2020VISIONUK LTD

trading as Home Opticians

2 Sledmere Close, Bolton, BL1 8JP
Company Registration Number: 12617795

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Version	Date	Author	Review Date
1.0	January 2026	Muhammad Suhayl Patel	January 2027

KEY SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

Role	Name	Contact
Named Safeguarding Lead	Muhammad Suhayl Patel	07807025163
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000	help@nspcc.org.uk
Child Protection — Police	999 (emergency) / 101 (non-emergency)	
Adult Safeguarding — Police	999 (emergency) / 101 (non-emergency)	
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Contact relevant local authority	

1. Policy Statement

2020VISIONUK LTD, trading as Home Opticians, is a specialist domiciliary eye care provider delivering NHS sight testing services to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in special educational settings, housebound elderly patients, care home residents, and people experiencing homelessness. Our work brings us into direct contact with children and vulnerable adults who may be at risk of harm.

Home Opticians is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults with whom we work. We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we are committed to ensuring that all staff have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to recognise and respond to concerns about the welfare of any child or vulnerable adult they encounter during the delivery of our services.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and volunteers working for or on behalf of Home Opticians, in all settings in which we operate, including special educational settings, patients' homes, care homes, and community venues.

This policy is produced in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government)
- The Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (Department for Education)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards

Signed: *MUHAMMAD SUHAYL PATEL*

Name: Muhammad Suhayl Patel

Position: Director and Principal Optometrist

Date: January 2026

2. Scope

This policy applies to all safeguarding concerns arising in connection with Home Opticians' clinical and operational activities, including but not limited to:

- NHS sight testing in special educational settings for children and young people with SEND
- Domiciliary sight testing in patients' homes
- Eye care delivered in care homes, residential settings, and secure facilities
- Eye care delivered to people experiencing homelessness

For the purposes of this policy:

- A child is defined as any person under the age of 18
- A vulnerable adult is defined as any person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, and who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect as a result of those needs

3. Named Safeguarding Lead

The Named Safeguarding Lead for Home Opticians is:

Muhammad Suhayl Patel — Director and Principal Optometrist

GOC Registration Number: 01-25232

The Named Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for all safeguarding concerns raised by staff
- Ensuring all safeguarding concerns are assessed, recorded, and acted upon promptly
- Making referrals to statutory agencies — including local authority children's social care, adult social care, and the police — where required
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding legislation, guidance, and local procedures
- Ensuring all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and that training records are maintained
- Liaising with host organisations — including schools and care homes — on safeguarding matters
- Reviewing and updating this policy annually

In the event that the Named Safeguarding Lead is unavailable, any safeguarding concern must be escalated directly to the relevant statutory authority without delay.

4. Safeguarding Training

- All staff working for Home Opticians complete mandatory safeguarding training at Level 1 and Level 2 before commencing any patient-facing activity
- The Named Safeguarding Lead maintains safeguarding knowledge at Level 3 or above and is working towards Level 3 accreditation
- All staff complete Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism, ensuring competence in recognising and responding to the needs of people with learning disabilities and autistic people
- Safeguarding training is refreshed at a minimum of every two years, or sooner where significant changes to legislation or guidance require it
- Training records for all staff are maintained centrally by the Named Safeguarding Lead and reviewed annually
- All staff receive safeguarding induction training before commencing work, including familiarisation with this policy, the referral process, and the key contact details set out above

5. Recognising Abuse and Neglect

All staff must be able to recognise the signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. Abuse can take many forms and may be carried out by a family member, carer, professional, or other person known to the child or vulnerable adult.

