



Policy Handbook

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Policies & Procedures Review Sheet

Ref	Name of policy	Version	Published date	Date due for renewal
1	Complaints and Grievances	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
2	Conflicts of Interest	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
3	Equal Opportunities and Diversity	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
4	Financial Reserves	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
5	Financial Regulations	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
6	Training and Learning	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
7	Data Protection and Confidentiality	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
8	Safeguarding	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
9	Recruitment and Selection	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
10	Health and Safety	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
11	Volunteers	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024
12	Volunteer Confidentiality	2.0	15/05/2023	15/05/2024

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to ensure that all the policies and procedures are adhered to.



Complaints & Grievance Policy

Autistic Parents UK is a Charity Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and exists to provide support to Autistic Parents in the UK.

To ensure our services remain at a high and improving standard, this policy document explains how you can let us know if you are not satisfied with your dealings with us, for any reason, either as a member of the public, a service user, a member of staff or volunteer.

Procedure for making a complaint

Stage 1

If you are unhappy about a particular service, please initially speak to the person organising the service who may be able to resolve this. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate, please email details of your issue to complaints@autisticparentsuk.org.

If you are unhappy with an individual who has a specific role in Autistic Parents UK, sometimes it is best to discuss with the person directly so that the issue can be resolved. If you feel this is difficult or inappropriate then please email complaints@autisticparentsuk.org

Information to include in your complaint

When e-mailing our dedicated complaints inbox, please include the following information:

- Your name and preferred contact details
- The nature of your complaint and how it specifically relates to Autistic Parents UK
- If the complaint is regarding a specific person or service, please provide names/details.
- Try to be as specific as possible about what you are unhappy about. If your complaint is about a specific incident, please include the date, time, location and who was present. This will help us identify what steps we need to take next and any solutions that resolve the situation.

We will aim to respond to your complaint/grievance within 24 hours. If the matter is more complicated, we will provide acknowledgement within five working days, and may need to ask for further clarifying information in order to investigate. We will aim to provide a response within ten working days.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with our initial response, please let us know by responding to complaints@autisticparentsuk.org outlining your reason/s. If your complaint is about a Trustee Board member, please direct your response to the Chairperson.

All written complaints will be logged. You will receive a written acknowledgement within five working days. We will aim to further investigate your complaint and respond within ten working days. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of any actions taken to date, or any actions being considered.

Stage 3

If you remain unsatisfied with our Stage 2 response, we will report the matter at the next Trustee meeting to resolve the situation. The decision of the Trustee Board will be final.

Positive Feedback

Please also let us know if you are happy with Autistic Parents UK services, we do love to hear good news stories and welcome your feedback, either to our volunteers verbally, or to our info@autisticparentsuk.org mailbox.



Conflicts of Interest Policy

The APUK Trustees will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of Autistic Parents UK on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of interest.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity of Autistic Parents UK decision-making processes and to enable members to have confidence in our integrity.

Examples of when conflicts of interest may arise include:

1. A Trustee Board member who is also on the Board of another organisation that is competing for the same funding.

2. A Trustee Board member is part of an organisation providing services that may be of interest.

In the course of meetings or activities, Trustee Board members will disclose any interests in a transaction or decision where there may be a conflict between Autistic Parents UK best interests and the Trustee Board member's best interests or a conflict between the best interests of two organisations that the Trustee Board member is involved with. If in doubt, the potential conflict must be declared anyway and clarification sought.

In the case of a conflict of interest arising for a Trustee Board member because of a duty of loyalty owed to another organisation or person, and the conflict is not authorised by virtue of any other provision in the memorandum or the articles, the unconflicted Trustee Board members may authorise such a conflict of interest where the following conditions apply:

1. The Trustee Board member who has declared the conflict of interest withdraws from the part of the meeting at which there is discussion of any arrangement or transaction affecting that other organisation or person;
2. The Trustee Board member who has the conflict of interest does not vote on any such matter and is not to be counted when considering whether a quorum of Trustee Board members is present at the meeting;
3. The other Trustee Board members who have no conflict of interest in this matter consider it is in the interests of the organisation to authorise the conflict of interest in the circumstances applying.
4. Any such disclosure and the subsequent actions taken will be noted in the minutes.

* A relative may be a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother, sister, spouse or civil partner of the Trustee Board member or any person living with the Trustee Board member as their partner.



Equal Opportunities Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

Autistic Parents UK is committed to being inclusive and ensuring its services are relevant and accessible to all. Recognising and valuing difference, Autistic Parents UK aims to offer services that reach out to everyone in all communities.

DEFINITION

Diversity is about valuing all differences; recognising that people from different backgrounds, with different skills, abilities and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions that enhance the work of Autistic Parents UK.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy seeks to value and harness differences and to make our services relevant and approachable for everyone. We aim to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to meet the changing needs of our service users, staff, volunteers, Trustee Board members, partners and supporters.

Autistic Parents UK believes in equality of opportunity and values all individuals regardless of any collective identity and is committed to providing an environment free of stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices. Challenging discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policy and practice and will support other organisations and individuals to do the same. Autistic Parents UK aims to create a culture in the organisation that respects and values diversity. Diversity is a prerequisite to all aspects of the services being provided by Autistic Parents UK and is central in being able to meet the needs of all communities.

Autistic Parents UK believes that all individuals have a right to be free from direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, caste, ethnic or national origin, religion, political affiliation, social class, employment or financial status, sexuality, disability, marital status, HIV/AIDS status, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or non-relevant criminal conviction. Autistic Parents UK seeks to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner.

THE TRUSTEE BOARD

The Trustee Board has overall and final responsibilities in relation to the Race Relations Act (1976), Sex Discrimination Act (1975-85), Equal Pay Act (1970), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974), Autism Act (2009), Equalities Act, (2010) and all other relevant or subsequent legislation. The Trustee Board will also ensure the development of a strategic commitment to diversity, which goes beyond adherence to any legal responsibilities. The Trustee Board will review the effectiveness of this policy annually.

CHAIRPERSONS

The Chairperson/s has responsibility to implement, monitor and evaluate the Equality and Diversity Policy. In particular, the Chairperson/s will ensure that:

- ∞ The Trustee Board are regularly informed of the policy's implementation and the implications of the Trustee Board decisions and policies for equality and diversity issues.
- ∞ All staff / volunteers and the Trustee Board are informed that an Equality and Diversity Policy is in operation and are bound to comply with its requirements.
- ∞ Staff / volunteers receive sufficient information and training to enable them to translate this policy into organisational culture.
- ∞ Line Chairperson/ss are aware of their responsibilities to their staff and volunteers in relation to equal opportunities and diversity.
- ∞ There are arrangements in place to properly monitor this policy.
- ∞ Managing diversity is internally driven, from a sense of commitment by the organisation and its employees / volunteers wherever they are based.
- ∞ Those responsible for equality and diversity issues have the resources to carry out their work effectively.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND EMPLOYMENT

Please see [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)



HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

It is expected that staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members will respect the values and differences of all individuals within Autistic Parents UK and all service users and those within partner organisations. Harassment in any form is entirely unacceptable and each member of staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members carries responsibility for their own behaviour.

Anyone who makes a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or gives evidence about such a complaint, will not be subject to victimisation or any other detriment as a result of their action. Autistic Parents UK will provide support for staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members who allege harassment and a proper investigation of complaints will take place. Please see our [Complaints Policy](#).

