Transcript for Safeguarding in Pastoral Ministry Webinar

[Welcome]

Hello and welcome to our Safeguarding in Pastoral Ministry webinar. This webinar is two and a half hours long and we'll have two five-minute breaks within that time. You should have received a link to the PDF of the slides and the handbook for this course, you will need those throughout the discussion so please have them ready. There are accessible formats available, so please let the host or the co-host know if you would like those. Ideally, we would like your webcams enabled, but we ask that you keep microphones muted unless you are participating in a discussion or asking a question. We do this because we want to minimise the distractions that background noise could create for people, but we also want to be able to see that everyone is here and engaged. We understand there might be occasions when you would prefer to have the webcam off. For example, if you're having problems with your internet speed, or you've got children who need your attention.

Just to say that information shared can be of a sensitive nature, and some of the content is not appropriate for children, so if children are in the room, please

consider using headphones and angling your screen away. Also, if you're happy to share any of your own experiences, please bear in mind confidentiality. We ask that you anonymise any examples, experiences or stories that you share.

It is important to keep yourselves emotionally safe during the training and if you need to take a breather from the webinar, that's okay and you can rejoin whenever you feel able to. It might be good to think about somebody you could reach out to if uncomfortable feelings or memories come to the surface. You might need to find support for yourself, or it might be that you're concerned about someone else or another situation after the session. If that's the case, please do contact our help-centre as soon as you can because the trainer is not equipped to give specific advice on the webinar platform.

The chat facility can be used throughout for questions and for participation in activities. The co-host might answer the question, signpost you to further sources, or hold on to that question for the next pause and share it with the host. If a question is not answered, or a question is about a very specific issue, please do contact our safeguarding help-centre by email or phone.

Thank you for choosing Thirtyone:eight for your training today. Our motivation is to equip, empower and encourage you in your safeguarding responsibilities. As we start, we just want to recognise the time, care and commitment you're investing in your church, charity or organisation by attending this training and in

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everything that you do, thank you. I hope that the message you get today is that you never have to do safeguarding alone. As I mentioned already, we have a help-centre; you may want to pop contact details into your phone now if you don't already have them to hand. The help-centre is there to support you with any questions regarding safeguarding. It might be queries about policy, or you might have a live situation which you'd value talking over with us and getting advice. The helpline operates from 7am till midnight, seven days a week, 365 days a year, or 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday for those regular questions about policies, guidance and processes, and the out of hours service for any more immediate concerns.

Everyone here today will have a different motivation for engaging with safeguarding. For us at Thirtyone:eight, it comes from our passionate belief that safeguarding is close to God's heart. Our name comes from a verse in the Bible, Proverbs 31:8 that says, "Speak out on behalf of the voiceless and for the rights of all who are vulnerable." When we take care of the vulnerable, we are fulfilling God's call. If you're part of another faith group, you may well recognise this call from your own sacred scripts. Or you might be part of a charity that has care and dignity for the vulnerable at its heart. Whatever your motivation, we want to equip you.

[Introduction]

Our focus today is safeguarding in pastoral ministry, and as we begin, it's helpful to clarify what we mean by each of these terms, as our contexts are likely to be very different.

The first word in that title is 'safeguarding'. At Thirtone:eight, we are a safeguarding organisation, and this is safeguarding training. So today, we will be exploring the particular applications of safeguarding to the context of pastoral ministry, rather than training you how to be pastoral ministers. By safeguarding, we mean the measures we take to protect people from all harm and abuse and the creation of healthy, safer cultures that enable people to thrive. We have particular safeguarding responsibilities laid out in law towards vulnerable groups (that is children, young people and adults at risk of harm). As organisations, we also have a duty to safeguard our staff and volunteers. So safeguarding involves keeping ourselves and our teams safe too.

The second word there is 'pastoral'. This is an interesting one to define! If you run a search, you'll get a variety of different answers, from art depicting the countryside to wellbeing support in schools and colleges. But there are some common threads. It's about caring for someone, meeting their practical, emotional, social and spiritual needs. It has its root in the image of a shepherd and sheep. The shepherd protects the sheep from harm, guides them on their

way, and ensures they have the food and water they need to survive. For those of us who are Christians, this image brings us back to Jesus, our Good Shepherd. When we work in pastoral ministry, we seek to be Christ-like towards others, whilst also relying on Him to guide us and to meet our needs too. If you are from a different faith or belief background, you may recognise a similar call to care for the whole person, nurturing and guiding from a place of being nurtured and guided ourselves.

