



OSCB
Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Board

Performance, audit, and quality assurance (PAQA) subgroup

Annual Report
2022-23



Page heading?



System-wide view on safeguarding work:

The subgroup¹ looks at how partners are managing children's safeguarding. This is done in different ways.



Assessments:

Organisations check how well they comply safeguarding standards and look at pressures on their services.



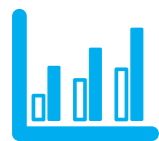
Audits:

We review how well organisations work with others to support children.



Views: from practitioners, families, and children:

an important part of the jigsaw, these are included wherever possible.



Data:

We review facts and figures against local targets.

¹ The list of Subgroup members is provided on the final page of this report.

Safeguarding audits and assessments done by OSCB agencies

In 2022/23 The group reviewed safeguarding audits from 12 large services which come into contact with children. They considered how well safeguarding is included in their daily work. The audits were presented by:

- Thames Valley Police
- Education
- Domestic Abuse Services
- Acute Health Services
- CAHMS
- A/E
- School Nursing service
- Health visiting Service
- Local Authority Children's Services
- Probation Service
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

(Some partners completed more than 1 audit on different themes).

Subjects of audits included:

Domestic Abuse

- The effects (both long and short term) for children living with Domestic Abuse
- How many domestic abuse incidents resulted in criminal prosecution
- The rise of child on parent Domestic abuse
- Domestic abuse in the digital world
- The normalising of domestic abuse among young people

Education

- Children Missing Education is increasing
- Children are safer when accessing education
- The significant increase of children being Electively Home Educated (EHE)
- When asked why they **decided??** to EHE their child parents site significant mental health and anxiety as a reason. However very few parents access specialist services such as CAHMS to support their child
- The number of exclusions/permanent exclusions of children and how they can be supported to access education

Health services

(i) Acute services

- The number of children/young people presenting to A/E having self-harmed
- The relationship with Think Family in supporting families

(ii) CAHMS

- Waiting time to access the service
- The significant increase in children presenting with eating disorders
- Resulting in delay in accessing the Eating Disorder services

(iii) School nursing Services

- Supporting children and young people who are struggling to manage in mainstream school
- Is the service compliant with their safeguarding procedures

(iv) Health visiting service

- Post visit notes/recordings
- Caseloads of Health Visitors
- Safeguarding issues

Police

- How information is collated and shared at Child Protection Conferences (CPCs)
- How incidents of Domestic Abuse are managed
- If police are compliant with national and local safeguarding children protocols

Children's Services

- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Increased numbers of children entering the care system (particularly older children)
- The impact of increased numbers of children on services provided including placements
- The care of unaccompanied asylum seeking children becoming CLA
- The quality of health assessments of CLA

Frontline teams

- There has been an increase in children becoming subject to Child Protection plans
- Children becoming subject to repeat child protection plans
- Recognising Neglect as a key issue in repeat Child Protection Plans

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- Increased scrutiny of adults in positions of trust working with children
- The type of allegations and how they are managed
- The link between children's and adults safeguarding

These are just a few of many examples from the services showing how safeguarding is part of their business-as-usual.

After every audit an action plan is developed which is monitored by the Members of the PAQA sub committee. Auditing can be an indication of safe practice in organisations working with children. It can also give a context of the work; good practice and work needed.

This year the chair commended a number of practitioners presenting their audit reports for the quality and detail given in their report. The subgroup has confidence that these services have good oversight of safeguarding and their auditing is to good effect.

Picture?

Self-assessment by OSCB agencies

Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Self-Assessment formally requests and gathers information from board member agencies on the safeguarding arrangements made in line with section 11 of the Children Act 2004, and standards developed by the Local Government Association for Adult Services.

It provides agencies with the framework to measure and quality assure their safeguarding arrangements, and the opportunity to evidence the impact of policies and practice on children and adults in Oxfordshire, as follows:

- Demonstrate how safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults is prioritised within your organisation and provide evidence of how your organisation has been able to learn and improve your safeguarding practice
- Measure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and joint working to protect the children, young people and adults with care and support needs
- Identify good practice and areas for development within your organisation to support improvement / development plans for your organisation
- Enable the OSCB/OSAB to identify training needs and plan for the provision of training, and development of tools and resources to support practice

Picture?