WIDENING ACCESSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

Autistic Parents UK will attempt to find ways of making the service accessible to everyone, including people for whom English is not a first language, religious practices, d/Deaf or hearing impaired people, blind or visually impaired people, disabled people (including learning disability or difficulties). Autistic Parents UK will ensure that the specific needs of people and communities that are disadvantaged and excluded are met and will find ways to support the representation of their interests.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS

Autistic Parents UK respect the beliefs of all staff and volunteers and will try to accommodate staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members religious and cultural needs by –

- ∞ Allowing time and, if possible, a place for prayers during the working day and at the workplace.
- ∞ Considering dietary requirements in catering for staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members when providing facilities to eat and store food.
- ∞ Allowing staff / volunteers of particular faiths to take their holidays for religious festivals and other religious observance, if necessary, giving them priority over other members of staff / volunteers not of that religion.
- ∞ Trying to arrange job interviews or other important work meetings when they do not clash with important religious festivals.
- ∞ Not imposing a dress code with which some people cannot comply.

In dealing with such matters, Chairperson/s must seek to balance the operation needs of their department with the cultural and religious needs of employees. Where appropriate, expert advice should be obtained.

DISABILITY

Autistic Parents UK will support staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members who are disabled or become disabled to continue to work within the organisation. Autistic Parents UK will aim to maintain disabled staff/volunteers in employment whenever practicable. Reasonable steps to achieve this may involve adjusting working conditions and practices. Autistic Parents UK will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all its services and activities are accessible to all.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT/COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST

All staff, volunteers and Trustee Board members should have access to support. If, for example, a group of staff, volunteers or Trustee Board members sharing a collective identity wish to set up a support group then this should be encouraged. If anyone feels isolated then provision should be made for external support.

ACCESS TO MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

Autistic Parents UK aims to actively encourage the views of members and service users from all communities in order to improve service delivery. This should cover all aspects of service including: management practice, recruitment, employment, volunteer involvement, training and development, publicity/publications and access to resources.

Autistic Parents UK will aim to ensure that its membership, goods and services are accessible to all and reflect the needs of all sections of the community. We aim to ensure that all people will receive a positive and sustained welcome from their first point of contact with staff, volunteers and the Trustee Board. We will monitor consumer feedback to develop a better and more responsive service. We will ensure that an accessible complaints procedure is available to organisations and individuals if they feel they have suffered discrimination.



MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In order to promote equality of access to our service, Autistic Parents UK will ensure that services are widely publicised. The marketing of Autistic Parents UK will strive to provide information and resource materials

which are written free from jargon, as well as from racist, ageist, disabling, homophobic, sexist images, language or attitudes and any other discriminatory practices. Autistic Parents UK will reflect the needs of different individuals and groups by communicating in an appropriate format.

Financial Reserves Policy

Introduction

It is good financial practice to develop a reserves policy to ensure Autistic Parents UK can meet its financial liabilities, and to clarify with funders the reasons why Autistic Parents UK has money which is not specially allocated, thereby creating transparency and accountability.

What are reserves?

The term “**reserves**” describes that part of an organisation’s income funds that is freely available for its general purposes. “**Reserves**” are therefore the resources which Autistic Parents UK has or can make available to spend, for any or all of our purposes, once we have met our commitments and covered our planned expenditure.

Reserves are divided into:

- ∞ General or unrestricted reserves, which can be used for any purpose at the discretion of the Trustees.
- ∞ Designated reserves, being held for a specific purpose decided by the Trustees, but which could be used for another purpose.
- ∞ Restricted reserves or restricted funds, being held for a specific purpose by the donor or by the terms of the appeal, and which can be used only for that purpose.

More specifically, this defines reserves as income which becomes available to Autistic Parents UK and is to be spent at the Trustee Board members discretion in furtherance of any of the organisation’s objects (sometimes referred to as “general purpose” income), but which is not yet spent, committed or designated (i.e., is “free”).

Autistic Parents UK may hold financial reserves in order:

- ∞ To ensure that the organisation can meet its obligations in the short term in the event of late payment of grants.
- ∞ To cover any outstanding liabilities such as remaining lease commitments on premises.
- ∞ To ensure that the core activity can continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty.
- ∞ To finance an unexpected increase in running costs.
- ∞ To finance some unexpected capital expenditure.

Autistic Parents UK will seek to build reserves equivalent to approximately 12 months revenue expenditure to finance these eventualities should they occur.

Monitoring and review

The policy and general reserve target will be reviewed on an annual basis. Furthermore, the calculations of the required level of reserves will be an integral part of our planning, budget and forecast cycle. Details of reserves and what they can and cannot be used for will be reported to the Trustee Board through financial statements.





Financial Regulations Policy

Budget

The budget will be prepared by the Treasurer, in consultation with the Trustee Board. The budget will then be discussed and approved by the Trustee Board in advance of the commencement of the financial year. The budget will be used as the basis for authority to incur expenditure and for comparison to quarterly figures, which shall be reported to the Trustee Board.

Within the approved budget, the Trustee Board has power to delegate authority to spend. Any spending outside of, or in excess of budget, should be authorised by the Trustee Board.

In the event of unbudgeted expenditure being necessary in an emergency e.g., to pay an electrician/plumber etc., the Chairperson/s may take action that incurs expenditure up to a limit of £1,000 or in consultation with the Treasurer up to £2,000 subject to a report being made to the Trustee Board at the earliest opportunity. Where immediate action is necessary and there is no time to seek appropriate authorisation, the Chairperson/s has authority to act in his/her best judgement and subject to that action being reported forthwith to the Treasurer.

Accounting

The Treasurer in consultation with the Chairperson/s shall be responsible for determining the financial procedures and records. Full and adequate financial records shall be maintained in manual or computerised format to enable the efficient and effective management of the organisation and fulfil the reporting requirements of relevant regulatory bodies and funders.

Financial Requirements

A timetable shall be agreed with the Auditors/independent examiner to enable the production of the annual accounts to be progressed as soon as possible after the financial year-end. Every effort is to be made to adhere to this schedule. Draft Accounts will be examined in detail by the Treasurer and Chairperson/s and presented to the Trustee Board. The final audited/examined statement of accounts shall be adopted at the Annual General Meeting and thereafter submitted to the relevant regulatory and funding bodies. Appropriate internal arrangements shall be put in place and reported to the Trustee Board. Wherever irregularities are suspected in respect of any property or function of the organisation the Treasurer shall immediately be informed and in consultation take action as necessary by way of investigation and report. The matters will then be reported to the next meeting of the Trustee Board.

Banking Arrangements

Bank accounts will only be opened with the authority of the Trustee Board which will mandate the individuals who have authority to sign cheques or otherwise authorise withdrawal of funds. Cheque books are held by the Treasurer for all accounts. All cheques require two authorised signatories.

Cash

Any cash floats kept shall be securely stored to the satisfaction of the Chairperson and Chairperson/s at all times. All such floats shall be reimbursed on the authorisation of the Treasurer and/or Chairperson/s. The maximum balance for reimbursement shall be £100 and the maximum cash holding at any location is £200 save exceptional circumstances e.g., Annual General Meeting. All petty cash expenditure in excess of £10 shall first be authorised by the Chairperson/s and/or a Trustee Board Member.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure in excess of £2,000 must be authorised by the Trustee Board or, where urgent action is needed, the Treasurer may authorise up to £3,000 with subsequent report to the first Trustee Board Meeting after the event.

Fixed Assets

A register shall be maintained recording all items of fittings and equipment of purchase price in excess of £1,000 owned by the organisation. Such capital property shall not be removed or used other than for the organisation's purposes, except under the directions of the Trustee Board.

Fixed Assets will be depreciated in accordance with recommended practice.

Small items of capital equipment shall be treated as repairs and replacements and written off in the year of purchase.

**Income**

The collection of all money due shall be under the supervision of the Treasurer. No outstanding income in excess of £500 value shall be written off as a bad debt without the authorisation of the Trustee Board.

Insurance

The Treasurer shall be responsible for affecting all insurance cover and negotiating all claims. All insurances shall be reviewed annually and reported by the Treasurer to the Trustee Board. Additional cover will be arranged for new risks as they arise.

