

OHWC SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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Table 1: Version Control

Date	Changes made	Version
07/02/2024	Initial issue	1.0
06/03/2024	Changes to structure and format following Safeguarding Lead review	2.0

1) INTRODUCTION

The OHWC is committed to safeguarding in line with national legislation; and national and local guidelines. We ensure safeguarding by ensuring our club is run in a way which keeps our club members safe.

We all have a responsibility to safeguard adults and young people who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse and neglect.

The OHWC is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to our club members which necessitates:

- the recognition of club members who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk;
- knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself;
- and being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

This policy document outlines what safeguarding is and what to do if you have a concern.

2) POLICY STATEMENT

The Oadby Hill Walking Club (OHWC) is committed to following good practice and this includes having clear, consistent policies, procedures and processes for everyone to follow.

The OHWC takes its responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously. We have a duty of care to all our club members and other members of the public. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and accept our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of anyone who attends and participates in our events and activities, in accordance with current legislation.

The OHWC believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

The OHWC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for all people involved in hill walking. We acknowledge that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, and we are committed to prevent abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all adults and young people involved.

All members of the OHWC; have a role and responsibility to help ensure the safety and welfare of adults and young people. We strive to ensure an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

The OHWC accepts that we are required to fulfil our duty of care, which means that we must do everything that can be reasonably expected of us to help safeguard and protect people from harm, and to act when we suspect that someone is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

Anyone working with or volunteering for the OHWC will receive and have access to details of our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures documents. They will receive this information to outline their responsibilities to safeguarding.

3) PURPOSE & AIMS

The purpose and aims of the OHWC Safeguarding Policy are to safeguard our members and demonstrate our commitment as a club, to safeguarding individuals from abuse, harm and harassment. We as a club want to ensure that everyone involved in OHWC is aware of the policy and procedures for safeguarding our club members.

- The policy and procedures for safeguarding our club members.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding club members.
- The procedures that are followed, if we have a concern relating to the safety or wellbeing of a club member.

4) COMMUNICATION

The OHWC will make available its Safeguarding policy and Safeguarding procedure to all club members and all club members are expected to help implement this policy and procedure across the club.

5) ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

The OHWC believes that everyone deserves the right to experience the joy of walking outdoors. We strive to be diverse, inclusive and accessible in how we offer and promote our activities.

We are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment. The welfare for everyone is paramount in all the activities and events we carry out, as well as the decisions we make. We value, listen to and respect all views and opinions.

Everyone, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.

We recognise that ability and disability can change over time and that some people may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, including those with care and support needs.

6) DEFINITIONS

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

Adult for this policy document and practice within the OHWC, an adult is anyone aged 18 or over.

Safeguarding adults means protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding young people means protecting young people from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to young people 's health or development, and ensuring young people grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.

Young people / person: for this policy document and practice within the OHWC, a young person is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

7) WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding refers to measures designed to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals. These measures enable everyone to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility meaning individuals and organisations must work together to prevent and stop experiences of abuse and neglect, whilst at the same time, promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults.

8) WHY DO WE NEED SAFEGUARDING?

The OHWC recognises that abuse, harassment and harm can happen to anyone- the people we work with, staff or volunteers. It is not always visible and often not spoken about.

Abuse and harassment are wrong and the OHWC does not want any of its members to come to any harm. When everyone understands safeguarding and their right to be safe, people are protected.

The guidance given in this policy is based on the following principles:

- The welfare of young people and adults is paramount in all the work, activities and programmes and events carried out as well as organized by or for the OHWC.
- It is important to value, listen to and respect all views and opinions.
- All young people and adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- The OHWC will seek to ensure that in its own organisation, we are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all young people and adults will always be respected.
- We recognise that ability and disability can change over time and that some young people and adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, especially those with care and support needs.
- We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within the or in the wider community.
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with our Safeguarding policy and procedure documents.
- The OHWC recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding and is committed to complying with their procedures.

9) OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

To implement this policy the OHWC will ensure that:

- 1) Everyone involved with the OHWC is aware of the safeguarding procedures and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern, relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult or young person.
- 2) Any safeguarding concerns raised are taken seriously and responded to promptly and proportionately.
- 3) The safety and wellbeing of our members is OHWC's priority.
- 4) Those at risk of harm will be the priority of the club and the wishes and feelings of the affected person(s) will be respected and supported unless there are reasonable grounds to override these.
- 5) Any actions will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and will be proportionate to the level of risk.
- 6) We will commit to **Making Safeguarding Personal**. This means that safeguarding should be person led and outcome focused.
- 7) **Where possible**, we will discuss safeguarding concerns with the individual(s) involved to seek their consent to share information. However, there may be occasions where the need to gain consent is overridden, due to the risk of harm.
- 8) The OHWC reserve the right to involve the Police and the local authority, to safeguard individuals.
- 9) All members of the OHWC understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding young people and adults.
- 10) Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the Board on an annual basis.

10) GOOD PRACTICE, POOR PRACTICE AND ABUSE

It can be difficult to distinguish poor practice from abuse, whether intentional or accidental. It is not the responsibility of any individual involved to make judgements regarding whether abuse is taking place, but everyone is responsible for recognising and identifying poor practice and potential abuse, and to act on this, if they have concerns.

Any concerns regarding safeguarding within the OHWC **MUST** be reported to the OHWC designated Safeguarding Leads at ohwcsafeguarding@gmail.com.

11) PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR WALK LEADERS AND EVENT ORGANISERS

Walk leaders and others in authority should take time to familiarise themselves with this quick reference to good practice when in the company of young adults as well as adult club members.

Planning

Do

- Plan activities for club members carefully to ensure that there is always maximum protection.
- Attend to health and safety requirements.
- Make sure that any young adults are accompanied by their own adult carers (e.g. parents) and that these adults are directly responsible for those in their care.
- Make sure you know which club members are in your charge, the extent of your responsibility, where they are and what they are doing.

Supervision

Do

- Have a minimum of two adults when working with small groups and work in view of other colleagues if supporting an individual on your own.
- Have male and female helpers where practical.

Other practicalities

Do

- Insist on relevant training or instruction if you are expected to oversee something that you aren't confident about or don't feel competent to carry out.

Do not

- Allow rough activities which could lead to inappropriate behaviour or injury.
- Permit abusive youth peer activities (e.g. ridiculing or bullying).

Awareness

Do

- Inform club members about the safety issues involved in their activity and how to cope (e.g. always tell someone where they are going).
- Be alert to potential harm or inappropriate behaviour by others to club members in your care.
- Provide access to club members to talk to another adult about any concerns they may have.

- Be alert to any evidence of drug or alcohol use by club members in your care.

Conduct

Do

- Remember you are a role model for club members and always provide an example you would wish them to follow.
- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well-intentioned, may easily be misinterpreted.
- Respect a club member's right to privacy unless you feel they are at risk of harm.

Do not

- Show favouritism or get drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. tantrums or crushes)
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching which could be misunderstood

Always remember

- Plan activities carefully and be alert to potential harm.
- Where possible ensure young people are accompanied by their own adult carers and that they take direct supervisory responsibility.
- Arrange for an appropriate number of adults to be present – try to always have at least two.
- Avoid being left alone with young people if you can.
- When one-to-one contact is unavoidable, keep it short, be accessible and make sure someone is informed.

If you have a concern about the safety and well-being of a young person or adult:

- 1) Immediately tell the walk leader or event organiser.
- 2) Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told.
- 3) Sign, date and pass your notes to the designated OHWC Safeguarding Leads at ohwcsafeguarding@gmail.com.
- 4) If possible, ensure that no further situation arises which could cause any further concern.

If a young person or adult tells you about an incident of abuse that has just occurred:

- 1) Allow that person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said.
- 2) Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement.
- 3) Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information.
- 4) Assess whether there is any ongoing immediate danger.
- 5) If there is take immediate action to stop or minimise that danger.
- 6) Write careful notes of what you were told.
- 7) Sign, date and pass your notes to the OHWC Safeguarding Leads at: ohwcsafeguarding@gmail.com.
- 8) If possible, ensure that no further situation arises which could cause any further concern.

12)REPORTING CONCERNS

If you are in immediate danger or need immediate medical assistance, contact the emergency services at 999.