And then finally, 'ministry'. For some of us this term will sit comfortably. We might even have the word 'minister' in our role title. For others, we might want to distance ourselves from it, to say, "No, I'm not doing ministry. I'm just caring for members of my community. I'm just helping out." In this training, we are taking a broad view of ministry - to minister is to serve. So, if your role involves serving others and, in some way, meeting their practical, emotional, social or spiritual needs, then you are involved in pastoral ministry.

We have a beautiful quote from the Bible here. In John 13:35 Jesus says, "By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

For me, Jesus's words here summarise why it is so important for good safeguarding to be woven into our pastoral ministry. Jesus tells his friends that the way people will recognise them as belonging to him is through the love that

they show each other. What does that mean? Well, God's love in the Bible is active. It's marked by compassion, justice and mercy, caring for practical needs. It's who God is, and it's how God commands God's people to live. Jesus came and embodied this love. When we minister to others in Jesus name, we want to show them this love too.

Jesus might not have given his disciples a safeguarding policy, but good safeguarding is implicit in this commandment to love, to have compassion for the oppressed and the hurting, to act justly with and on behalf of the vulnerable, to take care of each other's practical needs.

In 'A Theology of Safeguarding' by Dr Krish Kandiah with Justin Humphreys, we have this quote on page 14 that says, 'The Bible gives us a clear mandate, motivation and mission to ensure that those who are or may be vulnerable are heard, defended and treated appropriately, effectively, fairly and compassionately. Our theology must be worked out in best safeguarding practice for all.'

It would be wonderful to hear from you now. Are there any other Bible verses, words from other sacred texts, or elements of your faith that underpin your own understanding of pastoral ministry? And how might these verses or elements of faith or belief interact with safeguarding?

Thank you for those responses.

Now that we've framed our course, I just want to show you where we're going in the rest of our session with our module outline. We've broken our session up into four modules. They're all of different lengths. We'll look first at people, ourselves and others in our communities, and how we can safeguard each other well.

Secondly, we'll look at power, recognising where we hold power, whether we've sought it or not, and how to manage it safely.

Thirdly, we'll look at processes, considering what intentional, proactive steps we can take to make our ministry safer for all. And then, finally, we'll discuss the places in which our pastoral ministry takes place, seeking to apply our learning from the rest of the course to our own contexts.

[Module 1 – People]

Pastoral ministry of all kinds means working with people, so this is the focus of our first module.

In this module, we're going to consider what pastoral ministry involves in your context, the inherent vulnerabilities of pastoral ministry for ourselves and for those to whom we're ministering, what the safeguarding risks are for those in our communities and how we can reduce them, and the importance of clear boundaries, expectations and of working within our capacity.

We're going to do a short poll now. It will come up on your screen. It's anonymous, so feel free to answer very honestly.

Thinking about the role that's brought you to training today, do you work with children, young people or adults, or across all age groups? Is your role full time or part time? Is your role paid or voluntary? And now think about where you minister and select all the options that apply - Do you minister in the place where your church meets, in your own home, in other people's homes, on the street, in particular institutions like hospitals or prisons or care homes, in other places of work, on international mission, or somewhere else? And what does your role involve? It might be that you're praying with and for people. Maybe it involves shopping or companionship, support, mentoring, providing transport, teaching and preaching, counselling, sharing communion or any number of other things. If you do something that isn't mentioned in that list, please pop it into the chat. We'd really like to recognise what pastoral ministry involves for you. It's great to see all those different responses. You can see we've got quite a breadth of experience and a variety of ways that ministry is outworked. We really hope we can learn a lot from each other during this session.

We're going to split into a couple of different breakout rooms now to consider vulnerability. Let's try to identify the particular vulnerabilities that come with pastoral ministry - that are just built into it, for us and for those to whom we're ministering. If you are in breakout room one, please consider what makes you vulnerable in your ministry role. If you're going to be in breakout room two, please

consider what makes those you are ministering to vulnerable. This can include both existing vulnerabilities due to the life circumstances that they find themselves in, or in terms of participating in the ministry itself. For example, a person may be vulnerable because of their age or a particular illness, or it could be the vulnerability that comes from someone visiting them in their own home. Any and all answers are very welcome.

