



Keeping Everyone Safe  
Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

## Policy Version Control

Status	Version	Date	Description of Changes
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Approved	V1.0	22/11/2025	Minor Adjustments after Executive Committee Scrutiny
Approved	V2.0	16/06/2026	Reviewed. No Changes.

# Keeping Everyone Safe: Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

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# Keeping Everyone Safe: Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy

ASPE is committed to protecting the welfare of children and adults at risk who engage with the Association through events, research, publications, visits, online forums, partnerships, any funded activity, or any other context. The Association accepts a moral and legal duty to safeguard those who may be vulnerable to harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation and to promote environments in which wellbeing is paramount. This policy sets out ASPE's approach to preventing harm, recognising indicators of concern, responding to disclosures or allegations, and working cooperatively with statutory agencies and partner organisations. The Executive Committee has overall responsibility for safeguarding and ensures appropriate oversight, resource allocation, and accountability.

## Principles and Scope

ASPE's safeguarding approach is founded on respect for the intrinsic worth and dignity of every person, the right to live free from abuse and neglect, and the obligation to act promptly and proportionately when concerns arise. This policy applies to all trustees, volunteers, consultants, contractors, speakers, researchers, students, members, and anyone acting on behalf of ASPE. It covers safeguarding concerns relating to children, defined as persons under 18, and adults at risk, defined as adults who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. This policy should be read alongside ASPE's Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and in conjunction with applicable statutory guidance and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Committee holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding systems and culture are in place across ASPE. The Committee appoints a named Safeguarding Lead who has clear authority to act on safeguarding matters, to liaise with statutory agencies, and to ensure timely reporting, record-keeping, and review. The Safeguarding Lead is supported by at least one deputy to provide cover during absence. The Secretariat undertakes operational tasks including maintaining records, ensuring that appropriate pre-appointment checks are carried out where roles require them, and administering practical arrangements for events and funded projects. All people representing ASPE are required to familiarise themselves with this policy, to follow safer working practices, and to report concerns promptly to the Safeguarding Lead. Where concerns involve a member of the Executive Committee, impartial handling will be ensured through recusal and reallocation of responsibilities to an alternative senior lead where appropriate.

## Safer Recruitment Selection and Induction

ASPE promotes safer recruitment practices to reduce the risk of harm. For roles that involve direct or regular contact with children or adults at risk, ASPE requires relevant pre-appointment checks which may include references, identity verification, right to work checks, and criminal record checks in line with current statutory guidance and the nature of the role. Job adverts and role descriptions will make clear ASPE's safeguarding expectations and the requirement to comply with this policy. Induction for new trustees, volunteers, researchers and regular contributors includes a safeguarding briefing, confirmation of safeguarding contacts, access to policy documents, and instruction on reporting procedures.

## Recognising Concerns and Responding to Disclosures

Early recognition and proportionate action are central to safeguarding. Indicators of possible abuse or neglect may include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behaviour, withdrawal, neglect of basic needs, sexually explicit or sexualised language or behaviour, signs of financial exploitation, or disclosures by the person concerned or by others. Anyone who witnesses or receives such information must act without delay and in line with this policy. If a person discloses abuse, the immediate priority is to listen carefully, stay calm, offer reassurance that the disclosure is taken seriously, and avoid promising confidentiality or asking leading questions. The recipient should record the disclosure promptly and accurately, using the person's own words where possible, and report the matter to the Safeguarding Lead immediately via [safeguarding@aspe.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@aspe.org.uk). Where the Safeguarding Lead is not available, concerns must be reported to the deputy or to a member of the Executive Committee.

## Reporting Referral and Cooperation with Statutory Agencies

When a safeguarding concern meets the threshold for referral, the Safeguarding Lead will make prompt contact with local statutory safeguarding services or the police in accordance with statutory guidance and local multi-agency arrangements. If

there is an immediate risk to life or evidence of a serious crime, the police must be contacted straightaway. The Safeguarding Lead will ensure that the person raising the concern receives timely feedback insofar as is compatible with confidentiality and the requirements of any investigation. ASPE will cooperate fully with any statutory investigation and will not undertake parallel internal inquiries that would compromise criminal or child protection processes. Where concerns arise in the context of research, publication, or events involving partner organisations or schools, ASPE will share relevant information with relevant organisations and coordinate referrals as needed, always prioritising the safety of the person at risk.

