

## Safeguarding Policy

For the purposes of this document, The AVOCADO Foundation will be referred to as "the Charity".

### 1. Statement of Policy

#### 1.1. Introduction

The Charity regards the health, safety and welfare of all service users as one of its highest priorities. The Charity recognises and fully accepts its moral and statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and its duty to protect staff, trustees and volunteers from unfounded allegations of abuse.

This policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers working on behalf of the Charity. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Volunteering Policy

#### 1.2 Principles of Safeguarding at The Avocado Foundation

We will ensure:

- A safe environment for all beneficiaries and their families.
- Those suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm or abuse are identified and referred to the necessary agencies as appropriate.
- All staff, trustees and volunteers learn about safeguarding, the policies and procedures at the Charity and how to keep themselves and others safe. We will do this by:
- Appointing and training a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Trustee to lead on all safeguarding matters.
- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare and safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Promoting a safe environment at all organised events and celebrations.
- Engaging with stakeholders to ensure their commitment to safeguarding.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers recognise the signs of abuse or that an individual may be at risk of significant harm.
- Working with other agencies as appropriate (e.g. Childrens' Services, Local Safeguarding Children's Board) where an individual is being, or at risk of being, significantly harmed.
- Providing a framework for reporting and dealing with concerns and disclosures.
- Establishing clear procedures for the reporting and handling of allegations of abuse against staff.



- Requiring staff to undertake safeguarding training as appropriate.

### 1.3. Legislative Frameworks

The legislative frameworks around our policy are:

- **Children's Act 2014**, which is fundamental to people working with children and young adults in the UK.
- **Protection of Children Act 1999** requires employers to carry out Criminal Record Checks before employees are allowed to come into contact with children.
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003** makes it is an offence for a person over 18 to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006** sets out the type of activity in relation to children and adults at risk for which employers and individuals will be subject
- **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012** which changed the definition of Regulated Activity including who is eligible for a barred list check.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015** reaffirms safeguarding as everyone's responsibility and the sharing of information between agencies.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019** requires all staff to read and understand their responsibilities if engaged in 'regulated' activities with young people.
- **The Charity Commission – Safeguarding for Charities and Trustees 2017** provides guidance on what to do to protect people who come into contact with your charity through its work from abuse or mistreatment of any kind.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1. Definitions of Abuse

The following are recognised as definitions of abuse, although any act which harms a child, young person or vulnerable adult should also be considered:

**Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent an injury occurring.

**Neglect** - the persistent or severe failure to meet a child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's physical and/or psychological needs, which may result in serious impairment of their health or development.



**Sexual Abuse** involves a child, young person or vulnerable adult being forced or coerced into participating in or watching sexual activity of any kind. Any apparent consent or awareness is irrelevant.

**Emotional Abuse** – persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection; includes abusive or offensive electronic communications. This causes severe and adverse effects on behaviour and emotional development, resulting in low self- esteem. Some degree of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

**Financial Abuse** - in intimate or parental relationships is a way of controlling a person’s ability to acquire, use, and maintain their own money and financial resources.

**Significant Harm** – The Children’s Act introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interest of the children. Some children may be in need of help because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

**Extremism and Radicalisation** – Extremism is defined as ‘vocal or active opposition’ to fundamental British values; democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. Radicalisation is defined as ‘the way in which a person comes to support terrorism and encourages other people to believe in views that support terrorism.

**Female Genital Mutilation** - all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. FGM is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003.

## 2.2. Other definitions

**Safeguarding** – protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from maltreatment, preventing impairment of their health or development and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

**Child Protection** – any activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Child/Young Person** – anyone under the age of 18.

**Vulnerable Adult** – for the purposes of this policy, an individual under the age of 25, with specific personal or situational needs, which increase their risk of suffering significant harm.



**Regulated Activity** - Those working in specified activities will be classed as engaging in regulated activity. Put simply, this is anyone who is teaching, training, instructing, coaching, caring for or supervising children or providing personal care, healthcare, social work, assistance with household matters and personal affairs, and transportation to vulnerable adults.

### 3. Roles & Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff, trustees and volunteers involved in the charities' activities have a role to play. Money4YOU will ensure that staff, trustees and volunteers undergo safeguarding training at induction, advanced training (as appropriate) and will take part in the annual CPD programme where safeguarding updates/refreshers will be programmed.

#### 3.1. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is **Carol Akiwumi** MBE – CEO of the Charity.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Managing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant agencies
- Providing advice and support to staff who have made referrals to other agencies
- Keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
- Referring cases to the Channel programme via the MASH team where there is a radicalisation concern
- Maintaining secure and accurate records of any child protection concern, referral, complaint or allegation
- Attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate
- Communication of the policy and arrangements to all relevant parties including but not limited to children, young people and vulnerable adults, their parents and families, staff, trustees and volunteers
- Engaging with local authorities and other agencies as appropriate
- Ensuring that staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training appropriate to their roles and update this annually
- Maintaining accurate and up to date employment records of all staff including DBS checks
- Maintaining safeguarding training records.
- Safety of all beneficiaries, including when a young person or vulnerable adult is absent or missing, without explanation
- Providing periodic reports to the board about safeguarding incidents or referrals as well as policy implementation
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and volunteers



### 3.2. Designated Safeguarding Trustee

The Designated Safeguarding Trustee is **Edwin Viegas**, responsible for:

- Ensuring the charity's policies reflect prevailing legal and contractual requirements.
- Full compliance of the legislative duties
- Assuring the implementation plan proposed by the DSL
- Apprising the board of trustees regarding policy implementation and effectiveness
- Supporting the DSL and DDSL in the execution of their responsibilities

### 3.3. Photography and Image Sharing

The charity recognises its safeguarding responsibilities and potential issues when people are taking photographs or filming at an event. It will always obtain parental consent before any child, young person, or vulnerable adult is photographed or filmed. Publication of images will be with the direct consent of the parent/carer and the child.