As you go into your breakout rooms, please agree who's going to bring feedback to the main group when you return.

Okay, I hope you had really good conversations. Some possible answers for the vulnerabilities that you may experience during pastoral ministry could be: lone-working, sometimes we are ministering by ourselves and this brings with it a level of vulnerability. There's an appendix about lone working in your handbook if you'd like to read more about it.

Another vulnerability could come through unrealistic expectations. Those expectations might be your own, what you hope any pastoral relationship might be, and feeling hurt or disappointed if these expectations aren't met. There may also be unrealistic expectations on the part of the person that we're ministering to. They may have needs far greater than our capacity to support and feel let down if we can't meet those needs. There's a risk of burnout and of serving

beyond our capacity (both in terms of time and expertise). There could also be unhealthy attachments.

Pastoral ministry can have an impact on our own emotional health and wellbeing. It could impact on our family life, on the time that we have for ourselves and our families. Our own life circumstances can make us vulnerable. It can be harder to give out when we are experiencing difficulties ourselves.

We may also experience impact on our faith, our own spiritual health and our relationship with God. If that is something that you're encountering during your ministry, please reach out and get support.

We might experience bullying or harassing behaviour. At times, our ministry may even put us in physical danger.

By becoming involved in people's lives, we may be open to allegations about our actions and how these are perceived. Strong safeguarding processes and accountability will reduce this risk.

And now for the groups who've been considering the vulnerabilities of those you're supporting; some possible answers could be:

Vulnerability could come through their own life circumstances- an illness, physical frailty, mental health crisis, bereavement, homelessness or many other factors.

There is vulnerability in admitting somebody into one's own home or space. Those we are ministering to are relying on our organisations to safely recruit pastoral ministers. It is a vulnerable position to have someone know personal details and information about potentially sensitive things.

There's also vulnerability in looking to someone for spiritual guidance. There can be a misuse of power, or a misrepresentation of God and His love. This can have an impact on faith, spiritual health and relationship with God. So, it's something we need to take seriously.

Vulnerability can, again, come through unrealistic expectations of what this relationship is, and what it can provide. If a pastoral relationship doesn't have safe boundaries, it leaves people vulnerable to hurt, to disappointment, and even to abuse.

Now we're going to identify some specific safeguarding risks that apply to different groups and that are particularly relevant to pastoral ministry. There's a section in your handbook that gives some more information about this.

Across the four nations of the UK, safeguarding legislation defines various types of harm and abuse that children and adults can experience. If our organisation becomes aware that someone is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, one of these forms of harm, then we have a responsibility to refer this concern to what we call 'statutory agencies', for example, police and social care services,

who can act to protect that person. We also have a responsibility to work in ways that mean people aren't exposed to harm and abuse through their involvement with us.

What this means for us as we work in pastoral ministry is that we need to pass on any concerns we have about someone's safety and wellbeing to our safeguarding lead so that they can keep records and liaise with statutory agencies as necessary. We also need to understand how to work in safe ways. We'll explore this throughout the webinar, but let's just take a moment to identify some safeguarding risks we need to be aware of.

Here is a question for you: Do you know any of the forms of harm and abuse that relate to children in UK law? There's an acronym 'PENS' we can use to remember them. Firstly, physical abuse, that's harm to the body; secondly, emotional abuse, harm to mind and wellbeing; thirdly neglect, not meeting basic needs, and fourthly sexual abuse, that includes any sexual contact, whether that's physical or otherwise. If you're living and working in Wales, legislation for children includes financial abuse too, as child and adult safeguarding isn't separated in Welsh law. The legislation that names these forms of harm and defines them further is in your handbook.

What this means practically for you is that, if something you encounter in your ministry with children, young people and families, means that you're worried that

someone is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing one of these forms of harm, you must tell your safeguarding lead. You might not be sure, in safeguarding we are always dealing with uncertainty, but you might have indicators through things that you see, things that you're told, things that you notice, such as changing behaviour, a change in emotional state or changing relationships. Pass on all concerns, however small.

Again, another question for you, what other forms of harm and abuse are you aware of relating to adults?

