

Policy: Safeguarding

Equality Statement

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No member of the public, member of staff, contractor, volunteer or job applicant shall be discriminated against on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Application of Policy

1. This policy sets out the OPCC's approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It applies to all aspects of our work and to everyone working for the OPCC including permanent and temporary employees, contractors, self-employed contractors and anyone working on behalf of or undertaking work or volunteering for the OPCC. The OPCC expects all staff, contractors and volunteers to co-operate fully in the achievement of this policy.

Introduction

2. We are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults by recognising our responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children and vulnerable adults from significant harm.
3. We acknowledge our duty to respond appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.
4. We recognise the importance of the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as part of our responsibilities and seek to ensure that any safeguarding issues as part of the OPCC's work including any contacts with the office are handled in accordance with the policy. This includes ensuring that the providers we commission have effective procedures for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
5. The aim of the policy is to increase staff awareness of the expectations placed on them in relation to safeguarding, along with clear signposting information and processes which should be adopted in line with best practice.
6. While permanent and temporary employees, contractors and self-employed contractors and volunteers are likely to have varied levels of contact or exposure to potential safeguarding issues including contacts and correspondence with children,

young people and vulnerable adults as part of their duties and responsibilities for the OPCC, everyone should be aware of the potential indicators of abuse and neglect and be clear about what to do if they have concerns.

7. The policy has been written in line with and is fully compliant with all relevant safeguarding legislation including:
 - Children Act 1989
 - Children's Act 2004
 - Care Act 2014
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015
 - Mental Capacity Act

Definitions

8. We use definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance. Safeguarding children is defined in [Working together to safeguard children 2018](#) as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment
 - preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
9. Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the [Care and support statutory guidance](#) issued under the Care Act 2014 as:
 - protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
 - people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
 - people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
 - recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being

Roles and responsibilities

10. The Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team (SMT) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed.
11. The OPCC Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that underpin this policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the Head of Business Services.

12. Employees must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Recruitment

13. The PCC is committed to safer recruitment procedures. Where it is identified that staff have regular or frequent contact with children or vulnerable adults then appropriate procedures will be initiated.

14. It is the responsibility of the Head of Business Services to undertake a risk assessment for the job description and person specification for those roles likely to involve regular and/or substantial contact with children or vulnerable adults before recruitment takes place. This will ensure that only appropriate individuals are selected to undertake vetting procedures.

15. Full and factual employment references will be sought in all cases. Information about employment gaps will be sought. Should the OPCC recruit volunteers, recruitment will be rigorous and take into account regulated and supervised activity.

16. Where relevant, contractors will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before having contact with children and young people or vulnerable adults.

17. Training will be provided to staff to ensure understanding of this policy.

Examples of OPCC business which could be impacted by safeguarding

18. Commissioning - as a commissioner of services, the OPCC will ensure that any services the PCC commissions from third parties are compliant with a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children according to Government Guidance: Working Together to safeguard Children 2018 and the Care Act 2014.

19. Case work – we will take all reasonable steps to ensure concerns raised through our involvement in case work (such as dealing with distressed or suicidal members of the public) are dealt with in accordance with child and vulnerable adult safeguarding procedures. In the first instance all concerns will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If appropriate a referral to child/adult safeguarding will be made and where appropriate the police will be notified.

20. Work Experience Students and Youth Commissioners – where concerns arise as a result of issues raised by Work Experience Students or Youth Commissioners they will be referred in line with this policy. Staff should take care to ensure that they do not put young people or themselves in a vulnerable situation by taking care when working alone with the young person and avoiding the situation where possible.

Allegations against OPCC officials, staff or contractors

21. As a publicly funded body, the OPCC expects high standards from all of its employees and aspires to the highest standards of excellence and professionalism from the people it employs.
22. Concern may be raised if a staff member is behaving in a way which demonstrates unsuitability for working with children or vulnerable adults in their present position, or in any capacity.
23. Allegations or concerns may arise either in the employee's/professionals work or private life. Examples include:
 - Commitment of a criminal offence against or related to children or vulnerable adult.
 - Behaving towards children vulnerable adults in a manner that indicates they are unsuitable to work them.
 - Where an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff from their private life such as perpetration of domestic abuse or where inadequate steps have been taken to protect vulnerable individuals from the impact of violence or abuse.
 - Where an allegation of abuse is made against someone closely associated with a member of staff such as a partner, member of the family or other household member.
24. In such cases the safety of the child and vulnerable adults at risk is of paramount importance. Immediate action may be required to safeguard children or vulnerable adults at risk.
25. Any concern that child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm or abuse, must immediately be reported.
26. The concern will be reported to the staff member's line manager and the designated safeguarding lead in the first instance, who should take advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). A police investigation of a possible criminal offence may be required and if appropriate disciplinary action/suspension pending investigation will be considered in line with the complaint's policy. It should be noted that there are separate processes for complaints against the Police and Crime Commissioner which will also be used in the case of a safeguarding allegation.
27. Reputational issues will be managed appropriately by discussion with the relevant communications team.

