered as part of corroboration and gathering of information during a basic disciplinary investigation.

No safeguarding investigation was undertaken by YI other than to speak the survivors without an advocate. No attempt was made to seek further information, put together previous concerns raised against the disclosures or to assess current and future risk. From interviews, trustees and senior leaders relied on verbal assurances of actions both within YI and from the wider Brotherhood and allowed the youth leader's (O15)'s standing and charisma to cloud their judgement regarding what was possible.

All known allegations were not explored or robustly investigated and that therefore associated risks were not identified or well managed.

9.3 Were all the processes adopted in line with Youth Initiatives policy and guidance (including relevant Northern Ireland statutory regulation and requirement at the time) and undertaken in acceptable timescales?

YI's policy and guidance is unavailable from this time and many staff cannot remember seeing it. Therefore, it is not clear what actions should have been undertaken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, or whether this was included in the policy at all. YI did not see the actions as abusive and ran a disciplinary process. Further investigation at the time might have changed this, but it did not happen. Child Protection and Safeguarding at this time was in its infancy and it is likely that this also affected the development of policy and guidance for employers and charities.

The report to the police was not robust and not timely (as required by the Criminal Law Act 1967 (NI)). Records were not well kept. There are only contemporaneous notes indicating that an official Police report was made. The report to Social Services was also not robust and did not contain the correct information because there was no safeguarding investigation at the time.

Youth Initiatives policy and guidance is difficult to assess from 1998, but the findings show that relevant Northern Ireland statutory regulation and requirement at the time was not robustly followed or undertaken within acceptable timescales.

9.4 What factors influenced the content and timing of the victim's disclosures?

The structure of YI at the time was not conducive to survivors coming forward. Culture was not open in the 1990s and survivors felt guilt and shame. When they did come forward, these feelings were compounded by them being led to believe by some YI staff that they were in the wrong. The survivors continue to feel that they took the blame for the relationship rather than O15.

Small groups should have made disclosing easier, but the youth leader (O15) was charismatic and well loved by all, including staff and families, and this made disclosing, even to small group leaders, very difficult. The survivors did not feel that they would be believed and therefore did not feel safe to disclose. The reasons for this are complex and the survivors found them overwhelming.

9.5 What organisations/statutory agencies were associated with YI and had a role in safeguarding young people and the work of YI in the community in 1998? Are there any further actions that could have been taken to further safeguard others?

YI did engage with the Police and Social Services at the time, but prior to this, links were not well established, and information shared regarding this case was not accurate or complete. YI could have sought broader information from staff and young people and shared this with external agencies which would have been good practice.

9.6 Were those directly involved well communicated with and kept appropriately informed at all stages of the process?

Communication between YI and survivors in the case of the youth leader (O15) was limited. The speed of the action taken by YI prevented very much information being shared. YI acted swiftly to remove O15 from working with young people, which is commendable, but information regarding what was shared with the police and Social Services was not provided to the survivors, they were not asked whether they would like to speak with external agencies, or offered the chance to speak to anyone external to the organisation until 1999 when a member of Sword of the Spirit came over from the USA, however they were not independent. Decisions were made between YI and the Brotherhood with neither including what might be helpful for the survivors or those of their friends who had previously raised concerns and who might be feeling anxious.

Undoubtedly less was understood in 1998 about trauma and abuse. However, communication with those directly involved was not well managed and they were not kept informed at all stages of the process.

9.7 Were those directly involved suitably cared for and supported by Youth Initiatives during the process and afterwards?

There were multiple occasions where the youth leader's (015)'s behaviour was disclosed and reported; however, this was not recognised as abuse, there was no investigation and both young people involved were apportioned blame for the relationship developing. Support in the form of counselling was offered to some degree but this was not found sufficient or helpful by the survivors, despite some individual support being offered.

Those directly involved, including both survivors and those young people who wanted to support their peers, were not suitably cared for and supported by YI during the process and afterwards. It is also poor practice that all the young people who tried to raise concerns were thwarted with the idea that were they to continue, YI would close, and people would lose their jobs.

