

## PROVIDING SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION – POLICY

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Policy describes how ARK Housing Association will facilitate the person centred support of its service users who have an autism spectrum condition.
- 1.2 This policy is written to acknowledge the specific and unique support needs and experiences of a person with an autism spectrum condition. A separate procedure is not necessary as existing Care and Support policies and procedures address the person centred care planning and support needs of individuals.
- 1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies:
- [Supporting Positive Risk Taking Ref: CS04](#)
  - [Personal Planning Ref: CS02](#)
  - [Behaviour of Concern: CS17](#)
  - [Restraint Ref: CS06](#)
  - [Protection of Adults at Risk Ref: CS03](#)
  - [Health and Safety Ref: HS01](#)
- 1.4 This policy complies with current legislation, as follows:
- The Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
  - The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
  - The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
  - The Human Rights Act 1998
  - The Data Protection Act

### 2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 ARK recognises that individuals with an autism spectrum condition need to experience well co ordinated services committed to meeting their needs over the long term.
- 2.2 ARK's policies and procedures reflect the unique support needs of service users with ASC.
- 2.3 ARK will implement an Autism Service improvement plan where necessary which will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure service users' support continues to meet current best practice.
- 2.4 ARK is committed to providing person centred support that is tailored to meet the individual needs of service users with ASC. Support offered to individuals with ASC will usually be structured and routine as per current best practice guidelines.

- 2.5 ARK recognises that in order to offer person centred support for individuals with an ASC staff must be able to see the world from the perspective of the person. This means having an understanding of how the person sees and experiences the world and how these experiences impact upon the behaviour of the person.
- 2.6 Support offered to service users will be designed to facilitate their social inclusion and reduce the risk of stigma and discrimination based upon assumptions made about an individual's behaviours.
- 2.7 Support offered to service users will encourage them to have as full a life as possible with the opportunity to access social, leisure, educational and employment opportunities. We will also support individuals to develop and maintain relationships.
- 2.8 Support offered to service users will encourage the development of new skills, maintenance of existing skills and encourage the individual to reach their potential.
- 2.9 ARK, as a provider of specialist accommodation, recognises the importance and potential impact of the environment on the service user. ARK's specialist design brief informs the building of new properties and refurbishment of existing properties. An internal environmental assessment informs the layout of furniture etc. to provide free access to safe spaces.
- 2.10 Support offered to the service users will be based on professional assessment and diagnosis of an autism spectrum condition. ARK will work with multi disciplinary professionals, family, friends and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the strategies used to support the individual best meets their needs. Strategies and approaches used will be reviewed regularly and at least in line with review of support plans.
- 2.11 ARK recognises that individuals with ASC may experience high levels of anxiety and stress due to a number of factors including sensitivity to noise and lighting, inability to manage change, being unable or prevented from following rituals and routines. Service user may present with behaviours of concern. This could include aggression and/ or violence.
- 2.12 ARK is committed to supporting behaviours of concern in a person centred way that facilitates and encourages positive behaviour. Further guidance on supporting service users can be found in our Behaviour of Concern Policy ([CS17](#)).
- 2.13 ARK believes the best way to do this is through the development of a comprehensive care planning process that is based on assessment of the persons needs and abilities.
- 2.14 ARK will support growth, development and quality of life by supporting positive risk taking based on risk assessment and consistent support planning to meet planned goals.
- 2.15 ARK supports the use of physical intervention only when a multi disciplinary assessment has been carried out and the relevant consent has been given (please refer to [CS06](#)). No intervention will be considered unless a comprehensive risk assessment and prescriptive support plan is in place.
- 2.16 ARK staff will undertake CALM training (Crisis, aggression, limitation and management) and hold a current certificate before any physical intervention however

ARK recognises that in an emergency staff may have to intervene in a situation to ensure the health and safety and well being of the service user and others.

- 2.17 Staff will undertake Autism training as part of the induction process. Refresher training will be carried out every two years. Autism training will be person specific to ensure the impact of the ASC on the individual is recognised, understood and supported.
- 2.18 Staff will undertake training to implement and review agreed strategies to support an individual e.g. Social Stories, SPELL, and Comic strip conversations etc.
- 2.19 ARK takes seriously its responsibility to ensure the health and safety and well being of staff and measures in this policy detail ARK's commitment.
- 2.20 We will ensure that any person who experiences aggression or violence within the organisation will receive appropriate support.
- 2.21 ARK recognises that staff supporting service users who display anxiety, aggression and/ or violence may experience higher levels of stress. We will ensure staff receive appropriate support to manage stress.
- 2.22 ARK will ensure its policies and procedures are relevant and reviewed.
- 2.23 ARK will ensure Care and Support for service users with ASC reflects current regulatory guidance such as Keys to Life and The Scottish Strategy for Autism.

### **3.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 3.1 Care and Support Managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented as required by all Care and Support staff
- 3.2 The Care and Support Area Managers will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every three years and that any proposed amendments are submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

**Approved by Board of Management:          June 2016**

**Review due by:    June 2019**