Multi-agency Safeguarding self-assessment

Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Self-Assessment formally requests and gathers information from board member agencies on the safeguarding arrangements made in line with section 11 of the Children Act 2004, and standards developed by the Local Government Association for Adult Services.

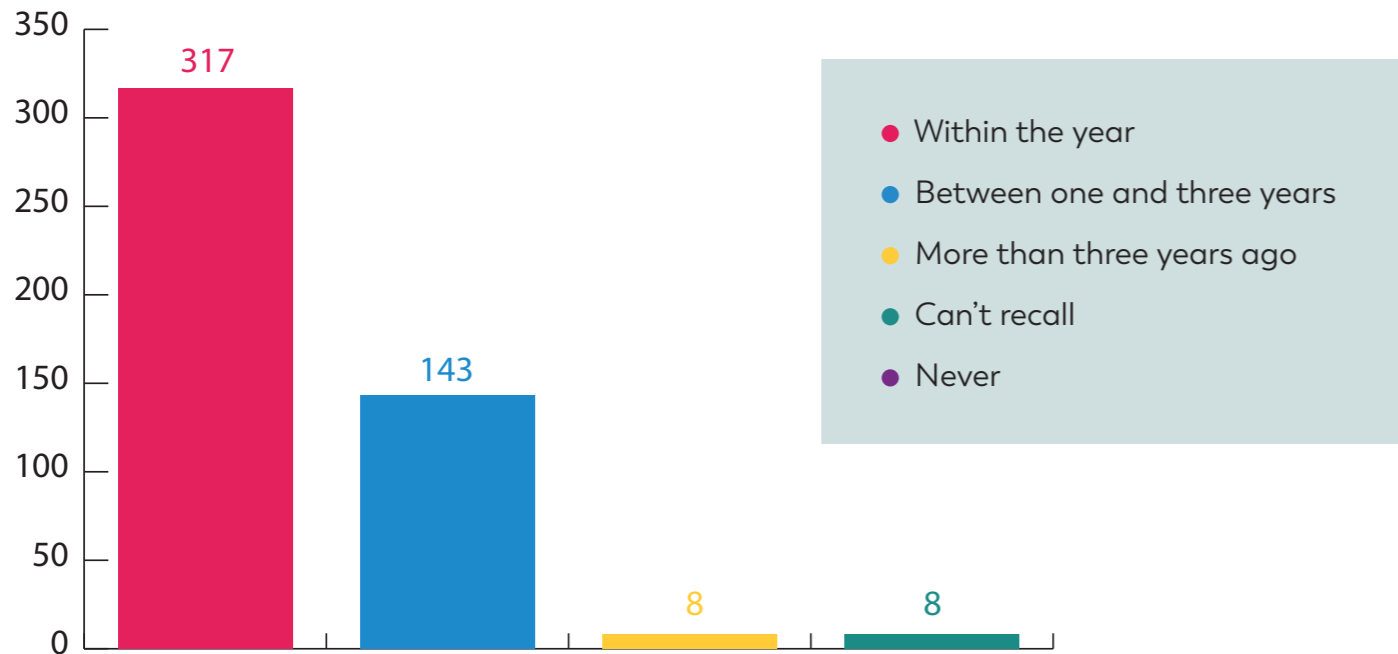
It provides agencies with the framework to measure and quality assure their safeguarding arrangements, and the opportunity to evidence the impact of policies and practice on children and adults in Oxfordshire, as follows:

- Demonstrate how safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and adults is prioritised within your organisation and provide evidence of how your organisation has been able to learn and improve your safeguarding practice
- Measure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and joint working to protect the children, young people and adults with care and support needs
- Identify good practice and areas for development within your organisation to support improvement / development plans for your organisation
- Enable the OSCB/OSAB to identify training needs and plan for the provision of training, and development of tools and resources to support practice

This report summarises what the self-assessment and peer review process tells us about the effectiveness of our safeguarding arrangements in Oxfordshire, and the effectiveness of joint working locally to protect children, young people and adults with care and support needs.

Some of the headlines

When did you last attend safeguarding training?



