

## Working with Children & Vulnerable Adults - A4e Ltd

### Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

At many, but not at all of our locations our staff could be working alongside Children and Vulnerable Adults. Because of this all employees may in the course of their duties come into short, accompanied contact with such groups and individuals the Company feels it is essential to have a Policy on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults. This Policy applies to all Staff of the Company, including all Contractors, Agency and Temporary Staff undertaking work of any nature within the Company's premises.

Visitors, Groups and Organisations and those hiring the Company's premises or those working for organisations' hiring the Company's premises will be expected to have and demonstrate their own Child Protection Policies (see Para 2.3 Visiting Organisations and Groups).

#### Definitions:

##### Children

The term 'working with children' covers a number of areas. According to the Department of Health guide for organisations working with children, these include:

- employment in establishments that provide functions mainly or exclusively for children, such as schools, children's homes and children's hospitals
- some employment in daycare premises
- caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children
- a position where normal duties include non-supervised contact with children, eg a mini-cab firm whose drivers are employed to transport unaccompanied children to school on a regular basis
- those responsible for care of young people under the age of 16 in the course of their employment
- those responsible for training and guidance of young people under the age of 18.
- positions of influence and control over children which could place them at risk.

##### Vulnerable Adults

*"A person who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation"* (Law Commission Report 231.1995).

AND

*"People with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and people with disability or impairment are included within this definition, particularly when their situation is*

*complicated by additional factors, such as physical frailty or chronic illness, sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, drug or alcohol problems, social or emotional problems, poverty or homelessness.”*

## **Communication**

This Policy shall be posted on the Company Noticeboards' and Employee Internet Site and appropriate groups and individuals will be made aware of the Policy. The Policy however does apply to all Staff, Contractors, Agency and Temporary Staff undertaking work of any nature within the Company's premises.

A4eLtd will:

- Promote the knowledge and education of children and vulnerable adults by providing opportunities for them to take part in training and work experience safely.
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children and vulnerable adults.
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from abuse.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise its staff to adopt the best practices to safeguard and protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and to minimise risk to themselves.
- Require staff to adopt and abide by this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and these Procedures.
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children or vulnerable adults in line with this Policy and these Procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Review and evaluate this Policy and these Procedures on a regular basis.

## **Principles**

The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is everyone's responsibility, particularly when it comes to protecting them from abuse. Children and vulnerable adults have a lot to gain from the training and work experience A4e is able to offer. It provides an excellent opportunity for them to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own unique potential. This Policy and these Procedures are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of children and vulnerable adults is the primary concern.
- All children and vulnerable adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns about abuse, and the responsibility of the Social Work Department and the Police to conduct, where appropriate, a joint investigation.
- All incidents of alleged poor practice, misconduct and abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

- All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Review**

This Policy and these Procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children and vulnerable adults or any changes within A4e Ltd.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children or vulnerable adults within A4e Ltd.
- In all other circumstances, at least annually.

## **Procedures**

To assist in the implementation of the Policy - a number of procedures will be adopted as set out below:

### **1. Recruitment and Employment**

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults. A4e Ltd will take all reasonable steps to ensure that no person recruited to a Post involving duties set out in the Education Act 2002, including posts where the normal duties including caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or vulnerable adults, or whose normal duties involve unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults under arrangements made by a responsible person, or whose normal duties include caring or supervising or training.

For all positions that require regular contact with children or vulnerable adults the following recruitment procedures must be completed:

#### **1.1 Advertising**

All forms of advertising used to recruit Staff for positions involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will include the following:

- The responsibilities of the Post.
- The level of experience or qualifications required (e.g. experience of working with children is an advantage).
- Details of A4e Ltd's policy and open and positive stance on child and vulnerable adult protection.

#### **1.2 Pre-application Information**

Pre-application information for positions involving regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will be sent to applicants or will be available on our Vacancy website and will include:

- A job description including roles and responsibilities.

