

AIM Alternative Provision Ltd (AIM) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

AIM is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all children. We recognise our responsibilities to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and neglect.

We acknowledge our duty to act appropriately with regards to any allegations towards a member of staff or volunteer, or in relation to any disclosures or suspicion of abuse.

We recognise our duty of care to safeguard children as detailed under the Children Acts' 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

We believe that:

- The welfare of all children is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, ethnicity, religious or spiritual beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to in a swift and appropriate manner

We will ensure that:

- All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity
- The welfare of each child will always be of highest priority
- Bullying (in any form) is neither accepted nor condoned
- Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour
- There is a clear line of accountability with regards to safeguarding concerns
- Employees and volunteers will be kept updated with regards to changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and young people
- Employees and volunteers will undertake relevant and appropriate development and training in relation to safeguarding children
- All employees and volunteers within the Company are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguarding and their duty to the children and young people in their care, and that they fully understand the correct process for reporting concerns

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and 2004: and in line with the following:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Roles & Responsibilities

All employees and volunteers working within AIM must:

- Understand the different categories of abuse and neglect, and how to recognise the signs
- Recognise that some parents/carers may require additional support in raising their children, for example as a result of mental health issues, learning disabilities, substance misuse or domestic abuse
- Understand their responsibility to report any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected. This includes reporting any concern they may have regarding another employee's or volunteer's behaviour towards a child or children
- Understand the line of accountability for reporting safeguarding concerns and be fully aware of the Company's DSO and their role within the organisation
- If appropriate, liaise with other agencies, contribute to safeguarding assessments and attend child protection meetings/core groups/conferences

Recognising the signs of abuse/safeguarding concerns

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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or 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.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 capacity, 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. 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 misuse.

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.

Child Sexual Exploitation: This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child Criminal Exploitation: As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Extremism: Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as *“the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for death of members of our armed forces as extremist.”*

County Lines: As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of ‘deal line’.

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

All organisations working with children and young people should have a DSO in place.

The DSO will provide a direct point of contact for any staff member or volunteer who has a child protection concern, record any concerns in a clear (and secure) manner, and ensure that the appropriate action is taken.

The DSO should also ensure that the Child Protection Policy is being fully adhered to.

The DSO for AIM is Lyndsey Marshall.

If the DSO is not available (due to annual leave, sickness etc), staff and volunteers should report to the deputy DSO: Hayley Baverstock.

If neither the DSO nor Deputy DSO is available, advice should be immediately sought from:

The First Response Team on 01296 383962 (outside of office hours call: 0800 999 7677)

email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk NB. This email address is only secure if emailing from another secure account.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child or young person discloses to you that abuse or inappropriate behaviour has/may be/is taking place, you should:

- Listen to the child. Allow them to tell you what has happen in their own way, and at their own pace. Do not interrupt a child who is freely recalling significant events
- Remain calm. Be reassuring and supportive but try not to respond emotionally
- Do not ask leading questions. Only ask questions if you are seeking clarification about something they have said. Use TED; Tell, Explain, Describe
- When you are able to, make an accurate record of what you have been told, taking care to note any times, dates or locations mentioned. Use the child's own words where possible. Do not substitute anatomically correct names for body part names used by the child
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing in telling someone and you are glad they told you. Reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong
- Do not promise to keep their disclosure a secret, but reassure the child that you will only share the information with the right people who will be able to help them. Explain what you will do next
- At your earliest opportunity, speak to your DSO regarding the disclosure. If your DSO and deputy DSO are not available, ring First Response for advice

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child DO NOT DELAY, ring 999

What to do if you are concerned about a child

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to the DSO. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways, including a comment made by a child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behaviour or knowledge.

The employee/volunteer must record the concern in writing and ensure it is kept strictly confidential and stored securely in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

It is the responsibility of the DSO to deal with any Safeguarding matters initially and then escalate as appropriate.

Policies & Procedures

This policy has been written in line with the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership multi-agency policies and procedures.

In addition, AIM is committed to a number of other policies which support Child Protection. Copies of these are held and are available in the office. These include:

- Whistleblowing
- Safer Recruitment
- Privacy Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Allegations Against Employees/Volunteers

When any form of complaint is made against an employee/volunteer it should initially be dealt with by the DSO. If the complaint is against the DSO, then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed. The Windsor and Maidenhead LADO is contactable on 07774332675.