Payment of Accounts

The normal method of payment of money due from the organisation shall be by cheque or BACS transfer drawn on the organisations bank account. Cheques require two authorised signatories. Electronic and card payments must be authorized by two persons signing a payment requisition form before transactions are made. Persons signing and authorising payments cannot be the recipients of such payments. Receipts must be kept as proof of spend against the payment requisition form.

All requests for capital expenditure should be made to and approved by the Treasurer.

All invoices will be examined and certified for payment by the relevant person in consultation with the treasurer.

As a general rule invoices will be paid on a net monthly basis.



Training and Learning Policy

Purpose of learning

Autistic Parents UK believes that learning should be an integral part of the organisation so that:

- ∞ The Trustee Board can perform their roles and tasks effectively
- ∞ Staff and volunteers of Autistic Parents UK can perform their roles and tasks effectively

The central aim therefore is to provide an environment where continuous development can take place and where Trustee Board, staff and volunteers are supported and enabled to carry out their roles and activities.

To achieve this aim, learning and development needs will be regularly discussed and reviewed. Trustee Board, staff and volunteers will be encouraged to play an active part in identifying their learning needs, selecting appropriate learning methods and in assessing the effectiveness of their learning.

Learning options

Options for learning and development for the Trustee Board may include:

- ∞ Inductions to a Trustee role
- ∞ Support and shadowing other Trustee Board members
- ∞ Training courses appropriate to their role
- ∞ Presentations and speakers at Trustee Board meetings from individuals or organisations that have specialist knowledge and skills

Options for learning and development for any staff may include:

- ∞ Inductions to their role and the organisation
- ∞ Support and shadowing other staff
- ∞ Training courses
- ∞ Reflection and other learning activities e.g., online learning

Options for learning and development for volunteers may include:

- ∞ Inductions to their tasks and the organisation
- ∞ Support and shadowing other volunteers
- ∞ Volunteer support meetings
- ∞ Training courses

Learning and Development Process

Induction

Autistic Parents UK operates an induction programme which helps Trustee Board, staff and volunteers to familiarise themselves with the organisation. All new Trustee Board members, staff and volunteers will take part in an induction programme including an introduction to the organisations mission, history, goals and targets and all policies and procedures. All new Trustee Board members, staff and volunteers are given a handbook/induction pack.

Identifying and assessing learning needs

Autistic Parents UK believes that identifying learning needs should be an ongoing and easy process for all Trustee Board, staff and volunteers. Trustee Board learning needs will be identified at Trustee Board meetings. Staff learning needs will be identified through staff meetings, supervisions, support meetings and/or communication with Trustee Board. Volunteer learning needs will be identified through volunteer meetings and individual volunteer support meetings. Some training courses may be deemed compulsory by Autistic Parents UK; for example, health and safety. These training courses will be communicated, paid for and organised by Autistic Parents UK.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Trustee Board s have responsibility for ensuring that a clear procedure is in place for recording, monitoring and evaluating learning activities. For example, through training and learning request forms, evaluation forms.



Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy

Data Protection Policy Statement:

Autistic Parents UK acknowledges and will observe its legal duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 as amended together with relevant regulations and codes of practice issued under this Act, to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to protect the identity and relevant information pertaining to Trustee Board, members and other individuals who come into contact with the organisation. Autistic Parents UK will act in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 principles as set out below:

The 2018 Data Protection Act:

The Data Protection Act 1998 is primarily concerned with 'personal data; that is personal data which directly refers to **identifiable, living, individuals**. The Data Protection Act does not apply to information pertaining to organisations; however, it could apply to named contacts within organisations.

The Data Protection Act 2018 covers any living identifiable individual and that includes data, regardless of name, which could help anyone to recognise who the information is about.

Whenever or wherever data is handled, we must be careful to ensure that individuals are protected and that includes the protection of personal data to ensure that data is not misused. Most information held by Autistic Parents UK relates to the Trustee Board, members, volunteers, service-users and people that access our resources. With permission of the Data Subject, information is kept by Autistic Parents UK in order to enable us to:

- ∞ check eligibility for membership
- ∞ circulate information to our members and service users relating to the activities of the organisation
- ∞ effectively support and manage volunteers

Autistic Parents UK will strive to ensure that any Data legitimately entrusted to us will not be released to third parties without the expressed consent of the data subject.

The definition of 'data' is quite complicated in that it not only applies to manual information (paper records) and computer records (database information for example), data can also include photographs, biometrics, video, CCTV or audio material therefore, when handling any type of material Autistic Parents UK should always consider the questions "is it personal and is it data?"

What the Data Protection Act covers:

The Data Protection Act requires that all organisations have a lawful basis for processing personal data.

The six lawful bases are:

- ∞ Data subject's consent
- ∞ To perform a contract with data subject
- ∞ To comply with a legal obligation
- ∞ To protect data subject's vital interest
- ∞ Public task
- ∞ In controller's or third party's legitimate interests

Information held by organisations about individuals must be processed – that is **collected, stored, handled, shared, altered or destroyed** according to the data protection principles. The principles are designed to ensure that the people about whom you hold data, know that you have it and why and they consent to your use of it.

Data Protection Principles:

- ∞ Processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- ∞ Purpose limitation
- ∞ Data minimisation
- ∞ Accurate and up to date
- ∞ Storage limitation
- ∞ Security
- ∞ Accountability of the controller – the data controller must be able to demonstrate compliance with these principles



Data subjects' rights

The Data Protection Act provides the following rights for individuals:

- ∞ The right to be informed
- ∞ The right of access
- ∞ The right to rectification
- ∞ The right to erasure
- ∞ The right to restrict processing
- ∞ The right to data portability
- ∞ The right to object
- ∞ Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

Special category data

- ∞ personal data revealing **racial or ethnic origin**;
- ∞ personal data revealing **political opinions**;
- ∞ personal data revealing **religious or philosophical beliefs**;
- ∞ personal data revealing **trade union membership**;
- ∞ **genetic data**;
- ∞ **biometric data** (where used for identification purposes);
- ∞ data concerning **health**;
- ∞ data concerning a person's **sex life**; and
- ∞ data concerning a person's **sexual orientation**.

If special category data is to be processed conditions for processing sensitive data applies (at least ONE condition must apply):

- Explicit consent
- Employment, social security and social protection (if authorised by law)
- Vital interests
- Not-for-profit bodies
- Made public by the data subject
- Legal claims or judicial acts
- Reasons of substantial public interest (with a basis in law)
- Health or social care (with a basis in law)
- Public health (with a basis in law)
- Archiving, research and statistics (with a basis in law)

Responsibility of Data Protection:

Autistic Parents UK has a designated 'Data Controller' who is responsible for managing data protection. However, the overall responsibility of Data Protection lies, not with the data controller but with the Chair of Trustee Board. Organisations cannot choose to be data controllers on behalf of another organisation. In the interests of Autistic Parents UK and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, all Trustee Board, staff and volunteers should familiarise themselves with the principles of data protection and should act accordingly within the confines of the Act.

Autistic Parents UK data protection procedures

If Autistic Parents UK involves individuals to volunteer for the organisation, volunteers must sign a registration form giving consent for their personal data to be held by the organisation.

Special category data

Should Autistic Parents UK require information in respect of sensitive data (i.e. criminal convictions or health concerns) for existing or future volunteers or members, the data subject must be informed and should therefore give informed consent to the processing.

Volunteer and members' records will be kept for a maximum of 5 years. All other information will be kept for a period of 3 years unless funders request that records are kept for longer periods.

Security

All data will be retained in secure cabinets and/or secure online systems. Furthermore, no data leading to the identity of any living identifiable person will be made available to third parties.



Accuracy of Records

Autistic Parents UK will ensure that personal details about the Trustees, volunteers and members are accurate and up to date.

Equal Opportunities

Data relating to ethnic origin, sex, disability or other personal characteristics is generally only collected for the purposes of equal opportunity monitoring. Autistic Parents UK will try to ensure that monitoring forms enable people to accurately describe themselves and provide a range of choice of options. Autistic Parents UK will try to ensure that all monitoring forms, cannot be identifiable individuals.