5.1 Types of Abuse — Children

- Physical abuse: including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Emotional abuse: persistent emotional maltreatment causing severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development
- Sexual abuse: involving forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities
- Neglect: persistent failure to meet basic physical or psychological needs
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Radicalisation and extremism

5.2 Types of Abuse — Vulnerable Adults

- Physical abuse: including hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining, or misuse of medication
- Emotional or psychological abuse: including threats, humiliation, controlling behaviour, and isolation
- Financial or material abuse: including theft, fraud, exploitation, or misuse of property
- Sexual abuse: including rape, sexual assault, and sexual acts to which the person has not or cannot consent
- Neglect and acts of omission: including failure to provide adequate care, food, medication, or medical attention
- Organisational abuse: including poor care practices within an institution
- Discriminatory abuse: including abuse related to a person's disability, age, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation
- Modern slavery and trafficking

5.3 Indicators of Abuse or Neglect

During clinical delivery, staff must be alert to the following indicators that a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing abuse or neglect:

- Unexplained injuries, bruising, burns, or marks
- Injuries inconsistent with the given explanation
- Fearful, withdrawn, or anxious behaviour
- Significant changes in behaviour or presentation
- Poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, or signs of malnutrition
- Disclosures — direct or indirect — of abuse or harm
- Signs of distress in the presence of a particular person
- Carer or family member speaking for the patient and preventing direct communication
- Unexplained reluctance to be examined or to remove clothing for clinical purposes

6. Procedure for Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Any member of staff who has a safeguarding concern — however minor it may seem — must follow this procedure without delay:

Step 1 — Do Not Delay

If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, call 999 immediately. Do not wait to consult the Named Safeguarding Lead before calling emergency services where immediate danger is present.

Step 2 — Do Not Investigate

Staff must not attempt to investigate a safeguarding concern themselves. It is not the role of clinical staff to determine whether abuse has occurred. The role of staff is to observe, record, and report.

Step 3 — Record

As soon as possible after observing a concern or receiving a disclosure, the member of staff must record the following in writing:

- The date, time, and location of the observation or disclosure
- An accurate, verbatim account of what was said or observed — using the person's own words where a disclosure was made
- A description of any injuries or marks observed, including their location, size, shape, and colour
- The names of all persons present
- Any action already taken

Records must be factual and objective — staff must not include opinions or interpretations. Records are stored securely in the patient's clinical record within Acuitas in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Step 4 — Report to the Named Safeguarding Lead

The concern must be reported to the Named Safeguarding Lead — Muhammad Suhayl Patel — on the same day. If the Named Safeguarding Lead is unavailable or is the subject of the concern, the matter must be referred directly to the relevant statutory authority.

Step 5 — Referral to Statutory Agencies

The Named Safeguarding Lead will assess the concern and, where appropriate, make a referral to:

- Local authority children's social care — for concerns relating to a child
- Local authority adult social care — for concerns relating to a vulnerable adult
- The police — where a crime may have been committed or where there is immediate risk
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) — where the concern relates to a person in a position of trust

Referrals will be made on the same day the concern is received where there is immediate risk, or within 24 hours in all other cases. All referrals and their outcomes are recorded in the safeguarding log.

Step 6 — Inform the Host Organisation

Where a concern arises in a special educational setting, care home, or other host organisation, the host organisation's designated safeguarding lead will be notified in accordance with that organisation's safeguarding procedures, subject to any overriding data protection or investigative considerations.

7. Responding to Disclosures

If a child or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse to a member of staff, the following guidance applies:

- Listen carefully and remain calm — do not show shock or disbelief
- Reassure the person that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Do not promise to keep secrets — explain that you may need to share the information to keep them safe
- Do not ask leading questions or press for further details beyond what the person volunteers
- Use the person's own words and do not suggest what may have happened
- Explain clearly what will happen next
- Record the disclosure as accurately as possible as soon as practicable after the conversation
- Report to the Named Safeguarding Lead immediately

8. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Home Opticians staff are aware of their mandatory duty to report Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to the police where they discover — either through disclosure or observation — that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. This duty applies to all regulated health and social care professionals and is set out in the Serious Crime Act 2015.

Any such disclosure or observation must be reported to the Named Safeguarding Lead immediately, who will make the mandatory report to the police.

9. Prevent Duty

Home Opticians recognises its responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the Prevent duty). Staff are aware of the risk of radicalisation and extremism and will report any concerns that a child or vulnerable adult may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism to the Named Safeguarding Lead, who will refer to the Channel programme or relevant statutory authority as appropriate.

