



Body Politic Safeguarding Policy

Important Contact Details

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Body Politic believes that children have the right to be completely secure from both the fear and reality of abuse and neglect, and we are committed to safeguarding all the children in our care from harm.



Monitoring & Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. All individuals in a position of trust should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its contents.

We, Body Politic will complete an annual self-assessment to appraise their safeguarding practice against OSCB standards, please see www.oscb.org.uk/

Review Date	Changes Made	By Whom	Approved by
May 2022	Total policy update using OSCB policy template	E J GREIG	
April 2023	Annual update including contact details	E J GREIG	
October 2023	Contact details review	E J GREIG	



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1.0 Our Policy

Body Politic recognises its duty of care to safeguard children and adults as detailed under the Children Acts' (1989 & 2004), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) and The Care Act (2014).

Body Politic is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and vulnerable adults and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

Body Politic acknowledges its duty to act appropriately with regards to any allegations towards anyone working on its behalf, or towards any disclosures or suspicion of abuse.

Body Politic believes that:

- The welfare of all children and young people is paramount (Children's Act, 1989)
- All children, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation and /or identity, have the right to equal protection from harm or abuse (as stated by UNCRC, Article 19)
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other reasons.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

2.0 Legal Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act (1989)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Children Act (2004)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused (2015)
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines



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This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, committee members/board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone in a position of trust. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children's Act 1989).

3.0 Organisational Supporting Documents

This policy should be read alongside our following policies and guidance:

- Safer Recruitment, recruitment, induction, training and supervision
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Body Politic Code of Conduct
- IT, Social Media and E-safety
- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Whistleblowing
- Registration & Referrals

4.0 Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children and young people who attend Body Politic's services.
- provide all those in a position of trust with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection
- provide a setting where children feel listened to, safe, secure, valued and respected
- appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead for children and ensure a clear line of accountability with regards to safeguarding concerns
- ensure all those in a position of trust have been provided with up to date and relevant information, training, support and supervision to enable them to fulfil their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection

To keep children safe Body Politic will:

- provide a clear procedure to follow when safeguarding and child protection concerns arise
- ensure effective and appropriate communication between all individuals in a position of trust
- build strong partnerships with other agencies to promote effective and appropriate multi-agency working, information sharing and good practice.

5.0 Roles & Responsibilities

All individuals in a position of trust must:



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- Understand the different types of abuse and recognise the possible risks and indicators
- Understand their responsibility to report any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected. This includes reporting any concern they may have regarding another person's behaviour towards a child or children
- If appropriate; liaise with other agencies, contribute to safeguarding assessments and attend child protection meetings / core groups / conferences
- Record and store information legally, professionally and securely in line with organisational policies and procedures
- Understand the line of accountability for reporting safeguarding concerns and be fully aware of the organisation's safeguarding lead and their role within the organisation.

5.1 Safer Recruitment

Safe recruitment is central to the safeguarding of children and young people. Body Politic employs freelance sessional staff to work with children in a position of trust and therefore have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. This includes ensuring that the organisation adopts safe recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable persons from gaining access to children. Please see our *Staff Recruitment Policy* for more information on how we ensure safe recruitment in our organisation.

5.2 Partnership with Parents & Carers

We will always endeavour to ensure to have excellent communication with parents and carers. This informs the quality of our work and is a major part of ensuring children are kept safe. This communication is also vital in ensuring staff identify any signs of abuse or neglect. Body Politic staff should strive to be open with parents/carers about their concerns. Every effort will be made to include the family in constructive discussions about concerns and any action taken, unless this is not in the best interests of the child or young person.

5.3 Staff Training

Body Politic will ensure that all staff have the correct training to be able to fulfil their safeguarding duties to their full potential. This includes helping staff understand our safeguarding policies and procedures and ensuring they undertake the required level of training for their role in line with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board standards - every 3 years for Generalist and Advanced Safeguarding and every 2 years for Designated Leads.

5.4 External Visitors

The term 'external visitor' is defined as anyone who is not employed by Body Politic who enters our premises on any given day. External visitors must never be left unsupervised or alone with children or young people unless these visitors have undergone the appropriate safer recruitment checks for this to be approved.

For example, Body Politic hires 'Specialists' who regularly attend Body Politic sessions and have been vetted to ensure they have the appropriate documentation including DBS certification and level of safeguarding training.