Disposal of Data

All data which identifies a living, identifiable individual, will be disposed of by way of shredding/incineration. Autistic Parents UK may engage the services of a company who has the means to undertake this process.

Access to Information

Access to records (sensitive data) must be with the expressed written permission of the Chairperson and Chairperson/s. Unauthorised access or disclosure of any personal/confidential information will be seen as a serious offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Information is confidential to Autistic Parents UK as an organisation and may be passed onto the Trustee Board to ensure the best quality of service is given to our members.

Data Subject Access

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, a data subject has the right to know about all the personal data that is held on them including manual and computer data. Should a data subject make a valid subject access request to their information, Autistic Parents UK will inform them of the following:

- ∞ Whether their personal data is being processed by or for Autistic Parents UK.
- ∞ A description of the data will be given to them including, why it is being held and who it is disclosed to.
- ∞ A copy of all actual personal data about the data subject will be supplied.
- ∞ The data subject will be informed and evidence given as to where their information was obtained from.
- ∞ An explanation will be given to data subjects regarding why it is necessary to obtain and retain their information.

Data Subject Access Request Procedures

Should a data subject request be made, Autistic Parents UK must undertake the following procedures:

- ∞ the request is being made by the data subject and not a third party (if the data subject is unknown to Autistic Parents UK, identification such as a valid passport/driving licence must be produced)
- ∞ if the request is being made by a third party i.e., solicitor, spouse etc., written permission by the data subject must be given
- ∞ members may have sight of records held in their name. Autistic Parents UK's Chairperson/s to respond to all requests in writing no later than 25 days of given notice (sensitive data will only be made available to the individual or organisation named on the file)
- ∞ Volunteers may have sight of their personnel records by giving 10 days' notice through the submission of the data request form to the Chairperson/s.

Disclosure of information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 organisations have a legal duty to disclose certain types of information to various organisations. Autistic Parents UK will comply with this requirement and any information Autistic Parents UK is given access to which we believe to be unlawful or could be harmful, will be passed onto a third party such as Social Services or the Police.

Withholding Data Subject Information

Some areas of social work, medical and educational records can be withheld from the subject access request. Should a situation arise, Autistic Parents UK will seek to obtain the views of the Information Commissioner.



Autistic Parents UK Communication Systems

Website - Data published on Autistic Parents UK's website will allow global access to information provided. To protect the rights of individuals, Autistic Parents UK will obtain written consent to the publishing of information from any individual whose personal data is used. Information includes name, photograph, e-mail address and any other information, which may lead to the identification of an individual.

E-mail - In accordance with the Subject Access Request Form, Autistic Parents UK will make available to the Data Subject, any request for information concerning e-mail correspondence describing the individual concerned. All e-mails leading to the identity of the Subject Access should be retained (on file) and kept in a secure unit. From the date of the initial correspondence, e-mails leading to the identity of a Subject Access should be kept for a period of 5 years.

Databases - Autistic Parents UK will ensure that information held on database(s) is not excessive and held for longer than is necessary. All information held will be obtained on an 'opt in' basis. Any unnecessary information held on database system is to be archived for a period of three years, to be destroyed by means of shredding or incineration.

Archives - All archived and stored files remain within the Data Protection Act 1998 and therefore, Autistic Parents UK will store all information in a safe and secure place whether in a unit or online. Unless otherwise specified by Autistic Parents UK Trustee Board, all stored and archived information to be retained for a period of three years. At the end of three years all personal data to be destroyed by means of shredding or incineration.

System Security - Autistic Parents UK will take all measures necessary to ensure that all personal data both IT and physical data is protected against accidental or deliberate loss, damage or destruction.

Back-up Procedures - To ensure continuous protection of all data, Autistic Parents UK will use back-up procedures.



Safeguarding Policy

Autistic Parents UK has a legal and moral responsibility to provide a duty of care for adults that are considered vulnerable by the government, and implement procedures to safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse.

The named safeguarding officer for our organisation is: **Jenni Guthrie**.

In the absence of the above safeguarding officer, the next person in line to manage safeguarding will be: **Ayesha Pusey**.

The role of the safeguarding officer is to:

- ∞ Ensure that APUK has procedures in place for safeguarding adults who access APUK services and that they are familiar with them,
- ∞ To act as the first point of call for staff/volunteers concerned about the safety and welfare of an adult (or child),
- ∞ To be responsible for contacting adult social care in cases where an adult is at risk of harm,
- ∞ To be familiar with local multi-agency safeguarding partnership procedures,
- ∞ To ensure staff and volunteers know where they can find this policy and any related procedures,
- ∞ To advise and provide guidance to staff/volunteers concerned about an adult or child safeguarding issue,
- ∞ To support staff and volunteers after they have shared their concerns about an adult,
- ∞ To communicate to staff any changes in policy and procedures,
- ∞ To keep accurate records of concerns about identified adults and actions taken,
- ∞ To liaise with appropriate local agencies for support and advice and keep a list of contacts,
- ∞ To train staff and volunteers about how to respond to adult and child safeguarding concerns,
- ∞ To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding within the organisation,
- ∞ To collect monitoring data on all safeguarding activities across the organisation,
- ∞ To review and update the organisations policy and procedures on safeguarding,
- ∞ To ensure parents, carers and other appropriate family members are aware of the organisation's safeguarding policy and procedures,
- ∞ To promote the importance of safeguarding across the organisation,
- ∞ To manage complaints about poor practice of either staff or volunteers,
- ∞ To make decisions about appointing someone who has a criminal record, and
- ∞ To ensure the organisation meets the requirements of its insurers regarding its safeguarding responsibilities.

Definitions:

Vulnerable Adult:

"An adult who is at risk or who may be in need of residential care services by reason of mental or other disability or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves or to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation" (Law Commission Bulletin, May/June 1995)

Alternatively Public Health England refer to a vulnerable adult as:

any adult (person over the age of 18) unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from exploitation. (Public Health England, 2022)

Adult at Risk

A person aged 18 or above with care and support needs who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and, as a result of their care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from this (Care Act 2014)

APUK as an organisation consider risk to be situational as opposed to individual characteristics of that person and therefore adhere to the 'adult at risk' definition when considering safeguarding policy and processes. We consider "vulnerable" to infer disempowerment.

Child

Any person under the age of 18



Aim of this policy:

To define the practice and procedures for staff and/or volunteers, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults who access services and supports. It is aimed at protecting both the accessing adult and the member of staff and/or volunteer.

Objectives of this policy:

- ∞ To ensure that all staff and/or volunteers working with adults are carefully selected, understand and accept responsibility for the safety of those individuals in their care,
- ∞ To ensure that the adult's welfare is of paramount importance when undertaking any activities, and
- ∞ To respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse, and to ensure confidential information is restricted to the appropriate individuals within our organisation and appropriate external agencies.

Statement of adults' rights

In dealing with incidents of abuse or potential abuse adults have the following rights, which should be respected. The right to:

- ∞ live without fear of abuse from their families, carers, professionals, volunteers or service users,
- ∞ be safe and receive adequate care and protection. This includes protection from all forms of violence including physical punishment, intimidation, belittling, lack of respect, harassment, and sexual assault,
- ∞ be involved in decision-making that affects them, and to be supported in making their own decisions about how they wish to proceed in the event of abuse, and in whom they wish to confide. Their wishes should only be overridden if considered necessary in the interests of their own safety or the safety of others,
- ∞ report abuse and be taken seriously, including the right to involve the police if a crime has been committed,
- ∞ make informed choices about intimate relationships without being exposed to exploitation or sexual abuse,
- ∞ be free from discrimination because of their ethnic origin, culture or religion, gender or sexuality, age, disability or mental health,
- ∞ bring a formal complaint under our complaints procedure if they are not satisfied with the initial investigation regarding abuse, and
- ∞ be kept informed at all stages of the process, should our organisation take action as a result of an allegation of abuse.

