



Safeguarding Children – Protection Policy

Policy Statement

Everybody has the right to be valued as an individual, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be safe.

Old Chapel Music CIC (OCM) delivers group sessions and mentoring for under-18s and is committed to the welfare and safeguarding of those who take part.

Designated Safeguarding Officers

If you have any concerns or need to make a report, you should contact one of the following:

Katie Hayes (Safeguarding Lead) on 07764992284

Joe Kent (Safeguarding Deputy Lead) on 07561875858

You can also directly contact the Leeds Children's Social Work Service:

During Office hours (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm): 0113 376 0336

Social Care Emergency Duty team (out of hours): 0113 376 0469

Email: childrensedt@leeds.gov.uk

Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is rare, but everyone needs to be aware of and look out for possible signs of abuse. The Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership defines four types of child abuse:

PHYSICAL ABUSE: Causing any sort of physical harm to a child. For example hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or inducing illness.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: Persistent actions and behaviour which cause harm to a child's emotional development. For example:

- making a child feel that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate



- inappropriate expectations of a child, such as interactions that are beyond their intellectual capability
- overprotection and limiting a child's learning or access to normal social interaction
- bullying or actions which cause a child to feel frightened or in danger

SEXUAL ABUSE: Forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence. For example:

- physical contact including assault by penetration (rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

NEGLECT: The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological and emotional needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Possible signs of abuse 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 or the explanation of the cause of the injury does not seem right.
- The child discloses abuse, or describes what appears to be an abusive act.
- Someone else (child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child.
- Unexplained change in behaviour such as withdrawal or sudden outbursts of temper.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or sexually explicit behaviour.
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Difficulty in making friends.
- Eating disorders, depression, self-harm or suicide attempts.

Becoming aware of a safeguarding issue

This could happen in various ways, for example

- a child or young person's appearance, behaviour, creative output or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect
- a child or young person discloses an incident(s) of alleged abuse, either recent or which occurred some time ago
- concern is expressed by someone else (child or adult) about the welfare of a child
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received



- a written report is made regarding the serious misconduct of an employee or volunteer towards a child or young person

What to do if you are concerned about a child

Any concern you have will be addressed and treated seriously. It is never okay to do nothing, or to hope that someone else will deal with it. You should:

- Initially talk to a child/young person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask non-leading questions, for example: *"I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay?"*
- Listen carefully to what the young person has to say and take it seriously. Act at all times towards them as if you believe what they are saying.
- Always explain to the child/young person that any information they have given will have to be reported on if it suggests they (or others) have been harmed, or are at risk of harm
- It is not your responsibility (or OCM) to investigate incidences of suspected child abuse but to gather information and refer only.
- Notify the Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) for OCM, or Leeds Children's Social Work Service
- Make a written record of what was said as soon as you can, while it is fresh in your mind (there is a pro forma at the end of this policy), and sign and date it.
- Respect confidentiality – do not share what has happened other than to make your report to the appropriate person and ensure any written document is kept safely and securely.
- Avoid confronting the alleged abuser yourself, or telling them about the allegation.

Responding to abuse or suspected abuse: management responsibilities

The Safeguarding Lead will contact the Leeds Children's Social Work Service or Duty and Advice team as soon as possible after being notified.

They will also contact the child's parents / carers unless to do so would place the child at an increased risk of harm.

Allegations against staff (including freelance workers and volunteers) and project participants

An allegation against a staff member should be reported to the Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy.

They will report to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) using the notification form and contact details on the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

<https://www.leedsscp.org.uk/> - search for 'managing allegations'.



The process for managing the allegation will be to follow our Grievance Procedure, and to take any further actions as advised by the LADO.

Where the alleged abuser is another young person, OCM will work to ensure that the needs of both are met. The needs of the child experiencing abuse will be paramount and the alleged abuser will be suspended while an investigation takes place. OCM has a responsibility to inform the alleged abuser of the procedures being followed, and to allow them the chance to express their feelings and respond. It may be necessary for this communication to be in the form of an independent representative.

