



Flexicare (Oxford and Abingdon) Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Registered Charity Number 1172635

FLEXICARE
(Oxford and Abingdon)
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Flexicare Safeguarding Policy

Purpose:

Flexicare has a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to a safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements.

- We recognise the welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation has an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Some children 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, their parents, carers, and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

Flexicare's responsibility also includes ensuring that the organisation adopts safe recruitment and selection procedures which prevent unsuitable persons from gaining access to children. This policy should be read in conjunction with the document entitled "Flexicare Policies, Standards and Information".

Flexicare will:

- Protect children and young people who receive our services from harm.
- Provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.
- Comply with the assessment, implementation and monitoring requirements from their internal and external audits and inspections.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Flexicare, including the Manager, Coordinators, the Board of Trustees, paid staff, and volunteers. Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be addressed without delay and may result in dismissal/exclusion from Flexicare.

Definitions:

The Children Act 1989 definition of a child is: anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, even if they are living independently, are a member of the armed forces or is in hospital.

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their daily lives. There are 4 main categories of abuse, which are: sexual, physical, emotional abuse, and neglect. It is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories, they are:

- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Female genital mutilation
- Grooming
- Historical abuse
- Online abuse

Safeguarding children: Safeguarding children is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) as:

- protecting children from maltreatment.
- preventing impairment of children's health or development.
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Legal Framework:

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation is available from nspcc.org.uk/learning.

Flexicare has arrangements in place that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

Training and Awareness:

Flexicare will ensure an appropriate level of safeguarding training is available to its Trustees, employees, volunteers, and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it (e.g., contractors).

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, this requires them as a minimum to have awareness training that enables them to:

- Understand what safeguarding is and their role in safeguarding children.
- Recognise a child potentially in need of safeguarding and take action.
- Understand how to report a safeguarding Alert.
- Understand dignity and respect when working with children.
- Have knowledge of this Safeguarding Children Policy.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing:

Flexicare expects all employees, volunteers, and trustees to maintain confidentiality and not discuss work related activities outside of Flexicare unless there is an urgent need to do so, such as the risk of harm to a child/ren when information should be escalated expeditiously to the Coordinator on-call, Trustee or third party. Information will only be shared in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection best practice, whilst recognising this does not preclude or limit the sharing of information to keep children and young people safe.

Information will be shared with the Local Authority if a child is deemed to be at risk of harm or **contact the police if they are in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.**

Recording and Record Keeping:

A written record will be kept about any concern regarding a child with safeguarding needs. This must include details of the person involved, the nature of the concern and the actions taken, decision made and why they were made.

All records must be signed and dated. All records must be securely and confidentially stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Safe Recruitment & Selection:

Flexicare is committed to safe employment and safe recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

Flexicare has policies and procedures that cover the recruitment of all Trustees, employees, and volunteers. These can be found in the Flexicare Policies, Standards and Information which is reviewed regularly and updated in line with local and national procedures.

Flexicare ensures it is compliant with the Safer Recruitment contents available from Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) which is updated regularly. https://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/g_safe_rec.html

Code of Conduct for behaviour:

All employees and volunteers should be aware of Flexicare's code of behaviour towards the children and families we support: all staff and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with their role and duties, in line with all Flexicare policies and procedures policies. All members of the team are in a position of trust, and it is their professional and ethical responsibility to always protect the interests of children in their care.

Use of Mobile Phones and other Digital Technology:

Staff and volunteers must not use social media accounts to share information or images about the families or children in their care. During a sit, photographs may be taken and sent to parents via the Flexicare phone or email. The pictures must be deleted from the sitter's device without delay. Photographs may be kept by the sitter or used by Flexicare with explicit consent from parents.

Whistleblowing:

It is important that staff and volunteers within Flexicare have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. The procedure is outlined in the Flexicare Comments / complaints leaflet. Whistle blowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their organisation. This includes concerns about another employee or volunteer, such concerns should be raised in line with section 12 of the Flexicare Policies, Standards and Information document. There is also a requirement by Flexicare to protect whistle-blowers.

Audit, monitoring and review:

Alongside our local monitoring and reporting processes, Flexicare is subject to and complies with the outcomes of annual audits from the OSCB. We are also monitored by Oxfordshire

County Council. Flexicare is subject to regular inspections from the Care Quality Commission. Where required, Flexicare will also seek external reviews from a third party not connected with Flexicare to ensure compliance with local and national expectations.

Further information can be found on the OSCB website <https://www.oscb.org.uk/>

Important Contacts:

Hannah Dunning, Registered Manager (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

07445 265444

Email: admin@flexicare.org; Mailing address: 7, Horsecroft, Stanford in the Vale, SN7 8LL

James Ross, Chair of Trustees

01235 524990

Care Quality Commission

03000 616161

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

If you have immediate concerns regarding a child in Oxfordshire relating to child protection of safeguarding, you should contact the MASH for guidance on **0345 050 7666**.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice on safeguarding concerns

01865 810603

NSPCC Help Line

0808 800500

Family Lives, parent and family support (formerly Parentline)

0808 800 2222

Police

Emergency – 999

Non-emergency – 101

References Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board (2020) safeguarding procedures – online <https://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/>

Author: Hannah Dunning, April 2023

Next Review: April 2025

Trustees Approval: April 2023