Definition of abuse:

"Abuse is a single or repeated act or lack of appropriate action, occurring within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, and which causes harm or distress to a person". (adapted from Action on Elder Abuse's definition of elder abuse)

Types and indicators of abuse

There are 6 main types of abuse: **physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, financial, neglect and discriminatory**

Physical Abuse - is the deliberate infliction of pain, physical harm or injury including: hitting, slapping, pinching, pushing, kicking, hair pulling, restraint, withholding or misuse of medication. Indicators include:

- ∞ Multiple bruising
- ∞ A history of unexplained falls and/or minor injuries
- ∞ Fractures not consistent with falls or explanations of the injury
- ∞ Unexplained loss of hair, in clumps
- ∞ Cuts that are not likely to be explained by self-injury finger marks
- ∞ Burns not consistent with possible explanations
- ∞ Excessive consumption of alcohol by the adult or care giver
- ∞ Deterioration of health without obvious cause
- ∞ Increasing immobility
- ∞ Dehydration
- ∞ Over or under use of medication
- ∞ Withdrawal



∞ Flinching

Psychological and emotional abuse - is any pattern of behaviour by another that results in the psychological harm to a vulnerable person and may include: humiliation, insults, ridicule, bullying, threats of harm or abandonment, verbal or racist abuse, enforced isolation, coercion, lack of privacy or choice, denial of dignity. Indicators include:

- ∞ Strain within the relationship
- ∞ Indications that the abuser acts differently with the identified adult when the worker is present than at other times
- ∞ An air of silence in the home when the alleged abuser is present
- ∞ A general lack of consideration for the adult's needs
- ∞ Refusal to allow the adult an opinion of their own
- ∞ Denial of privacy in relation to their care, feelings or other aspects of their life
- ∞ A denial of access to the adult, especially where the adult is in need of assistance which they will consequently not receive
- ∞ Denial of freedom or movement e.g., locking the person in a room or tying them to a chair
- ∞ Alterations in the psychological state – possibly withdrawal or fear

Sexual Abuse - is any sexual act to which the person has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting. Acts may include: fondling, sexual intercourse, offensive or suggestive language, inappropriate touching. Indicators include:

- ∞ Unexplained bruising around the vaginal or genital areas
- ∞ Unexplained difficulties in walking
- ∞ Reluctance of the person to be alone with an individual known to them
- ∞ Unexplained behaviour change
- ∞ Unexplained bleeding from vaginal or genital areas
- ∞ Stained or bloody underclothing

Financial Abuse - is the misappropriation of the funds of an adult and may include theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits. Indicators include:

- ∞ Situations where, despite having a personal income/pension, the adult is without money soon after its receipt, particularly where that person is not able to spend money without assistance.
- ∞ Unexplained shortage of money despite a seemingly adequate income
- ∞ Unexplained withdrawals from saving accounts
- ∞ Unexplained disappearance of financial documents e.g. building society books and bank statements

Neglect - includes ignoring medical and physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect may be deliberate or by default where the abuser is not able to provide the care needed and may not recognise the need for that care to be given. The abuser may also be neglecting themselves. Indicators include:

- ∞ Persistent hunger
- ∞ Loss of weight
- ∞ Poor hygiene
- ∞ Inappropriate dress
- ∞ Consistent lack of supervision for long periods, especially during activities which hold danger for them
- ∞ Denial of religious or cultural needs
- ∞ Constant fatigue or listlessness
- ∞ Physical problems and medical needs that are not attended to

Discriminatory Abuse - includes racist or sexist abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.

Warning Note: More than one of these six types of abuse may occur at one time, though only one may present itself initially.



Guidelines on recruiting and screening Trustee Board, staff and/or volunteers

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with our organisation.

Staff and volunteer recruitment procedures will include a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check (previously CRB checks), at the appropriate level, for all personnel who will have access to adults using APUK support services and should always include self-declaration and the use of references. This may include all members of the Management Trustee Board if they have or will have contact with vulnerable adults. Formal interviews will be held for all paid employees. All prospective volunteers should be 'interviewed', this need not be a formal interview.

We will ensure that all staff and/or volunteers have appropriate qualifications and training.

Should any concerns arise following a DBS check then this will be passed onto the Management Trustee Board. The safeguarding lead will be contacted for information and guidance. Any Disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to adults accessing our services, colleagues, the general public and/or our organisation. A number of questions will be asked:

- ∞ Does the offence relate directly to work with adults at risk?
- ∞ What is the seriousness of the offence[s] and the circumstances surrounding it?
- ∞ How long is it since the offence was committed?
- ∞ Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- ∞ Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- ∞ What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- ∞ Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If all these questions are not answered satisfactorily then the prospective staff member and/or volunteer will not be allowed to join the organisation.

All new staff members and/or volunteers will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all staff and/or volunteers are adequately supported.

Any concerns about a staff member and/or volunteer will be passed on to the safeguarding lead and the Trustee Board.

All Trustee Board members, staff and/or volunteers of our organisation will:

- ∞ Report any occurrences or suspicions of abuse to the designated safeguarding officer,
- ∞ Abide by the code of conduct for adults accessing APUK services,
- ∞ Respect confidentiality and not divulge information given in confidence unless justified by assessed risk to the adult,
- ∞ Ensure that their recording and reporting of facts, incidents and observations are as accurate as possible, and
- ∞ Take action when suspicious that abuse is occurring at our organisation, no matter what the setting, who the perpetrator is or who the victim is. Our organisation will respect and not penalise those who stand up for anyone who is suspected of being abused. Anyone who reports suspicions or occurrences of abuse is covered under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Code of conduct for Trustee Board s, staff and/or volunteers

Always remember that while you are undertaking any activity with adults, you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.

Do:

- ∞ Respect all adults regardless of their age, ability, sex, sexual orientation or ethnicity,



- ∞ Place the safety and wellbeing of the adult first. It must be placed before any personal or organisational goals and before loyalty to friends and family,
- ∞ Be aware of the relative powerlessness of adults accessing supports,
- ∞ Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of adults,
- ∞ Report any suspicions, signs or communications of abuse to the lead designated safeguarding person,
- ∞ If an adult communicates to you that they are being abused:
 - o Remain calm and try not to show any shock or disbelief,
 - o Listen very carefully to what you are being told,
 - o Demonstrate a sympathetic approach by acknowledging regret and concern that this has happened to the person,
 - o Reassure the person, telling them they have done the right thing by sharing the information, that this information be treated seriously and that the abuse is not their fault,
 - o Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure refers to a recent incident. Where applicable, any evidence should be retained, bagged and labelled,
 - o Explain that you are required to share the information on a “need to know” basis with the designated safeguarding officer, but not with other staff or service users,
 - o Reassure the person that any further investigation will be conducted sensitively, and with their full involvement wherever possible,
 - o Reassure the person that the service will take steps to support and, where appropriate, protect them in future,
 - o Report the information to your designated safeguarding officer at the earliest opportunity, and
 - o Make an accurate written record of what the person has told you.

Do not:

- ∞ Do not stop someone who is freely recalling significant events but allow them to share whatever is important to them,
- ∞ Do not ask questions or press the person for more details. As this may be done during any subsequent investigation, it is important to avoid unnecessary stress and repetition for the person concerned,
- ∞ Do not promise to keep secrets,
- ∞ Do not make promises you are unable to keep, and
- ∞ Do not contact the alleged abuser or alleged victim [depending on who is sharing the information with you at the time].

Our organisation will make a copy of this policy available to all potential Trustee Board, staff and/or volunteers. Our organisation has formally approved and endorsed the local multi-agency Safeguard and Protect Policy and Procedures for the protection of adults. For a copy of the guide visit:

<http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/adult/safeguarding-adults-Committee/publications/>

Appendix 1:

Logging Concerns Form

Name of adult	
Date form completed	
Time form completed	
Your name	
Signature	
Your organisation	
Your position	
What is the concern? (Brief summary)	
Please record the following as factually as possible - use actual words if you can Who? What? Where?	