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5.5 Social Media

Body Politic recognises the benefits of social media for children, young people and adults however are also aware of the risks that our service users can encounter online. Exposure to upsetting and/or inappropriate content, grooming or sharing personal information online are just some examples of these potential dangers. Sessional staff are instructed to follow Safeguarding procedures if a child, young person or adults is showing any indicators that they are experiencing exposure to any of these risks.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

1. Introduction

All professionals have a responsibility to report concerns to Children's social care under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, if they believe or suspect that the child:

- Has suffered significant harm;
- Is likely to suffer significant harm;
- Has a disability, developmental and welfare needs which are likely only to be met through provision of family support services (with agreement of the child's parent) under the Children Act (1989);
- Is a Child in Need whose development would be likely to be impaired without provision of service.

All professionals have a responsibility to report concerns to Adult's social care according to the Care Act (2014), if they believe or suspect that an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. Prior to raising an adult safeguarding concern, it must be assessed if the concern meets the criteria for a Section 42 (S42) safeguarding enquiry under the requirements of The Care Act 2014. The requirements 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?
- And as a result of care and support needs is the adult unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect?

If these requirements are met, it is necessary to escalate your safeguarding concern.

2. What to do if you are concerned about a child or adult at risk Supporting children or adults at risk

If/when an adult or child reports they are suffering or have suffered significant harm through abuse or neglect, or have caused or are causing physical or sexual harm to others, the initial response from all professionals should be to listen carefully to what they say and to observe the child/adult's behaviour and circumstances to:

1. Clarify the concerns;
2. Offer re-assurance about how they will be kept safe;
3. Explain what action will be taken and within what timeframe. Adults/Mental capacity/empowerment/proportionality



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Children or adults at risk must not be pressed for information, led or cross-examined or given false assurances of absolute confidentiality, as this could prejudice police investigations, especially in cases of sexual abuse.

If the child or adult at risk can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social care, they should be asked for their views.

It should be explained to the child or adult that whilst their view will be taken into account, the professional has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure their safety and the safety of other children/adults at risk.

Confidentiality

We all have a right to confidentiality under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It's important to respect the wishes of a child or any person who doesn't consent to share confidential information. If you're not given consent to share information, you may still lawfully go ahead if the child or adult at risk is experiencing, or is at risk of, significant harm.

Child protection concerns, disclosures or safeguarding allegations made against a person in a position of trust must not be discussed across the workforce as a whole. This information should be shared solely with Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Care and/or the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) as appropriate. Furthermore, personal information which is shared by the child or young person on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.

If staff and volunteers wish to discuss situations with colleagues to gain a wider perspective, this should be done on an anonymous basis with names and other identifying information relating to the child or adult and their family remaining strictly confidential. For more information, please see our *Confidentiality policy*.

Information sharing

Staff are encouraged to follow 'The seven golden rules to sharing information' which can be found in this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

In summary, one should:

- Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate)
- Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
- Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information unless this is seen as necessary to safeguard the individual effectively.



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- Consider safety and well-being
- Ensure all information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it.

Supporting those working with our service users

Body Politic recognises those in a position of trust emotionally “safe”. It is important that all staff supporting individuals are able to discuss safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and with their line manager as and when they need to, during end of the day safeguarding meetings or in regular supervision. Please see our *Staff supervision & Staff training and development policies* for more information.

Reporting concerns

The referrer should provide information about their concerns and any information they may have gathered prior to referral. Body Politic will support the member of staff making the referral to provide this information accurately as they are asked for the following:

- Full names, dates of birth and gender of all child(ren) and adults at risk in the household;
- Home address and (where relevant) school/nursery/care provision attended;
- Identity of those with parental responsibility and any other significant adults who may be involved in caring for the individual such as grandparents;
- Names and date of birth of all household members, if available;
- Ethnicity, first language and religion of individual and parents/carers;
- Any special needs of individual or parents/carers;
- Any significant/important recent or historical events/incidents;
- Cause for concern including details of any allegations, their sources, timing and location;
- Individual's current location and emotional and physical condition;
- Whether the individual needs immediate protection;
- Details of alleged perpetrator, if relevant;
- Referrer's relationship and knowledge of individual and family;
- Known involvement of other agencies / professionals (e.g. GP);
- Information regarding individual / parental knowledge of, and agreement to, the referral;
- The individual's views and wishes, if known.