Please contact the Safeguarding Leads, at ohwcsafeguarding@gmail.com. If a Safeguarding Lead is implicated or you think may have a conflict of interest, then report your concerns to the OHWC Chair.

You can also contact the police, social services, your doctor or other organisations that can provide information and give help and support.

The OHWC will follow the procedures in this document promptly in line with the flowchart at Figure 1 below. If you believe your concerns are not being addressed in the way that they should be please contact the OHWC Chair.

At all stages you are welcome to have someone who you trust support you and help you to explain what happened and what you want to happen.

It is of utmost importance to the OHWC that you can take part in our activities safely and we will take every step to support you to do that.

13)REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT OTHERS

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

You should not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself. If you have concerns and/or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must contact the Safeguarding Leads. If a Safeguarding Lead is implicated or you think has a conflict of interest, then report your concerns to the OHWC Chair.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please follow the guidance below.

- a) It is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether an adult has been harmed or abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns they have.
- b) If someone has a need for immediate medical attention call an ambulance on 999.
- c) If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed, contact the police on 999 straight away. Where you suspect that a crime is being committed, you **MUST** involve the police.
- d) Remember to be person centred / make safeguarding personal. If it will not put them or you at further risk, discuss your safeguarding concerns with the person and ask them what they would like to happen next. Inform them that you **MUST** pass on your concerns to your Safeguarding Leads.
- e) **DO NOT** contact the person before talking to the Safeguarding Leads if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out.
- f) Remember not to confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

14)RESPONDING TO A DIRECT DISCLOSURE

If a club member indicates that they are being harmed or abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern, the person receiving the information should:

- Take it seriously.
- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the adult to continue at their own pace,
- Be sensitive.
- Keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify/clarify what the person is telling you.
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Ask them what they would like to happen next.
- Explain what you would like to do next.
- Explain that you will have to share the information with the Safeguarding Leads.
- Ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside the organisation.
- Arrange as to how you/the Safeguarding Leads can contact them safely.
- Help them to contact other organisations for advice and support.
- Act swiftly to report and carry out any relevant actions.
- Record in writing what was said using the adult's own words as soon as possible.

It is important not to:

- Dismiss or ignore the concern.
- Panic or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Make assumptions or speculate.
- Come to your own conclusions.

- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Make promises that cannot be kept.
- Investigate the case.
- Confront the person thought to be causing harm.
- Take sole responsibility.
- Tell everyone.

15)NEXT STEPS

Once the concern has been passed to the Safeguarding Leads, they will coordinate the safeguarding procedure in accordance with the flowchart in Figure 1 below. The Safeguarding Lead will keep clear records of decision making, actions taken, and the outcomes achieved. They will also collect feedback from the club member.

The Safeguarding Leads will:

- a) Immediately perform actions to ensure that anyone at risk is safeguarded, this could include contacting the police or next of kin. If the harm is caused by another club member, actions will be taken to avoid contact.
- b) Inform, reassure, and advise the person making the report on what to do and what not to do. Explain what will happen next and reinforce the need for confidentiality.
- c) Consider what is known about the situation, what the risks are, what is known of the views of the club member, whether they have given their consent to the report being made and whether they might be an adult at risk. Find out whether the person making the report believes the adult can make decisions about what safeguarding actions they want to be taken.
- d) If there is a known safe way of contacting the club member, ensure that they have been given information about the process and what will happen next. Ensure that they have been provided information about other organisations that can support them.
- e) Contact the police if:
 - A serious crime has been committed.
 - A crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the police themselves.
 - The club member has asked you to make a report to the Police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.
 - Make a referral/report to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team if you believe they may be a person at risk and:
 - The club member appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and well-being.
 - There is other 'persons at risk' using the club.

- The person at risk lives in England or Scotland and they have asked you to make a report or have given their informed consent to you making it.
- g) Use OHWC policy and procedures to stop harm. This could include removing the person who may be causing harm from club activities if deemed necessary.
- h) Ensure records are complete and stored securely.