When?	
What action was taken, including the names of anyone to whom this information was passed?	
Any information about the alleged abuser?	



Recruitment and Selection Policy

Introduction

This document explains Autistic Parents UK's policy on the recruitment and selection of paid staff. It will be made available on request to applicants for our posts and will be used by line Chairperson/ss who are responsible for recruiting staff, to ensure consistency. All selection decisions will be based on skills, qualifications and experience.

Equality commitment

Our organisation believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of their race, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or offending background.

Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination occurs at the point of selection.

Our organisation recognises that apart from job related qualifications and experience, other knowledge and experience may be equally valid in the appointment of a worker and are particularly relevant in the case of people from groups which experience discrimination.

Where the policy refers to a disabled person, we are using the definition under the Disability Discrimination Act, which states that someone is a disabled person if they have:

“a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”

Job Description

When a vacancy arises a job appraisal will be carried out and the job description brought up to date. Job descriptions will be flexible and allow for reasonable adjustments to be made should disabled people apply.

The job description will include the following information:

- ∞ Title
- ∞ Overall role of post
- ∞ List of principal responsibilities and duties (around 8 to 12 very brief statements)
- ∞ General duties such as attending internal meetings, representing our organisation, preparing reports and statistics, undertaking training.
- ∞ Responsibility to work in a way that promotes equality.
- ∞ General Statement: 'This is not a complete statement of duties and may be amended in the light of changing needs of the organisation after consultation with the post-holder'.

Person Specification

The person specification is a statement of the specific skills, knowledge, experience and attributes required to undertake the tasks involved in the job. It will be used as a basis for selecting candidates to be short-listed and for the decision-making during the interview itself by providing known, appropriate, justifiable and agreed criteria.

The criteria will be testable against the application form and interview. No criteria will be used for short-listing or selection that is not included in the person specification. Criteria will be divided into those that are essential (candidates must have these) and those that are desirable (can be acquired after appointment). Genuine Occupational Qualifications will be included, where appropriate, with justification. No artificial barriers to age, disability or race will be included.

All posts will be open to applicants aged 16 and over.

Formal qualifications will not usually be required unless necessary and related to the job. If so, this will be stated in the person specification. Equivalent overseas qualification will be regarded as acceptable. Any doubts over comparability will be checked.

Full consideration will be given to all types and lengths of experience, including voluntary work experience.



The criteria may be weighted. The recruitment panel will make this decision.

Career Development

Our organisation is committed to supporting the development of its employees (including volunteers and temporary staff).

To increase development opportunities for all workers and to ensure those from under-represented groups have opportunities to progress to more senior positions, the Chairperson/s and Trustee Board have the authority to approve internal only advertising of vacant posts in certain circumstances, which are:

- Existing part-time posts which are allocated additional hours, where the overall nature of the posts remain unchanged and the increase in hours is less than 50%.
- Existing posts that are re-graded following additional responsibilities, where the overall nature of the post remains unchanged.
- Vacant junior posts that have been supported by either a temporary worker or a volunteer who has fulfilled that role for a minimum of three months and who at the discretion of the Chairperson/s and Committee is deemed a suitable candidate.

Advertising

Where posts are externally advertised, advertisements will be designed and placed in various outlets to attract as wide a group of suitable applicants as possible.

All advertisements will carry our statement of commitment to equality, the disability symbol, the date of the interview and for data protection purposes, will highlight that 'personal data' will be processed for the purposes of determining their suitability to the post. We will make sure we provide job information in accessible formats for disabled people.

Information to applicants

The following papers will be sent out to job applicants:

- Covering letter, including date of interview and named person who can discuss job with applicant
- Person specification
- Summary of terms and conditions
- Foundation statement
- Background information relating to the post
- Application form
- Equality monitoring form
- Disabled people at work – options form

Applicants, who are short-listed, will be advised by standard letter of the interview date.

Information to short-listed candidates

Letters to candidates invited for interview will include:

- Requests for 'reasonable adjustments'. Applicants who have indicated they are disabled will be asked to give sufficient details to enable the panel to take into consideration any adjustments that need to be made to the interview arrangements or the post.
- Details and a map of where the interviews will be held
- Outline of the format of the selection process, e.g. formal interview, written exercise, presentation group work
- The times at which the candidate will be required to attend
- Details of any additional material the candidate will be required to bring
- Any other information relative to the day
- Names of panel members

Selection Panel

All selection decisions will be made by a panel and not an individual. There will be at least two people for posts graded 3 and below and at least 3 people for all other posts. Panels will, where possible, reflect groups that experience discrimination in their make-up in an attempt to eliminate stereotyping and bias.

Panels will always include the line Chairperson/s and a person with expertise in the job area. Other panellists will be drawn from the Trustee Board, partnership bodies, user groups or senior staff. The



Chairperson/s will provide briefings to each selection panel on how to ensure the process for recruitment and selection complies with our Recruitment Policy and avoids discrimination.

Short-listing

Short-listing will be on the basis of essential and desirable criteria that will be applied consistently to all applicants.

Disabled applicants will be offered the choice of applying under the 'guaranteed interview' scheme and if they do so, should complete the 'disabled at work options form'. If they apply under the scheme, they will be guaranteed an interview, if they meet the essential criteria. Assumptions will not be made about whether or not they are able to do the job.

Only completed application forms will be considered, except where disabled people need to send in applications in other formats. Personal information will be separated from the forms on receipt and will not be seen by the panel until short-listing is completed. The 'disabled people option form' will be kept with the application form, to ensure the short-listing panel takes account of reasonable adjustments needed. CVs may be included to give additional information, but will not be considered on their own without the appropriate form. Application forms may be completed in handwriting or using a computer or other device.

Interviewing

All questions at interview will relate to the person specification. Each candidate will be asked about the same main areas and will not be asked about personal circumstances. The selection panel will prepare questions and agree who will ask which questions before the interview. All candidates will be asked about their commitment to equality and how they will ensure their work promotes this.

Declaration of Interest

If any of the selection panel knows any of the applicants, personally or professionally, they should declare this to the rest of the panel. It will be for the panel to decide whether this could be prejudicial and whether that member should withdraw. Their decision should be recorded with brief reasons. In general personal knowledge of a candidate will not debar a panel member unless the applicant is a close relation or partner. If a panel member wishes to withdraw from the process, however, they should be allowed to do so and a replacement nominated.

Certificates and Qualifications

Candidates will only be asked to bring certificates or evidence of qualifications where these are necessary criteria for the post, or as evidence of identity of their commitment to learning and development.

Asylum and Immigration Act 1996

All candidates will be asked to provide evidence that they are eligible to work in the UK. This will be a document showing the name and NI number from a previous employer, Inland Revenue, Benefits Agency, Contributions Agency or Employment Service and could be P45, payslip, P60, NI card or letter.

Selection and Rejection

Decisions about selection will be made in accordance with the person specification. Once the person has been selected, and confirmed their acceptance, all unsuccessful applicants will be informed. Short-listed candidates will be offered the chance to discuss the reasons why they were not appointed. Because of resource implications, this opportunity will not be pro-actively offered to other applicants. However, we will endeavour to give feedback, if requested.

References

A minimum of two references will be taken up on candidates who successfully complete the interview stage, but will only be referred to after interviews have taken place. They will be used to verify factual information and to support or deny the appointment of a candidate, not to choose between candidates.

Pre-employment health checks

If the selected applicant has taken considerable amounts of sick leave, not related to a disability in recent posts, or had to leave previous posts because of a sickness not related to a disability, the recruitment panel may decide to refer the applicant for an Occupational Health Assessment prior to confirming an appointment. In these cases, an offer of employment will not be made until the health check has been



carried out and the panel is satisfied with the result. Past sickness, which is not recurrent, will not automatically bar candidates from selection. Where sickness is related to a disability, the panel will take this into consideration when considering adjustments that need to be made.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau's (CRB) Disclosure Service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, our organisation complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice.

