



OSCB

Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Board

Business
Plan
2022-24



Our vision

We want to keep children in Oxfordshire as safe as possible by making sure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding through training, learning and local resources.

Our aims

We want to provide Oxfordshire's safeguarding partnership with:

1. **Leadership and Governance**
2. **Direction on improving practice**
3. **Scrutiny and quality assurance**

Our priorities

Our partnership priority areas of work have been shaped by qualitative and quantitative data as well as the views of children, families and practitioners.



1. Leadership and Governance

Our priority areas of work will be:

1. Raising awareness of repeat safeguarding messages with national stakeholders
2. Monitoring capacity and demand for safeguarding services throughout and after the pandemic
3. Leading on high profile safeguarding campaigns and issues e.g. violence against girls and women, peer on peer abuse in schools and colleges
4. Commending good practice across the safeguarding partnership

We are committed to raising awareness of repeat safeguarding messages with national stakeholders, like the National Child Safeguarding Panel and the DfE. These messages from serious incidents and reviews cover:

- the national insufficiency of placements to meet children's needs in their local area
- the national practice of categorising abuse which does not work well when there are multiple risk-factors and the risk is also from outside the family home
- the effectiveness of the National Referral Mechanism in making a difference to children's lives
- national statute and guidance to local areas on how to manage the Governance arrangements with academies and local education departments so that children are kept safe in school

We have set up a 'Demand Dashboard' to enable a clear view on the system as we come through the pandemic. This will keep the partnership alive to current safeguarding concerns as they emerge e.g. demand on Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub into which safeguarding concerns are reported, staff shortages across the safeguarding partners. The pandemic has had an impact on our community. Making sure that vulnerable children are 'seen' has been an important learning point for safeguarding partners not just in Oxfordshire but nationally.

We have strong connections with stakeholders across the County. We work closely with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board on quality assurance, scrutiny and training. We are mindful of the shared commitment to improve support to children as they move to adults services.

We are very proud of all those workers who support and deliver services to children and families in Oxfordshire – be it directly or indirectly. What they achieve together is remarkable. We will continue our 'commendations system' to thank those people who make a difference to the lives of families in our community, they maybe go the extra mile, work exceptionally well together or simply do a really good job.

2. Direction on improving practice

Our priority areas of work will be:

1. Tackling neglect
2. Keeping children safe in (and out of) Education
3. Child exploitation

Providing children and families with good services is a high priority for us. As a partnership we want to offer direction on three specific areas for improved practice.

The term 'neglect' is used to mean that the parent or carer is unable to meet the needs of the child yet. Neglect is recorded as the main reason in 60% of 'child protection plans', which are put in place when we have concerns about children. However, neglect is not being picked up to a similar extent when families first need help. We want to ensure that workers from the police, health and social care are always at those meetings, which plan support for children. We do know that fathers are at less than half of these meetings and we want to change this.

Keeping children safe in (and out of) early year settings, school and colleges is something we know is important from the case reviews and audits we do. We know that children are safer when they are in school. Exclusion from school increases their risk of being unsafe and being harmed. There are many schools and colleges in our county and it is important that we all agree how to best keep children in their own school or in another safe place where they can learn. We need to make sure that expectations regarding a child's right to education are clear and understood.

Criminal exploitation of children is complex and damaging. Children can be drawn into situations, where they can be both victims and perpetrators. We are working together to understand the nature and scale of the problem and identify children engaged with and at risk from criminal exploitation. We are working on support for practitioners. We are also making sure that new services are designed to keep teenagers safe from criminal exploitation. The evidence shows us that this age group is more likely to be at risk outside of the home when it comes to safeguarding.

3. Scrutiny and quality assurance

Our priority areas of work will be:

1. Check how effectively local agencies work together
2. Learn from case reviews, multi-agency audits, analysis, impact assessments
3. Embed change through training and learning

Our partnership is strong. We challenge each other when necessary and make sure we get the best for children in the county. We aim to continually check, learn and change for the better. We will look at how well partner organisations are working to keep children safe through a safeguarding 'self-assessment'.

Audit work will look at the things we are most concerned about. We want to check how we work together when safeguarding concerns are reported to our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, how well we help those children with mental health problems, how good we are at protecting children from child exploitation and how well we work to support those children who are at the highest risk.

At every point we want to be confident that workers understand 'what it is like to be the child in this family'. The partnership reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews will identify the learning we need to improve how we keep children safe. Importantly the OSCB will make sure that change happens. The OSCB will run Learning events for workers on child exploitation, trauma, violence against girls amongst other concerns.

OSCB safeguarding training already has a reach to over 10,000 learners each year through online and face to face training. A priority will be to focus our local offer of courses and make sure they meet the needs of local practitioners.





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