

Procedures for reporting, referring and recording safeguarding concerns

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. These procedures set out the range of work that supports the implementation of the Oxford City Council Safeguarding Policy and should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

2. Training

- 2.1. Guidance for staff on how to access training is available on the Oxford City Council Safeguarding intranet page. Councillors and volunteers will be invited to attend relevant training.
- 2.2. The following procedures are in place to ensure employees, councillors and volunteers complete the appropriate safeguarding training. There are different levels of training available to employees, volunteers and councillors, defined by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards.
- 2.3. All new employees, councillors and volunteers will be briefed on their responsibilities towards children, young people and adults with care and support needs during their induction.
- 2.4. All employees, councillors and volunteers are required to complete the internal safeguarding awareness briefing. This must be refreshed every two years.
- 2.5. Volunteers' line managers should contact the [Safeguarding Coordinator](#) to arrange to book volunteers on to a briefing.
- 2.6. Employees, councillors and volunteers working directly with children will be required to complete OSCB levels two and three, appropriate to their role.
- 2.7. Employees, councillors and volunteers working directly with adults with care and support needs will be required to complete OSAB levels two and three, appropriate to their role.
- 2.8. Recruiting managers should follow the Oxford City Council Recruitment and Selection Procedures and undertake the required Oxford City Council Recruitment and Selection training.
- 2.9. Designated Safeguarding Leads, Designated Safeguarding Officers and Safeguarding Champions will be required to attend the OSCB Designated Lead training and OSAB Leader/Manager training course.
- 2.10. When it is uncertain whether an employee fits into any of these categories, line managers should discuss the issue with the Human Resources team or Safeguarding Coordinator.
- 2.11. Specialist training courses are available on the Board websites and participation is strongly encouraged. All courses are free, non-attendance will incur a £50.00 fee. Courses can be booked via the Board websites:
[OSCB training courses](#)
[OSAB Training courses](#)

3. Safer Recruitment

- 3.1. To ensure safeguarding is embedded in our recruitment and selection procedures this procedure operates in conjunction with following Oxford City Council policies and guidelines:
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
 - Criminal Records Policy
 - Safer Recruitment guidelines
- 3.2. The Head of Business Improvement is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and compliance with the Disclosure and Barring legislation through the Disclosure and Barring Service ['DBS'].
- 3.3. The following statement is included in all job descriptions:
'Oxford City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.'

4. Information Sharing

- 4.1. Oxford City Council understands the importance of ensuring that personal data is always treated fairly, lawfully and appropriately and that the rights of individuals are upheld. Oxford City Council is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.
- 4.2. To meet the statutory requirements of The Care Act 2014 and The Children's Act 1989 and 2004, and Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2023 all employees, councillors and volunteers must comply with the following policies, guidelines and protocols:
- [Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers](#)
 - [Safeguarding Information Sharing Protocol OSCB](#)
 - [Oxford City Council Internet Usage Policy and E-mail Policy](#) internal use only
 - [Oxford City Council IT Security Policy](#) internal use only
 - [Oxford City Council Data protection policy](#)
- 4.3. Oxford City Council recognises that all information regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with care and support needs should be kept confidential. However, in order that children, young people and adults with care and support needs are protected from harm, in some circumstances, usual considerations of confidentiality that might apply to other situations within Oxford City Council may be overridden.
- 4.4. It is important that employees, councillors and volunteers can share information appropriately as part of good safeguarding practise and do so confidently.

- 4.5. [The OSCB 7 golden rules for information sharing](#) provide advice on the sharing of information.

5. Emergencies

- 5.1. Call police using 999 if:
- There are immediate concerns for the person's safety or urgent welfare checks where there are serious concerns for the individual.
 - You witness a crime (such as physical abuse) or if you are a victim of crime e.g. public order offences. You don't have to be the intended victim; you can be caused harassment, alarm or distress by someone's actions towards another.
 - Someone discloses to you that they have just been the victim of crime and the perpetrator is still in the vicinity.
- 5.2. Inform your line manager and a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity. Make a written record of the incident.