A disclosure is only requested if it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where a disclosure is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to the Chairperson/s of our organisation and we guarantee that this information is only seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

If the person selected starts work before the disclosure is received, they will not be able to work unsupervised with children, young people or vulnerable adults until a satisfactory disclosure is received.

Unless the nature of the position allows our organisation to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that all those in our organisation who are involved in the recruitment process, have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offenders. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training, in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g., the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview we ensure that if a discussion takes place on the subject of any offences, or other matter that might be relevant to the position, failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position, could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

We make every subject of CRB Disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.

Retention of Information

Our organisation complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice regarding the correct handling, use storage, retention and disposal of disclosure information and its obligations under the Data Protection Act.

All application forms, notes and disclosures relating to unsuccessful applicants will be kept confidentially for 6 months and then destroyed by secure means.

This information will only be used in the event of any complaints or claims to employment tribunals or in circumstances where funders require us to keep this information for audit.

The Chair of the selection panel or the officer in charge will ensure that notes are kept to record the reasons for selection or rejection of candidates, and the scores candidates if any are used. These notes will be kept as in the above paragraph. Any rough notes made by interviewers to act as memory aids when making the decision, will be destroyed immediately after the interview by the interviewers.

Disclosure information is not kept on an applicant's personnel file and is kept separately and securely, with access limited to those who are entitled to see it. Our organisation recognises it is a criminal offence to pass



this information to anyone not entitled to receive it. However, we may keep a record of the date of issue of a disclosure, name of subject, reference number and decision taken. We may also keep equality monitoring data on applicants.

Monitoring of recruitment information

The officer responsible for the recruitment will ensure the Equality sheet is completed, with details of gender, ethnicity and disability of all applicants, those who were short-listed and those who were selected.

Successful/Unsuccessful Applicants

Once a decision has been made by the panel, successful applicants will be notified by telephone and will be sent written confirmation. Successful applicants will be required in writing to accept/refuse the position. Successful applicants must notify our organisation of their availability to begin employment.

Unsuccessful applicants will immediately receive written confirmation of the panel decision.



Health and Safety Policy

Part A - What we're trying to do

We aim to:

- ∞ avoid accidents and damage to people's health and cutting corners on health and safety to try and save time and money;
- ∞ ensure that we pay as much attention to health and safety as any other key business objective;
- ∞ always follow safe systems of work;
- ∞ avoid buying in unsafe products;
- ∞ work to legal requirements as a minimum standard to be achieved;
- ∞ always insist on high standards of health and safety when dealing with others; and
- ∞ strive for continuous improvement in health and safety performance.

How we're going to do it

We will always:

- ∞ make sure we consider health and safety whenever we plan anything (however small);
- ∞ identify hazards, assess risks to see whether our control measures are adequate or need to be improved and (see below);
- ∞ set ourselves measurable health and safety standards and targets with dates for implementation;
- ∞ monitor how well we are achieving them (for example, through inspection) and record results;
- ∞ report and record all accidents and incidents and investigate them to see why we have not been able to prevent them;
- ∞ consult everyone to get their views about possible health and safety problems and solutions;
- ∞ communicate all necessary health and safety information;
- ∞ provide necessary training for everyone so they can meet their health and safety responsibilities;
- ∞ get advice from outside competent specialists whenever we need it;
- ∞ meet basic workplace welfare requirements, have appropriate first aid and fire precautions and all relevant insurances eg public liability, employers liability etc
- ∞ make time every three months to see how we're doing, record our findings, and, where necessary, set new targets for improvement.

Who is responsible for what?

- ∞ The Chairperson has overall responsibility for health and safety in the company;
- ∞ The Chairperson must make sure safe systems of work/activities are always followed and carry out regular monitoring;
- ∞ All Trustee Board members and volunteers must co-operate in following safe procedures, report problems and make suggestions for improvements;
- ∞ Our contractors and suppliers must provide us with all necessary safe information and cooperate with our health and safety requirements.

PART B – Record of Risk Assessments (example format)		
Hazards	Risks	Control Measures
What could cause harm? Machinery? Chemicals? Manual handling? Electricity etc?	What could happen? How bad could it be? How likely is it? Who could be affected? What is the risk level, high medium or low?	What do we need to do to prevent harm? Is it adequate? Do we need to do more? If so, by when?



Environmental Sustainability Policy

Introduction

The UK government's definition of sustainable development is 'ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come'. There are some fundamental concepts behind sustainable development, these are:

- ∞ Sustainable development aims to improve our quality of life based on a broad definition giving equal weight to social, environmental and economic factors, rather than just improving our standard of living based on monetary measurements
- ∞ It sees social, environmental and economic issues as inter-linked rather than separate issues
- ∞ It focuses on the long-term and inter-generational equity, rather than just the short-term

Social

Participation, equity and partnership are the key issues. Everyone must have the opportunity, and encouragement, to participate and excel. There must be a healthy, safe and inclusive society. A society where there is a culture of continuous learning and skill development and everyone is able to access education, training and information.

Autistic Parents UK Trustee Board, staff and/or volunteers continually strive to promote participation, equity and partnership working by:

- ∞ valuing difference and promoting diversity
- ∞ embedding equality of opportunity in the work we do
- ∞ providing training opportunities that promote and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding
- ∞ empowering individuals enabling them to make a difference and improve their quality of life

Environment

At Autistic Parents UK we recognise that all our activities have environmental impacts. Our organisation has a role to play in protecting the environment and can make a difference. Autistic Parents UK will consider the effects of all our activities on the local and global environment. We will develop actions to move towards a more environmentally sustainable way of life.

Waste

To reduce waste, we will:

- ∞ prevent unnecessary printing and duplication – increase our use of email and avoid printing out messages, adjust page settings to make documents fit on less pages, proof-reading and page previewing before printing to avoid mistakes
- ∞ use both sides of paper – photocopy double-sided and use scrap paper for notes
- ∞ reduce the amount of paper mailed out by encouraging our members to receive publications by email
- ∞ reduce the amount of paper generated by circulating information, where possible, electronically
- ∞ avoid products with unnecessary packaging to reduce waste
- ∞ look for opportunities to recycle our waste, including paper and toner cartridges
- ∞ provide reusable cutlery and crockery, rather than disposable alternatives
- ∞ consider buying second-hand furniture and other items, where feasible

Energy and water consumption

Carbon dioxide and other emissions are released every time gas, oil or coal is burnt to produce energy, this uses resources and contributes to climate change. We will:

- ∞ use low energy light bulbs
- ∞ turn off lights and heating when not needed, and power-down computers and other electronic equipment
- ∞ support renewable energy, where possible
- ∞ use water responsibly and keep waste to a minimum

Purchasing

All economic transactions have social and environmental effects. By choosing Autistic Parents UK purchases thoughtfully, we can make a positive difference. Cost alone cannot be the only consideration when buying items. We will:



- ∞ buy goods containing recycled material for office use, wherever possible, such as paper
- ∞ take into account the environmental and social impact of all purchases, including buying fair trade, organic or locally produced produce where possible
- ∞ buy environmentally friendlier products, wherever possible, that are recycled, recyclable, reusable, made from renewal materials, made from non-hazardous materials, energy efficient and have minimum packaging
- ∞ invest our funds ethically

Transport

The use of vehicles has social and environmental costs, they contribute heavily to pollution, health problems and climate change. To reduce dependence on cars, Autistic Parents UK will:

- ∞ minimise the need to travel where possible and use the least polluting form of transport appropriate to each journey. This may include working from home and communicating by telephone and email, where appropriate
- ∞ organise events in locations and at times accessible by public transport, and provide details of how to get there by different modes of transport, if applicable

