



Safeguarding Policy

Updated January 2023

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OM in the UK recognises the unique status of children, young people, and adults made vulnerable by their circumstances and will respect them as individuals. We recognise that abuse damages vulnerable people, affecting their physical, mental and spiritual development. Any abuse of vulnerable people by OM workers is unacceptable.

This policy sets out our responsibilities toward vulnerable people: those who are a part of our organisation, those who partner with us and those who attend our ministry activities.

Terminology:

Vulnerable Person: both vulnerable adults and children up to age 18.

Vulnerable adult: a person over the age of 18 who has care and support needs which may result in them being unable to protect themselves from harm in a particular situation. Depending upon the situation, this could include people who are new to the OM team, residential students and workers and particularly those for whom English is not their first language.

OM worker: anyone for whom OM takes some responsibility for their actions, including employees, support-raising workers, people seconded from other organisations, volunteers, students and people on Short Term Missions.

Safeguarding Co-ordinator: The person responsible for overseeing all safeguarding procedures and training in OM. This is the HR Lead who has oversight for Safeguarding which is identified as a key responsibility with their job description.

Local Safeguarding Contact: The people responsible as the primary 'go to' contact person at OM's sites in the UK for reporting an incident or raising a concern. They also act as the 'eyes and ears' of OM for any potential Safeguarding issues to feedback to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Definition of abuse

Abuse includes any action (or lack of action) which results in potential or actual harm to a vulnerable person's health, survival, development or dignity. No actions of abuse by OM workers towards vulnerable people will be tolerated by OM. Acts of abuse may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Physical abuse

hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness.

Emotional abuse

hostile or rejecting treatment, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Sexual abuse

forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening. Pressuring vulnerable adults into sexual activities, or involving them in sexual activities without their consent, is another form of sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse may include rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, or grooming in preparation for abuse.

Neglect

the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, which may result in harm to a vulnerable person's health or development. This may include ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating, or failure to provide protection from other forms of abuse.

Exploitation

Engaging vulnerable people in sexual or other activities in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, affection, status, or anything else that they or their family needs. Exploitation may include slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude.

Emotional abuse

Including restriction of movement, degrading, humiliating, bullying (including cyber bullying), and threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Financial/material abuse

including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Spiritual abuse

An abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves.

Responsibilities of OM workers

All OM workers are expected to engage with vulnerable people with integrity and without exploitation. Specific behavioural guidelines will be outlined in the Staff Handbook.

OM workers will be held responsible for their behaviour and cannot accuse the vulnerable person of "provoking" or 'encouraging' the abusive action.

All workers with OM are required to hold each other accountable in their behaviour around vulnerable people and so refer any concerns to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or designated Local Safeguarding Contacts on each team.

Steps to address risk

Recruitment

During the application process, all OM workers will be subject to appropriate background checks, including detailed character references and self-disclosure forms. Criminal records checks will be required for positions in which the individual will be working directly with vulnerable people.

Should a criminal record check (from the Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS) identify a conviction, then a review and discussion between the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the applicant would take place. This discussion would include the nature and seriousness of the conviction and any potential Safeguarding issues that arise for OM related to this. If the situation is not satisfactorily explained and a way forward resolved, then an applicant may not be able to join OM in any capacity. Any decision taken by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, possibly in consultation with relevant colleagues, will be recorded including supporting reasons and retained for reference.

OM engage an authorised third party to carry out DBS Checks (Thirtyone:eight <https://thirtyoneeight.org/>) and subscribe as members of them as an 'umbrella organisation' for Safeguarding advice, guidance and training. To manage the DBS checking process, OM has a designated and registered DBS Lead Recruiter, supported by a team, who will identify and raise any query or concern with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, to whom they report for this part of their role.

Ministry planning

All OM outreach activities will be formally risk-assessed using best practice principles. Management processes and event activities will take all reasonable steps to mitigate risk

When engaging in ministry in partnership with churches, schools or other organisations, an agreement on safeguarding standards and responsibilities will be part of the planning process. OM workers will be expected to meet OM behavioural standards, plus any standards required of the ministry partners.