6. Raising a concern

- 6.1. Inform your line manager
If you have concerns about a person's welfare you must inform your line manager and keep them updated about subsequent action.
- 6.2. Consult a safeguarding champion
Safeguarding champions have completed advanced level safeguarding training. They will guide you through the referral process. Safeguarding champions will not take ownership of the concern or make referrals on your behalf; they are a resource for support and guidance. Details of Safeguarding champions can be found on the [Safeguarding intranet page](#).
- 6.3. If necessary make a referral
In Oxfordshire there are different referral pathways for adults and children. A safeguarding champion will advise on the most appropriate action. See sections 7 and 9 for guidance.
- 6.4. Record your concern and the action taken
All safeguarding and welfare concerns should be recorded on the externally provided case management system, currently [MyConcern](#).
- 6.5. Councillors and volunteers must refer to their reporting processes

7. Adult Safeguarding

Adult Safeguarding Triage Team

- 7.1. If you've encountered an issue and are unsure if it is a safeguarding issue or not you can call and request a consultation with the Safeguarding Triage Team.
- Tel: 01865 328232

Adult Safeguarding Enquiry Criteria

- 7.2. The criteria for a Section 42 (S42) safeguarding enquiry under the requirements of the Care Act 2014 are as follows:
- The adult is reported as having or appears to have needs for care and support.
 - The adult is reported or appears to be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
 - As a result of care and support needs, the adult unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding Referral

- 7.3. Safeguarding referrals go to Adult Social and Health Care. You can report:
- Online: [Safeguarding referral form](#)
- 7.4. When a concern is raised with the Adult Social and Health Care team, they will pass this information to the Adult Safeguarding Team. The wishes of whoever is the subject of the concern will always be listened to and acted upon, and then a decision will be made about what needs to happen next.
- 7.5. Safeguarding Champions and line managers should consult [The Adult Safeguarding Threshold of Need Matrix](#) before advising on a referral pathway.

Consent

- 7.6. Unless there is a risk to the person's safety you should gain the person's consent before making a referral. Always advise the person of your concern and explain the steps you will take. It is important that the person's wishes are known, when making a referral you will be asked if you have the person's consent and what they want to happen.
- 7.7. You can make a referral without the person's knowledge if you have good reason to. The person making this decision must make a written record of their decision. If you are unsure seek advice from the Safeguarding Triage Team.

Urgent concerns

- 7.8. If you have urgent concerns for the safety or wellbeing of a person (that do not require police) contact Adult Social and Health Care Team during office hours
- Tel: 0345 050 7666
 - 8.30am - 5pm Monday - Thursday
 - 8.30am - 4pm Friday
 - In an emergency, out of hours please contact 0800 833408.

Care needs assessment

- 7.9. If your concern is not about abuse or neglect but someone not receiving care when you think they should, you should request a Care Needs Assessment using the: [Assessment Form for Professionals](#).

Concerns for people without care and support needs

- 7.10. If the person does not fit the criteria for safeguarding duties, there will still be help available and staff should always seek advice from a safeguarding champion about the most appropriate referral pathway.
- 7.11. People who may fall within this category include:
- Adults who may be at risk of harm or exploitation due to their circumstances or other vulnerabilities e.g. age, social isolation
 - Adults who are at risk of harm or victimisation due to their lifestyles or specific needs e.g. sex workers, homelessness, drug users
 - Adults who repeatedly come to the attention of local services
 - Adults who go repeatedly missing
 - Care leavers who are over 18
 - Adult survivors of child abuse including child sexual exploitation

Referrals within the City Council

- 7.12. To keep someone safe, staff should always consider what actions the Council can take and ensure everything that can be done has been. Line managers should advise on who should be alerted about the concern.

Multi Agency Risk Management (MARM) framework

- 7.13. Where an adult's needs do not meet the threshold for safeguarding but there is a high level of risk and a multi-agency response would be beneficial, officers can refer in to the [MARM Framework](#). This can be used for any adult but will be particularly helpful for those who hoard, self-neglect or are homeless. All attempts should have been made to reduce or minimise risk prior to referring to MARM.

Hoarding

- 7.14. Where hoarding or fire safety concerns are identified or suspected, a Safe and Well visit request must be made to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. The 'Recording the condition of a home' and 'Hoarding image rating' toolkits, found on the OSCB website, can help identify hoarding.

Escalation

- 7.15. Designated Safeguarding Leads are responsible for handling escalation processes and inter-agency disputes. If there is a need for escalation, the line manager must be contacted in the first instance.