Your safeguarding practice

Do you know what to do when you have safeguarding concerns about a child or adult with care and support needs?		
Yes (92.6%)	No (2.8%)	Partially (4.9%)



Do you have the opportunity to reflect on cases with a colleague/manager in a way that supports you in making safeguarding decisions?		
Yes (73.2%)	No (10.1%)	Sometimes (16.7%)



How confident would you be to escalate issues if you felt that your safeguarding concerns were not being addressed			
Very confident (27.9%)	Confident (41.7%)	Slightly unsure (25.7%)	Very unsure (4.7%)

Quality assurance audits on working together

These are in-depth pieces of learning, drawing out detailed points of improvement and good practice. This report aims to highlight some of the findings from the different audits completed.

Child exploitation also known as **Contextual Safeguarding** is a key priority for safeguarding partners. It is characterised by children/young people

- Being criminally exploited
- Being sexually exploited
- Going missing
- At risk of radicalisation
- County lines
- Gang activity
- On line grooming/exploitation
- It can also involve child labour and/or child trafficking

This is the government's recognition of harm being caused to children outside the home - essentially by adults - but can include the involvement of children who are also being exploited and asked to involve their friends.

As well as protecting children/young people from exploitation the OSCB is keen to promote positive language when working with exploited children and to remember they are victims of crime. It is also important to involve the family when working to protect the child/young person.

In response to this the OSCB has:

- Revised the assessment and working tools for professionals working with exploited children
- Tightened the partnership procedures to recognise and divert children from further harm
- Confirmed the commitment for including parents in safety plans for their children

Neglect is strategic priority for safeguarding partners. During the last year several conferences have been held helping all staff and partners to recognise neglect.

A new set of tools to assess and support practitioners have been developed and are available on the OSCB website.

The council's internal procedures will be updated in June 2023 to reflect the new changes.

Your role as a practitioner

- Be clear about recognising neglect
- Understand the impact of neglect on a child
- Be clear about what you can do to help and support a child and family experiencing neglect

The Multi-Agency Chronology (MAC)

The OSCB in response to [practitioner survey](#) on the [multi-agency chronology](#) (MAC) is currently working on a more user friendly and computer accessible system for more effective in gathering key information on a child/young person experiences.



OSCB Training

In response to the findings and themes from audits and practice reviews the OSCB training team reviews the training programme monthly to ensure key findings are covered.



In 22/23 Learning through training offered:

Overview

- 301 training events held in total
- 6,210 practitioners attended virtual and face to face training
- 11,826 practitioners completed online learning

Practitioners have told us about OSCB training:

- *'I found the course delivered by 2 knowledgeable and experienced DSLs to be extremely helpful'*
- *'Trainer from today was exceptional with inclusion of participants and great at time keeping.'*
- *'(the training) was engaging, interesting, and we had space to converse and ask all the questions needed.'*
- *'It was good to think about the more holistic approach to safeguarding, rather than just the usual process and procedure agenda.'*
- *'Details about the Chronology practice was very helpful and will support our setting in early identification of patterns and issues of any struggling families.'*
- *'I have made an action list to be included in our Safeguarding action plan for 2023 with notes from the training.'*

OSCB trainers are volunteers:

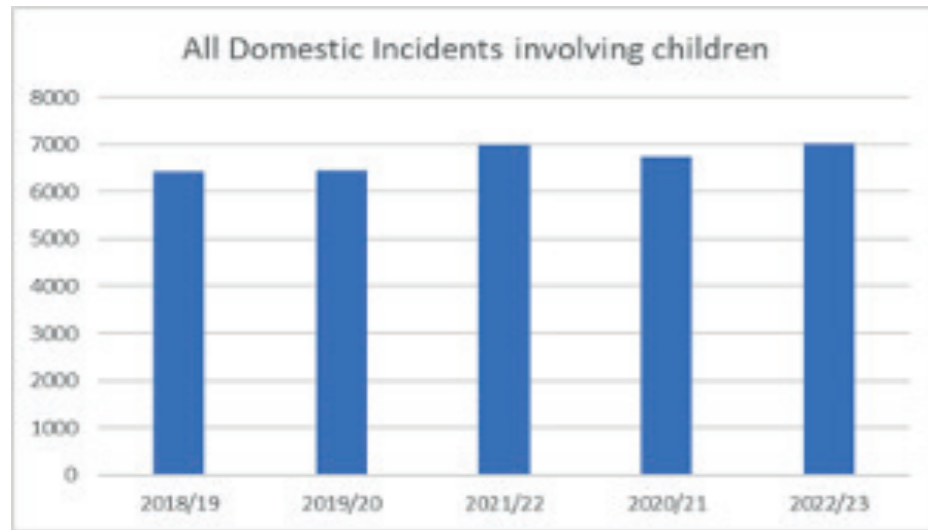
- **77** volunteer safeguarding trainers
- **10** new trainers completed our 'Train the Trainer' course this year
- **2** development sessions were held for trainers to build their knowledge of OSCB Rapid Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, kinship care, update on neglect and the effect of pornography on young people