- A candidate specification (e.g. stating qualifications or experience of working with children or vulnerable adults required). An application form and self-declaration form.

### **1.3 Application and Self-Declaration Form**

All applicants will be requested to complete an application and self-declaration form. The purpose of the application form is to obtain relevant details from the applicant for the position. The purpose of the self declaration form is to collect information on criminal behaviour that is relevant to the position e.g. criminal records or investigations.

### **1.4 References**

References will be sought as required. Where possible at least one of these references will be from an employer or a voluntary organisation where the position required working with children or vulnerable adults in any of the following capacities: employee; volunteer; or work experience. If the person has no experience of working with children or vulnerable adults, specific training requirements will be agreed before appointment.

### **1.5 Checks**

A4e Ltd is registered with the Criminal Records Bureau and prior to appointment a CRB and List 99 check and/or equivalent international check will be completed. This will require the prospective position holder to complete and submit a CRB form, with the results returned to the A4e HR Team. As recommended by the CRB the following types of checks are to be requested for positions requiring contact with children and vulnerable adults:

#### *Standard Disclosure*

Standard disclosures will be requested from those applying for positions listed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA) (Exceptions) Order 1975. These categories include occupations with duties involving regular contact with children and young people under the age of 18; and the elderly, sick and handicapped people.

#### *Enhanced Disclosure*

Enhanced Disclosures will be requested for positions that involve a greater degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. For example positions which require regular contact with, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children and young people.

### **1.6 Interview**

For positions that require regular contact with children or vulnerable adults, interviews will be carried out. An interview will include requests for additional information to support the application.

### **1.7 Offer of Position**

Once a decision has been made to appoint an individual, an offer letter will be presented to the applicant including the details of the position, any special requirements and the obligations e.g. agreement to the policies and procedures of the organisation, the probation period and responsibilities of the role.

Confirmation of the position being accepted will require the offer letter to be formally accepted and agreed to in writing e.g. by the individual signing and dating their agreement on the offer letter and returning it to the organisation.

### **Current staff**

A4e staff engaged in positions which do not usually entail working with children will, on occasions where an assignment involves supervised contact with children, be required to complete an A4e Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Personal Disclosure Form. Staff who disclose that they have been convicted of any offence relating to children or young people; and/ or subject to any disciplinary action or sanction relating to children, will not be permitted to work in any part of A4e which involves contact with children.

In cases, which involves a permanent move or where for a short period of time the position is going to entail unsupervised work, i.e. regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge with children young people or vulnerable adults, a disclosure from the CRB will be required before the role may be undertaken.

### **1.8 Induction**

The induction process for the newly appointed member will include the following:

- An assessment of training, individual aids and any other needs and aspirations.
- Clarification, agreement and signing up to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.
- Any appropriate Training need identified and agreed including the Protection of children and vulnerable adults and working effectively with children and vulnerable adults (including presentation skills, developing child and vulnerable adult friendly resources and activities).
- Clarification of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the position.

### **1.9 Probation**

Newly appointed members will complete an agreed period of probation on commencement of their role.

### **1.10 Personal Development and Review**

All members who have contact with children or vulnerable adults will be monitored and their performance reviewed. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress, set new goals, identify training needs and address any concerns of poor practice.

## **2 Members with Specific Responsibility for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

### **2.1 Authority**

The Director of People Services and the CRB Lead Signatory for A4e have the main responsibility for managing child and vulnerable adult protection issues within the Company and either may act as the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer. The role and responsibilities of this role are detailed below.

The Director of People Services and the CRB Lead Signatory for A4e shall:-

- Implement and promote this Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and any associated Procedures.
- Regularly report to the Senior Management Team
- Act as the main contact within the Company for the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Provide information and advice on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Support and raise awareness of the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- Communicate with Staff on issues of child and vulnerable adult protection.
- Keep abreast of developments and understand the latest information on data protection, confidentiality and other legal issues that impact on the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Encourage good practice and support of procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- Maintain confidential records of reported cases and action taken and liaise with the statutory agencies and ensure they have access to all necessary information.
- Organise training for Staff.
- Regularly monitor and review the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures.