9.8 What was appropriately communicated to the staff at the time after the youth leader's (015) dismissal? Does this raise any concerns around the culture of transparency within the organisation at the time?

Information sharing to the staff group was appropriate at the time. However, this information was not shared with all staff and there was no opportunity for staff to add information or raise previously held concerns to better inform the decision making. In the same way, there were no opportunities for young people or their parents to raise any concerns. This highlights broader concerns around the culture of transparency within the organisation at the time.

9.9 If there are any outstanding risks to those connected with Youth Initiatives have sufficient safeguarding measures been taken?

YI now have in place a safeguarding policy and procedures, a safeguarding lead and a safeguarding trustee. The CEO reports to the Trustees on a regular basis regarding safeguarding and any incidents are included in the report. One of the survivors advised that she felt the YI of the 1990s and the YI today were "like night and day" and that YI was now a very professional organisation with much more awareness. There is now far more of a culture of respect to young people from those within YI.

It is the view of the reviewers that a culture of accountability has begun to develop over the last few years. This can be seen through supervision the calling out of behaviour and through professional challenge, all of which was lacking in the lead up to the events of 1998 but is now a requirement within YI.

The changes made and the culture of safeguarding which is growing within YI is well evidenced and commendable. However, there remain some elements of risk which have yet to be addressed and these remain learning points for YI.

9.10 What lessons need to be learned by Youth Initiatives and what measures if any, still need to be implemented to help prevent any such incidences from reoccurring?

There continues to be a of lack objectivity regarding relational links between the communities and YI. If left unresolved, this could continue to cause issues were another allegation to be made. Transparent processes and procedures are now in place but there remains a concern that these processes will be followed in a subjective rather than objective way because of the longstanding and personal links across and within the organisations.

Governance of YI is in place and processes, such as the regular receipt of safeguarding information via reports from the CEO, are followed and can be evidenced. However, there remains a confusion between the operational role of the senior staff to account for 'on the ground' safeguarding such as staff training, individual safeguarding referrals and support for young people, and the strategic role of the Trustees in holding YI to account for its safeguarding culture and its future direction of travel for safeguarding.

10. Recommendations:

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Evidence	Key Outcome
1	That YI senior staff and trustees consider the dissemination of this report, or of a redacted version of this report, including the learning, to contributors of this review and more widely.	<p>Senior staff and trustees to assimilate the review report and recommendations and to make a decision about sharing.</p> <p>That sharing might happen in stages, including those who have contributed (with consent if not redacted) prior to a wider sharing of the report.</p>	<p>Many contributors to this review have asked to see the final report and wish to know the outcome.</p> <p>The strength of feeling surrounding this case has been long lasting and many people feel closure is needed.</p>	<p>That those who have contributed to the review, and the wider community of YI see that this process has been requested by YI and has been transparent.</p> <p>YI will begin to positively evidence change and restore confidence that they understand why there is the level of concern and hurt remaining in the community.</p>
2	That YI trustees and senior management team consider re-reporting the issues from 1998 and 1999 as a non-recent incident of abuse of a position of trust to the police and to relevant Social Care services.	Trustees and senior management staff to look carefully at what they understand to have been reported against what subsequently came to light or is included in this report.	The concerns from 1998 are not criminally time limited and currently there is no police record of what happened at the time.	That YI closes loopholes and gaps left from the 1998 response to allegations.
3	That YI changes the narrative it is currently using regarding the handling of the allegations made against the youth leader (015).	<p>That Trustees ensure a real understanding of what went wrong in 1998 and the issues it has caused.</p> <p>That YI sends out some proactive communications which outline the learning and ensure a</p>	Voices of those involved – survivors, staff and previous YI participants have shown that the allegations were not handled as well as they might have been.	<p>Those involved in the 1990s will begin to feel that there is an understanding now of the learning that has taken place.</p> <p>YI will have taken responsibility for the fact that there was no investigation in 1998 and that this should have happened, even accounting for the context of NI at the time, and</p>