Acting on safeguarding concerns

28. No one working for the OPCC should investigate concerns about individual children or vulnerable adults who are or may be being abused or who are at risk. However, this does not mean that we should do nothing when we learn of a concern. We all have a responsibility to make sure that concerns about children and vulnerable adults are passed to the agency that can help them without delay.
29. If anyone is concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of being abused or neglected, they should not ignore their suspicions and should not assume that someone else will take action to protect that person. Concerns about children should be referred to the children's social care department of the local authority where the child lives. Similarly, concerns about vulnerable adults should be referred to local authority adult services. Although the police have a role in an emergency situation they should not be the first route for reporting.
30. If anyone working for OPCC is in any doubt about what to do, they should consult their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
31. Anyone working for the OPCC who has concerns about the behaviour of a colleague must always raise this with their line manager as quickly as possible.

Dealing with disclosures

32. If a child/vulnerable adult tells you they are being abused you should:
 - Show them you have heard what they have said and that you take the allegation seriously
 - Encourage them to talk but not ask leading questions as this could be seen as corruption of evidence
 - Not interrupt when they are recalling events, and not ask them to repeat their account
 - Explain to them what you will need to do with this information
 - Not promise to keep what has been disclosed a secret, as you have a duty to report it
 - Record everything they tell us as accurately as possible using the exact words if possible and send it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to record
 - Discuss the disclosure with the OPCC designated safeguarding lead
 - Follow the LSCB reporting procedure for where the child/vulnerable adult lives
 - Inform the LADO in cases of professional misconduct
 - In an emergency call the police
33. You should not:
 - Confront the alleged abuser

- Ask leading questions or try to investigate
- Discuss with the parent if the allegation relates to them
- Promise to keep a secret
- Assume somebody else is dealing with it

Appendix A: How to make a referral

Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's/adults social care and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child/vulnerable adult is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so. Contact details for each local authority can be found here;

Local Authority	Children	Adults
Birmingham	<p>Advice & Support Service on 0121 303 1888</p> <p>If you have access to secure e-mail: secure.cass@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk if you do not have access to a secure e-mail: cass@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk</p> <p>Outside of normal office hours please call 0121 675 4806 for the Emergency Duty Team</p>	<p>Telephone: 01213031234</p> <p>E-mail: ACAP@birmingham.gov.uk</p> <p>Text Relay: Dial 18001 followed by the full national phone number</p> <p>Report online at: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/ - Children, Young People and Families Section</p>
Dudley	<p>Telephone (Office Hours): 0300 555 0050</p> <p>Out of Office Hours: 0300 555 8574</p> <p>Report Online: https://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/tell-us/</p>	<p>Telephone (Office Hours): 0300 555 0055 and select option 1</p> <p>Out of Office Hours: 0300 555 8574</p> <p>Report Online: https://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/tell-us/</p>

Coventry	<p>Telephone: 101 or 999</p> <p>Social worker (out of office hours): 024 7683 2222</p> <p>If there is no immediate danger or you need advice or information, you should call the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 024 7678 8555.</p>	<p>Telephone: 024 7683 3003</p> <p>Email: ascdirect@coventry.gov.uk</p>
Sandwell	<p>Emergency Telephone: call 999 or 0845 113 5000</p> <p>Non-Emergency Telephone: call 0121 569 3100</p>	<p>Telephone(Office Hours): 0121 569 2266</p> <p>Out of Office Hours: 0121 569 2355</p> <p>Email: sandwellenquiry@sandwell.gov.uk.</p>
Solihull	<p>Telephone(Office Hours): 0121 788 4300</p> <p>Out of Office Hours: 0121 605 6060</p>	<p>Telephone: 0121 704 8007</p> <p>Report Online: https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/socialservicesandhealth/reportsafeguarding</p>
Walsall	<p>Telephone (Office Hours): 0300 555 2866</p> <p>Emergencies: 0300 555 2922</p>	<p>Telephone: 0300 555 2922</p> <p>Text: 07894 114482</p> <p>Email: initialintake@walsall.gov.uk</p>
Wolverhampton	<p>Telephone(Office Hours): 01902 555392</p> <p>Emergency Out of Hours: 01902 552999</p>	<p>Telephone (Office Hours): 01902 551199</p> <p>Emergency Out of Hours: 01902 552999</p>

Version No	Date	Author	Post	Reason for issue	Date agreed by PCC	Review Schedule
1.0	July 2019	Polly Reed	Head of Business	General Review		Biennial

			Services			