

I Just Want to Talk to Someone

A second mystery shopper exercise for
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board



June 2021

1 Background

Our mystery shopper report “I Just Want to Talk to Someone” was completed in June 2019 and was presented to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board (OSAB). This report contained a number of recommendations for the Board and were as follows:

- The Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) webpage on Social & Healthcare provides information including a freephone contact telephone number “what to do if you are worried about someone” using layman’s terminology.
Update - information now provided and now no telephone number available.
- Either update the OSAB website to a more user friendly, less jargonistic format or develop a section purely for the public.
Update - OSAB website updated using more accessible language.
- Always explain what “safeguarding” is.
Update - OSAB website does not do this, OCC website does.
- On the OSAB website rename the “General Public Alerter Form” and give a telephone number for people to use as an alternative to an online service.
Update - Form renamed but no telephone number available.
- Remove the “blue box” to the right of the page.
Update - page redesigned
- Simplify the General Public Alerter Form -8 pages is a lengthy document.
Update - form not simplified and currently 8 pages long.

Following improvements, the OSAB in May 2021 asked Healthwatch Oxfordshire to re-run the mystery shopper exercise using the same criteria as previously followed.

2 Context

I am a thirty something professional leading a busy life, I work full time and am frequently away at weekends. I live in a busy neighbourhood and my next-door neighbour is an elderly lady who I know to say hello to. I have noticed over the last three months her garden appears neglected and she is looking very slim and slightly unkempt, there is also someone who calls himself her gardener calling weekly. This is very unusual as she has always loved her garden and took pleasure

in looking after it, she has her gardener, but the garden is so overgrown, and she has always been very well presented. I have tried to catch her to speak to and when she sees me, she rushes inside. Today, I have a bit of spare time and I feel I should try and alert someone that I am concerned about my neighbour as she has no family to support her. I am unsure what to do so I turn to my old friend the internet....

2.1 What did I do?

I used a search engine and entered “I am concerned about my neighbour”, I **clicked** on the first website and the page advised me to contact my local social services department if my concerns were non-urgent.

I then searched for the Oxfordshire Social Services and the first page I came to and **clicked** was the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Social and Health care page: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care>

On the top of the page there were a set of three banners, one of which was bright yellow and said “raising a concern about someone” so I **clicked** in the yellow box. The next page I was taken to was:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/keeping-safe/having-concern-about-someone>.

The page was very informative and explained about safeguarding and different types of abuse. From this I realised that my neighbour was self-neglecting and was potentially being financially exploited.

At the bottom of the page there was a link to a form for a member of the public to fill in: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/221035> so I **clicked**. I was taken to an eight-page form which was as follows:

Page 1: had two questions - one the nature of the relationship between the person reporting the “abuse” and the person being abused. The second about the type of abuse being reported.

Page 2: had 16 questions relevant to the person being abused including NHS number, NI number, ethnicity, email address and communication needs.

Page 3: asked for my details and only had 4 boxes to fill in, name, address, telephone number and email.

Page 4: asked 4 questions about the current situation.

Page 5: asked three questions, what outcome does the person want, what is important to them and how do you think adult social care can keep them safe.

Page 6: asked four questions under the heading Fire and Rescue.

Page 7: asked three questions under the heading Trading Standards.

Page 8: I was then asked to submit the form.

I really didn't want to complete this lengthy formal document asking a lot of questions I couldn't answer, I just wanted to talk through my concerns with someone! So, I scrolled down the page and clicked the "contact us" at the bottom of the page, hoping to find a phone number. This click took me to the following page:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/contact-council/contact-us>

This page listed all the departments of the Oxfordshire County Council, I clicked on report a safeguarding concern and it took me back to the 8-page form!

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/221035>

2.2 OSAB

During this exercise I did not come across any links directing me to the OSAB website as had previously happened in the mystery shopper exercise. Therefore, I looked at this site separately in light of the June 2019 recommendations.

The OSAB website page reporting concerns link <https://www.osab.co.uk/how-to-report-concerns/> takes users to the OCC website - raising a safeguarding 8-page form. Once again there is no telephone number for people to call to discuss their concerns. The information for members of the public is towards the bottom of the page and is above an orange box talking about section 42 formal enquiries etc. This worries me as I really just want to tell someone I am worried about my neighbour! There was no telephone number on the OSAB website only links to email.

2.3 Comments

- I clicked four times until I reached a page that signposted me to safeguarding, this compared to 13 times in the June 2019 report.
- The page that I came to was very informative and clearly explained safeguarding.
- The raising a safeguarding form was very off putting and appeared to be a catch all which I am not sure a member of the public would feel comfortable completing. It was a recommendation of the 2019 report that this form be simplified.
- I could not find a telephone number to call and despite clicking links to contact us on the OCC webpage I ended up back at the eight-page form.
- The OSAB page directed the public to the OCC eight -page form without explaining about safeguarding.
- The link for the public on the OSAB page was halfway down the page just above a large orange box talking about section 42 enquiries etc.

3 Recommendations:

1. The eight-page raising a safeguarding public form is simplified as follows:

Page 1: remains as it is.

Page 2: change to:

- Name
- Address
- Age (approximate age if not known)
- Any communication needs, for instance is the person you are concerned about deaf.

Page 3: stays the same.

Page 4: reduce to one question:

- Why are you making this safeguarding referral?

Page 5, 6 and 7: remove all pages and questions.

Page 8: stays the same.

2. A freephone telephone number is provided on both the OCC and the OSAB website especially as there are those who may not have access to digital means.
3. The OSAB page on how to report a concern is changed and directs people to the page on the OCC website which explains what safeguarding is and not directly to the raising a safeguarding public form .
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/keeping-safe/having-concern-about-someone>
4. The OSAB website moves the link for the public towards the top of the page as the bright orange box is very formal and off putting.
<https://www.osab.co.uk/how-to-report-concerns/>

To find out more about Healthwatch Oxfordshire please see:

www.healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk

If you would like a paper copy of this report or would like it in a different format or language, please get in touch with us:



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