

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Autscope

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to protect children and vulnerable adults first and foremost
- to work to the highest standard of good practice
- to instigate effective intervention if a child or vulnerable adult's welfare is at risk
- to protect organisers

Objective

To give all Autscope organisers a clear structure within which to work and ensure that children and vulnerable adults who attend Autscope are protected.

Definition

For the purpose of this policy a child is a person aged between 0-18 years of age.

While Autscope does not necessarily endorse many of the terms and concepts used in the statutory definition, Autscope does endorse the importance of protecting all individuals from risk of abuse. Therefore for the purposes of this policy Autscope accepts the statutory definition of 'vulnerable adult' as set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Policy Statement

During the Autscope conference parents are responsible for their children at all times. Autscope organisers do not take direct responsibility for children attending Autscope.

During the Autscope conference adult attendees are responsible for themselves at all times whether or not they meet the definition of a "vulnerable adult". This includes responsibility for arranging their own carer if needed.

Nevertheless Autscope seeks to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse and neglect. We will ensure that proper and prompt action is taken to report to relevant authority any suspicion of abuse or neglect. Additionally we have a duty to our colleagues and ourselves to ensure that we do not place each other or ourselves in vulnerable situations.

This policy is intended for use in conjunction with "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children". A copy of this document will be located in the organiser's file during Autscope.

Safeguarding Officer

The designated Safeguarding Officers will be the *[post name]* and *[postname 2]*.

Role and responsibility of Safeguarding Officer

- To be familiar with the Children Act 1989 and Dept. of Health Guidelines “Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children” document on Child Protection Procedures.
- As far as possible to access ongoing training on Child Protection/Safeguarding Vulnerable groups.
- To take responsibility for organising any necessary training of organisers in Child Protection/Safeguarding Vulnerable groups issues.
- To ensure that childcare provision at Autscope is commissioned from providers who meet all appropriate statutory standards.
- To work with the committee to ensure Autscope meets the statutory requirements in relation to vetting/CRB/ISA checks on individuals for whom this is legally required.
- To promptly refer allegations or suspicions of abuse of a child or vulnerable adult to the appropriate local social services department or police.

Responsibility of all organisers

- To work within this Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy, observing confidentiality as laid down in the Autscope policy on confidentiality.
- To inform and seek the support of a Safeguarding Officer with any concerns or worries regarding children or vulnerable adults.
- To complete a cause for concern report if there are worries about a child or vulnerable adult.
- The organiser originally identifying the alleged abuse must be willing to submit a report to a Child Protection unit or social services department and attend case conferences as required.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or failing to act to prevent harm. Children or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or institutional or community setting; by those known to them or by a stranger.

The recognised categories are:

- **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child or vulnerable adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child or vulnerable adult that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults. It may involve causing children or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or vulnerable adults. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child or vulnerable adult, though it may occur alone.

- **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse of a child involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual Abuse of a vulnerable adult is the involvement of a vulnerable adult in sexual activities or relationships, which are for the gratification of the other person and which: they have not consented to, or they cannot understand and are not able to consent to, or which violates the individual's expressed cultural or religious preferences, sexual taboos, or family custom and practice.

- **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or vulnerable adult's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or vulnerable adult's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or vulnerable adult from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may

also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.¹

¹ All definitions included in this section are taken from "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children" Department of Health 12/99 with the exception of the definition of sexual abuse of vulnerable adults which is drawn from Cambridgeshire County Council 'Protection of Vulnerable Adults Referral Form' - <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/48E29165-1FF2-4FBE-A0EF-8ED768275D3B/0/ReferralForm.pdf>

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES GUIDELINES FOR ALL ORGANISERS

1. Minimise the situations where the abuse of children, young people or vulnerable adults may occur.

- Parents attending Autscope must agree in writing to be responsible for their children at all times.
- As clearly stated in Autscope literature, by registering to attend Autscope, participants agree to be responsible for their own basic care needs or to bring a carer with them to provide for those needs.
- In an emergency situation involving a child the organiser must ensure that responsibility for a child is returned to a person with parental responsibility or an appropriate statutory agency as soon as possible. In the interim the organiser must act to protect the safety and interests of the child including ensuring that an adult is never left alone with a child or young person where there is little or no chance of their activity being observed by others.
- In an emergency situation involving a vulnerable adult an organiser must ensure that responsibility for a vulnerable adult who is unable to care for themselves is returned to a person with legal responsibility or an appropriate statutory agency as soon as possible. In the interim organisers must act to protect the safety and interests of the vulnerable adult including ensuring that they are not left in the care of a single individual where there is little or no chance of their activity being observed by others.
- The Safeguarding Officer must ensure that childcare providers commissioned by Autscope meet all appropriate statutory standards.
- The Safeguarding Officer must ensure that Autscope works towards compliance with statutory requirements in relation to vetting/CRB/ISA checks on individuals of who this is legally required.

