



Academies Trust



Deputy
Safeguarding Lead
Stoke

Welcome

Are you an expert Safeguarding practitioner ready to move from leading a single school to shaping the safety and wellbeing of an entire region?

At Co-op Academies Trust, safeguarding isn't just a checklist—it's the foundation of everything we do. We are looking for two dedicated professionals to join our expanded central safeguarding team. This is a rare opportunity to join a robust, established network of experts to work towards a common goal of safeguarding children.

Why this role stands out:

- **You are Never Alone:** You will join an experienced team comprising a Trust Safeguarding Lead, two established Deputy Leads, and dedicated Safeguarding Support.
- **Professional Support:** You will benefit from a comprehensive induction and monthly group supervision to support your own wellbeing and professional practice.
- **True Strategic Impact:** You won't just be reacting to cases; you will be providing high support and high challenge to Headteachers and DSLs, helping them build "Gold Standard" safeguarding cultures that align with the latest statutory guidance and Ofsted expectations.
- **A Holistic Network:** You will work in conjunction with our Social Inclusion Team, collaborating with experts in SEND, Attendance, Behaviour, and Speech & Language to provide 360-degree support for our pupils.

Your Impact:

- **Regional Leadership:** You will be the "go-to" expert for your region, working closely with the Regional Director to ensure consistency and excellence across primary and secondary school settings.
- **Cultural Architect:** You will help schools move beyond "policy" to create a truly inclusive ethos where every family feels they belong and every child feels seen.
- **Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** You'll partner with HR, IT, our Community Team, Governance, Data Protection and Health & Safety to ensure that safeguarding is woven into every fabric of the Trust's operations.

What we are looking for:

- **The Expert:** Extensive experience as a (Deputy) Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with a deep, working knowledge of current legislation.
- **The Influencer:** A proven ability to improve practice in others. You don't just know the rules; you know how to teach and inspire others to follow them.
- **The Visionary:** Someone who understands that safeguarding is a key driver of school improvement and pupil outcomes.

Join a team that values your expertise as much as your wellbeing. Let's create safer futures together.

If you would like to know more about this role, please contact Toni Welborn by emailing toni.welborn@coopacademies.co.uk to book on to one of our scheduled information sessions.

Karine Hendley | Regional Director, West Yorkshire & Trust Safeguarding Lead

Our Co-op Academies Trust

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for showing interest in our academy and our Trust.

We are a large Multi Academy Trust spanning the North and West Midlands of England. Our Trust includes a wide variety of schools, from small and large primary schools to secondary schools, a college, and special schools that offer all-through, primary, and secondary education. We are currently based in Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Staffordshire, Stoke, Wirral, Manchester, Oldham, and Salford, structured into four regional hubs.

We are focused on growing the Trust to ensure that all our schools are strong, reliable, and offer exceptional pupil experiences that positively impact our communities. It's the quality of our schools that matters, not the quantity.

We have the highest ambitions for the communities we serve. Our commitment to school-to-school collaboration drives continuous improvement across our schools. We are also dedicated to investing in our staff, with a strong CPD programme and succession planning that provides clear pathways for career progression.

We are looking for staff who are passionate about making a difference and transforming our communities through their daily work, embodying our "Ways of Being." These core values - Do What Matters Most, Succeed Together, Be Yourself Always, and Show You Care - are evident in everything we do.

What sets our Trust apart is our sponsorship by the Co-op Group. Co-op values are also embedded in how we work, and our close relationship with the Co-op means we benefit from the expertise that has made it one of the most respected and ethically driven businesses in the country. Since our founding in 2010 with just two academies, we have taken a pragmatic approach to growth, always working collaboratively to improve every academy in our Trust. By providing a great education, we are changing the lives of young people. Grounded in cooperative principles, we empower both staff and students to work together for a better education and stronger communities.

We are proud of the rich diversity across our Trust, which strengthens our ability to make a real difference. We are committed to ensuring that each student receives an excellent, memorable school experience that prepares them for future success, while also instilling a strong sense of moral integrity and responsibility.

Best wishes,

Dr Chris Tomlinson | Chief Executive Officer

Our Values

Co-op Academies Trust is committed to the values shared by co-operatives everywhere:

Self-help – we support learners, parents, carers and staff to help themselves

Self-responsibility – we encourage learners, parents, carers and staff to take responsibility for, and answer to their actions

Democracy – we give our learners, parents, carers and staff a say in the way we run our schools

Equality – we believe that the voice of each individual should be heard

Equity – we run our schools in a way that is fair and unbiased

Solidarity – we share interests and common purposes with our learners, parents, carers and staff, and with other schools in the communities we serve

We strive to demonstrate the following ethical values in everything we do:

Openness – we believe in being open with colleagues in our schools and beyond, children and their families, sharing information and ideas to raise standards and life chances

Honesty – we act in a professional and respectful manner in our dealings with everyone

Social responsibility – we maximise our impact on the people in our communities while minimising our footprint on the world

Caring for others – we treat everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves, understanding that children only have one childhood

We use our simple 'Ways of Being Co-op' to demonstrate our values:

- Do what matters most
- Be yourself, always
- Show you care
- Succeed together

The Application Process

The closing date for applications is 4th February 2026.
Interviews for shortlisted candidates will provisionally take place 10th February 2026.