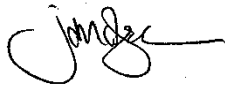
		<p>clear line on future safeguarding.</p> <p>That YI trustees and senior staff consider a series of learning events for staff, previous staff and YI participants who are now adults, which highlight what went wrong and what is expected now.</p>		<p>safeguarding being in its infancy.</p> <p>YI will add to its culture of professional curiosity and show that it now properly shares information externally and challenges where required, including the religious communities both in the UK and USA.</p>
4	<p>That YI Trustees put in place a Strategic Safeguarding Plan to assist in more strategic thinking and removing the blurred lines between strategic and operational requirements.</p>	<p>Trustees to consider strategic actions – how they wish to hold YI senior managers to account.</p> <p>Trustees, with senior managers, to put together a strategic safeguarding plan selecting the five main areas in which they would like to work.</p> <p>Trustees to ensure that operational work is carried out by staff and reported to trustees in order to stay strategic.</p>	<p>There is as yet little strategic oversight of safeguarding in YI. Safeguarding by trustees is reliant on the one safeguarding trustee who carries out operational work where required and notifies the other trustees.</p> <p>Holding to account for safeguarding with questions regarding impact across YI, learning from hearing the voices of young people, knowledge of the main vulnerabilities of young people across YI, inclusion of new</p>	<p>YI trustees will have an understanding of top-level safeguarding across the organisation – risks, vulnerabilities and what young people are saying across YI will be better understood and resources can be targeted to ensure concerns or gaps are addressed.</p> <p>Senior staff at YI will be properly held to account, safeguarding actions scrutinised at strategic level by all trustees.</p> <p>The existence of a written strategic safeguarding plan will ensure that staff are aware of the direction of travel for safeguarding and feel part of the journey as it relates to them.</p>

			legislation and learning from safeguarding issues plus the subsequent impact of such learning is not yet in place in any auditable form.	
5	That YI arranges specific safeguarding training for those at governance level which includes strategic challenge and oversight.	All trustees to undertake safeguarding training for those at governance level. All trustees to become involved in strategic challenge regarding safeguarding and to parity and professional challenge from the board as a whole.	Currently the board of trustees includes one safeguarding trustee who work both operationally and strategically. Evidence shows a tendency for safeguarding to be allocated to the safeguarding trustee due to their experience, removing strategic challenge from the board as a whole.	The board of trustees as a whole will gain a better understanding of their role in safeguarding and holding the organisation to account. All trustees will be involved in this and therefore increased and better quality strategic challenge for safeguarding will be evident.
6	That YI Trustees and Senior Management Team look at the Allegations Management Process (internally and what should be shared externally) and identify any areas where	Trustees to look at the process in place for handling allegations and to ensure that these include clear guidance where there are relational links. The process should include being able to draw in managers who do not have close	Objectivity due to complex relational links between the religious communities and YI have been identified as causing some of the 1998 concerns regarding	YI trustees and senior managers will assure themselves, the wider staff team and those externally, that both strategically and operationally, the management of an allegation against a member of staff will be properly investigated, handled objectively, reported externally in a timely way, include correct