Creating a better environment

Autistic Parents UK recognises that we can take small steps to improve the office environment for our staff, volunteers and users, and the wider environment. We will:

- ∞ encourage the use of plants, especially those that can absorb emissions in offices, and ensure their proper care
- ∞ maintain the office as a pleasant and effective working space, carrying out an annual office-tidy where appropriate
- ∞ regularly service all office equipment to maintain optimum operating efficiency and longevity
- ∞ raise awareness of sustainability among staff, volunteers and service users and encourage environmental action
- ∞ publicise our environmental efforts and encourage other organisations to do the same

Economic

Autistic Parents UK has a role to play in developing and maintaining a high quality, competitive and efficient economy. We will:

- ∞ endeavour to provide a sustainable, quality service to meet the needs of our stakeholders by raising funds from a variety of appropriate sources
- ∞ provide volunteering opportunities to individuals to enhance their skills and personal development to improve their employment prospects, and to help us provide our service
- ∞ provide low cost or free support and accessible training, where possible to enable our stakeholders to develop skills and knowledge
- ∞ use local venues and businesses to help support the local economy



Volunteer Policy

Autistic Parents UK supports the use of volunteers and will ensure that

- **Volunteers** are properly integrated into the organisational structure, enabling them to contribute effectively to its work.
- **Volunteers** will not be used to replace and reduce the work of paid employees.
- **Paid Employees** at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will seek to involve them in their work.
- **Paid Employees** will, where possible, provide work for volunteers that is satisfying and that can lead to personal development. Those paid employees involved will seek to help volunteers meet these needs as well as providing access to relevant training for them to carry out their work effectively.

The overall responsibility for **volunteers** rests with the *Programme Trustee Board member*.

Equal Opportunities

Autistic Parents UK has adopted the equal opportunities policy of its lead and accountable body. This policy operates in respect of paid employees, volunteers and users. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding and commitment to the equal opportunities policy.

The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are people who work to help Autistic Parents UK to achieve its objectives for no financial reward other than reasonable out of pocket expenses, as set out in the Volunteer Expenses Policy. Volunteers, paid employees and management work in partnership to achieve the objectives of Autistic Parents UK.

Expectations, Responsibilities and Opportunities

Autistic Parents UK expects its volunteers to be realistic in their commitment and volunteers are expected to offer as much or as little time as they consider appropriate to them. However, once a commitment is made, the organisation expects its volunteers to fulfil this unless negotiated otherwise.

All paid employees will be fully informed about the rights and responsibilities of volunteers as part of their own induction and through the approved working practices of Autistic Parents UK.

Volunteers are encouraged to represent their views to senior management on all aspects of Autistic Parents UK's work through volunteer meetings and individual volunteer supervision sessions.

Opportunities will be provided for changing or upgrading volunteer opportunities as desired by the volunteer and appropriate to Autistic Parents UK through the supervision system, but such change would not be as a replacement for a paid post.

Recruitment and Selection

Autistic Parents UK believes that volunteering should be open to all and welcomes applications from anyone who wishes to volunteer. The selection process of the organisation is applicable to all potential volunteers. Once this process is completed, volunteers will be interviewed and, depending on their skills, abilities and choice, will be matched to a volunteering opportunity. **Autistic Parents UK is a charitable organisation for and run by parents who are Autistic themselves, and many of our volunteer roles, particularly those involving peer support, will need to be filled by Autistic parents.** Other roles, such as fundraising and external support/general administration roles, may be filled by non-Autistics or non-parents.

Volunteer Task Outline

All volunteers will be given clear guidelines and task outlines detailing the areas they are responsible for. All volunteers will be required to support within the boundaries described in these guidelines. Ad-hoc volunteers will be given details on projects open for contribution and can contact their supervisor at any time to ask for details if they want to take on a specific role.

Confidentiality



Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid employees and will be required to confirm that they have read, understood and will abide by requirements outlined in our [Volunteer Confidentiality Policy](#).

Induction and Ongoing Training

Volunteers are entitled to an individual induction to familiarise themselves with the work of the organisation. All volunteers will receive regular supervision and support sessions and have a responsibility to liaise with setting up meetings or joining in with volunteer events. Other training will be provided as appropriate.

Expenses

All volunteers will have reasonable out of pocket expenses reimbursed in line with the Volunteer Expenses Policy. Expenses should be claimed monthly using the Volunteer Expenses Form. Expenses can be paid by cheque or cash as required by the volunteer.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the insurance policy of Autistic Parents UK whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work for the organisation. Volunteers using their own vehicles are advised to contact their insurance company to advise them that the vehicle is being used for volunteering purposes.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Policy of Autistic Parents UK applies to all volunteers and a copy is available to all staff and volunteers. See [Health & Safety Policy](#).

Support and Supervision

All volunteers will have a designated supervisor who will normally be the person whom they will work alongside or the Programme Trustee Board member. The supervisor will agree objectives with the volunteer and have regular reviews to feedback on progress, discuss future development and air any problems.

Grievance Procedure

Any volunteer may report their grievance in accordance with the [Complaints & Grievance Policy](#) for staff and volunteers. A copy of the procedure is available to all staff and volunteers.

Disciplinary Procedure

If any problems and complaints about volunteers cannot be rectified, the disciplinary procedure will be invoked. A copy of the procedure is available to all staff and volunteers.



Volunteer Confidentiality Policy

Working with data

At Autistic Parents UK, we all have a responsibility to ensure the safety of data from individuals and other organisations. Through the many roles we have for volunteers at Autistic Parents UK you may come into contact with confidential information about people, our organisation and other organisations.

Keeping information confidential is not only important for our work in supporting Autistic parents and those that support them but also is a legal responsibility.

How we collect, manage and work with people's information is covered by the Data Protection Act, strengthened by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) effective within the UK from 25 May 2018. This organisation, staff and volunteers have a duty to ensure we maintain the highest standards regarding Data Protection and avoid the consequences of non-compliance.

As a volunteer for Autistic Parents UK you will have access to confidential data, we ask you to complete this form acknowledging you understand your responsibilities towards safe data management and confidentiality. We also request that you complete your induction training which will have more information on data protection, please contact your supervisor with any questions. Periodically it may be necessary for you to undergo further training and development to ensure we maintain the highest principles in data management.

The types of data you may come into contact with in your role are categorised as follows:

- **Personal information** - name, address, date of birth, email address, photographs, IP address, location, online behaviours and profiling or analytics data.
- **Sensitive personal information** - ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, health information.

Information should only be gathered from individuals when specifically required for any given purpose, volunteers or staff collecting data must ensure they follow procedure to maintain the safety and security of the data.

Data may be gathered through meetings, writing, or digital information (including recordings), this agreement on data confidentiality includes all forms of data collection in all aspects of your role with Autistic Parents UK. If you ever become aware of a data breach there is a risk of a breach please notify the Data Protection Officer immediately by emailing info@autisticparentsuk.org FAO: Ayesha Pusey or calling 07753352060.

Confidentiality expectations

Autistic Parents UK owes a duty of confidentiality to the people and organisations we hold information about, it is essential to ensure the safety of the people and organisations we work with. Autistic Parents UK expect staff and volunteers to only access information that they need to know and similarly only share data with those who need to know.

Confidentiality is important in both informal and formal data, including internal correspondence like emails, Trustee Board papers and minutes, or information relating to ongoing projects. If you have more than one volunteer role within Autistic Parents UK, information you are expected to maintain confidentiality within an individual role. Organisation policies on safeguarding, health and safety, and whistleblowing may also determine when confidential information may need to be shared.

As an Autistic Parents UK volunteer:

- I will not discuss confidential information which I gain access to through my role
- I will not send any confidential information to a third party unless I am explicitly authorised to do so
- I will not share confidential information in general conversation
- I will not use confidential information for my own purposes whilst in my role or once my role has ended.