

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

Policy and procedures

Contents

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy

Effective from:	September 2025
For the attention of:	ASDAN staff / Centre staff / Third parties

Policy owner	Policy approver
Safeguarding Officer (Senior Education Development Partner)	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Chief Executive Officer) / ASDAN Trustees

Review history		
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ASDAN safeguarding group
Trustee: Jamie Diwell, Dean Smart
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Melissa Farnham (Chief Executive Officer)
Deputy Safeguarding Officer: Kerrie King (Senior Education Development Partner)

Contents

1	Background	4
2	Definitions	5
2.1	Definitions of abuse	5
2.2	Prevent Duty	7
2.3	Modern slavery	7
3	Roles and responsibilities	8
3.1	ASDAN	8
3.1.1	Requests for information	8
3.1.2	Contact with children and vulnerable adults	8
3.1.3	Staffing and HR	9
3.2	Centres	9
4	Processes	10
5	Reporting procedure	11
5.1	Witness or reason to believe abuse/raising an allegation	11
5.2	Disclosure	11
6	Code of behaviour	12
6.1	Centre Visits	12
7	Work experience	13
7.1	Physical contact	13
7.2	Contact outside of work	13
8	Training and dissemination	14
9	Associated policies and procedures	15
9.1	Further information	15

1 Background

ASDAN believes that every young person should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. All members of ASDAN staff and those undertaking work on behalf of ASDAN all third parties that have a responsibility to support the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults from abuse or exploitation. This policy applies to everyone representing ASDAN in any way within the United Kingdom and abroad.

This includes reporting on any possible instances of:

- Information disclosure that could result in putting a child or vulnerable adult in danger. This is important as sharing children's personal information with third parties or with other parts of ASDAN needs to be fair to the child to do so. Sharing children or vulnerable adult's personal information with third parties, including sharing inferred or derived from their personal information, can expose children to risks.
- Abuse or neglect (either directly obtained or implied through conversations or materials seen) for further investigation, and not putting oneself into a position where any behaviour could be misinterpreted.

Every allegation or suspicion of abuse will be taken seriously and addressed as a priority and in accordance with the processes set out in this policy.

This policy has been created using the Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ)'s Principles for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults framework as guidance. Also taken into account is the [Care Act 2014 guidance on Safeguarding in adult care](#) and the [Care Quality Commission Regulations for service providers and managers Regulation 13](#).

This policy addresses the Charity Commission's expectations of charities for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy will be reviewed every year or earlier if deemed necessary.

2 Definitions

'Safeguarding' is how we aim to ensure that children and vulnerable adults who engage with ASDAN including through undertaking programmes or qualifications or face to face contact feel safe, and to try to prevent abuse from happening.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (Department for Education, September 2024) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The [Care Act 2014](#) describes Safeguarding vulnerable adults as:

- Protecting the rights of adults to live safely, free from abuse and neglect
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse and neglect
- Ensuring that the adults wellbeing is promoted including taking into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years (The Children Act 1989). Every child, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm.

Abuse and maltreatment can take many forms and there is no strict limit on the definitions for the purposes of this policy, the following definitions are as stated in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (Department for Education, September 2023).

Vulnerable adults are people 'aged 18 years or over who are, or may be, in need of community care services by reasons of mental or other disability, age or illness or who are unable to care for themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation' ([No Secrets Department of Health and Social Care 2000](#)). This may include adults with learning difficulties, mental health issues, physical impairments or drug and alcohol misuse.

2.1 Definitions of abuse

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (eg via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

2 Definitions

Emotional abuse/Psychological abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Other forms of abuse which need to be reported, and may particularly relate to Vulnerable Adults, are:

- Financial or material abuse: this involves the theft or misuse of a child or vulnerable adult's money (eg child or disability benefits), fraud or extortion;
- Discrimination or harassment: if based on someone's characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act (eg gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief) this can, in some situations, be considered to be abuse or hate crime;
- Institutional abuse: where an institution (such as an Academy) has policies or practices that deny children or vulnerable adults their dignity, or assert power and create a climate where the forms of abuse listed above are allowed to continue without challenge.

2 Definitions

2.2 Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 that outlines a responsibility on key authorities to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It requires that schools and other education providers are able to identify those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and to know what to do when they are identified, as well as building resilience by promoting fundamental British Values and enabling young people to challenge extremist views.

ASDAN considers that staff and Contractors may be in a position to identify children and young people at risk of radicalisation or extremism through the course of moderating learner work. Those subject to this policy are also asked to read and refer to the Department for Education's [The Prevent duty departmental advice for schools and childcare providers](#), 2015. The processes outlined in section 4 of this document should be followed if a member of staff or Contractor identifies a cause for concern.

2.3 Modern slavery

Modern slavery is a serious and often hidden crime in which people are exploited for criminal gain. The impact can be devastating for the victims.

