

Safeguarding Policy

The Policy.

1. The purpose of the policy is to establish a process to ensure we do all that is possible to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
2. The OPCC recognise the welfare of the child and vulnerable adults as part of their responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding them in the Avon & Somerset Constabulary area.
3. Ensure that any services the PCC commission from third parties are compliant with a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children according to the Children's Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014
4. Ensure that any safeguarding issues as part of the OPCC's work including through contacts to the office are handled in accordance with the policy.
5. Have oversight of the Constabulary as part of governance and scrutiny arrangements.
6. The OPCC will comply with all relevant safeguarding legislation including:
 - Children's Act 2004
 - Care Act 2014
 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, section 1(8)(h);
 - The Human Rights Act 1998;
 - Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human beings;

The Scope.

1. The policy covers all staff including temporary employees, agency staff, contracted staff and volunteers.
2. The aim of the policy is to increase staff awareness around the expectations placed on them in relation to safeguarding, along with clear signposting information around processes which should be adopted and best practice.
3. OPCC staff have a clear responsibility to take action when they suspect or recognise that a child, young person or vulnerable adult may be a victim of harm or abuse.

4. The policy recognises the needs of children and vulnerable adults from minority ethnic groups and disabled children and vulnerable adults and the barriers they may face, especially around communication.
5. The policy allows OPCC staff to safely voice any concerns through an established procedure.
6. All reports of abuse or potential abuse are dealt with in a serious and effective manner.
7. There is an efficient recording and monitoring system in place.
8. Employees receive appropriate training.
9. Robust 'safer' recruitment procedures are in place.
10. While employees, volunteers and contract staff 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. Responsibilities are limited and it is important to remember the following:

IT IS NOT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY OPCC EMPLOYEE TO
DETERMINE WHETHER ABUSE IS ACTUALLY TAKING PLACE

What is Safeguarding?

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children and vulnerable adults' health or development
- Ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children, young people and vulnerable adults to have the best outcome

and

- "The action we take to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm - is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children, vulnerable adults and families has a role to play."

The definition of a vulnerable adult:

- "18 years old and over;
- Is or may be in need of care due to a mental, physical or learning disability, age or illness; and
- May not be able to take care of themselves; or
- Unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation such as:
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse

Psychological abuse
Neglect of failure to help or support them
Financial abuse”

Situations where concern may be raised.

- A child or vulnerable adult may tell you about something or someone that has upset or harmed them
- Someone else might report that a child or vulnerable adult has told them, or that they believe that a child or vulnerable adult has been or is being harmed
- A child or vulnerable adult might show signs of physical injury for which there appears to be no explanation
- A child or vulnerable adult’s behaviour may suggest he or she is being abused
- The behaviour or attitude of one of the workers towards a child or vulnerable adult worries you
- You witness worrying behaviour from one child or vulnerable adult to another.
- A child or vulnerable adult demonstrates worrying behaviour towards other children or vulnerable adults.
- The situations where staff have contact with the public but not direct work with children or vulnerable adults could include PCC summer events, meetings, out and about days, surgeries, contact correspondence etc.

The following could be signs of abuse:

- Unusual bruising;
- Injuries that are unexplained;
- Deterioration of health for an appropriate reason;
- Withdrawal or a change in usual behaviour;
- Somebody who appears poorly cared for.

Responsibilities.

Everyone has a responsibility:

- For safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- To recognise the welfare of the child and vulnerable adult as our primary consideration in everything we do;
- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate training to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and that support is provided to the individual(s) who raise or disclose the concern;

- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- To prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals;
- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in place.

Safeguarding roles.

- The Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for ensuring that this policy and related procedures are implemented, monitored and consistently reviewed;
- The Youth Champion and Health & Wellbeing Officer (Safeguarding Champion) is responsible for ensuring the implementation, consistent monitoring and improvements of the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures;
- The Youth Champion and Health & Wellbeing Officer (Safeguarding Champion) 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;
- Employees must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of the Safeguarding Champion.

