

Asylum Aid Child Protection Policy

Asylum Aid is committed to ensuring that all children are not abused and that working practices minimise the risk of such abuse. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect all children and young people, including the children of adults who use Asylum Aid's services, from harm.
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Asylum Aid, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, and students.

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/england/>

This policy is to be used in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding Children-Referral Pathway
- Risk Assessment and Management in Mental Health
- Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Referral Pathway

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind.
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe, and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.
- Working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children and young people.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them.
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures confidently and competently.
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all safety checks are made.
- Recording storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance.
- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern.
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.
- Using our policies and procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately.
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us to deal with bullying when it does arise.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place.
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for children, young people, service users, staff and volunteers by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, service users, children, young people and their families treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

Abuse can include:

- physical,
- financial,
- sexual,
- psychological,
- discriminatory,
- emotional,
- female genital mutilation, and
- neglect.

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetuated by anyone. Staff, volunteers and trustees should be familiar with recognizing and identifying child abuse and potential barriers to disclosure. For more information refer to <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

Staff, volunteers and trustees should also ask questions about any children that live with service users and keep them in mind during interactions.

Rights & Responsibilities

Organisational Responsibilities of Asylum Aid

- To ensure that all Staff, Volunteers and Trustees are aware of children's need for protection.
- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability.
- To Enhance DBS check all Staff and Volunteers that have access to or work with children.
- To appoint a Child Protection Lead (CPL) who will oversee the implementation of the Policy and ensure that appropriate monitoring and audit takes place.

Individual Responsibilities of all Asylum Aid Staff, Volunteers and Trustees

- To be familiar with the Child Protection Policy, the Safeguarding Children Referral Pathway, and the Best Practice in Working with Children.
- To take appropriate action in line with the policy of Asylum Aid.
- To declare any existing or subsequent convictions.

Professionals working in universal services have a responsibility to identify the symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect including new and emerging threats, including online abuse, grooming, sexual exploitation and radicalisation, to share that information and work together to provide children with the support they need.

Support for those who report abuse

All those making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern, whether they are staff, volunteers, Trustees, clients, carers or members of the public, should be reassured that:

- They will be taken seriously.
- Their comments will usually be treated confidentially, but their concerns may be shared with the appropriate authorities if they or others are at significant risk.

Confidentiality issues

All staff volunteers and Trustees should be aware that in circumstances where there is serious risk of harm to a child or others, confidentiality may be broken. Where possible, consent for disclosure should be sought from the child or their parent or guardian, but where this is not possible, relevant authorities should be contacted even without consent. Before breaching our duty of confidentiality to a client, a supervisor must be consulted and where necessary advice sought from the Law Society ethics helpline, the Bar Council or the OISC.

Where a staff member is unsure about whether the circumstances are at a threshold where confidentiality can be broken without consent, advice should be sought from the CPL, their line manager, or the Asylum Aid Director.

Where this is developmentally appropriate, the Child has the right:

- To be made aware of this policy.
- To have alleged incidents recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

We are also committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

The named Child Protection Leads are: Monika Nollet (Immigration Supervisor) and Charlotte Alderson (Children's Solicitor and Senior Caseworker).

Reviewed: January 2023 (amended 15.3.23 with new Child Protection Lead)

To be reviewed: January 2024

Director's Signature: _____

A Pickup