

Safeguarding Policy

Purpose

The overall purpose of this policy, the associated policies, guidance's and service procedures is to protect the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults who are involved with or living in the range of community, fostering and residential services provided by the O.T.M.S foundation ltd. This policy aims to set the O.T.M.S foundation ltd fellowship approach to keeping children safe and responding to child protection concerns.

The O.T.M.S foundation ltd seeks to

- Proactively manage risk to minimise the likelihood of any of our children or young people coming to harm.
- Achieve a culture across the organisation where every child and young person's rights to be valued, respected and treated with dignity is the standard of everyday interaction and practice.

The O.T.M.S foundation ltd believes that

- No child or young person should ever experience abuse of any kind. Every adult has a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practise in ways that protects every individual from harm.
- The welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989 All children, young people and adults regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse. Some children, young people and adults are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues. Working in partnership with children, young people, and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Scope

- This policy applies to all leaders, managers, foster carers, care bank, sessional and agency members of staff, the Council of Trustees, volunteers, students and anyone working on behalf of the O.T.M.S foundation ltd.
- This policy applies to every child and vulnerable adult in our care. A child is someone who is under the age of 18 and so has not yet reached their 18th Birthday. A vulnerable adult is someone over the age of 18

DBS Checking Procedure:

- Assessment of Roles - Before recruitment, roles are assessed to determine the level of DBS check required Standard or Enhanced.
- DBS Application - All individuals subject to a DBS check complete the appropriate application form provided by the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd
- Verification of Identity - Individuals provide necessary identification documents as per DBS guidelines. The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd ensures the authenticity of these documents.
- Submission to DBS - Completed applications are submitted promptly to the DBS for processing.
- Record-Keeping - The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd maintains accurate records of all DBS applications, including dates of application, type of check requested, and outcomes.

Recruitment Procedure:

- Job Description and Person Specification - The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd provides a clear job descriptions and person specifications are developed for all roles, outlining the skills, qualifications, and attributes required.
- Application Process - All applicants are required to complete an application form or submit a CV, which includes a declaration about any previous convictions or cautions.
- Shortlisting - The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd shortlists candidates based on the job description and person specification, ensuring fair and unbiased selection.
- Interview Process - Structured interviews are conducted by The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd. Questions focus on skills, experience, and suitability for the role.
- DBS Disclosure Review - If applicable, DBS disclosures are reviewed alongside other aspects of the application to assess suitability for the role.
- Offer of Employment - Offers of employment are made subject to satisfactory DBS checks (if applicable) and other pre-employment checks, such as references Documentation i.e passport, National insurance come back approved.
- Induction and Training - Successful candidates undergo comprehensive induction and relevant training, including safeguarding procedures.

The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd Safeguarding policy

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people namely:

Legislation that apply

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Safeguarding Act 2018
- Regulation of Care Act 2015

Policy and Guidance

- Working together to safeguarding children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Mandatory Reporting of female genitalia Mutilation (Home Office 2016)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (Department for Education 2015)
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998/Data Protection Act 2002 (Isle of Man) and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679).
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years - Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers; HM Government 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in education
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Guidance Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees October 2019

Recognising the signs of abuse

What do we mean by abuse? There are many kinds of abuse, some of which are listed below

- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse involves causing deliberate harm or injury to an individual through actions such as hitting, kicking, shaking, or using excessive force. It may also include inappropriate restraint, confinement, or deprivation of basic needs.
- **Child Sexual Abuse:** Child sexual abuse refers to any form of sexual activity or exploitation involving a child. This includes but is not limited to rape, sexual assault, molestation, grooming, exposure to sexually explicit material, or any other non-consensual sexual activity.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation involves individuals or groups taking advantage of a child or young person for sexual purposes. This may include grooming, manipulation, coercion, or blackmail for sexual favours, pornography, or prostitution.
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour:** Harmful sexual behavior refers to inappropriate sexual behaviour exhibited by children or young people that may cause harm to themselves or others. This includes behaviours such as sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, or sexual aggression.
- **Child Trafficking and Slavery:** Child trafficking and slavery involve the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. This may include forced labour, sexual exploitation, or other forms of exploitation.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse involves behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to an individual. This may include verbal threats, intimidation, humiliation, manipulation, rejection, or constant criticism, leading to a decline in the individual's self-esteem and well-being.
- **Neglect:** Neglect occurs when an individual's basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, or emotional support are not adequately met, resulting in physical or emotional harm or deprivation.
- **Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence refers to any pattern of abusive behaviour used by one partner in an intimate relationship to gain or maintain control over another partner. This may include physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual assault, or coercive control.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Female genital mutilation involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is a harmful practice that can cause severe physical and psychological consequences.
- **Bullying and Cyber Bullying:** Bullying involves repeated aggressive behaviour intended to cause harm, distress, or intimidation to another individual, often with an imbalance of power. Cyberbullying refers to bullying behaviour that takes place online or through digital devices.
- **Radicalisation:** Radicalisation refers to the process by which individuals are exposed to extremist ideologies or beliefs and become increasingly supportive of or involved in extremist activities or violence.
- **County Lines:** County lines involve the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults by criminal gangs to transport and distribute drugs across different geographical areas. It often involves coercion, threats, violence, and exploitation.
- **Mental abuse:** Mental abuse also known as psychological or emotional abuse, refers to a pattern of behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to an individual. It involves the use of verbal or non-verbal tactics to control, manipulate, intimidate, or degrade another person, undermining their sense of self-worth, autonomy, and well-being.

What children and young people say:

- **Children and young people are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system and have said that they need. (Working Together 2018) These asks from children and young people should guide the behaviour of practitioners:**
- **vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee"

We will meet our commitment to keeping children, young people and adults safe by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Ensuring that the children and young people who are looked after by us or receive a service from us, know how to and feel confident about raising a concern.
- Ensuring that we provide safe physical environments for our children and young people, staff, volunteers and contractors, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance.
- Ensuring all children and young people living in our fostering and residential services have good information and access to their external network of support to enable them to contact their placing authority to call for a review of their care should they have concerns about their safety.
- Appointing at senior manager level Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL), and a lead trustee for safeguarding related matters.
- Applying robust processes and procedures to the recruiting, vetting and on boarding of all staff, foster carers and volunteers.
- Providing a thorough induction for all staff, foster carers and volunteers which draws attention to the respective service procedures for safeguarding and how to raise a concern about a child or young person's safety or wellbeing. This will include an introduction to the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd additional training which provides a framework for all to conceptualise safeguarding.
- Ensuring all staff, foster carers, volunteers and managers routinely access good supervision and support.
- Ensuring that the range of training offered to staff and foster carers equips them with the necessary competence and skill to recognise and be alert for any signs that a child or young person may be in any way at risk of harm.

- Ensuring all staff working in services understand their responsibilities to speak out if they found, saw or are informed of other staff misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a child or young person.
- Working transparently with partner and network agencies to share information and concerns with them as quickly and professionally as possible.
- Ensuring, managers, staff and senior managers have a good understanding of the role, function and responsibilities of the area safeguarding children. partnership and Safeguarding Board appropriate to their role, position and responsibility in the organisation.
- Providing a range of ways to ensure children and young people have opportunity to share concerns.
- Regularly reviewing and updating our service specific safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.
- Ensuring our written records are professional, child focused, respectful and accessible.
- Ensuring that our complaints policy and associated procedures are widely shared and made available to children, young people, their families and external agencies.
- Ensuring that our Whistleblowing policy is available and accessible to all staff and foster carers.
- Ensuring the procedures to manage any allegations against staff, volunteers and foster carers are clear and implemented robustly and fairly.
- Ensuring staff and foster carers are aware that there are a number of serious incidents which require an immediate and emergency response. In these situations, a senior manager will be notified without delay and the police contacted. These incidents include:
 - Allegations of rape
 - Allegations of sexual assault
 - Allegations of significant physical harm
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have clear procedures to help managers, staff, foster carers deal efficiently and effectively with any bullying, that arises in our services.
- Recognising the significance of contextual safeguarding which is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>
- Recognising the significance of online abuse and the impact this can have for children and young people.
- Ensuring that staff and foster carer understand their responsibility to raise concern in relation to consent when working with other agencies including the police.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

Trustees have a legal duty to take reasonable steps within their power to ensure that children, young people and adults that come in contact with O.T.M.S foundation Ltd are safeguarded from harm. The Council delegates the day to day implementation of this responsibility to the executive team in the roles described below. The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd has appointed a Designated Trustee to act on its behalf in relation to ensuring the appropriate development, implementation and monitoring of this.