Processes & signposting information.

When a child, young person or vulnerable adult makes an allegation of abuse or bullying, you should:

- Stay calm and try to get another witness, if it does not compromise the situation
- If you believe the person is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which any employee would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you must contact the relevant emergency service and notify the Safeguarding Champion;
- Listen carefully to what is said and allow the person to talk at their own pace, being careful not to compromise potential evidence
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain it is likely that information will need to be shared with other responsible people, **do not promise to keep secrets**
- Only ask questions for clarification, the use of open questions e.g. what, where, when, who? is advisable, do not ask leading questions (that suggest certain answers as this could compromise evidence)
- Reassure the child, young person or vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and who you will inform
- Immediately report to and inform the Safeguarding Champion

- Record all details you are aware of on the Safeguarding Incident Record Form (IRF) as soon as possible, which is available <G:\OFFICE OF PCC\OPCC Policies and Procedures\Safeguarding\Incident Record Form.doc>
- Referral process – see below
- Outcome of the referral to be recorded on the IRF

Referral process:

- If you are concerned for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult, or there is an immediate risk to a child or vulnerable adult then they should follow established safeguarding procedures - the Southwest Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures: <http://www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/>

Area Safeguarding contacts:

- Bristol – First response – 0117 903 6444
- North Somerset – Single Point of Access - 01275 888808 (out of hours 01454 615165)
- South Glos – First Point – 01454 866000 (out of hours 01454 615165)
- BANES Family Team – 01225 396 312 (out of hours 01454 615165)
- Somerset Direct – 0845 345 9122 (out of hours 0845 345 9122)

When allegations or concerns are expressed about any other person (e.g. parent, carer, other service user), you should:

- Take the allegation or concern seriously
- If you believe the child, young person or vulnerable adult is 'at risk' of immediate significant harm, which includes situations which you would reasonably believe requires the emergency services, then you should contact the relevant emergency service and then notify the Safeguarding Champion immediately
- Record details on the electronic Safeguarding Incident Record Form (IRF), which can be found <G:\OFFICE OF PCC\OPCC Policies and Procedures\Safeguarding\Incident Record Form.doc>
- Referral process – see above
- Outcome of the referral to be recorded on the IRF

Any allegation against staff that indicate that they may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or vulnerable adult, or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult; or
- Behaved towards a child, children or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

will be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Champion.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Safeguarding Champion, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chief Executive.

The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with the advice and support of the Office & HR Manager.

Recruitment

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

It is the responsibility of the Office & HR Manager to undertake a risk assessment for the job description and person specification for those roles likely to involve regular and/or substantial unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults before recruitment takes place. This will ensure that only appropriate individuals are selected to undertake vetting procedures.

- We will ensure staff on recruitment panels undertake appropriate safer recruitment training;
- For roles involving Safeguarding, full employment references and factual information about employment gaps will be sought. For all other roles; employment references and factual information about employment gaps covering a period of 3 years will be sought;
- Should the OPCC recruit volunteers, recruitment will be rigorous and take into account regulated and supervised activity.

Commissioning

As a commissioner of services, the OPCC has a responsibility to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are detailed in all contracts. The OPCC will work with providers to ensure that responsibilities are understood and adhered to in line with best practice arrangements and ensure this is monitored as part of the contract management process.

Training

All OPCC staff will receive training in relation to safeguarding and their responsibilities in upholding this policy as part of their induction programme. Refresher training will be provided to all staff on a three yearly basis.

Monitoring

Compliance with, and effectiveness of, this policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance;
- As a result of any other significant change or event

This policy will be reviewed by or on behalf of the PCC or CEO to ensure that it remains accurate and fit for purpose.

Policy Statement Information	
Policy Owner (Job Title)	Chief Executive Officer
Date to be Reviewed	March 2016
Date Last Reviewed Completed	
Effective Commencement Date	March 2015