General Discussions

If you have any questions or queries about the role, we will be making a number of sessions available to interested candidates please contact toni.welborn@coopacademies.co.uk.

How to Apply

All applications must be made using the [Trust's online recruitment platform](#).

Please ensure you complete the application form clearly addressing the person specification.

What We Offer

Our employee benefits package includes:

- As well as 5% cash-back you'll get being a Co-op member, you'll get a Co-op colleague discount card. This gives you a 10% discount in our Co-op Food stores. Staff also receive double discounts every month!
- Co-operative flexible benefits (discounted line rental and broadband package, family care advice and cycle to work scheme)
- Discounted gym membership and leisure activities which includes discounts on Merlin Entertainments (Sea Life, Legoland etc), Virgin Experience Days, SuperBreak and many more!
- Co-operative Credit Union: save directly from your salary and receive a competitive dividend. Borrowers can benefit from very competitive interest rates & terms (in comparison with other high street lenders)
- Co-op Funeralcare benefit
- Season ticket and rental deposit loans

Job Description

Trust Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Reports to: Trust Safeguarding Lead

Salary: £56,730 - £60,208 FTE

Start Date: April 2026

Location: Working across Stoke with occasional travel to other regions

The Role

The role involves leading safeguarding and child protection work across the Trust, including playing a key role in the strategic development of the trust's approach to safeguarding.

Your work will involve influencing school leaders to ensure best practice, as well as advising on the technical and legal elements of safeguarding. Your role will require you to provide safeguarding supervision for DSLs, as well as providing our academies with up-to-date and expert advice, including at briefing and network meetings, or in relation to individual cases.

You will work closely with the Trust's Chief Executive Officer, Trust Safeguarding Lead, Regional Directors, Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, school leaders (inc D/DSLs) and other central colleagues to ensure a strong and robust safeguarding culture in all academies. You will work closely with the Trust's Social Inclusion Team and other central functions.

This includes:

- developing the relevant policies and procedures and ensuring compliance with changing national statutory guidance;
- providing advice for schools and quality assuring their work;
- recognising and mitigating risk;
- collaborating with other trust departments, inc IT, HR, governance and community to ensure efficacy of approach;
- developing and delivering training;
- leading the DSL and mental health leads networks.

Some of your work will be contributing to reports to the Trust's Senior Leadership Team and Trust Board regarding school performance.

You will be required to work most of your week in schools.. At times, the role could also include working with local authorities and other agencies/partners, and could involve supporting case work for specific families. Frequent travel to the schools in your region will be essential, as will occasional travel outside of your region.

Key Responsibilities

- Ensure all academies in the Trust implement the requirements of national statutory guidance.
- Ensure all Trust safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are compliant with changing national guidance and a changing landscape of risk (inc AI, social media etc).
- Design and undertake a calendar of quality assurance activities in every school across the trust. Risk assess schools to determine which QA activities are needed. Report findings to the Headteacher, DSL, Trust Safeguarding Lead, and support reporting to the Trust Board. Follow up where concerns are raised or shortcomings are evident.
- Provide advice to school safeguarding teams on concerns about pupils and staff, relating to a wide range of safeguarding concerns.
- To advise academies on how to further develop proactive outreach, support and intervention work with vulnerable families, to draw attention to best practice in the Trust, and beyond, and to help with cooperative work with local agencies that may deliver additional resources to vulnerable families.
- To work co-operatively as a part of the Safeguarding Team, including supporting others' professional development and contributing to group supervision.
- Work collaboratively with a range of trust teams, for example the HR team in relation to safer recruitment and relevant staffing matters inc allegations; IT regarding monitoring, filtering and online safety; Community team re the needs of each community; Governance re policy and Scheme of Delegation; PR re organisational risks.
- Develop and deliver training to a range of audiences, in response to needs identified through QA or through national/local trends.
- Undertake the safeguarding element of due diligence activities for prospective academies when required.
- Be an important point of contact for Head Teachers/Principals, central Trust staff and designated safeguarding leads for advice if they are concerned about a child protection or safeguarding issue. This may occasionally require being available outside of the normal school day when required.
- Ensure that all safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are kept up to date, accounting for updates to national guidance and the relevant audit tools and risk logs are completed in a timely manner
- Provide professional input to review / update of other Trust policies as needed
- In liaison with HR staff, ensure that all academies comply with safer recruitment procedures and that induction includes a specific focus on safeguarding
- Work with HR to ensure that Single Central Records are compliant with regulatory expectations
- Complete quality assurance audits in the academies across the trust
- Contribute to safeguarding investigations / Child Practice Reviews/ learning lessons reviews, liaise with relevant agencies and report to appropriate authorities
- Provide guidance and support on managing allegations against staff in conjunction with Trust HR
- Provide guidance and advice on best practice in safeguarding to external partners