The trainers are an invaluable line of communication the safeguarding network. They meet Oxfordshire's workforce over 100 times each year and feedback their views directly to us.

Thank You

Trainers for sharing your expertise for free!!!

Heading??



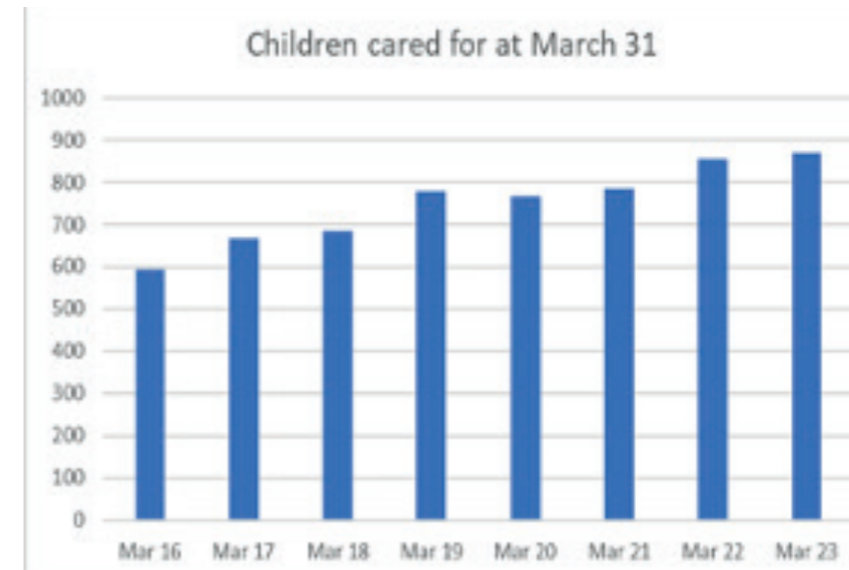
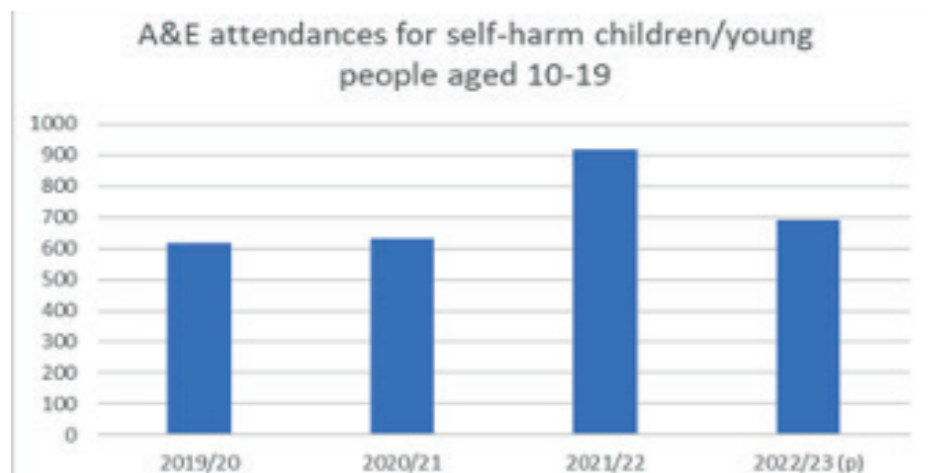
The TVP were being inspected at the time of this report and amongst other matters also focused on:

- Domestic abuse incidents with children involved/linked
- Non-Domestic Abuse referrals to CSC