You might already be aware that the law and guidance in the different UK nations has different ways of categorising harm and abuse in relation to adults. The differences in the law might affect what happens next, which statutory services respond in what way, or it might just be a difference in terminology. In Northern Ireland, for example, national policy has this category of exploitation, and this covers numbers of different situations like domestic abuse or trafficking or modern slavery. In England, legislation for adult safeguarding separates abuse into 10 distinct categories. Whereas legislation in Scotland talks about 'all harm', and Wales recognises that the five forms of abuse that we already mentioned could be experienced in a number of different ways. For example, if somebody is experiencing domestic abuse, this might involve emotional abuse and physical abuse and financial abuse. Unless you hold a professional safeguarding role, it's

not necessary for you to know these forms of harm/abuse, although it may give you confidence in following up concerns. There is foundational training available for both children and young people and adults at risk of harm. There is also information in your handbook. Essentially, if you are worried that someone isn't safe, talk to your safeguarding lead.

So how can we reduce these safeguarding risks?

One great way is through training. And everyone working with vulnerable groups should have safeguarding training that enables them to recognise and respond to concerns and work in ways that are safe. So, thank you so much for being part of this training today. You might also wish to undertake further training related to the group that you're working with, whether that's children and young people or adults at risk of harm. And some roles will require further specialist training to for example, training in healthy spiritual leadership, managing abusive behaviours or safer recruitment.

An awareness of trauma and how it can impact someone's life will reduce the safeguarding risks involved in pastoral ministry. This awareness will enable us to work in ways that are safe and empowering for those who have experienced harm and abuse. There is an appendix about this in your handbook, and there's a training course on supporting victim-survivors to explore this in much more depth.

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There is a lot of recent research and increasing understanding around this, and it's been a big focus point for national policy across the UK.

And then there's creating safer cultures. If our organisation has a strong safeguarding culture, this reduces risk in all aspects of our ministry. A safer, healthier culture is one with the principles of safeguarding as the foundation for everything. So, some questions to consider might be, does our organisation listen well, how open are we to hearing difficult things? Is power shared widely, and are those in leadership positions kept accountable and supported? Do we model safe behaviours in our community, in meetings, in community activities, in our relationships with each other. Is our structure and our governance clear and accessible and understandable to all, and how do we communicate what's important to us? Would everyone, of every age and background, know how to pass on a concern and feel able to do it?

If this thinking about culture has sparked something in you and you want to have further discussions, Thirtyone:eight has a tool called the 'Culture Cube' that you can use to have a much more in depth discussions in your communities.

Following on from those thoughts about trauma awareness and safer culture, this quote comes from a collective statement from a group of survivors of spiritual and church-based abuse to their respective churches published by the organisation Survivors Voices: "Don't judge us for our natural human responses

to the highly abnormal things that we have experienced." Can we minister in a safe and non-judgmental way to those who have experienced trauma? Are there responses to hurt that we find more 'acceptable' than others or can we walk alongside people expressing the full range of emotions or do we want to tidy things up or 'solve' somebody's situation? Another quote in the same letter says, "Stop offering things that you can't give." "Dare to admit that you don't know what to say or what to do." When we have listening cultures that meet people where they are, we can reduce the risk of someone experiencing further harm or hurt through their interaction with us. In our roles as pastoral ministers, we may well be the person that someone choses to talk to about their experience of abuse. The way we respond can have a powerful impact. There is a section on responding well to a disclosure of abuse in your handbook.

So, a few more ways we can reduce safeguarding risks. Transparency and accountability are watchwords for safeguarding. I'd like to open this one up for you to consider in terms of your own ministry. How can you be transparent and what does accountability mean for you in your role? Thank you for those responses.

The second image on the slide represents clear boundaries and expectations. These are essential. In our relational communities, where we're often friends, as well as holding a role, establishing boundaries and clarifying expectations can

feel overly formal or even unnecessary. Sadly, the value of having clear boundaries and expectations is often only realised when something goes wrong and a situation becomes difficult, painful or even harmful. People often look to their church communities to meet emotional, spiritual and practical needs in ways that other relationships and organisations don't. This is good, and often we can do this, but we have finite resources of time and capacity and are often balancing a variety of different needs within our communities which aren't easily compatible. We can reduce risk of harm and build trust through clarity about what support we can offer and what we can't, how much time we have available etc. When we are honest and open about what is sustainable, we can be consistent and reliable – a trustworthy presence in someone's life.