In order to support the managing allegations process, we will:

- Follow all advice given by the LADO throughout the investigation process, including how to manage the employee or volunteer against whom the allegation is made, as well as supporting other employees and volunteers within the workplace.
- Follow all advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child making the allegation, as well as other children and young people connected to the organisation.
- Ensure feedback is provided to the LADO about the outcome of any internal investigations within your agency.

Should an individual employee or volunteer be involved in child protection, other safeguarding procedures or Police investigations in relation to abuse or neglect, they must inform the DSO. In these circumstances, we will assess whether there is any potential for risk of transfer to the workplace or the individuals own work with children.

Supporting employees/volunteers

All employees/volunteers will receive regular training and supervision with respect to Safeguarding issues.

Employees/volunteers to whom a young person has disclosed abuse, may be distressed by the disclosure and the DSO will monitor and take supportive action where necessary.

Confidentiality

Child protection concerns, disclosures from children or safeguarding allegations made against another employee or volunteer MUST NOT be discussed across the workforce as a whole.

This information should be shared solely with the DSO/Deputy DSO (and/or with First Response/the LADO as appropriate). Personal information which is shared by the

child on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.

If employees and volunteers wish to discuss situations in order to gain a wider perspective from colleagues, this should be done on an anonymous basis, with names and identifying information relating to the child and their family remaining strictly confidential.

Consent

When responding regarding a concern about a child, making a referral to First Response or contacting the LADO, the DSO should consult the Continuum of Need document to clarify whether consent from the child/family is required.

In any situation where a child is at risk of harm, consent is not required.

Escalation & challenge

Child protection will always be an area in which there may be differences of opinion about the best course of action. It is very important that all those working with children and families feel able to air their views and constructively challenge the actions of others, including other agencies and professionals. Employees should feel confident that they can raise any concerns they have about actions or decisions relating to safeguarding that are made by other professionals or agencies.

Photography and the use of Images of Children

As confirmed in the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), we will ensure written consent is sought from the parent or carer of any child under the age of 18 using our service before any photographs are taken.

If consent is given, we will make a clear agreement with the parent or carer as to how the image will be used (for example, on our social media) and how widely.

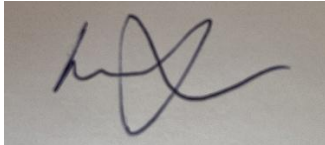
Due consideration will be given to the appropriateness of clothing and posture, and details such as the child's name or age will not be shared unless integral to the use of the image (such as the acceptance of an award), in particular when additional identifiers (i.e. our logo) are also being shared.

Review and Maintenance of the Policy

The management team shall undertake to review this policy, its implementation and effectiveness annually. The views of all employees/volunteers shall be sought where necessary and reflected in the review process.

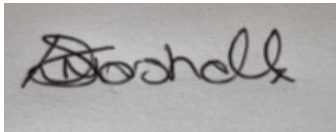
Any new legislation or developments in existing legislation will be considered as and when required and the policy will be updated to reflect these developments.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'HB', on a light-colored background.

Name: Hayley Baverstock

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L Marshall', on a light-colored background.

Name: Lyndsey Marshall

Dated: 11th July 2025

Review Date: July 2026



Phone Numbers / Contacts / Links

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on **999**.

Safeguarding Children (Buckinghamshire)

The First Response Team on 01296 383962 (9am -5pm Monday to Friday) (outside of office hours call: 0800 999 7677)

Email: secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscc.gov.uk NB. This email address is only secure if emailing from another secure account.

The Continuum of Need (previously referred to as Threshold Document)

<https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/professionals/continuum-of-need/>

Safeguarding Children (Windsor and Maidenhead)

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01628 683150

Emergency Duty Team (out of office hours) 01344 351999

Safeguarding Children (Surrey & Woking)

C-SPA 0300 470 9100 during office hours (9am – 5pm,
Monday to Friday)

Outside office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517898

Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk

OSAB Thresholds of Needs Matrix

<https://www.oscb.org.uk/documents/threshold-of-needs-2021/>

If you think a child or young person is being sexually exploited Contact the Kingfisher Team on 01865 309196.

If you think a child is at immediate risk call 999.