

The OSCB Business Plan 2017-19 (Refresh June 2018)



The local context

There are 141,800 young people aged under-18 in Oxfordshire (*mid-2015 estimates*). This population has grown around 6% in the last ten years – mainly in urban areas such as Oxford, Didcot, Witney, Bicester, and Carterton. The percentage of the county's population from minority ethnic backgrounds is approximately 9%, although this figure more than doubles in Oxford City. In the next ten years there is likely to be significant population growth among children born to first generation migrants, particularly those from Middle Eastern, Asian, and new EU countries. According to the IDACI¹ rankings, Oxfordshire's more deprived areas tend to be in the urban centres of Oxford and Banbury, with further pockets in Abingdon and Didcot. Overall, Oxfordshire is ranked twelfth lowest on IDACI measure.

There are high levels of activity in every part of the safeguarding system including the child protection system and care proceedings. The number of children on a child protection plan rose to 730 at the end of 2017/18. The rate of growth of children subject to child protection plans is higher than both the national average and the average of similar authorities. In March 2011 there were 38% fewer children subject to a plan than the national average and the figure is now above the national average. Neglect is the most common reason for children to be subject to child protection plans (65%). This is an increase on last year and is higher than the national average where the proportion of children subject to child protection plans for the reason of neglect is 48%.

Children in care are those looked after by the local authority. The number of children in care rose by 6% to 691 at the end of 2017/18. The county still has fewer looked after children than the national average. With the considerable increase in looked after children, the number of children placed out of county and not in neighbouring authorities has increased from 77 to 155, which is a concern. The number of children who have gone missing from home has fallen in the last year from 798 to 733. The proportion of children who repeatedly went missing from home remained at around 19.3%.

The issues of elective home education, persistent absence and permanent exclusions are increasing safeguarding concerns. All of these issues have increased in the last 12 months making them a priority for action.

The number of children open to child and adolescent mental health services continues to increase and there has been a noted intensification in the complexity of need. In 2017/18 there were 6794 referrals into CAMHs 11% higher than the previous year when there were 6128 referrals. The county's bullying survey shows that, in line with national trends and previous local results, those young people who are "different" from the majority in terms of experience of a long-term illness or disability, race, religion, or sexuality are likely to experience increased frequency of bullying and "feeling unsafe".

Multi-agency work to identify children and young people who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Oxfordshire is coordinated by the Kingfisher Team. Prevalence reporting continues to highlight hot spots and the most vulnerable groups – it has highlighted the correlation with young people at risk of criminal exploitation in particular with respect to drugs.

¹ IDACI is the index on 'income deprivation affecting children'

OSCB aims for 2018-19

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board aims to:

1. provide leadership for effective safeguarding practice
2. drive forward practice improvement
3. ensure that children and young people are kept safe.

1. Provide leadership. The OSCB has a leadership role to effectively co-ordinate agencies within the safeguarding partnership. In 2017 a new way of providing early help to families was launched in Oxfordshire which includes an updated threshold of needs. The OSCB has a remit to ensure that all partners understand this threshold, the safeguarding arrangements and that they work well to provide both early and ongoing help to families. The OSCB is clear that this remit is within the wider partnership context and links to work of the Children's Trust, the Oxfordshire Safer Partnerships and the districts' Community Safety Partnerships.

2. Drive forward practice improvement The OSCB's learning and improvement framework aims to improve practice across the child protection partnership. It draws out the repeated themes highlighted for action and enables us to focus on those safeguarding concerns which are most prevalent. Learning from case reviews is central to this. The OSCB provides guidance, procedures, learning summaries, local 'tools', learning events and core safeguarding training to support practice improvement.

3. Ensure that children and young people are kept safe. The OSCB and its partners have a role to ensure that where learning is understood it is implemented. The 'challenge' role of the board is essential. This ranges from running in-depth case audits to system checks, from meeting practitioners to senior managers reporting to the board, from evaluating training events to returning three months later to see what difference the training made to delegates' practice.

Within these three core aims the OSCB partners set out 8 priorities which remain a focus. The partners note the cross cutting challenges and barriers to implementing all these aims e.g. building the resilience of children; ensuring the right intervention in the right place as well as testing if investment is effective in improving safeguarding.

Aim 1: to provide leadership and governance

Priorities: increasing the effectiveness of the board, partnership working with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and community engagement

Why these priorities?

Increasing effectiveness. The OSCB is a transparent and effective partnership which holds to account the key strategic partnerships impacting on the safeguarding arrangements in the county. The OSCB needs to review its safeguarding arrangements in light of the new Working Together Guidance with a tight focus on remit and effectiveness. We know from the recent self-assessment done by partner agencies that the OSCB has an additional role to improve its communications on showing how challenge is made and what impact it has.