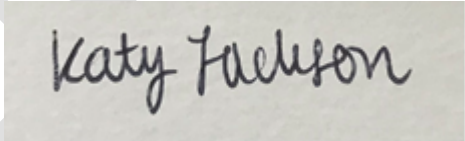
	<p>objectivity due to relational issues might be an issue.</p>	<p>links to manage the allegation when required and a trustee who is not a member of one of the communities to oversee multi-agency reporting and actions for YI to ensure transparency of challenge.</p> <p>This process should form part of policy and be disseminated to all staff.</p>	<p>handling of the youth leader's (015) case.</p> <p>While there are fewer links today, relational links remain.</p>	<p>information and that actions are followed up and reported to trustees.</p>
7.	<p>YI Trustees to strategically review their understanding of whether young people feel able to disclose concerns within YI, particularly in the case of young women.</p>	<p>Trustees to work with senior managers to seek the views of young people regarding; where they would go with a concern, how confident they feel that they would be heard and whether they feel their concerns would be taken seriously.</p>	<p>Young people in the 1990s, particularly young women, did not feel empowered to disclose and when concerns were raised by others, these were either actively discouraged or not heard and acted upon.</p> <p>Trustees have not yet tested whether the policy and procedures in place are effective and that young people, would come forward.</p>	<p>Trustees will be able to strategically evidence the impact of current policies and procedures in place which invite young people to speak out.</p> <p>Trustees will better be able to hold senior managers to account for safeguarding and encourage YI as a whole to take every opportunity to teach young people how to keep themselves safe with the support of staff.</p>
8.	<p>YI to make clear their formal and informal links with Servants of the Word, Sword of the Spirit and</p>	<p>YI trustees to establish and document their links with Servants of the Word, Sword of the Spirit and the Charis Community.</p>	<p>An overarching theme of this review is the ongoing relationship between YI, Servants of the</p>	<p>There will be a greater transparency from YI in relation to these links and this will minimise concerns of these links impacting on children and young people in the future.</p>

	<p>the Charis Community.</p>	<p>YI to consider how there can be greater transparency in relation to these links.</p> <p>YI trustees to ensure that policy and procedures build in the objectivity required when managing safeguarding, for example not having a manager running a disciplinary on someone from the same community as them.</p>	<p>Word, Sword of the Spirit and the Charis Community. The youth leader's (015)'s departure was managed by the Brotherhood which illustrates the link.</p>	<p>Stronger partnership arrangements will strengthen YI's mission and culture of safeguarding.</p>
--	------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Thank you to all who took part and assisted in this review



Jane Bee
March 2024



Katy Jackson



**thirtyone:
eight** 

Creating safer places. Together.



YOUTH INITIATIVES

No	Recommendation	Action taken to date:
1	That YI senior staff and trustees consider the dissemination of this report, or of a redacted version of this report, including the learning, to contributors of this review and more widely.	As agreed in the Schedule of Service with thirtyone:eight, the Redacted Report was issued upon completion to the two Survivors and the PSNI. The Summary report was then disseminated to all who contributed to the review. Permission was sought from the PSNI to circulate the Redacted Report more widely, this was granted as the report is coded, GDPR compliant and therefore does not interfere with the integrity of the live criminal investigation. In consultation with the Survivors, a number of individuals were identified to receive the Redacted Report. The aim was to increase understanding of the harm experienced by the Survivors and other young people as a result of inadequate action in 1998 and to ensure as far as possible that the risks to future generations of young people are mitigated. As this was outside the scope of the Schedule of Service, agreement was sought from other participants of the review to fulfil this objective.
2	That YI trustees and senior management team consider re-reporting the issues from 1998 and 1999 as a non-recent incident of abuse of a position of trust to the police and to relevant Social Care services.	The allegations of abuse from 1998/99 were re-reported to the PSNI on 28 Feb 2024 as non-recent incidents of abuse of a position of trust. A crime reference number confirms this action. The PSNI received the full report. The Charity Commission of Northern Ireland received the summary report, findings, recommendations and actions taken to date addressing the learning points identified by thirtyone:eight.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Youth Initiatives (NI) • 50 Colin Road • Belfast BT17 0LG

TEL +44 28 9030 1174 **E-MAIL** office@youthinitiatives.com **WEB** www.youthinitiativesni.com

Youth Initiatives (Northern Ireland) is registered as a company limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland No NI622215 • Registered Charity Number NIC100849