## **2.3 Visiting Organisations and Groups**

Groups and Organisations that hire, borrow or use any of the Company facilities and will be involved in caring, supervising, training or educating children and vulnerable adults shall be expected to have their own policies and procedures for protecting such groups. Access to the Company's facilities may be refused unless such a Policy exists and is adhered to and enforced and can be shown to A4e Ltd, the Director of People Services or the CRB Lead Signatory before the visiting Organisation enters or uses any Company facilities.

## **3. General Policy Items Children and Vulnerable Adults**

This code of conduct details the types of practice required by all members of A4e Ltd when in contact with children or vulnerable adults. The types of practice are categorised into good practice; practice to be avoided and practice never to be sanctioned. Suspicions or allegations of non-compliance of the Code by a member will be dealt with through the A4e Ltd's Disciplinary Procedure for misconduct.

### **3.1 Good Practice**

A4e Ltd supports and requires the following good practice by staff and others when in contact with children and vulnerable adults:

When working with children or vulnerable adults:

- Always work in an open environment e.g. avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment for activities.
- Treat all children and vulnerable adults equally, with respect and dignity.
- Put the welfare of each child or vulnerable adult first before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol or using unsuitable language in the company of children or vulnerable adults
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Ensure that if any form of manual or physical support is required for a child or vulnerable adult, it is provided openly, the child or vulnerable adult is informed of what is being done and their consent is obtained.
- Deliver education instruction first verbally; secondly role-modelled; and thirdly, and only if necessary, with hands on - which must be accompanied by telling the child or vulnerable adult where you are putting your hands and why it is necessary and obtaining their consent.
- Involve parents, guardians and carers wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empower children and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and vulnerable adults and avoid excessive training or competition and either pushing them against their will or putting undue pressure on them.

### **3.2 First Aid and Treatment of Injuries:**

If, in your capacity as a member of A4e Ltd a child or vulnerable adult requires first aid or any form of medical attention whilst in your care, then the normal good practice must be followed:

- Keep a written record of any accident or illness that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Where possible, ensure access to medical advice and/or assistance is available.
- Only those with a current, recognised First Aid qualification should respond to any accident or illness.
- Where possible any course of action should be discussed with the child/vulnerable adult, in language that they understand and their permission sought before any action is taken.
- In more serious cases, assistance must be obtained from a medically qualified professional as soon as possible.
- The child s or vulnerable adult s parents/guardians or carers must be informed of any injury and any action taken as soon as possible, unless it is in the child s or vulnerable adult s interests and on professional advice not to do so.
- Where possible ensure that at least two adults, preferably male and female are present at all times.

## **4 Photographing, Videoing and Filming of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

A4e Ltd reserves the right at all times to prohibit the use of photography, film or video at any event or activity with which it is associated.

### **5.1 Responding to Disclosures**

Information received about or from a child or vulnerable adult may fall into one of the following categories:

- A. Suspicion or allegation of misconduct/inappropriate behaviour /abuse against a member of staff.
- B. Suspicion or allegation of misconduct/inappropriate behaviour /abuse against someone who is not a member of staff.

If unclear about the nature of the information (and therefore which category the disclosure falls into) advice must be sought from the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer or the Police or Social Work Department.

## **5.2 Abuse**

It is not the responsibility of anyone from A4e Ltd to decide whether or not a child or vulnerable adult has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to report concerns. It is very important that A4e Ltd staff understand what is meant by the term 'abuse'. The different types of abuse are:

Emotional Abuse

Neglect

Physical Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Negative Discrimination (including racism)

Bullying (includes bullying by gangs; bullying by family members; physical bullying; verbal bullying; teasing; and harassment)

## **5.3 Establishing the Basic Facts**

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must clarify such basic facts as can be obtained without discussing the matter with the Child or Vulnerable Adult to establish whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that misconduct has occurred. If the basic facts support a suspicion or allegation of misconduct by a member of staff, the matter will be passed to the appropriate Protection Agency, normally the Social Work Department or the Police.

