

## The National Autistic Society Overarching Safeguarding Policy

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### INTRODUCTION

This Safeguarding Statement has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the relevant statutory guidance and best practice around safeguarding children and adults. Schools and Services within the NAS will also refer to and follow the procedures in the relevant safeguarding policies that are listed at the end of this document.

The NAS is committed to promoting the wellbeing and welfare of all its beneficiaries and is committed to protect the staff, volunteers and those connected with its activities from harm because of their close day to day contact with children and adults, NAS staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse and neglect at an early stage.

The Board of Trustees have agreed that the safeguarding of those in our care, including staff is of the utmost priority and all staff of the NAS take seriously our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and adults that we support and those who work and volunteer for the charity. We will identify and manage risk and work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements are in place within our schools and services to identify, assess, and support those people who are at risk of harm and to keep them safe and secure whilst in our care.

All concerns and allegations of abuse (including abuse toward our staff and volunteers) will be taken seriously and reported accordingly.

Our statement and supporting policies and procedures relate to all members of the NAS community including the children and adults who use our services, staff, trustees, visitors/contractors, parents and carers, volunteers and all those supporting and working within the services. The National Autistic Society is committed to setting a high standard to lead by example for all other organisations working for those with autism.

Everyone has the right to be protected from abuse and be treated no less favourably regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity and paternity and gender reassignment.

## DEFINITION OF SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It is fundamental to creating high-quality support services.

### **Those most in need of protection are:**

- children
- young people
- adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable

Although there are significant differences in the statutory basis and policy context between safeguarding children and safeguarding adults, which are reflected in our processes, there is an overarching objective to enable people to live a life free from abuse. Safeguarding is the responsibility of whole communities and depends on the everyday vigilance of everyone who plays a part in the lives of children or adults in vulnerable situations to ensure that people are kept as safe from harm as possible.

This Statement should therefore be understood alongside other NAS policies which fall under the safeguarding 'umbrella' as listed at the end of this document.

All relevant policies will be reviewed in accordance with the latest Statutory Guidance by the persons nominated by the Board of Trustees to approve such documents and who has responsibility for oversight of NAS safeguarding systems.

The NAS Safeguarding Lead will ensure regular reporting on safeguarding activity and systems in NAS Schools and Services to the Board of Trustees. The Board will not receive details of individual situations or identifying features of families as part of their oversight responsibility.

## ETHOS

Within the scope and control of the charity, the NAS has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and of adults who may be at risk of harm, this includes all those connected with the activities of the charity. The NAS will support the welfare and safety of all the people using its services and will:

- Undertake to ensure that everyone working with or on behalf of children and/or adults is competent, confident and safe to do so.
- Ensure that all those supported by and involved with our charity (including parents / carers) are aware of our safeguarding policies and how to report any suspected abuse.
- Promote safer recruitment policy and practices. The NAS will prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working or volunteering with children or vulnerable adults by adhering to statutory responsibilities to carry out appropriate checks on staff or others who work unsupervised with the people we support. We will take proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any

checks beyond what is required; and ensure those without full checks are appropriately supervised.

- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities for all employees and volunteers are included in recruitment materials including job descriptions and routinely discussed as part of management and supervision processes. There must be clear and well understood lines of accountability and support regarding safeguarding in each service area throughout the NAS. These must be clearly understood and supported by relevant staff guidance, the code of conduct and disciplinary procedures.
- Have a range of policies and guidance that encourage and support staff, volunteers, trustees and other primary stakeholders to raise concerns about the safety and welfare of children or adults towards whom we have safeguarding responsibilities.
- The NAS's policies and procedures will encompass the legislative frameworks of the constituent parts of the UK.
- All safeguarding policies will be approved by the appointed lead on behalf of the Board of Trustees following review.
- Ensure all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse through ongoing training and support and are aware of the NAS procedures and lines of communication. All those whose work with the NAS brings them into contact with children and/or vulnerable adults at risk will complete basic awareness safeguarding training. More specialist training opportunities are available for those who work routinely with children and young people or vulnerable adults at a level appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Work with the people we support, parents/ carers and other key stakeholders to build an understanding of the NAS's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults we support including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Implement documented safeguarding and health and safety policies including the organisation and arrangements for maintaining the health, safety and welfare of all those involved in the NAS, including schools and adult services.
- The NAS understands that people with an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) can see and experience the world in ways that are sometimes very different to the rest of the population. A consequence of this is that autistic people can behave in ways that can be challenging to a service or an individual. We will ensure that all those involved in NAS Schools and Services are trained in the Management of Challenging Behaviour where this is appropriate to their role and that they implement and adhere to the principles outlined to the Positive Behaviour Support in Schools and Services Policy and the Use of Restrictive Practice in NAS Schools and Services Policy.