2. Follow the agreed procedure for reporting and recording instances of suspected abuse.

- Organisers should report any concerns about child or vulnerable adult protection to the Safeguarding Officer immediately, and make a written report of the situation before the day / evening end.
- If a child or vulnerable adult begins to disclose information, listen carefully to what is said without prompting or probing. Notes should be made as soon as possible. It is **NOT** the role of organisers to investigate the claims made by the child or vulnerable adult. Care should be taken to ensure that the young person or vulnerable adult understands the need for you to disclose any information that they have told you in order to maintain trust. No promise of confidentiality should ever be given.
- All records kept about instances of concern should be kept in a secure (locked) location. These written records can be summoned as evidence and become the

property of the court. For this reason all records should be hand written or typed in black ink.

- If there is immediate danger to the young person or vulnerable adult you must act promptly. If a child is injured (and a person with parental responsibility is not immediately available) you must seek medical assistance immediately, whilst keeping the Safeguarding Officer(s) informed. If a vulnerable adult is injured (and they themselves or a person with legal responsibility for them is not immediately available) you must seek medical assistance immediately, whilst keeping the Safeguarding Officer(s) informed. Under no circumstance should you take a child or vulnerable adult for treatment in your car unaccompanied by another adult. If medical treatment is not required inform the Safeguarding Officer(s), who will take appropriate action.
- If the child or vulnerable adult is thought to be at risk if returned home or to the care of a person requesting access to them, then the emergency social services team should be informed immediately. If the team cannot deal with the issue then the police must be contacted.

Important points to remember

- Good practice and the law dictates that the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.
- Do not undertake an investigation of an allegation; ensure the individual is safe and report the facts to the police or local authority. Investigating and diagnosing abuse is **NOT** the responsibility of Autscope organisers.
- Under no circumstances ask a child or vulnerable adult to remove their clothing, even if the individual says s/he wants to show you something.
- Social Services have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Autscope organisers have a responsibility to pass on all concerns to the Safeguarding Officer and/or social services.
- Where there are grounds for concern the Safeguarding Officer should contact the appropriate authority.

Eleven points to remember

- The protection of the child or vulnerable adult must have first priority
- To delay reporting a suspicion of abuse could be disastrous
- Try to avoid situations where you are on your own with a young or vulnerable person
- Many forms of abuse have no visible symptoms
- It is important to listen carefully to the young person or vulnerable adult, to take what is said seriously and never promise to keep it a secret
- If a young person or vulnerable adult discloses to you accept what they are saying, keep calm and try to avoid showing indications of embarrassment.
- Be aware that the child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been threatened
- Never push for information

- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they were right to tell you and you believe them
- Let the young person or vulnerable adult know what you are going to do next, and that you will let them know what happens
- Make notes as soon as possible, writing down exactly what was said and when s/he said it. Record dates and times of these events and hand in to the Safeguarding Officer who will keep it secure.

Guidelines for completing a cause for concern report.

In any case where an allegation is made, or someone has concerns, a record should be made. In the event that the allegation is investigated by the Police or Social Services, this record will become vital evidence that will be used in any subsequent court action. It is important therefore that full and accurate details are recorded of all facts and actions, as and when they occur.

The following points will help you complete the report.

1. Ensure that the personal details of the child or vulnerable adult are entered accurately.
2. The person making the report must be identified.
3. In completing the details of the incident / suspicion the following need to be recorded.
 - a) Is the person making the report expressing their own views, or passing on those of somebody else. Record the details.
 - b) What has prompted the concerns? Include dates, times, etc. of any specific incident.
 - c) Any physical signs, remembering that the individual must NOT be asked to remove any clothing. Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
 - d) Has the child or vulnerable adult said anything? If so record it, but never press for answers – it is not for you to investigate
 - e) Have the parents been contacted? If so what was said?
 - f) Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so record details.
 - g) Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
4. Remember to record all actions taken, persons contacted, decisions made, instructions given or received. Each entry should be timed and initialled.
5. Deal only with facts. Do not express personal opinions or suppositions.
6. Treat all information received and records made as highly confidential. This information should only be released to those who have a genuine reason to know.

Confidential

Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Cause for Concern Report

Child/Vulnerable Adult's Surname	First Name
Home address	
Tel:	Date of Birth
Person Reporting	Appointment
Date of Incident	Time of Incident

Details of Incident Suspicion: (Record all details)

PLEASE CONTINUE ON REVERSE

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Record of Action Taken

Time	Action Taken	Initial
Record all action taken, comments or statements made, agencies contacted and at what time.		

Continue on Separate Sheet if required

Signature:

Print Name:

Date of Report:

When completed hand in to Safeguarding Officers.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