Any internal action following the results of the investigation will be dealt with in accordance with A4e Ltd's Disciplinary Procedure. An individual who is the subject of an allegation may be asked not to report for work until the Company is satisfied that it is appropriate for the individual to resume normal duties, such a period will be on full pay.

## **6.1 Responding to a Suspicion or Allegation of Abuse against someone who is Not a Member of A4e Ltd**

All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are not common. If a child or vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, the Company will react as soon as possible that day in line with the following procedures.

Where there is uncertainty about whether the concern relates to abuse or misconduct, the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must firstly be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action. If the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer is unavailable, external agencies

such as the Police and Social Work Department must be consulted for advice. This is important because they have an overview of child protection issues and they may well have other information that together causes concern.

## **6.2 Actions for the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer when Concerns are reported**

Before taking any action the Child and Vulnerable Adult Officer must always seek advice from the Police or Social Work Department.

## **6.3 Allegations of Abuse**

In all cases of suspected or alleged abuse, advice and guidance must first be sought from the local Social Work Department or the Police as to who contacts the parents.

## **7 Protection of Staff who report or allege Abuse**

Provided a member of staff is not acting maliciously or vexatiously the Law will protect any individual reporting abuse or harm to an appropriate authority.

## **8 Confidential information**

A4e Ltd will protect and manage information provided to it in confidence and will supply confidential information only to appropriate authorities where there are grounds for considering a child or vulnerable adult to be at risk of harm and/or abuse.

## **9. Referral to Secretary of State**

A4e Ltd has a duty to make a referral to the Secretary of State if an individual working in a child or vulnerable adult care position harms or puts at risk of harm and is dismissed or moved away from access to children or vulnerable adults as a consequence. In addition, a person in a care position who harms or puts a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm AND would have been dismissed if they had not resigned, retired, been made redundant or left at the end of a temporary contract, must also be referred.

NB No referral will be made unless the Company has (or would, but for a resignation, retirement, redundancy or expiry of a temporary contract) have taken steps to remove the individual from his or her position.

## **10. Discipline and Grievance Procedures**

In enforcing this Policy, any disciplinary action taken by the Company against an individual will be carried out using the Company's Disciplinary Procedure and every employee has the right to raise a Grievance using the Company's grievance procedure.

# Self-disclosure Form

## Self-disclosure form for applicants for posts or roles (including voluntary assistance) involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults

A4e Ltd is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from physical, sexual and emotional harm. As part of our Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection policy, we require applicants for posts or roles involving contact with children or vulnerable adults to complete this self-disclosure form. 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.

**Surname**..... **First Name**.....

**Address**.....

**Tel No H**.....**M**:.....**Postcode**.....

**1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences? YES NO**

**If yes, please supply details of any criminal convictions.**

Note: You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions, cautions, warnings and reprimands.

**2. Are you a person known to any Social Services Department as being an actual or potential risk to children or vulnerable adults?**

YES/NO

**If yes, please supply details.**

**3. Have you ever had any disciplinary sanction relating to child abuse?**

YES/ NO

**If yes, please supply details.**

Declaration I declare that to the best of my knowledge the information given above is correct and understand that any misleading statements or deliberate omission may be sufficient grounds for cancelling my appointment. I understand that I may be asked to apply for a Criminal Records Disclosure and consent to do so if required. I understand that the information contained in this form and in the Disclosure may be disclosed, where strictly necessary, to regulatory bodies and/or third parties who have an interest in child protection issues.

Signed: ..... Date: .....

**Please return this form to: HR Admin, A4e, Bessemer Road, Sheffield, S9 3XN. If you are returning via email you will be asked to sign this form at interview.**