



Oxford Winter Night Shelter **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

The following policy was agreed by the Trustees of OWNS on 15 March 2021.

Statement of commitment:

OWNS works with homeless adults, with low support needs, using volunteer helpers. It is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of people coming into contact with OWNS and its shelters, whether they are a guest, a volunteer, a staff member or trustee and to protect people's health, wellbeing and rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Purpose of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Effectively safeguard people coming into contact with OWNS and its venues and promote their rights and welfare
- Provide all staff and volunteers with clear rules to follow
- Make all staff and volunteers aware of what is expected of them in terms of their approach, behaviour and actions
- Provide evidence to guests, referring agencies, churches, and those funding the work of OWNS, that OWNS is committed to safeguarding.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all OWNS staff, volunteers and trustees.

Definitions of "an adult at risk"

In safeguarding terms an adult at risk is defined as a person 18 and over who:

- Has needs for care and support
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- As a result of care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse and neglect.

Homelessness itself does not make people vulnerable. However, circumstances such as homelessness may exacerbate other conditions and impact negatively upon an individual's ability to care for and protect themselves.

Safe practice principles

OWNS will endeavour to safeguard people by:

- Promoting understanding and acceptance that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone.
- Listening to and taking seriously all those who disclose abuse and respecting and valuing them at all times
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring that all necessary checks are made and safe recruitment and good practice guidelines are followed.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Working in partnership with guests and volunteers, churches, statutory and voluntary organisations.



Oxford Winter Night Shelter SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- Display on the website the details of who to contact if there are safeguarding concerns or support needs.
- Ensure that health and safety policy, procedures and risk assessments are in place and that these are reviewed annually.

Safeguarding all Guests

When guests are referred, a risk assessment is carried out by the referring agency, which is shared with the Project Manager. The Project Manager will then assess whether the person will be invited to access the OWNS shelter. If necessary, the Project Manager will consult with the trustees.

If a guest is identified as having a particular need (eg learning difficulties, health problems, addiction) the Project Manager will inform the shift leader.

Any women guests' beds will, where possible, be segregated and if possible, screened from the mens'.

There will be volunteers awake on site at all times who will look out for issues such as bullying or intimidation.

Safeguarding Volunteers

Volunteers are offered training and encouraged to give feedback on their experiences.

Vetting of staff, volunteers and visitors

All employed staff will be checked to ensure that they have no inappropriate history.

All volunteers must register with OWNS and provide the names of at least one referee.

Any visitors to the shelter (eg politicians, press) must clear their visit with the Project Manager or the Trustees.

Reporting concerns

Any concerns that guests or volunteers are suffering harm or abuse should be reported to the Project Manager or the Safeguarding Trustee.

The Project Manager will decide if further action is needed, in consultation with the referring agency and/or the Trustees.

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.



**Oxford Winter Night Shelter
SAFEGUARDING POLICY**