- Advise on making referrals to the LADO, regulatory bodies and other agencies, making referrals when necessary
- Provide Trust, hub and academy training which reflects best practice, signposting research-based best practice to members of the organisation
- Contribute to the trust approach to mental health for pupils, provide guidance and support to mental health leads across the Trust
- Contribute to the trusts challenge and support model, quality assuring safeguarding practices and holding leaders to account for safeguarding activity.
- Contribute to shaping the trust's vision for social inclusion, ensuring safeguarding is central to decision making.
- Contribute to maintaining a handbook for all DSL leads across the Trust, which details Trust expectations, systems, processes , guidance and support.
- Engage with national and local networks to further our own professional expertise
- Support where necessary the appointment of responsible/designated professionals at academy and Trust level
- Deliver a range of safeguarding CPD for staff, managers and Community Council Members and trustees
- Lead on the safeguarding element of due diligence activities for prospective academies
- Provide guidance and quality assurance of safeguarding incidents, including recording, categorisation and storage and stored securely within academies so that there is consistency across the Trust
- Provide safeguarding supervision to DSLs and embed supervision arrangements in the academies



- Be available to support academies in their work with vulnerable families and the liaison with and challenge to statutory bodies and organisations, including local authorities.
- Provide advice and support and signposting best practice in the Trust to academies related to parents/carers/families in order to promote parent/carer/academy partnership
- Maintain a register of incidents and report to the line manager and other senior Trust staff where necessary
- Contribute to the wider life of the Trust, its academies and its community through out of hours and partnership work when required
- Demonstrate commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Carry out your duties with full regard to the Trust's published employment policies
- Comply with health and safety policies, organisational statements and procedures, undertake to report any incidents/accidents/hazards and to take a proactive approach to health and safety matters in order to protect both yourself and others
- Contribute to the overall aims and ethos of the Trust and establish constructive relationships with the Trust's academies and other agencies as appropriate to the role of Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead
- Promote at all times the Trust's co-operative ethical values and work 'the Co-op Way'
- Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Chief Executive Officer

These duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, and the post holder will be required to undertake other duties and responsibilities, which the Trust may determine. feed into their policy, strategy and approach for attendance and for behaviour.



Person Specification

ESSENTIAL	ATTRIBUTE	Stage Identified
Qualifications & Education	A relevant qualification in education, social work or a related field	AF/C
	DSL trained	AF/C
	Safer Recruitment Training for Trainers (desirable)	AF/C
	A recognised qualification in child protection training / professional education & training (desirable)	AF/C
Experience & Knowledge	Direct experience in a child protection / safeguarding arena	AF/I/R
	In-depth knowledge of statutory and non-statutory guidance to schools and academies on safeguarding, including safer recruitment	AF/I/R
	Understanding of the linkage between safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, Special Educational Needs and/or alternative provision and evidence of successful engagement to reduce risks in these areas	AF/I/R
	Knowledge of LSCB / multi-agency partnership procedures and thresholds, ideally across more than one MAP	AF/I/R
	Experience of working with confidential and sensitive material and information, in line with data protection legislation.	AF/I/R
	Experience in writing / embedding policies related to child protection and safeguarding	AF/I/R
	Experience of providing safeguarding supervision to Designated safeguarding practitioners	AF/R/I
	Previous experience of leading / advising schools / academies or other children's settings on child protection and safeguarding	AF/I/R
	Experience of preparing Board or equivalent management papers / reports (desirable)	AF/I
	Experience as a DSL in a state school	AF/I/R
	Experience of contributing to a school's safeguarding curriculum (desirable)	AF/I/R
Skills	Ability to influence stakeholders at all levels	AF/I/R
	Ability to devise and deliver research-based CPD to a range of audiences	AF/I/R
	Ability to recognise and challenge poor practice and offer solutions	AF/I/R
	Ability to work sensitively with all those affected by issues of safeguarding	AF/I/R
	A methodical and efficient approach to tasks with the ability to work on own initiative	AF/I/R

Co-op Academies Trust

One Angel Square; Manchester; M60 0AG

Co-op Academies Trust is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage or civil partnerships.

Co-op Academies Trust as an aware employer is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as its number one priority. This commitment to robust recruitment, selection and induction procedures extends to organisations and services linked to the Trust on its behalf. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. We value variety and individual differences, and aim to create a culture, environment and practices at all levels which encompass acceptance, respect and inclusion. All our colleagues are expected to demonstrate a commitment to co-operative values and principles, and the Ways of Being Co-op.