### 3.4. Dealing with Concerns and Disclosures

If any member of staff, trustee or volunteer is concerned about the welfare or safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they must report their concerns to the DSL or Trustee with Safeguarding Responsibilities as soon as practicably possible. Staff, volunteers and trustees will receive training on how to deal with disclosures made by a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Written notes of the disclosure will be made by the member of staff, volunteer or trustee and these will be held in a secure location and shared with the relevant agencies as appropriate.

## 4. Staff

### 4.1. Safer Recruitment of Staff

The Charity operates safer recruitment and employment practices. Checks and critical process undertaken include:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check where the member of staff, trustee or volunteer is involved or likely to be involved in 'regulated' activity. Where this is not the case a standard DBS check will be made.
- Where a conviction is recorded, the DSL will carry out a risk assessment and decide whether to confirm or reject the individual's appointment. (Anyone that is barred from working with children will NOT be appointed)
- 2 employment/education references including the most recent employment



- Check on gaps in work history
- Evidence of identity is obtained, including the right to work in the UK
- Qualifications are checked and verified with original certificates
- Areas of concern in the CV or application will be addressed during the interview
- Applicants sign the application form to declare the information they have provided is true

#### 4.2. Allegations against Staff, Trustees or Volunteers

The primary concern in the event of an allegation is to ensure the safety of the young person or vulnerable adult. In all cases, action will be taken quickly, confidentially and professionally, with all parties clear that suspension is not an indicator of guilt, but a required part of a process.

Where an allegation is made, the Safeguarding Trustee and DSL will meet to discuss the required action. In order that a full and fair investigation can be carried out, consideration must be given to suspending the member of staff, trustee or volunteer. Where it is clear that a criminal offence may have occurred, the matter must be reported to the police. Any subsequent dismissal and/or must be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

In the event that a member of staff suspects any other member of staff of abusing a child, young person or vulnerable adult, it is their responsibility to report these concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, except when they are the person against whom the allegation is being made. In this instance the report should go to the Designated Safeguarding Trustee.

#### 5. Digital Safeguarding

We're committed to safeguarding everyone at the Charity. This includes people who use our digital services and social media channels.

We follow the same safeguarding principles for our activities offline and online.

Digital safeguarding means protecting everyone at the Charity from online harms like:

- **Cyberstalking** – Repeatedly using electronic communications to harass or frighten someone. For example, by sending threatening messages.
- **Discrimination and abuse on the grounds of protected characteristics** – It can be an offence to stir up hatred – 'inciting hatred' - on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics.
- **Disinformation** - Deliberate intent to spread wrong information.
- **Hacking** – Accessing or using computer systems or networks without authorisation, often by exploiting weaknesses in security.
- **Harmful online challenges** – Online challenges sometimes show people doing dangerous things. People share these posts on social media, encouraging others to do the same.



- **Hoaxes** – A lie designed to seem truthful.
- **Impersonation** - Where someone pretends to be someone else online. This is often by taking photos from social media to build a fake profile. This is sometimes known as ‘catfishing’.
- **Misinformation** - Where someone shares information they think is correct, but it isn’t.
- **Online bullying** - Offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting behaviour and abuse of power online. This can humiliate or denigrate people.
- **Online harassment** - Unwanted contact online intended to violate someone’s dignity. It could be hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.
- **Promotion of self-harm, suicide and eating disorders** – Content encouraging these harmful behaviours on social media.
- **Radicalisation** - Radicalisation aims to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable people to support a cause. This may be through a direct relationship, or through social media.
- **Sexual exploitation and grooming online** - Developing a relationship with a child with the intention of abusing them. Offenders use emotional and psychological tricks to build relationships. The abuse can take place online or offline.
- **Sharing of illegal and inappropriate imagery** - ‘Illegal’ means child sexual abuse imagery and imagery that incites violence, hate or terrorism. ‘Inappropriate’ could mean sharing pornography, or violent or hateful content.
- **Oversharing personal information** - This includes information that makes someone identifiable, like their names or phone number. It may also include identifying details based on someone’s protected characteristics.

If you think someone is at risk of any of these harms, you must report it.

This applies to everyone who uses our online services. These include websites, digital platforms and social media. It applies in the UK and Overseas and covers all activities of the Charity at any level which take place online.

## 6. Useful Contacts

IF A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR VULNERABLE ADULT IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, ALWAYS CALL 999

To raise a concern about the welfare of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult if you think they are being harmed, abused or neglected – and not in immediate danger

### **Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London NW9 4EW

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