Modern slavery comprises slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking. There were an estimated 40 million people in slavery globally in 2016 and 10,000 –13,000 potential victims in the UK, however many victims are not identified or reported. The common factors are that a victim is, or is intended to be, used or exploited for someone else's (usually financial) gain, without respect for their human rights. The perpetrators seeking to take advantage of them could be private individuals, running small businesses or part of a wider organised crime network.

For adult victims, there will be some element of coercion involved, such as threats, use of force, deception, or abuse of power. Victims may appear to give consent, but in reality they have little ability to choose to leave the exploitative situation and the perpetrators have still committed a crime. Child victims and vulnerable adults are not able to give informed consent and therefore exploitation even without any element of coercion could constitute modern slavery.

ASDAN staff are encouraged to read the document [Modern Slavery statutory guidance for England and Wales](#) on how to identify modern slavery. The processes outlined in section 5 of this document should be followed if a member of staff or Contractor identifies a cause for concern.

3 Roles and responsibilities

All ASDAN staff and Contractors have a responsibility to understand and follow the guidance set out in this policy.

3.1 ASDAN

ASDAN staff and Contractors are likely to come into contact with students' work primarily through the course of moderating or certificating ASDAN programmes or qualifications, but also as part of related work including filing sample portfolios, and preparing training materials. ASDAN has an obligation to take appropriate action if there is cause for concern of abuse in any materials seen by a member of staff or Contractor.

3.1.1 Requests for information

ASDAN staff and Contractors may receive requests for information, be it via telephone, live chat, video conferencing or email. We must ensure that the person we are communicating with has the right to access the information that we hold. Under no circumstances should any identifiable information be supplied if we have not established validity for the data request and the authentication of the person requesting the information. Identifiable information includes name, gender, date of birth, awards made, and the location that a learner studies at. This is also covered within ASDAN's GDPR policy. All centres can see a copy of this policy on the ASDAN website: asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance

Please note that we would normally only be speaking to registered centres about specific named learners for our main purposes for example registering them for courses, awarding, or certification. It is essential to ensure we are talking to genuine contacts at specific registered centres, before discussing any individual.

3.1.2 Contact with children and vulnerable adults

ASDAN staff and Contractors may also come into contact with those who may be deemed a child or vulnerable adult through the course of visits to Centres or through ASDAN's work experience programme, including those engaged on apprenticeships.

ASDAN will ensure that all staff and Contractors are aware of and understand this safeguarding policy, and the procedures that should be followed in the case of any cause for concern. Staff and Contractors will also be asked to read and acknowledge their understanding of [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1](#) (Department for Education, 2023-2025).

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1.3 Staffing and HR

In relation to staffing and HR, ASDAN will:

- Identify a Safeguarding working group that will always include a Director and a Board member, to ensure that this policy remains current and effective, and to remain informed of any changes to legislation or regulation that may affect ASDAN.
- Take all reasonable measures to check the suitability of staff and Contractors to work with children and young people.
- Ensure that where ASDAN ceases to use the services of any person because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, a referral is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service as soon as possible if the criteria is met.

3.2 Centres

As Centres have primary contact with learners, they are expected to have primary responsibility for the welfare of their learners, including progressing and resolving issues.

It is ASDAN's expectation that any centre undertaking an ASDAN course will have a robust safeguarding policy and associated procedures in place, which adhere to the required regulation relating to their centre type. This is made explicit in the Terms and Conditions, which also requires centres to agree that their policy will be made available to ASDAN on request.

All ASDAN Centres are required to nominate a Designated Safeguarding Officer and ensure that this information is updated on the ASDAN website centre contacts page whenever a change to this role may occur. Any allegations or concerns will be referred to this person in the first instance. In the case that this person may be personally involved in the allegation, or that this information has not been provided or is out of date, the Head of the Centre will be contacted.

Where providers are care homes or external services it is expected that they will have the required policies and procedures in place to meet the requirements of the [Health and Social Care Act 2008: Regulation 13](#) to ensure that they have robust procedures and processes in place to prevent people using the service from being abused by staff or others they may come into contact with whilst using the service.

All centres can see a copy of this policy on the ASDAN website: [asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance](https://www.asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance)

4 Processes

4.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All staff and Contractors must hold a valid Enhanced level DBS check including barred list check certificate where their role involves visiting an existing or potential ASDAN Centre, whether a one-off, outside core hours or not specifically intended to involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. A Enhanced level DBS check including barred list check will be arranged by the HR Advisor and Administrator for all new members of staff and renewed on expiration. If any circumstances declared on the certificate change it is the responsibility of the member of staff or Contractor to submit a new application form.

If a member of staff or Contractor visits a Centre but does not hold a valid Enhanced level DBS check including barred list check certificate, they must be accompanied at all times by a member of Centre staff.

5 Reporting procedure

5.1 Witness or reason to believe abuse/raising an allegation

ASDAN staff and contractors are required to complete the following steps:

- Complete the ASDAN safeguarding **incident** form sections 1-5.
- Email the completed form to safeguarding@asdan.org.uk
- The witness will be informed that the issue has been passed to the centre but not of the outcome.