Contacts into the MASH

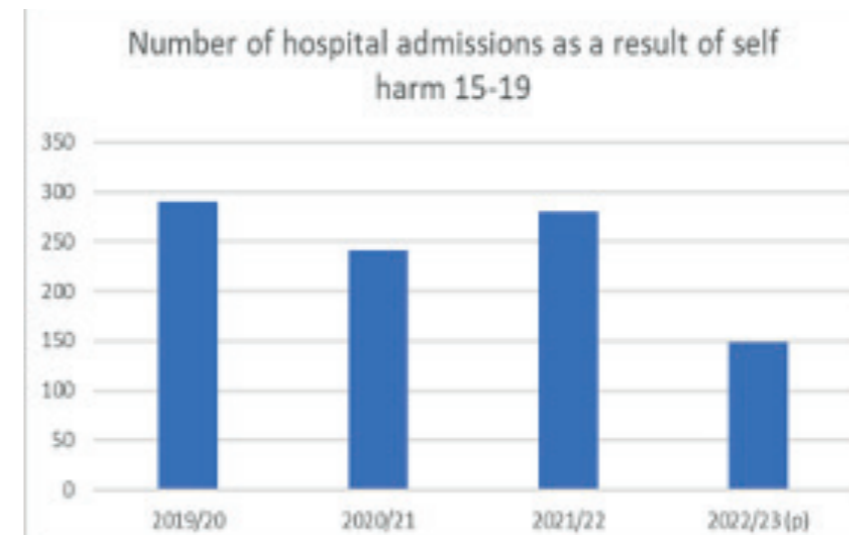
MASH contacts rose by 35% in 20/21. In 21/22 they rose again, by 18%. In 22/23 they rose by 3%. The target set was based on the level of contacts pre Covid. Since then, not only have we had the Covid impacts, but also cost of living crisis that has increased potential need and levels of anxiety across the partnership. There is no national data on contacts to social care, but we share data with other authorities in the Southeast. This shows the rate of contacts in 21/22 was 20% lower than the SE average rate. The MASH triages all contacts to Children's Social Care and Targeted Family Support at an early help level. There is management oversight on all contacts at the first point of contact, and during the decision-making process. All children presented cases in the MASH are RAG rated. All children at risk of significant harm are dealt with immediately.

The expanded MASH Exploitation team is now live.

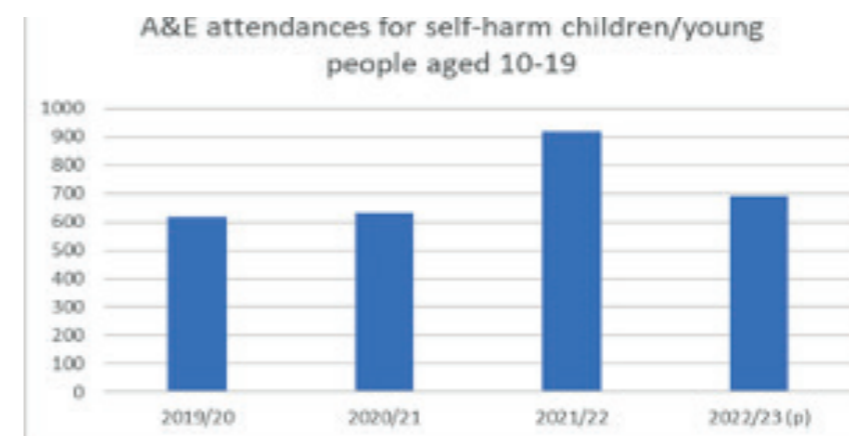


A key element in keeping children safe is keeping children in school.

We need to ensure school attendance remains a high priority for all agencies as a key measure of keeping children safe.



Whilst the timely delivery of initial health assessments (IHA) for Children we Care remains challenging, the situation has improved. This is largely due to a reduction in the number of children becoming looked after over the past 3 months. Oxford Health has increased its medical capacity by an additional initial health assessment each week. There are approximately 40 children waiting for their IHA with the predominant reasons being a delay in the required paperwork from Children's Social Care to be able to proceed and children placed outside of Oxfordshire facing long delays due to limited capacity in the receiving health team. Both issues have been escalated to the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Designated Nurse.