YOUTH INITIATIVES

3	<p>That YI changes the narrative it is currently using regarding the handling of the allegations made against the youth leader (015).</p>	<p>Youth Initiatives Trustees and Management team have communicated by letter with the Survivors and former programme participants who contributed to the review, acknowledging that the disciplinary procedure which resulted in the immediate termination of the former staff members employment, fell woefully short of the safeguarding investigation needed in 1998. It has been made clear that this man alone is accountable for his actions, the victims and their friendship groups so deeply affected by his behaviour are in no way responsible. The Summary Report is published on the YI website with an accompanying statement accepting the Findings of the review; that the investigation in 1998 was wholly inadequate. The Review's findings, recommendations and the actions taken to date by Youth Initiatives to address the recommendations are also posted on the website.</p>
4	<p>That YI Trustees put in place a Strategic Safeguarding Plan to assist in more strategic thinking and removing the blurred lines between strategic and operational requirements.</p>	<p>Youth Initiatives has a comprehensive Safeguarding policy. Additionally, it has developed and implemented a Strategic Safeguarding Plan which includes a regional questionnaire circulated to young people asking them directly if they feel safe with staff and participating in programmes. The questionnaire assesses participants awareness of which key staff they can approach regarding concerns they may have about employees or other young people. Youth Initiatives have created a recording system which identifies trending issues that young people are wrestling with, areas of concern and / or risk-taking behaviour. This informs staff training and ensures resources are targeted to meet identified needs. Youth Initiatives has a safeguarding structure which includes a designated Safeguarding Trustee, nine designated Safeguarding Officers who are publicly profiled in each youth community hub. A monthly safeguarding report is collated by the CEO and the lead designated Safeguarding Officer. This is circulated for discussion by management team and trustees facilitating strategic challenge from the whole board. Youth Initiatives continually reviews its safeguarding practices internally and invites external critique from organisations such as thirtyone:eight to ensure they are of the highest standard. Staff and trustees are professionally trained in Safeguarding by external bodies such as CiNi.</p>

Youth Initiatives (NI) • 50 Colin Road • Belfast BT17 0LG

TEL +44 28 9030 1174 **E-MAIL** office@youthinitiatives.com **WEB** www.youthinitiativesni.com

Youth Initiatives (Northern Ireland) is registered as a company limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland No NI622215 • Registered Charity Number NIC100849





YOUTH INITIATIVES

5	That YI arranges specific safeguarding training for those at governance level which includes strategic challenge and oversight.	All trustees are in the process of completing external safeguarding training which includes strategic challenge and oversight.
6	That YI Trustees and Senior Management Team look at the Allegations Management Process (internally and what should be shared externally) and identify any areas where objectivity due to relational issues might be an issue.	An independent Human Resource and Employment lawyer was engaged to review Youth Initiatives policies and procedures paying specific attention to the allegations management processes, employment, disciplinary and recruitment policies. All recommendations have been incorporated into the staff handbook which is updated annually and issued to all employees and interns. The procedures mitigate against possible conflicts of interest due to relational links by a series of steps prioritising objectivity, efficiency and transparency in the handling of potential allegations against a member of staff. The procedures ensure thorough investigation, proper external reporting and actions to be followed up and reported to trustees and statutory bodies as required by law.
7	YI Trustees to strategically review their understanding of whether young people feel able to disclose concerns within YI, particularly in the case of young women.	The board of trustees commissioned the Youth Initiatives management to devise and circulate a monitoring survey to all young people and volunteers which explicitly asks them whether they feel they have a voice, feel safe and are confident to report concerns about other young people or staff members. This facilitates expedient action should any concerns become apparent. The survey results are reviewed and discussed with staff, senior management and trustees, any action points are identified accordingly.
8	YI to make clear their formal and informal links with Servants of the Word, Sword of the Spirit and the Charis Community.	An independent Human Resource and Employment lawyer reviewed the formal and informal links with the identified organisations and updated YI's policies and procedures to build in the objectivity required to manage safeguarding. Less than 3% of the staff, interns and volunteers have an association with Sword of the Spirit, Servants of the Word or Charis community. Youth Initiatives works alongside and supports other youth work organisations and has a system of devising clear partnership agreements and guidelines.

Youth Initiatives (NI) • 50 Colin Road • Belfast BT17 0LG
TEL +44 28 9030 1174 **E-MAIL** office@youthinitiatives.com **WEB** www.youthinitiativesni.com

Youth Initiatives (Northern Ireland) is registered as a company limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland No NI622215 • Registered Charity Number NIC100849

