

OVADA Policy

PROCEDURE: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

DATE: February 2013

LATEST ISSUE: February 2023

TO BE REVIEWED IN: January 2024

(SAVE POLICY AS PDF IN ARCHIVE FOLDER AFTER EACH UPDATE)

SAFEGUARDING: Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy



OVADA recognises its responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection. The welfare and well being of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

OVADA is committed to ensuring that all children, young and vulnerable people in contact with our services are protected from harm. This includes ensuring that their physical and emotional health and welfare, and that their social and intellectual development are actively promoted.

This policy applies to all staff (including freelancers and volunteers) and focuses on the following elements:

Staff recruitment and selection – ensuring that all staff and volunteers who have unsupervised access to children have been safely recruited and appropriately checked through the DBS process

Raising awareness of child protection issues

Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse

Establishing a safe and nurturing environment where service users feel safe and happy

OVADA will follow the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures and Local Authority Guidance in all cases of abuse or suspected abuse. These can be found at www.oscb.org.uk

Policy

OVADA will ensure that:

All staff (including temporary staff/freelancers), volunteers and trustees have read this Safeguarding Policy and know to contact OVADA's Director and/or the relevant agencies in case they need to pass on concerns

Staff receive Safeguarding training with OSCB, as required by their role:

OSCB currently offers 3 mandatory courses (Generalist Safeguarding, Specialist Safeguarding and Designated Safeguarding Lead). All professionals working unsupervised regularly (3 hours or more a month) with children, young people and/or their families **must** complete the Generalist Safeguarding Training Course. If your role within OVADA requires Safeguarding Training you will be informed individually

All staff and volunteers report any unusual / inappropriate behaviour to OVADA's Lead for child protection and recognise their professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people

Staff keep accurate [written records](#) of concerns on children or vulnerable adults where a referral is not appropriate immediately. These records should be marked as confidential and stored safely in OVADA's Registered Offices

All staff and volunteers are recruited safely and have had the appropriate checks, (e.g. DBS) as required by their role. [See Appendix 1]

Staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is **always** advisable for work with individual children or vulnerable adults to be conducted in view of other adults

All are aware that any allegations against a member of staff or volunteer must be referred to the <https://www.oscb.org.uk/local-authority-designated-officer-lado/> on 01865 810603

We will liaise with other agencies that support children and vulnerable adults, (e.g. Social Care and Health) where necessary

Our service users know who to talk to in our organisation if they need help

We promote a positive ethos within our organisation, which allows our service users to be safe, supported and valued

If OVADA takes photographs of young people participating in activities and events, written permission is obtained before any photographic material is used in the public domain

If OVADA produces exhibition content that is explicit or graphic, for example work that contains nudity, violence or adult themes, it will ensure appropriate warnings are in place (written and verbal) to advise viewers and provide relevant support where necessary

Our Health & Safety policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our service users

Records of staff training and relevant certificates are kept up to date, as required

This policy is reviewed annually and distributed to staff, volunteers, trustees or service users and their families upon request

Procedure

All staff members, volunteers and trustees have a responsibility for action in cases of suspected child abuse. The following procedure should be followed if you have concerns about the safety of a child/vulnerable adult or if a disclosure is made.

Explain;

If a child or vulnerable adult asks to speak to you about a problem, DO NOT promise confidentiality, but explain that it may be necessary to consult a senior colleague in order to help them.

Listen;

Stop and listen carefully if someone wants to tell you about suspicions of abuse. Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention. Allow silences when needed. Do not show shock or disbelief and take what is said seriously.

Reassure;

Stay calm and give reassurance that only those people who need to know will be told. Explain that they have done the right thing by telling you and let them know that you believe them.

Give;

Time to talk. Establish the facts of what has happened but do not probe or ask leading questions. Keep questioning open, e.g. 'Is there anything else you want to say?' or 'Can you tell me more about that?' Do not criticise the perpetrator. Explain what you will do next, e.g. you will need to pass this information to your lead person for Child Protection.

Record;

If possible, make brief notes about what the child is telling you as they are speaking. If this is not appropriate, write down what was said, as soon as the child has left. Record

the date, time, place, your name and role and what was said (rather than your interpretation of it). Use the child's language wherever possible.

Review;

Read back to the young person what has been written and ask them if they are happy that this is what they said. This is very important as you will be asked by Social Services or Police exactly what was said to you.

Report;

The incident to your Line Manager as soon as possible and do not tell any other adults or children about it. Ensure that this person has your notes of what was said so that they can store them confidentially and securely.

Remember;

Do not confront the alleged abuser and ensure that information is kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected abuse by interviewing the young person or any others involved. This is a highly skilled role and any attempts by yourself could affect possible criminal proceedings.

For cases where the incident is managed by a partner agency, for example, a school or college, it is still a requirement for OVADA to formally record the concern and ensure that they indicate which staff member at the partner agency is leading on the process. OVADA should remain informed by the partner agency of any actions taken or further consequences.

Reporting Procedures and Contact Information:

Any suspicion, allegation or disclosure must be reported immediately (as soon as practicably possible on the day of the occurrence) to OVADA's Director. Disclosure or evidence for concern may occur in a number of ways, including a comment made by a

child, physical evidence such as bruising, a change in behaviour or inappropriate behavior/knowledge.