Repeated issues and ongoing concerns

PAQA's review of information leads to the escalation of some matters to the Board partners. The most persistent issues in the safeguarding system remain:

- Staff not being fully signed up to using the new screening tools for assessing neglect
- The increase in the number of EHE (Electively Home Educated) children – underpinned by the pause by the government for the proposal to introduce a register for children being EHE
- Exploitation – the new screening tool will be launched in the early Summer of 2023. It is hoped that partners will sign up to the new process
- Children being cared for continues to increase
- Children being supported by a Child Protection Plan continues to increase
- The partnership is still not meeting its targets for completing early help assessments to deflect families away from statutory intervention
- The national housing crisis
- The delay in accessing CAMHS and/or Eating Disorder services for children
- The persistence of domestic abuse incidents harming children

OUH self-harm and mental health presentation monitoring continues. Presentations are lower over the year although there has been an increase in 8–12-year-olds attending ED. The three county self-harm forums are no longer taking place to monitor trends however, information is shared with the safeguarding in education team, CAMHS, SHNs and the BOB. It has been noted that there has been a spike in presentations following school holidays at the start of term. There has been a slight reduction in ED under 18s attending over quarter 4 (n=205), it is noted that the North of the county continue to have the higher level of presentations. The monitoring of admission rates for the under 18 attendances following self-harm noted an increase of 7% in Q4 to 24% indicating an increase in the acuity of presentations. Information is shared with primary care and children social care for open cases. The safeguarding liaison service shared information for 3083 attendances at the Emergency Department and Clinical Decision Unit, a reduction of 827 from quarter 2. The number of attendances for children aged has decreased for 22/23 and this is very positive.

Early help and assessments

The children's trust has agreed a target to increase the number of strength and needs documents (early help assessments) to 5000 in 22/23. Although the number rose by 27% in the year to 3599 it still fell short of the 5000 target. An additional 289 strength and needs forms were completed within the health visitor pilot completed by Oxford Health. Partners are being asked for the children's trust meeting on 18th May to

- a List their 2022/23 early help targets
- b Identify their performance against these targets
- c Identify the barriers/challenges to achieving the target
- d What they are going to do differently
- e What the governance for early help reporting is?
- f Targets for 2023/24?
- g Actions to address the 3 priorities:
 - Early Help and Mental Health and Well-Being
 - Early Help and 0–5-year-olds
 - Early Help and SEND early intervention



Waiting times for CAHMS

In April CAMHS had a record number of referrals to our Single Point of Access with 751 compared to April 22 at 450. A large-scale project is underway to improve the Patient journey with SPA/Getting Help and Getting More Help.

Waiting times for NDC continues to be high however the team are offering a pre assessment offer (uptake is currently low). We are implementing the use of Sharon for both NDC families and for Getting Help /Getting More Help CAHMS services over the next 6 months. Sharon is an online peer and expert support system as well as developing a pre assessment offer for GH/GMH families who are waiting.

Increase in the number of children electively home educated

At the end of T4 (Easter 2023) 1180 children were electively home educated. This is an increase of 16% in the year and 65% on Easter 2019 (pre-Covid). Despite the increase the number of electively home educated children who were the subject of a social care plan fell to 6 this year from 15 last year and 25 at Easter 2019

Recruitment and retention

This continues to be a challenge across the whole partnership and work is being done to both recruit **to posts ans**.

This report summarises the subgroup's findings on how well our safeguarding system is working as one.

Also how the partnerships respond to emerging themes e.g young people attending local A/E departments following self harming

Oxfordshire's safeguarding partnership is committed to high standards.

We hope this report indicates the commitment from partners to keeping children safe and holding partners to account for their practice. The members of PAQA are dynamic and determined to improve partnerships to safeguard children.

List of agencies providing evidence on how well they work to address safeguarding themes:

- Children's Social Care, Oxfordshire County Council
- Community Rehabilitation Service (CRC)
- Education Safeguarding Advisory Team
- Learner Engagement Services, OCC
- Probation Service
- NHS Oxon Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS OCCG)
- Oxford City Council in partnership with South Oxon and Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, and Cherwell District Councils.
- Oxford Health NHS FT (OH NHSFT)
- Oxford University Hospitals NHSFT (OUH NHSFT)
- Youth Justice & Exploitation Service, OCC
- Thames Valley Police



OSCB

Oxfordshire
Safeguarding
Children Board

oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oscb.org.uk

Images used in this annual report are stock images