16) FURTHER INFORMATION

Useful Numbers

Police	101 (or 999 in an emergency)
Leicester Safeguarding Adults Boards	0116 454 6270 for Leicester, or 0116 3057130 for Leicestershire & Rutland
Childline	Freephone 0800 1111

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17) OHWC SAFEGUARDING FLOWCHART

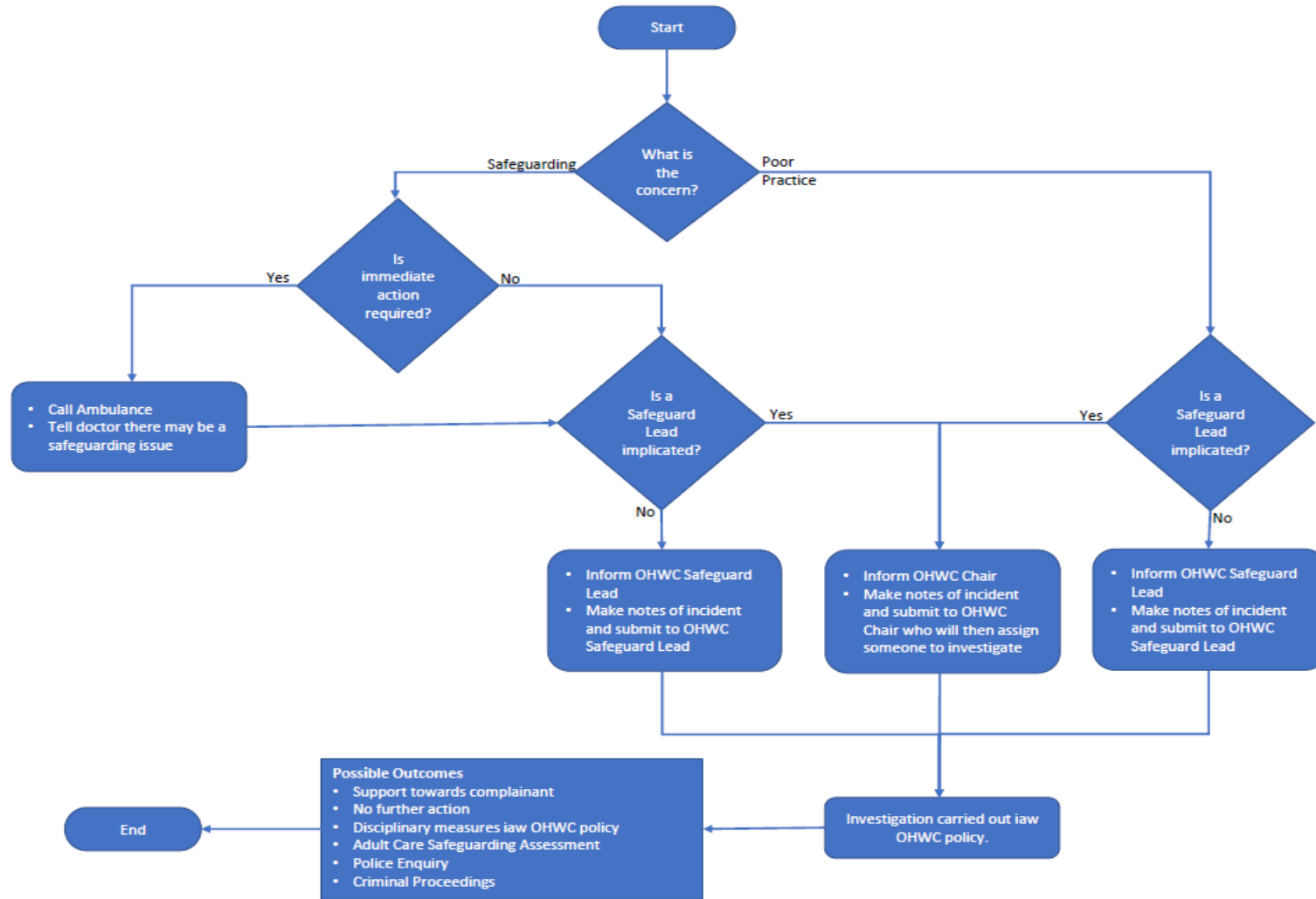


Figure 1: OHWC Safeguarding Flowchart