OCM senior staff and management will ensure appropriate support and supervision for staff who:

- have reported abuse
- are working directly with someone who has/is experiencing abuse
- are working directly with someone who behaves abusively

Safe Recruitment

OCM has robust recruitment procedures for staff, workers and volunteers. In all cases, candidates

- Complete and sign an application form and attend an in-person interview so we can fully assess their suitability for the role
- Provide proof of their identity
- Are asked to declare any criminal convictions they may have which involve abuse against children, however old these convictions may be. (This is an exemption from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.)
- Provide the contact details for two referees, which are followed up by the office staff. The reference questionnaire includes a question on their suitability to work with children.

In addition, anyone offered a role at OCM

- Undertakes a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the highest level allowed for their position (an enhanced check for all roles working directly with children)
- Is given copies of our safeguarding policies and asked to sign a document to confirm they have read, understand and accept their responsibilities as regards safeguarding.
- Is provided with basic safeguarding training



OCM can decide to exclude someone from working or volunteering with us if we have any doubts about their references or suitability.

Management and supervision

We encourage everyone involved to speak up if they have any concerns about safeguarding practices or procedures at OCM. Everyone should feel free to openly discuss areas of concern or make suggestions for improvement so that we can ensure the safest possible environment for the young people we work with.

Our Complaints Procedure, Grievance Procedure and Whistleblowing Procedure all outline the ways you can raise a serious concern about OCM in a formal way.

Training

All staff, tutors and volunteers are offered external training via the NSPCC or another trusted 3rd party. All staff and tutors working directly with children in a face to face setting have undergone the NSPCC introduction to child protection online training or equivalent from a 3rd party.

Recording and managing confidential information

A pro forma for recording a concern, allegation or witness statement is provided at the end of this policy. It should be given to the Safeguarding Lead or appropriate person (e.g. police officer) as soon as possible.

OCM takes privacy and data security seriously and all records will be handled in line with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

Remember that children and young people have a right to privacy and confidentiality. It is only in the exceptional circumstance that you believe someone is at risk of abuse or harm that you should break that confidence. If possible, you should explain directly to the child that you cannot keep secrets if it means someone might get hurt.

Distribution and review of policies and procedures

OCM policies are held centrally and staff are made aware of how to access them by their line manager. Volunteers are provided with hard copies, and sign a document to confirm they have read, understood and agree to abide by them.



OCM's board of Company Directors are responsible for reviewing policies and this is a standing item on the agenda for meetings.

Responsibilities of the Company Directors

OCM's Company Directors recognises its responsibility to implement effective safeguarding procedures across the organisation.

We will

- Ensure we have clear written policies and procedures around risk assessment, personal conduct and safeguarding
- Ensure we maintain our robust recruitment procedures, including DBS checks
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding training is undertaken by staff

Review

This policy was last reviewed on:

16th July 2024

22nd November 2022.



Raising a Safeguarding Concern for a Child or Young Person

Use this form to record the details of your concern. Follow the guidance in OCM's Safeguarding Children Protection Policy. Give the form to the named Safeguarding Lead in the policy, or email it to Leeds Children's Social Work Service: childrensedt@leeds.gov.uk

Today's date	
Your name	
Your role at OCM	
Your address	
Your phone number	

Date of concern / incident	
Name of individual at risk	

What is the nature of your concern? Please add as much detail as possible about what has prompted your concern, including the times dates of specific incidents if you can recall them. If completing this form in hard copy, add additional pages as needed.



Please keep your answers factual, and describe what you saw / heard / said / did.

Did you discuss your concern with anyone? Please tick.

	✓		If yes, name:
Individual at risk			
Parent / carer			
OCM staff			
External agency			
Other			

Was anything said that you need to add to this report?



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Thank you for reporting your concern. The Safeguarding Lead will make a report to Leeds Children's Social Work Service based on this information. You might be contacted directly by Social Services or the police to further discuss your concern.

Please remember that the safety and privacy of the individual concerned remain paramount, and we might not be able to share information about what happens next with you. Be assured that all safeguarding concerns are treated with the utmost seriousness and your concern will be investigated by the appropriate authority.

Office use

Name of person receiving this report	
Date received	