## **PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

The NAS recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children and vulnerable adults if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Each NAS School or service follows their Local Child Protection Procedures (as endorsed by the local safeguarding arrangements for partners) / or their Local Safeguarding Adult Procedures (via the Local Adult Safeguarding Board) and has links with the Local Authority and the Commissioning Authority for that individual.

## **TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

All staff working with the NAS will receive a basic introduction to the principles of safeguarding, whatever their role in the organisation.

Those working in and directly with NAS services will receive safeguarding training that is relevant to their role. This includes the Board of Trustees as well as support staff in schools and services and volunteers. For those working directly with children and vulnerable adults, safeguarding training will be refreshed on an annual basis either via the face to face Safeguarding People training developed by the NAS, the on-line safeguarding and child protection training or from the relevant Local Authority or specialist organisation.

Where practicable, we will support the children and vulnerable adults we support in how to keep themselves safe and to understand the role the NAS plays in the context of safeguarding legislation.

Our schools and children's services will ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead and their Deputy undergo suitable child protection training which is updated every 2 years; all staff including the head teacher, e-safety coordinator and the designated teacher (children looked after), undergo training relevant to their roles which is updated regularly. All other staff who work in the school and/or with children will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to meet their responsibilities for child protection effectively.

All staff working directly with children and vulnerable adults will have supervision with a suitably experienced person on at least a 6-weekly basis, during which safeguarding concerns and processes will be discussed. Full support will be given to any staff member who is involved in the disclosure or reporting of a safeguarding concern. Employees also have access to a confidential helpline (Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme).

## **PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY**

The NAS has a clear confidentiality policy which forms part of the suite of Safeguarding Policies and is reviewed annually and is accessible to all staff and volunteers working for the NAS via the intranet and discussion.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The NAS pays full regard to statutory guidance regarding the safer recruitment of staff to support children and adults who use our services. The NAS will prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children and adults by adhering to statutory responsibilities to carry out appropriate checks on staff or others who work unsupervised, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring those without full checks are appropriately supervised. The NAS has a written Safer Recruitment, Selection and pre-employment vetting procedures in place.

## **DBS / DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND / ACCESS NI REFERRAL**

The Disclosure and Barring Service's (DBS) / Disclosure Scotland / Access NI role is to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults.

Referrals are made to the DBS / Disclosure Scotland / Access NI when an employer or an organisation, has concerns that a person has caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults. In these circumstances the employer or regulatory body must make a referral. *If the NAS dismiss or remove a member of staff or a volunteer because they have harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or we would have done so if they had not left, we must refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) / Disclosure Scotland / Access NI.*

## **RELATED NAS POLICIES**

***(To be read and followed alongside this document, which can be found on the NAS intranet)***

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-bullying in Schools and Children and Young Persons Policy
- Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy
- Referral to the DBS Barred List Policy
- Missing Child Policy
- Missing Adult Policy
- Positive Behaviour Support in Schools and Services Policy
- The Use of Restrictive Practice in NAS Schools and Services Policy
- Safer Recruitment Guidance for NAS Schools and Services
- Health and Safety Policies

\*Unless otherwise stated, the term services is used to describe any service delivered by the NAS. This could include branches, helplines, volunteer services, student support etc. as well as social care services.