



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 15 OCTOBER 2025
Subject	SAFEGUARDING POLICY UPDATE JULY 2025
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Rachel Crouch, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities Email: <a href="mailto:rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk">rachel.crouch@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
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Report author	Paula Massey, Enabling Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Email: <a href="mailto:paula.massey@publicagroup.uk">paula.massey@publicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To inform Members of the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
Annexes	Annex A - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Annex B - Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That The Executive resolves to: I. Agree and adopt the updated Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Putting Residents First</li><li>• A Good Quality of Life for All</li><li>• Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Publica Executive Leadership Team. No wider consultation as this is an update to the Cabinet approved policy 12 November 2020

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1** The Care Act (2014) places a duty on local authorities to:

- Consider people's wellbeing when making decisions around care and support.
- Provide services or take steps towards preventing, delaying or reducing the needs for care and support.
- Providing information and advice on services available locally.

### **1.2** In November 2020 West Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet approved the implementation of Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

### **1.3** This updated policy consolidates changes to referral processes and clarifies key responsibilities, ensuring the Council continues to meet its statutory duty of care.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1** West Oxfordshire District Council is committed to safeguarding, which primarily involves protecting adults at risk, young people, and children from harm, abuse, or neglect. This commitment also extends to early intervention, promoting health and wellbeing, and upholding human rights. In collaboration with partner agencies, the Council aims to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect and ensure that individuals' views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs are central to any decisions made. Promoting individual wellbeing remains a core priority throughout all safeguarding actions.

### **2.2** West Oxfordshire District Council delivers a range of services that directly impact the lives of adults, young people, and children. Employees, elected members, contractors, and volunteers often work closely with individuals who may be at risk, placing the Council in a key position to safeguard and promote adult welfare. Services such as Licensing, Benefits, Planning, Environmental Health, Strategic Housing, Homelessness, Enforcement, Community Safety, Leisure Management, and Customer Services all play a role in this responsibility. Where appropriate and within legal parameters, the Council is required to share information with partner agencies to protect adults at risk of harm.

### **2.3** The Safeguarding Policy outlines the Council's roles, aims, and responsibilities. Through training and increased awareness, they equip employees and members to take proactive and informed action when concerns arise regarding an adult, young person or child's safety or wellbeing.

## **3. MAIN POINTS**

### **3.1** As a second-tier authority, the Council has a statutory responsibility and duty of care to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities and agencies.

### **3.2** West Oxfordshire District Council is a member of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership (OSCP).

### **3.3** Key data relating to cases:

- Rising safeguarding activity in 2023–2024

- 30 cases during financial year 2024-2025
- 16 cases this financial year as at 17.09.25
- Mental Health & Suicide Ideation: Most frequent category

**3.4** By implementing this Policy, the Council establishes a corporate-wide approach to safeguarding that applies across all services, providing clear strategic direction and defined lines of accountability.

**3.5** A similar Policy will be adopted for Publica Group Ltd to ensure its officers support the Council's duties in respect of safeguarding groups at risk.

Internal consultation and engagement will be undertaken as necessary to ensure the effective implementation and delivery of this Policy.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**4.1** Do nothing namely not review the 2020 policy

This is not good practice where guidance has changed.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**5.1** The current resourcing of the safeguarding function requires a review to ensure that all statutory responsibilities of the Councils are being effectively met. Subject to the outcome of this review and discussions with Councils, there may be a need to consider additional staffing resources to strengthen the safeguarding function and ensure continued compliance and effectiveness.

**5.2** There will be a requirement to deliver ongoing training and awareness which could have financial implications. Training of employees is currently undertaken through the online iHASCO training suite to Level 2 for both Adults and Children. Additional training can be obtained through the Safeguarding Board and Partnership for a one-off cost, dependent upon the course.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** The Children Act 2004, the Care Act 2014 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 place duties on the Council to ensure its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and adults at risk.

**6.2** The Council requires up to date policies to support its actions and avoid legal challenges.

#### **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**7.1** The Council has a duty of care towards adults at risk, children, and young people who participate in its activities or access its services. It recognises that all adults at risk, young people and children have the right to be safe and protected from harm. Without a safeguarding policy and appropriate staff training, there is an increased risk of harm to individuals and potential reputational damage to the Council.

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed and is attached as Annex B to this report.

9. SUSTAINABLE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Result – No actions required.



(END)