

## **4.11 modern slavery policy**

### **1. introduction**

Modern slavery is a crime and violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking.

Modern slavery can affect people of any age, gender, race or locality, although some are more vulnerable than others.

The Modern Slavery Act came into place in 2015 to;

- Ban prosecuting victims of slavery from crimes they were forced to commit
- Establish an Anti-Slavery Commissioner to oversee the UK's policies on slavery
- Increase sentences for slavery offences
- Introduce child trafficking advocates
- Make prosecuting the traffickers easier by consolidating the existing slavery offences
- Make UK businesses report on how they tackle slavery in global chains

Unseen, a modern slavery charity, stated the below figures for 2023:

- A total of 2,185 cases were raised, a reduction of 16% from the previous year
- Demographics included:
  - 339 (23%) female potential exploiters
  - 1,187 (77%) male potential exploiters
  - 1 transgender potential exploiter
  - 319 cases of sexual exploitation, 33% reduction from the previous year
  - 3,416 potential victims of labour exploitation, across 759 cases
  - 226 criminal exploitation cases, including 385 potential victims
- The helpline received 8,367 calls which included 5,876 potential victims of modern slavery
- Webforms increased by 40% to 3,233

This policy forms asphaleia's statement setting out the actions we take to understand all potential modern slavery risks and proactive measures we adhere to, ensuring there is no slavery or human trafficking in our operations or supply chains. Whilst this is required by globally operating companies by the Modern Slavery Act 2015, asphaleia have set out this statement also. It outlines our safeguarding duty to raise awareness, identify and report any slavery concerns with regards to our service users.

### **2. organisational practices**

asphaleia are committed to protecting and respecting human rights and have a zero-tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking in any form. Our commitment includes:

#### **2.1 human resources**

asphaleia aim to provide services that are to a high standard and conduct ourselves with the upmost integrity and expects all our staff to act in the same manner. asphaleia is committed to providing staff with a happy and safe working environment, which promotes an open, honest and transparent ethos. All employees are treated with respect and are able to carry out their job role free from conflict, un-assessed risk, harassment or any other unacceptable behaviour.

asphaleia have a number of HR policies to reflect this. New staff receive appropriate training so they can follow this ethos from the start.

asphaleia fulfil our requirements to undertake recruitment and vetting checks on all staff and volunteers that work within our organisation. This includes ensuring that they all have the right to work in the UK.

### **2.2 procurement**

asphaleia are aware that some of our procurement streams may be within sectors where modern slavery could occur. Therefore, we do our utmost in being selective of the companies who we purchase services and products from and if we are made aware of any modern slavery connection, we would cease our relationship with them immediately.

### **2.3 risk management**

asphaleia's Leadership Team are responsible for identifying, documenting and minimising any major risks to which we may be exposed to. These risks are reviewed on a quarterly basis and strategies, procedures and policies are produced and reviewed to minimise such risks. These risks include the protection of children and young people who access our services, staff and volunteers.

### **2.4 safeguarding and child protection**

asphaleia have numerous safeguarding and child protection policies in place which focus on the need to ensure children, young people, staff and visitors are safe, feel safe and are supported whilst they are in receipt of asphaleia services or work at asphaleia. Our safeguarding processes have been developed to ensure the identifying, reporting and support of any risks are managed effectively, person focussed and also fulfil the relevant legal and regulatory obligations.

The Leadership Team, together with the Safeguarding Team ensure that all employees receive the required and appropriate safeguarding training and have up to date access to relevant information. asphaleia ensure that the child and young person's voice is heard and that we offer a safe place where they feel they can disclose any concerns or issues without bias.

### **2.5 whistleblowing policies**

Our whistleblowing policy places a duty on all staff and volunteers to report any instances of impropriety, including criminal acts and misconduct. The policy sets out a clear process for reporting such concerns and provides protection for the reporting person. All concerns are taken seriously and investigated.