Other information may be relevant, and some information may not be available at the time of making the referral. However, the report should not be delayed, in order to collect information, if the delay may place the child/adult at risk of significant harm.

Parents/carers must be informed about any referral unless to do so would place the individual at an increased risk of harm.



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To report a new immediate concern – Under 18 & Over 18

All staff members must immediately talk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or onsite Manager if they have an immediate concern about a child or adult. All relevant information must be recorded on a 'Safeguarding Concern Form'. The DSL or onsite manager will then support the staff member in taking the appropriate next steps.

If a crime has been committed and it is urgent, the police must be notified by calling **999**. If this concern is regarded as urgent (regarded as a Level 4 on the Oxfordshire Threshold of Needs), an urgent response is needed. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) must be contacted immediately on **0333 014 3325** – ensure the referrer has the completed Safeguarding Concern form and other relevant details with them in order to provide accurate information.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead may feel it is appropriate to refer a service user to social services if the concern is seen as a level 3/4 on Oxfordshire's Threshold of Needs. In this case, the DSL will complete:

For children: an Oxfordshire MASH Referral Form (MASH Enquiry online referral form). Or they can email a report to MASH on the secure email on: mash-childrens@oxfordshire.gcsx.gov.uk. If it is a Level 4 concern, then the referrer is then encouraged to call **0345 050 7666** to follow up the details in the form.

For adults at risk: an Oxfordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding referral form which can be accessed via this link: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/keeping-safe/raising-safeguarding-concern>.

If there is a concern about a child (under 18)/family but it is not an immediate safeguarding concern

The Threshold of Needs matrix needs to be consulted which can be found at: https://www.oscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/6-Oxfordshire_Threshold_of_Needs-2019.pdf This tool is designed to support professionals to make decisions as to whether contact should be made with Children's Social Care.

If after consulting the Threshold of Need, there are still concerns that do not require an immediate safeguarding response (a Level 2 or low 3), the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) should be contacted and a 'no names' consultation (meaning you don't give the child's name) should be requested. The situation can then be discussed with them, and they will advise about what to do next. If a referral needs to be made, they will advise so.

- LCSS Central: **0345 241 2705**



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- LCSS North (including Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Carterton and Woodstock): **0345 241 2703**
- LCSS South (including Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage, Thame, Didcot and Henley): **0345 241 2608**

If a concern arises out of office hours, the Emergency Duty Team can be contacted on **0800 833 408**

If there is a concern about an adult (Over 18)/family but it is not an immediate safeguarding concern

If a crime has been committed but it is not urgent, the police must be notified on 101. The Threshold of Needs matrix needs to be consulted which can be found at:

<https://www.osab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/OSAB-Threshold-of-Needs-Matrix.pdf>

This tool is designed to support professionals to make decisions as to whether contact should be made with Adult Social Care.

If after consulting the Threshold of Need, there are still concerns that do not require an immediate safeguarding response (a Level 2 or low 3), these should be addressed with the young person, their families and where appropriate other organisations who work with the adult. This should all be done with the informed consent of the adult and following the six principles of safeguarding as described in the Care Act (2014).

3. Referrals on open cases

The Designated Safeguarding lead or onsite Manager will know if a referral is needed on an open case. They will then contact the relevant Social Care Team to relay the concern(s). If they do not have the name and contact details for the relevant social worker, they will contact MASH on **0345 050 7666**.

4. Allegations against others working with children/adults at risk

All allegations of abuse by those who work with children/adults at risk must be taken seriously, whether they are in a paid or unpaid capacity. This procedure should be applied when there is an allegation or concern that a person who works with any of our service users has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a service user;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/adult at risk;
- Behaved towards a child/children or adult(s) in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to them.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed immediately of any allegation against a staff member unless it concerns the Designated Lead themselves, in which case any concern should be passed on to the Deputy Lead. If this is still not appropriate, they should follow Body Politic's Whistleblowing Policy and contact Oxfordshire County Council's Local



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Authority Designated Office (LADO) on 01865 810603 or by emailing
LADO.safeguardingchildren@oxfordshire.gov.uk

5. Whistleblowing

We recognise that service users cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where those in a position of trust fail to do so. All those in a position of trust should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation. Please see our *Whistleblowing Policy* for full details.