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## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out Ofsted's approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. It applies to all aspects of our work and to everyone working for Ofsted, including permanent and temporary employees, contractors and self-employed contracted inspectors.

## 2. Strategic context

[Ofsted's strategy for 2017 to 2022](#) is underpinned by 3 core principles:

children and students first

- independence
- accountability and transparency

This means that everything we do should be in the interests of children and young people. This includes ensuring that the providers we regulate and inspect have effective procedures for keeping children and vulnerable adults safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

### 3. Definitions

Ofsted uses definitions of the term 'safeguarding' from statutory guidance.

Safeguarding children is defined in [Working together to safeguard children](#) 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

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the [Care and support statutory guidance](#) issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- people and organisations making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action
- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being

### 4. Recruitment

Ofsted carries out safe recruitment checks on everyone who works for us. All roles require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclosure Scotland check and references before the individual joins us. Many individuals, including all inspectors, will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and a check of social media because their role may bring them into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Anyone interviewed for a post with Ofsted, either internally or from outside the organisation, will need to show an understanding of safeguarding that is relevant to the role that they are applying for.

### 5. Expectations of staff and inspectors

Everyone working for Ofsted has a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this safeguarding policy and the procedures that go with it. They must maintain a proper focus on the safety and welfare of children and

vulnerable adults in all aspects of their work.

Anyone who works for Ofsted must inform their manager if they or any adult living in their household become(s) the subject of an allegation of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult or a police enquiry, irrespective of the nature of that enquiry.

Any allegations of misconduct towards children and/or vulnerable adults by those working for Ofsted will be managed using the procedure in 'Management of safeguarding complaints made against an Ofsted worker' (Ofsted internal guidance, 2017).

## **6. Safeguarding training**

Ofsted is committed to ensuring that everyone who works for us understands their safeguarding responsibilities and keeps their knowledge up to date. All staff and contracted inspectors must complete an online safeguarding training package within 3 months of taking up post, and after that at 3-yearly intervals. There will also be regular refresher training for inspectors on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, including on specific areas of risk and safeguarding practice.

## **7. Acting on safeguarding concerns**

No one working for Ofsted should investigate concerns about individual children or vulnerable adults who are or may be being abused or who are at risk. However, this does not mean that we should do nothing when we learn of a concern. We all have a responsibility to make sure that concerns about children and vulnerable adults are passed to the agency that can help them without delay.

If anyone is concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of being abused or neglected, they should not ignore their suspicions and should not assume that someone else will take action to protect that person.

Concerns about children should be referred to the children's social care department of the local authority where the child lives. Similarly, concerns about vulnerable adults should be referred to local authority adult services. Our processes for referrals are set out in Ofsted's internal guidance 'Handing safeguarding concerns about children and vulnerable adults'.

If anyone working for Ofsted is in any doubt about what to do, they should consult their line manager or duty team.

Anyone working for Ofsted who has concerns about the behaviour of a colleague must always raise this with their line manager or the Head of HR as quickly as possible.

## **8. Learning and improving**

We are determined to keep improving our knowledge and understanding of how best to protect children and vulnerable adults. We will review our own practice regularly to check that we are placing the right emphasis on safeguarding in our work.

We will carry out in-depth reviews of our actions in cases where children suffer serious harm while under the care of providers that we regulate or inspect, and where these cases raise questions about Ofsted's practice that need to be examined. The main purpose of the reviews is to learn lessons about when our

systems need to improve to protect children better in future. We will also promote a culture in which we are able to highlight and review near misses to learn and improve our practice.

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