

Ethics Policy

Policy Level	One
Policy Category	Ethics
Policy Authority	Board
Lead Committee	Senior Leadership Team
Lead Director	Phillipa Spicer
Approved Date	22/07/2024
Review Date	31/07/2026

Introduction

We believe we should champion ethical behaviour and reflect and apply our values in any activity we undertake, in addition to meeting legal and regulatory requirements.

Ethics and ethical-decision making are a discourse of thoughts and feelings based on core principles. This policy aims to set out these principles and provide an over-arching framework to guide our decision making, good judgment and conduct.

This policy applies to all that we do as a charity including service delivery, procurement, partnerships, acceptance of funding (grants, donations, legacies, in kind support, agreement), investments or any other contractual relationship.

Our trustees, staff, volunteers, employers and supporters are asked to actively consider the principles and how these can be integrated in all areas of our work and decision making.

As a charity we have a duty not to decline partnerships, acceptance of funding (grants, donations, legacies, in kind support, agreement), investments or any other contractual relationship which will help us achieve our charitable objectives without good reasons for doing so.

This policy runs alongside all existing policies and procedures including those relating to HR, finance, programme delivery, fundraising, safeguarding and whistleblowing. A level 2 ethics operating policy describes the processes we will follow.

Core ethical principles at YMCA FG

Ethical decision-making will apply these core ethical principles:

As a registered independent charity, our values, purpose, vision, mission and use of compliance as an enabler, shapes all that we do and the decisions that we make.

We are committed to The YMCA Way:

- Upholding our values of Welcoming, Active, Listening, Inspiring, Caring and Exciting, and behaving in a way that lives these values.
- Delivering programmes and services that meet the needs of communities.
- Applying evidence-based approaches which help children, young people and families to belong, contribute and thrive.

We place children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

We endorse the NCVO Charity Ethical Principals (2019) in guiding decision making, good judgment and conduct.

NCVO Charity Ethical Principles (2019)

In January 2019, the NCVO led by Dame Mary Marsh published the Charity Ethical Principles to support charities, their governing bodies and those who work in and volunteer with them in recognising and resolving ethical issues and conflicts.

These are often matters of judgement and it is therefore important that we have a framework of ethical standards through which we will assess partnerships, investments, procurement, funding or other significant activities.

The NCVO Principles set out a recommended framework for the ethical execution of charitable purpose, and we will adopt these as the starting point for decision making on ethical issues.

We recognise that these principles are a benchmark of good practice:

Beneficiaries First

We recognise we have a responsibility to carry out our purposes for the public benefit. The interests of our beneficiaries and the causes we work for should be at the heart of everything we do. This means we should:

- Be clear what our purpose, vision and mission is and who or what our beneficiaries are.
- Carry out our purpose to provide the greatest benefit to our beneficiaries and our cause regardless of whether this might have a negative impact on the reputation or operation of our charity or our leadership.
- When working with beneficiaries ensure that their views and experiences are actively listened to and considered.
- Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are drawn up in with the interests of beneficiaries in mind.

Integrity

We should uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct at all times. This means we should:

- Ensure appropriate systems are in place to help guarantee decisions are robust, defensible and free from conflicts of interest.
- Consider effect of activities conducted in private life on the reputation of the charity and of charities generally.
- Ensure resources are managed responsibly and funds are properly protected, applied and accounted for.
- Exercise due diligence in understanding ethical standards of commercial partners and individuals, to seek support from those with ethical values that are consistent with those of the charity.
- Be sensitive to the impact of activities on both the natural and human environment.

- In line with Charity Commission guidance, any donations from an unknown or unverified source are expected to have a due diligence assessment completed and be reported to the Commission as a serious incident.

Openness

We create a culture and space where donors and supporters, as well as the wider public, can see and understand how we work, how we deal with problems when they arise and how we spend our funds. This means we should:

- Operate a presumption of openness and transparency, subject to complying with legal and regulatory requirements, this includes publishing this policy externally, and disclosing all companies and individuals giving over £10,000 on our website.
- We only accept funds we can ascertain the provenance and as long as our due diligence has been met, we will honour any supporter's wish to remain anonymous.
- Publish annual reports, policies and procedures.
- Establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability for all our work, both internally and externally.

Right to be Safe

Every person who comes into contact with us should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment. We have a responsibility to create an inclusive culture that does not tolerate inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive or harmful behaviour towards any person. We should also be a place where people's wellbeing and mental health are valued and promoted, so that anyone coming into contact with us is empowered to value and invest in their own health and wellbeing. We extend this right to be safe to all creatures and we will not undertake any work with animals unless we have the specialist knowledge to keep them safe and healthy and the proposal has been approved by the board.

This means we should:

- Stand against and have a clear approach to prevent abuse of trust and power, as documented in our Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Whistleblowing and Complaints Policies.
- Create a culture that supports the reporting and resolution of allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse or inappropriate behaviour, through our Whistleblowing and Complaints Policies.
- Ensure anyone working or volunteering for us understands the expectations placed upon them, and provide training to support them, as documented in our HR Policies and Procedures.
- Ensure anyone who works or volunteers for us has access to proper support and advice, as documented in our HR Policies and Procedures.
- Not endorse or approve products or companies. A statement to this effect will be included alongside any branding or promotion associated with products raising funds for the EY Foundation.
- Not sell or exchange our data for financial benefit.

Due diligence on potential partners

We will undertake a due diligence process and pay special attention to the following categories given the potential to threaten the physical, mental health and well-being of young people and families we work with:

- Tobacco and vaping manufacture
- Companies generating a material proportion of their revenue from the sale of pornography
- Alcohol companies
- Arms and ammunition
- Gambling companies
- Weight loss / dieting companies
- Short term loan providers / pay day lenders
- Cosmetic surgery companies
- Psychics and clairvoyants
- Celebrities and influencers
- Companies that have been prosecuted for poor working practices, wages and conditions within the past 5 years
- Companies that have been prosecuted for a poor safeguarding record within the past 5 years
- Companies that have been prosecuted for a poor environmental and sustainability record within the past 5 years

The focus of this due diligence process will be on service delivery in YMCA branches, partnerships, grants, donations, legacies, in kind support and investment from organisations (private, public, charity or otherwise) rather than on individual fundraisers or donors.

If any opportunity requires further review and scrutiny, a risk assessment will be completed and escalated to the Board.

When making a determination, the Board will consider:

- the nature, scope and intent of the proposed relationship
- what is in the best interest of our beneficiaries and charity
- the extent to which a potential partner or donor has taken positive steps to mitigate or resolve past issues of concern.

The Board will take the final decision on all matters under this section of the policy.

Trustees will receive annual reports about instances where donations or offers of fundraising have been refused.