Partnership working. The OSCB works jointly with Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB), which has the remit to lead the strategic development of adult safeguarding and to hold agencies to account for their safeguarding work with adults. Areas of commonality for collaborative for work next year have been identified as: domestic abuse, transitions from children to adult service, domestic abuse and modern slavery.

Community engagement The OSCB is placing a priority on increasing engagement with the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCS) organisations to promote key safeguarding messages through training and to optimise the representation on the board and its subgroups. The sector is recognised as a valuable resource within the safeguarding partnership. Improved engagement is important to raise awareness of serious safeguarding issues such as female genital mutilation, the radicalisation of young people and child sexual exploitation. This coming year will focus on supporting the VCS to secure safeguarding effectiveness at an operational level; improving communications; developing the role of the VCS partners on the boards groups.

Aim 2: to drive forward practice improvement

Priorities: working to address neglect and working to safeguard adolescents

Why these priorities?

Each year the OSCB's learning and improvement framework draws out the themes for improvement. These include the ten most common points from recent case reviews. Amongst these learning points the following two factors are prominent:

Neglect. A repeated theme in case reviews and in the safeguarding system. Serious case reviews show that it is a consistent presenting factor for all age groups and it is the most common reason for a child to be subject to a child protection plan. Data informs us that, as workforce, we do 'see it and name it' at an early enough stage. Data also informs us that the contributory parental factors of domestic abuse; substance misuse and mental health often underpin situations of neglect. We know that it has a devastating long-term effect on children's resilience, leading to other forms of serious harm in later life.

Safeguarding adolescents. Issues such as mental health, self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse, and domestic violence in peer relationships are reflected in the high numbers of young people subject to child protection plans and in the care system. Audits and case reviews show the complexity of supporting this age group and the importance of continued support from services as they move in to adulthood. Feedback from young people supports this.

Analysis over the last 12 months has identified that an increasing number of adolescents are at risk of exploitation be it criminal, drugs or sexual and that there are ongoing risks with respect to entitlement in full time education which will require strategic leadership and co-ordination across schools in the county to be effective. The data on entitlement in full time education highlighted needs of children with SEN in particular.

The joint work with OSAB sets out actions on transitions for children to adult's services as well as domestic abuse. **The OSCB has set out actions** to address criminal exploitation including drug and sexual exploitation as well as those not in full time education which also links to the work of the Children's Trust.

Aim 3: to ensure that children and young people are kept safe.

Priorities: to take robust action following learning, to challenge improvements as well as to assess safeguarding risk and impact from reduced resources in the system

Why these priorities?

Act following learning. Over the last few years a significant amount of learning has been achieved. Partners have shared the ten most common learning themes from case reviews with managers and practitioners. Safeguarding training and learning events need to reflect these themes and evaluation should indicate that learning is achieved. Safeguarding communications should reinforce the messages derived from the learning and improvement work to all elements of the children's workforce.

Challenge improvements. The OSCB will use its local framework to test learning. For example, scrutiny through multi-agency audits; reviews of safeguarding practice; performance data and reports to the board on the work with the most vulnerable children in the county. Audits will focus on work which safeguards children at risk of neglect; in secure estate; using translators to communicate safeguarding concerns as well as children who are perpetrators of sexual crime. In all cases the OSCB will seek the views of children and parents and check use of local safeguarding resources (or 'tools').

Assess risk and impact. The OSCB provides guidance, procedures, learning summaries, local 'tools', learning events and core safeguarding training. Partners then self-assess how well they meet safeguarding standards to play an effective in the local safeguarding system. The aim is to ensure that children and young people are kept as safe as possible. This coming year the intention will be to incorporate their assessment of the safeguarding risks / impact from reduced resources into this self-assessment process.

In summary

Aims of the OSCB	The priorities in 2018/19:	This means the OSCB will:
To provide leadership & governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve board effectiveness 2. Joint work with OSAB 3. Engage local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop the work of the Board to be more effective in light of the new Working Together guidance - Develop joint working on housing, domestic abuse, transitions and keep a watching brief on modern slavery - Ensure that local voluntary and community organisations are better engaged in the partnership: training, communication and working together.
To drive forward practice improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Safeguard adolescents 5. Address neglect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support multi-agency responses to safeguard vulnerable adolescents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ transitioning from children to adult services with OSAB ▪ at risk of domestic abuse or peer abuse with OSAB ▪ at risk of criminal exploitation including drug and sexual exploitation ▪ not in full time education - Support a co-ordinated and multi-agency response to neglect
To ensure that children and young people are kept safe	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Act following learning 7. Challenge improvements 8. Assess risk and capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the training workstream is well co-ordinated across the OSCB and OSAB and having an impact - Ensure the learning and improvement comms. workstream reinforces safeguarding messages - Test how well learning is embedded in to practice through multi-agency audits which include the voices of children and families - Check how well the integrated safeguarding arrangements effectively provide early help to families - Check the level of risk and impact on the safeguarding system through the annual partner self-assessments with OSAB