8. Procedure for reporting deaths or serious abuse of adults with care and support needs

- 8.1. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board is required to review deaths of adults with care and support needs where there is at least a suspicion that the death resulted from abuse or neglect. The Board will also review serious cases of abuse or neglect of adults with care and support needs.

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- 8.2. If you become aware that an adult with care and support needs has died or been seriously harmed on Council premises, you should immediately contact:
- The Executive Director for Communities and People
 - Otherwise you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads
- 8.3. If you suspect the death is related to Domestic Abuse, you must also contact:
- [Domestic Abuse Lead](#)

9. Child Safeguarding

Early Help

- 9.1. Early help intervention can prevent the requirement for statutory intervention and promote the wellbeing of a child and their family.
- 9.2. When a child or family is identified as benefiting from early help, a whole family, multi-agency Strengths & Needs form should be completed. This can be completed by:
- The professional identifying the need of the family
 - Any professional who knows/has a relationship with the family or is part of a network that supports the child/family
 - A professional identified by the family as the most appropriate person to support them with the Strengths & Needs conversation
- 9.3. Strengths and Needs forms and other Early Help tools can be found on the [OSCB website](#).

Local Community Support Service (LCSS)

- 9.4. For emerging concerns that do not require an immediate safeguarding response contact LCSS on Tel: 0345 241 2705 or email LCSS@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- 9.5. Contact the LCSS Link Worker to complete a Named Conversation where you have the consent of the family to seek support and advice on their behalf. Contact details can be found on the [intranet safeguarding page](#).

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- 9.6. For urgent safeguarding concerns contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on Tel: 0345 050 7666
- 9.7. You should call MASH immediately if there is an urgent safeguarding concern, for example:
- allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused
 - concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks
 - concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk
 - the child is frightened to return home
 - the child has been abandoned or parent is absent

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- 9.8. Following a conversation with the MASH team you may be asked to submit a referral form.
- 9.9. [The Oxfordshire MASH Referral Form](#) for professionals only to refer children to social services.
- 9.10. Or you can email a report to MASH on the secure email on: mash-children@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- 9.11. Safeguarding Champions and line managers should consult [The Children's Safeguarding Threshold of Need Matrix](#) before advising on a referral pathway.

Consent

- 9.12. When gaining advice or making a referral you should ideally do so with the families knowledge and consent. The MASH and LCSS will ask you if you have parental consent to share the child's details.
- 9.13. There will be situations where it is not appropriate to ask for consent e.g. if the parent is suspected of abuse and doing so may put the child at increased risk.
- 9.14. For further information sharing guidance please see the document below:
 - [Information sharing for practitioners](#)

Child exploitation

- 9.15. If a child has made a disclosure regarding sexual or criminal exploitation, or if you think a child may be at risk of being sexually or criminally exploited, please contact MASH on 0345 050 7666.

Radicalisation

- 9.16. If you are concerned that a child or young person is being radicalised;
 - Call 999 if you have concerns for the safety of the child, young person or the public.
 - Follow child safeguarding procedures
 - For more information see Oxford City Council [PREVENT](#) intranet page

Position of trust

- 9.17. If you have a concern about a professional or person in a position of trust you should speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will refer to the Safeguarding Allegations Policy.

Further information

- 9.18. Visit the [OSCB Themes page](#) to find out more about topics such as:
 - private fostering
 - child sexual exploitation
 - female genital mutilation
 - disabled children
 - forced marriage

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- children missing education
- preventing extremism

Escalation

- 9.19. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are responsible for handling escalation processes and inter agency disputes. The Council has signed up to the OSCB Escalation process
- 9.20. DSL with overall escalation responsibilities is:
- Community Safety Service Manager

10. Procedure for reporting of child deaths

- 10.1. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is required to review deaths of children where there is at least a suspicion that the death resulted from abuse or neglect. The Board will also review serious cases of abuse or neglect of children.
- 10.2. If you become aware that a child has died or been seriously harmed on Council premises, you should immediately contact:
- The Executive Director for Communities and People
 - Otherwise you should contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads

11. Extremism/Radicalisation

- 11.1. Protecting those vulnerable to extremism is a safeguarding issue, similar to protecting people with care and support needs from other harms e.g. neglect or exploitation.
- 11.2. If you are concerned about an individual being drawn into extremism you should follow safeguarding procedures.
- Inform your line manager
 - Get advice from a safeguarding champion
 - Refer Social and Health Care Team Tel: **0345 050 7666**
 - For more information see the [PREVENT](#) intranet page.

12. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

- 12.1. The Council has additional responsibilities to report incidents of human trafficking and modern slavery.
- 12.2. For procedures on reporting and referring Modern Slavery and Exploitation at Oxford City Council, completing and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Duty to Notify, contact Oxford City Council's [Anti-Slavery Coordinator](#) and refer to this document:
- [Oxfordshire's response to Adult Exploitation and Modern Slavery](#)
- 12.3. Under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Oxford City Council voluntarily prepares a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year which is published on Oxford City Council's website. A Section 54 Statement must detail the steps taken during the previous financial year to

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ensure that no slavery or human trafficking is taking place in any part of its business or in any of its supply chains (or a declaration that no such steps have been taken).

13. Recording concerns

13.1. MyConcern



13.2. MyConcern is the current central reporting system for safeguarding concerns raised by Oxford City employees and councillors and can be found on the Safeguarding intranet page. The system is monitored by a group of Designated Safeguarding Officers and each new concern is triaged by a member of the group. Where there are outstanding actions they will direct actions to be completed to the case owner and notify the relevant teams to follow up. Once referrals are completed (internally or externally) the report can be closed.

13.3. Accurate reporting on MyConcern is essential to record the history of safeguarding concerns and previous support for an individual, ensure an appropriate response and information sharing, correctly interpret the data, complete lessons learnt and identify trends and training issues.

User information

13.4. MyConcern training forms part of the internal Safeguarding Introduction briefing which is mandatory for all staff.

13.5. Account set up and further training is available from the [Safeguarding Coordinator](#).

Recording concerns

13.6. Recording and reporting of concerns should be:

- Factual – Who are you concerned about, where do they live, what happened? Why are they at risk?
- Have context – what was the purpose of the visit/interaction? Are they a council tenant? Are they known to other departments?
- **Remember:** If making an external referral, record reference numbers and names of professionals spoken to. You can add more than one person to a concern. If you don't know the name put 'unknown' this can be updated later.
- Accurate and timely information should be recorded within teams' case notes. In the event of a Case Review, chronologies will be supplied to the Safeguarding Boards, as appropriate.

Referral details

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- 13.7. Always apply referral details to the concern. This can be done through the 'Update Concern' option. Click on the concern you wish to update and go to the referral tab. Enter the date of the referral and choose from the list of agencies. Choose the outcome which is most appropriate.

No referral required

- 13.8. You may have discussed your concern with a safeguarding champion and decided that no further action needs to be taken. e.g. the situation is already being managed internally or by another agency.
- 13.9. If there are no new concerns or information to give to the primary agency you should not repeat the same information. If there are new or escalating concerns about an on-going situation, then you should record your concern on MyConcern and inform the primary agency.

14. Allegations against a Council employee or volunteer

- 14.1. The Council has an additional policy for managing allegations involving Council employees.
- Safeguarding Allegations against Employees
- 14.2. Allegations of abuse against an employee will be assessed by the Head of Business Improvement and the initial actions will determine whether the allegation is so serious that it should immediately be referred to Social Services and/or the Police.
- 14.3. The Council recognises that it may be difficult to inform on colleagues but assures all employees, councillors and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child, young person, or adult at risk may be being abused or bullied.
- 14.4. The Council's [Whistle Blowing Policy](#) is available on the Council's web pages.

15. Safer Recruitment

- 15.1. To ensure safeguarding is embedded in our recruitment and selection procedures this procedure operates in conjunction with following Oxford City Council policies and guidelines:
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
 - [Criminal Records Policy](#)
 - [Safer Recruitment guidelines](#) – internal use only
- 15.2. The Head of Business Improvement is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate recruitment procedures are in place and compliance with the Disclosure and Barring legislation through the Disclosure and Barring Service ['DBS'].
- 15.3. The following statement is included in all job descriptions:

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www.oxford.gov.uk



‘Oxford City Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults with care and support needs and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.’