If a safeguarding concern is raised through ASPE regarding a researcher who is conducting work supported by an ASPE grant, ASPE will work collaboratively with the researcher's employing or partner institution and with any relevant statutory authorities. ASPE recognises that partner institutions have primary responsibility for staff and student conduct and investigatory authority in most higher education and research contexts, and ASPE will therefore share information promptly, support joint risk assessment, and agree roles for investigation, interim measures, and communications. Where necessary, ASPE will support suspension of grant activity, temporary pausing of research, adjustments to supervision arrangements, or other interim safeguards consistent with the partner institution's processes and statutory guidance. ASPE will take steps to protect research participants, children and adults at risk involved in funded projects and will ensure that remedial actions and learning are implemented across ASPE's funding and project governance arrangements.

### Managing Allegations Against Trustees, Volunteers, Consultants and Contractors

Allegations or concerns about the conduct of trustees, volunteers, consultants, members or contractors must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Lead. Allegations that may indicate a person has harmed or poses a risk to a child or an adult at risk will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance and, where applicable, local arrangements for managing allegations against people who work with children or vulnerable adults. ASPE will take steps to ensure the safety of individuals during any investigation, which may include suspension, temporary reassignment, or removal from specific duties. Decisions about interim measures will be precautionary, proportionate and reviewed regularly. Where allegations involve potential criminal behaviour, the police will be informed and ASPE will follow the advice of statutory agencies on the timing and scope of internal actions. ASPE commits to a balanced approach that protects the person at risk, supports the rights of the person subject to allegation to a fair process, and maintains confidentiality in line with legal obligations.

External investigators will be used where impartiality, expertise or stakeholder confidence require independent examination. The criteria for these external investigators will be decided by the nature of the complaint.

### Record-Keeping Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Accurate and contemporaneous records are essential to effective safeguarding. All concerns, disclosures, decisions, referrals and actions taken by ASPE will be recorded securely and retained in line with data protection legislation and ASPE's retention schedule. Records will state what was observed or said, who was present, the actions taken, and times and dates. Access to safeguarding records is restricted to those with a legitimate need to know. ASPE recognises that safeguarding may require sharing information with statutory agencies, partner organisations and, where appropriate, the person's family, and such sharing will be done lawfully and proportionately. Consent for sharing information will be sought where appropriate and safe, but ASPE will not withhold information necessary to protect a person at risk or to comply with a statutory duty. The Safeguarding Lead will record decisions about information sharing and the rationale for those decisions.

### Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

ASPE acknowledges the particular risks posed by online environments and will take steps to mitigate them. Digital platforms used for events, research or member interaction will be configured to reduce risk, guidance will be provided on safe online practice. Where ASPE produces digital resources involving children or adults at risk, consent and safeguarding considerations must be addressed in advance, including clear usage rights, minimisation of identifying information, and secure storage. Allegations or concerns about online grooming, sharing of inappropriate material, or cyber exploitation will be treated with the same seriousness as other safeguarding concerns and referred to statutory agencies where indicated.

### Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns About Organisational Culture

ASPE encourages a culture in which concerns about safeguarding practice, organisational culture, or leadership decisions can be raised safely. The Whistleblowing Policy provides a confidential route to raise serious concerns where internal reporting appears ineffective or where there are concerns about the conduct of leadership. Individuals raising concerns in good faith will

be protected from retaliation and their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. The Executive Committee is committed to learning from such reports and to addressing systemic issues that may create risk.

### Support for Survivors and Witnesses

Where safeguarding concerns are substantiated or where investigations generate significant stress for those involved, ASPE will seek to provide appropriate support. This may include facilitating access to counselling, signposting to specialist support organisations, offering reasonable adjustments to work or participation, and ensuring clear communication about processes and timescales. ASPE recognises the emotional impact on whistleblowers, witnesses, alleged victims and individuals involved in investigations and aims to handle cases with sensitivity while fulfilling safeguarding obligations.

### Conclusion

This policy sets ASPE's standards and expectations for the protection of vulnerable people in all contexts in which the Association operates. It complements statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements and should be read alongside ASPE's Complaints Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. If anyone is unsure about how to act in a particular situation they must seek guidance immediately from the Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.



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