If an allegation is raised involving an ASDAN member of staff, the allegation should be logged using a Safeguarding Incident Form, and emailed to safeguarding@asdan.org.uk. The allegation will be formally investigated in line with this policy and ASDAN's disciplinary procedures, following discussion with the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer.

If an allegation is raised involving an ASDAN Contractor, the allegation should be logged using a Safeguarding Incident Form, and referred to a member of the Safeguarding group. The allegation will be formally investigated following discussion with the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer and dealt with in line with the terms and conditions of their contract.

The Chair of Trustees will be made aware of any allegations against a member of staff or Contractor, and kept informed of the progress of any subsequent enquiry. The Board may choose to elect a Board member to represent Trustees on an investigatory or disciplinary panel.

5.2 Disclosure

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses information to a member of staff or Contractor they will:

- Explain that they are unable to keep secrets and that dependent on what they are told, they may have to tell someone else in order to keep them safe
- Remain calm and not show shock or disbelief
- Listen carefully without interrupting
- Acknowledge their courage and reassure them they have done the right thing
- Not ask detailed, probing or leading questions, or any questions that start with the words how, what, when, where or why
- Not criticise any alleged perpetrator
- Explain what they are going to do next, and reassure that they will only tell people on a 'need to know' basis
- Complete steps 1.1 - 1.3 of the safeguarding incident form as in section 5 of this policy.

6 Code of behaviour

The interests of every child or vulnerable adult must be put first; all will be treated equally and with dignity and respect

Staff and Contractors must be aware at all times of the effects and consequences that words and actions might have or meanings that could be construed from them.

ASDAN staff and Contractors will avoid:

- Disclosing information that could identify a child to an unauthorised adult
- Distribute images of the child, either in a learning environment or assessment
- Situations in which they are left alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- Acting in any way that might make a vulnerable person uncomfortable
- Meeting or engaging in any form of contact that is not on official premises or outside of business hours
- Use of inappropriate language, any toleration of inappropriate language uttered by any party in the presence of or by vulnerable people
- Allowing any allegation concerning a child or vulnerable adult welfare to go unreported
- Ever promising that information shared by a child or vulnerable adult will be kept confidential

6.1 Centre Visits

When visiting an ASDAN centre, staff are expected to abide by the Safeguarding policy and protocol set out by each individual centre. Staff ID badges will be available as will copies of enhanced DBS certificates if requested.

Contact with young people or vulnerable adults at a Centre must be supervised by a member of Centre staff. There should not be a reason for ASDAN staff or Contractors to find themselves alone with a learner. Should this happen, the colleague should remove themselves from the situation.

If a staff member or Contractor is left working alone where there is potential for a child or vulnerable adult to enter the room, they must take appropriate action to prevent this eg by placing or requesting the placement of a 'do not enter' sign on the door, or by locking the room.

7 Work experience

ASDAN hosts work experience students at its head office and across all central departments. It is recognised that although desirable, it is not always possible for work experience students to be supervised or accompanied by two members of staff. In the case that a member of staff is working alone with a placement they should:

- Avoid enclosed spaces and ensure doors are left ajar
- Inform another member of staff of their location and the activity they will be working on with the student

7.1 Physical contact

It may be necessary to touch a work experience placement eg on the arm to guide them, but this should be kept to a minimum and only when another adult is present. Staff should not engage in non-professional contact with a young person (eg hugging, horseplay).

7.2 Contact outside of work

ASDAN staff and Contractors will not share personal contact details with any young people or vulnerable adults, including through social media. Any necessary follow up contact (eg for work experience students) should be made through the learner's Centre or school.

If a student attempts to connect with a member of staff through social media, they must decline the invitation and explain that they cannot accept their request. Any unsolicited contact should be reported to and logged by the Safeguarding group.

8 Training and dissemination

This policy will be shared with all members of staff. It will be issued with all new contracts for external work where the nature of the contract may involve the Contractor coming into contact with a child or vulnerable adult.

All new members of staff will be issued with a digital copy of this policy as part of the induction process.

Training on ASDAN's safeguarding policy and procedures will be delivered to all members of staff that may come into contact with children, vulnerable adults, learner materials or young people engaged in work experience on an annual basis.

Training will be made available to the Safeguarding working group as required and appropriate.

9 Associated policies and procedures

Document name	Responsible person
Employee code of conduct (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
Work Experience policy (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
GDPR policy	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
Risk Registers (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
IT policy (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
Email policy (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
Whistleblowing policy	Quality Manager
Whistleblowing policy (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance
Disciplinary policy (internal)	Director of Infrastructure and Finance

9.1 Further information

Childline	0800 096 7719	childline.org.uk
NSPCC	0808 800 5000	nspcc.org.uk
Disclosure and Barring Service	0870 909 0811	gov.uk/dbs