Designated Trustee

The designated trustee is responsible for ensuring the implementation, consistent monitoring and improvements of the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures. The designated Trustee for safeguarding is Tristan Gordon.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team have direct responsibility for ensuring that this policy and related procedures are adhered to across specific departments and fulfil the overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented, monitored and on a minimum annual basis reviewed through the Directors of Operations and Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Directors of Operations

The Director of Operations are responsible for line managing and overseeing the work of the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd Safeguarding Leads and ensuring that these duties are carried out appropriately.

Safeguarding Leads

The Safeguarding Leads are responsible for developing and improving policy, procedure and practice in relation to safeguarding across the organisation and ensuring that robust systems are in place to monitor practice. They are responsible for providing a quarterly report to the Senior Leadership Team and Annual report to the board of Trustees. It is the Safeguarding Leads responsibility to lead of the review the Section 11 self-assessment and to provide it to Local Authorities for whom services are provided on a biannual basis. (Children Act 2004)

The Safeguarding Leads, senior managers and the on-call managers are responsible for dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children and young people at risk appropriately and in accordance with the procedures that underpin this policy. Safeguarding leads will be updated on all safeguarding issues in their respective service area. The DSL is Jacquie Epelle

All Managers

All managers are responsible for ensuring that foster carers, employees, volunteers, agency workers and care bank staff follow this policy and its related procedures and receive the mandatory safeguarding training and support they need, in line with their responsibilities and level of direct contact with children and young people.

All trustees, foster carer, employees and volunteers

All trustees, foster carers employees and volunteers are responsible for carrying out their duties in a way that actively safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people. They must also act in a way that protects them from wrongful allegations of abuse as far as possible. They must bring safeguarding concerns to the attention of one of the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd Safeguarding Leads within 24 hours.

Reporting Procedures:

Recognise Signs of Concern: All employees of the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd are encouraged to be vigilant and attentive to signs or indicators of potential safeguarding concerns. These signs may include but are not limited to physical injuries, changes in behaviour, emotional distress, or disclosures of abuse.

Immediate Response: If there is an immediate risk of harm to any individual, employees should take immediate action to ensure the safety of the person(s) involved. This may involve contacting emergency services (e.g., police, ambulance) if necessary.

Report to Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): All safeguarding concerns, whether actual or suspected, must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd. The DSL is responsible for coordinating safeguarding efforts and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken.

Document Concerns: When reporting a safeguarding concern to the DSL, employees should provide as much detail as possible, including the nature of the concern, any relevant observations or evidence, and the names of individuals involved (if known).

Confidentiality and Sensitivity: All safeguarding concerns will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy and dignity of all individuals involved.

Support for Reporting Individuals: Employees who report safeguarding concerns will be provided with appropriate support and guidance throughout the reporting process. This may include access to counseling services or additional training on safeguarding procedures.

Investigation and Response: Upon receiving a report of a safeguarding concern, the DSL will initiate an investigation into the matter. This may involve gathering further information, interviewing relevant parties, and consulting with external agencies or authorities as necessary.

Reporting to External Authorities: If the safeguarding concern involves allegations of criminal activity or significant risk of harm, the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd will report the matter to the appropriate external authorities, such as the local safeguarding board or the police.

Follow-Up and Monitoring: Following the investigation, the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd will take appropriate action to address the safeguarding concern and mitigate any risks identified. This may include implementing safeguarding measures, providing support to affected individuals, and reviewing policies and procedures to prevent future incidents.

Record Keeping: All safeguarding concerns, reports, and actions taken will be documented in accordance with data protection laws and organisational policies. Records will be securely maintained and retained for the required period.

Contractors or other organisations funded by or on behalf of the O.T.M.S foundation Ltd

The O.T.M.S foundation Ltd shall ensure that:

- Sub-contractors are aware of their safeguarding obligations under relevant service contracts;
- There are local systems to ensure that appropriate sub-contractor supervision, performance, management and compliance, in terms of conduct, are aligned with safeguarding principles and the organisational policy.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Name: Jacquie Epelle

Email: Jacquie@savingsouls.org.uk

Designated Safeguarding Trustee:

Name: Tristan Gordon

Email: Tristang@savingsouls.org.uk

External agencies

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 50

Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)

www.ceop.police.uk

Charity Commission Guidance for Trustees. (Updated October 2018).

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>