Ministry activity

OM carries out a range of mission events involving vulnerable people which include TeenStreet UK, children's ministry and other outreach activities, and residential training programmes. The leaders of each of the respective ministry activities will develop appropriate specific policies and procedures with the support and direction of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, relating to the particular circumstances and risks. These will be reviewed at least annually and proactively as circumstances require.

For overseas mission placements, we will ensure that the relevant OM receiving fields have the appropriate Safeguarding Policy and practices in place that meet OM International standards.

Fundraising

OM recognises that some partners and supporters may be in potentially vulnerable circumstances for a whole variety of reasons ranging from mental health, through to dementia or bereavement. All staff who are likely to interact with people in potentially vulnerable circumstances will be trained with annual refreshers. The training will include how to spot signs of potential vulnerability, how to respond appropriately in line with training received and procedures and to suggest improvements in OM practice where helpful.

Training

People joining OM will be required to undergo safeguarding training as part of their pre-departure process (for those serving overseas) or orientation and induction (for those serving within the UK). All workers with OM ministries will be required to undertake refresher training annually. OM will aim through on-going safeguarding training for all OM workers to develop a culture of safeguarding awareness and responsibility across the organisation.

The Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Local Safeguarding Contacts will also attend OM's Child Safety Officer training programme run by OM International.

Specific training regarding practical care and safeguarding issues will be given to those involved in direct ministry with children or vulnerable adults.

Communications

OM ensure that the privacy of individuals is maintained to a high level throughout all communication. Therefore, we always seek consent before writing stories about individuals and taking and using photos in any form of media.

Accordingly, this Safeguarding Policy will be accessible through the OM website and upon request.

Reporting Vulnerable Person Safety Concerns

In instances where an OM worker has witnessed a clear incident of abuse against a vulnerable person, the worker should report directly to the Local Safeguarding Contact or in their absence the Safeguarding Coordinator who will then contact the appropriate statutory authority.

In situations where the OM worker has not personally witnessed the abuse, has a concern about the behaviour of another OM worker or the safety of children connected with OM, they should contact either their Local Safeguarding Contact or the Safeguarding Coordinator for advice.

People to Contact (during office hours unless a disclosure has been made):

Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Laurie Searle 07483 336366 laurie.searle@om.org

Local Safeguarding Contacts

Quinta: Ginny Drake 07944 853156 ginny.drake@om.org

Halesowen: Laurie McEwen 07708 902561 laurie.mcewen@om.org

London: Simon Lunt 07913 185649 simon.lunt@om.org

In the event of serious risk of harm when no Safeguarding contact is immediately available, an OM worker should contact any member of the Core Leadership Team or, if necessary, the Police.

Response to reports

Any report of misconduct by an OM worker will be taken seriously. The Safeguarding Coordinator is responsible to ensure the report is clarified and logged in a secure system, and for informing the appropriate statutory agencies concerned with abuse of the vulnerable.

The Safeguarding Coordinator will launch an inquiry process in line with OM International procedures, as long as such an inquiry does not interfere with any investigation by a statutory agency.

OM workers are required to cooperate fully with any safeguarding inquiry, both internal and those launched by any statutory authority.

If the OM Worker named in the report is involved in ministry to vulnerable people, they will be stood down from ministry until the inquiry is complete. Depending on the situation, the person may be asked to step down from other field responsibilities (including attending team/field meetings) until the inquiry is complete.

Any outcome of an investigation which is considered as 'Misconduct' will be handled according to the Disciplinary Procedure as detailed in the Staff Handbook. If the Police charge someone with abuse, that would constitute gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

Review of this policy:

Written, approved by the Board of Trustees, and published: December 2021

Reviewed: At least annually, upon the completion of any inquiry and by receiving updates from Government website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees>

Reviewed by: Compliance and HR Lead and confirmed by Core Leadership Team.

Last review: January 2023