10. Safer Recruitment

- All staff, contractors, and volunteers who have access to children or vulnerable adults are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with barred list check before commencing work
- DBS certificates are reviewed via the DBS Update Service on an annual basis
- Home Opticians will not employ any person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults
- References are obtained for all new staff prior to appointment
- Identity and right to work checks are conducted for all new staff
- All training and qualification certificates are verified before appointment

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Home Opticians recognises that confidentiality is important but that it is never absolute where the safety of a child or vulnerable adult is at risk. The following principles apply:

- Information about safeguarding concerns will only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect the child or vulnerable adult
- The consent of the person concerned will be sought before sharing information where it is safe and appropriate to do so — but consent is not required where seeking it would place the person at greater risk
- The safety and welfare of the child or vulnerable adult takes precedence over any duty of confidentiality
- All information sharing will comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Caldicott Principles
- Staff must never promise a child or vulnerable adult that they will keep a disclosure confidential

12. Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation is made against a member of staff — including the Named Safeguarding Lead — the following procedure applies:

- The allegation must be reported immediately to the Director — or, if the allegation is against the Director, directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the relevant statutory authority
- The member of staff concerned must not be informed of the allegation until advice has been sought from the LADO
- The Director will liaise with the LADO and follow their guidance on next steps, which may include suspension pending investigation
- All allegations are recorded and managed in accordance with statutory guidance
- Home Opticians will cooperate fully with any investigation by statutory agencies

13. Mental Capacity and Consent

Where a vulnerable adult may lack mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety or care, Home Opticians will act in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The following principles apply:

- Every adult is presumed to have mental capacity unless established otherwise

- Staff must not assume that a person lacks capacity because of their age, disability, or diagnosis
- Where there are concerns about a person's capacity, a formal capacity assessment must be carried out
- Where a person lacks capacity, decisions must be made in their best interests in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Concerns about a person's capacity and any related decisions must be recorded in their clinical record

14. Working in Special Educational Settings — Additional Safeguarding Responsibilities

Home Opticians delivers eye testing services in special educational settings (SES) for children and young people with SEND. The following additional safeguarding responsibilities apply in this context:

- All staff working in SES must be familiar with and comply with the school's own safeguarding policy and procedures
- All staff must sign in and out of every school in accordance with the school's visitor management procedures
- Staff must follow the instructions of the school's designated safeguarding lead where a safeguarding concern arises on school premises
- Where a safeguarding concern arises during a school visit, the school's designated safeguarding lead must be notified in addition to the Home Opticians Named Safeguarding Lead
- Staff must never be alone with a child without another appropriate adult present
- Photography or recording of children is strictly prohibited unless explicitly authorised in writing for clinical purposes — for example, photographs of prescribed spectacles included in the clinical outcome report
- Staff must not make personal contact with pupils or their families outside of the clinical relationship

15. Record Keeping

- All safeguarding concerns, disclosures, referrals, and actions are recorded in the Home Opticians safeguarding log, maintained securely by the Named Safeguarding Lead
- Safeguarding records are stored separately from clinical records and are accessible only to the Named Safeguarding Lead and the Director
- Safeguarding records are retained for a minimum of seven years, or until the child concerned reaches the age of 25 — whichever is the longer
- All records comply with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Caldicott Principles

16. Policy Review

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the Named Safeguarding Lead, or sooner in the event of:

- Any safeguarding incident or referral

- Changes to legislation or statutory guidance
- Changes to the settings or patient groups in which Home Opticians operates
- Feedback from staff, host organisations, or commissioners indicating a review is necessary

Signed: *MUHAMMAD SUHAYL PATEL*

Name: Muhammad Suhayl Patel

Position: Director, Principal Optometrist, and Named Safeguarding Lead

Organisation: 2020VISIONUK LTD (trading as Home Opticians)

Date: January 2026

Next Review Date: January 2027