OVADA's Director must formally record the concern, with the employee/volunteer. OVADA's Director is responsible for informing OVADA's Chairperson (or Vice Chair in case of absence) immediately.

If you are unable to reach OVADA's Director or OVADA's Chairperson directly but:

Have immediate concerns about a child (for example allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused, is severely neglected, is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place them at immediate risk, is frightened to return home or has been abandoned), contact: the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\)](#) immediately on: 0345 050 7666. This number will take you through to Customer Services who will ask a series of questions and triage into MASH where safeguarding concerns are raised.

Have a non-emergency concern about a child, contact the [Locality and Community Support Service \(LCSS\)](#) and request a 'no names' consultation. (Opening Hours: Mon–Thurs, 8.30-5.00pm and Friday, 8.30am-4pm). You can then discuss the situation with them and they will advise you on what to do next and whether a referral needs to be made:

-LCSS Central:
0345 241 2705

-LCSS North (Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Carterton, Woodstock):
0345 241 2703

-LCSS South (Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage, Thame, Didcot, Henley):
0345 241 2608

-In an emergency contact the Emergency Out of Hours Social Care team on:
0800 833408 (After 5pm Mon-Thurs and 4pm Friday) or if no response, call 999.

APPENDIX 1: DBS

[Source: www.gov.uk/dbs-check-applicant-criminal-record]

Checking someone's Criminal Record:

OVADA will use this tool to find out if it can apply for a DBS check (formerly a CRB check) in relation to their roles: www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check

Types of check:

There are three types of check OVADA can carry out as an organisation:

A standard check shows spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings

An enhanced check shows the same as a standard check plus any information held by local police that's considered relevant to the role

An enhanced check with barred lists shows the same as an enhanced check plus whether the applicant is on the list of people barred from doing the role

Certificates for previous roles:

OVADA will accept a certificate that was requested for a previous role but will:

Check the applicant's identity matches the details on the certificate

Check the [certificate](#) is the right level and type for the role applied for

<https://secure.crbonline.gov.uk/crsc/check?execution=e1s1> if the applicant is signed up for the update service

If a DBS is deemed necessary for your role:

OVADA is a Member of Oxfordshire Youth and will use this local organisation as an umbrella body to process DBS checks: www.oxfordshireyouth.org/dbs. OVADA may also use Disclosure Services (as recommended by partner organisation, Ian Nolan Events) to process online applications: www.disclosureservices.com

Expiry:

A DBS check has no official expiry date. Any information included will be accurate at the time the check was carried out. OVADA's Director will discuss with staff members/volunteers to decide when a new check is needed in relation to the role or if a role changes.

APPENDIX 2: Types of abuse and neglect

All staff and volunteers should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying

to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

[Source: OSCB Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy - In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016]

The effects of child abuse can be devastating, especially if children are left unprotected or do not have the support to cope with that abuse. Indications that a child may be being abused include:

Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries

An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent

The child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her

Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child

Unexplained changes in behaviour such as becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper

Inappropriate sexual awareness

Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour

Distrust adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected

Difficulty in making friends

Appendix 3: Specific safeguarding issues and themes

The following links are intended for guidance;

Bullying including cyberbullying

<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/anti-bullying>

Children missing education

<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/children-missing-education>

Child missing from home or care

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance - Missing from care 3 .pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf)

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

www.oscb.org.uk/safeguarding-themes/child-exploitation-modern-slavery/child-sexual-exploitation

Domestic abuse and violence

www.oscb.org.uk/themes-tools/domestic-abuse

Drugs and Substance Misuse

www.oscb.org.uk/safeguarding-themes/substance-misuse

Fabricated or induced illness

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277314/Safeguarding_Children_in_whom_illness_is_fabricated_or_induced.pdf

Faith abuse

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175437/Action_Plan - Abuse linked to Faith or Belief.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175437/Action_Plan_-_Abuse_linked_to_Faith_or_Belief.pdf)

Forced marriage and honour based violence

www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage

Gangs and youth violence

www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence

Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)

www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls

Harmful Practices (including Female Genital Mutilation and Breast Ironing)

www.oscb.org.uk/safeguarding-themes/harmful-practices

Hate

www.educateagainsthate.com

LGBTQI+

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/homophobic-biphobic-and-transphobic-bullying>

Mental health

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2

Missing children and adults strategy

www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy

Online safety

www.schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/internet-safety-and-cyberbullying

Private fostering

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/fostering/become>

[e-foster-carer/fostering-us/private-arrangements](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/e-foster-carer-fostering-us-private-arrangements)

Preventing radicalisation

www.oscb.org.uk/safeguarding-themes/prevent/

Relationship abuse

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disrespect-nobody-campaign>

Sexting

www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/sexting/what-is-sexting/

Trafficking

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance

Further Reading:

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)

www.oscb.org.uk

OSCB: Raising a Concern and Useful Contacts

www.oscb.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child

OSCB Training

www.oscb.org.uk/learning-zone/training/

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk

All links/phone numbers checked and updated - please copy and paste link into a new browser if link fails - correct as of 14 February 2023 (MV)