And then finally, signposting. This final way to reduce safeguarding risk is related to the boundaries we just discussed. As well as being clear about our physical availability, we also need to recognise where our expertise ends. The needs of someone in our community may go beyond what we are safely able to provide. For example, in the course of conversations, it may become apparent that a person needs professional counselling or mental health support that is beyond our remit. A person might become increasingly physically frail and need help with personal care. A person might become homeless or disclose that they're experiencing domestic abuse, exploitation or modern slavery. In all of these

cases, if we try to be that person's sole source of support, then we're not actually acting safely for them or for ourselves. Of course, we can continue to support all of these people, but we need to signpost to experts and pass on our safeguarding concerns in order to reduce risk and to safeguard well.

We're going to finish up this first module by considering a case scenario together. As you listen, just consider the following questions: Who is at risk here? What could have been done differently? How would these different actions reduce risk of harm?

This is our scenario: Mrs. Di Costa is in her mid-80s and has been a member of your church for almost 20 years. She comes to Sunday worship most weeks with a couple who live near her. A few months ago, this couple spoke to Maria, the pastoral team leader, to say they're a bit worried about Mrs. Di Costa. Her house used to be really neat and tidy, but this has changed, and also, she's becoming a bit forgetful and less steady on her feet. They each take her by the arm now to get her to the car on a Sunday morning. Since then, Maria has been visiting Mrs. Di Costa every other day to help around the house. She gave Mrs. Di Costa her phone number and said to call anytime she needs anything. Sometimes she'll get some shopping or cook a meal as well. Over the last month, Mrs. Di Costa has started to call multiple times a day saying that she needs help, that she can't find certain things around the house or remember how to do different tasks. If Maria

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doesn't answer, Mrs. Di Costa will keep ringing. So Maria often has 20 to 30 missed calls when she checks her phone.

OK, firstly, then, who is at risk here? Well perhaps most obviously, it's Mrs. Di Costa, we think back to those safeguarding risks we talked about. Is there a possible risk of self-neglect with the changes in her behaviour and in the appearance of her home? More widely, there's risk to Mrs. Di Costa if the neighbours or Maria act in abusive ways.

Maria is at risk of becoming overwhelmed or 'burning out'. She is also at risk of allegation if Mrs Di Costa can't find things around her home and Maria is there a lot. The couple who take Mrs. Di Costa to church are at risk. They may end up inadvertently hurting her if they're physically supporting her to the car, and that could be distressing for them- particularly if it triggers a statutory investigation. The rest of the pastoral team might be at risk, because they see Maria being there every other day, giving her number to call at any time, and think this is what is required of pastoral ministers if the team leader is doing this.

So, some of these risks are great, and we would definitely see them as safeguarding concerns, and some of them are things that we will want to avoid because there is a risk of further harm if they continue.

So, what could have been done differently? Well, the couple who take Mrs. Di Costa to church, and certainly Maria, should have told the safeguarding lead their

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concerns about Mrs. Di Costa's wellbeing straight away and passed on each new concern if circumstances change over time.

This means the safeguarding lead can keep records, check existing records for any related concerns and just follow the safeguarding process that they're trained to do as necessary.

We could find out if Mrs. Di Costa has noted changes in herself. What does she want to happen? Where might she get support? Does she have any family around? Being curious, asking those questions, is good safeguarding practice.

We, or Maria, might encourage Mrs. Di Costa to talk to her GP about forgetfulness and reduced mobility to see what support is available.

We could signpost to other support and offer to make contact, if that would be helpful and appropriate.

We would ask Mrs. Di Costa if she would like anyone from the pastoral team to visit her. You might have noticed in the scenario that, actually, it doesn't say that she asked for Maria to start coming every other day, this just happened. We need to keep the person at the centre of their own lives and see what they would like to happen. If she does want this, we can discuss who and when and what would be helpful. Then those members of the pastoral team can visit on agreed days and times; they can record and refer any concerns; if they're lone-working

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we can ensure that someone knows where they are, how to make contact and debrief for accountability.

We also want to make sure that the activities that we're part of to support Mrs. Di Costa don't go outside the boundaries of the role or our code of conduct, or the level of criminal record check that we have. For example, handling money and personal care might not be appropriate for some roles.

So, if we did those things, how would this reduce the risk of harm? Firstly Mrs. Di Costa can get any professional help and support she needs more quickly if these things are noticed and recorded, and actions are taken. As an organisation, the church is aware of any risks and can fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. It would mean that Maria is not working beyond her capacity, and the pastoral team see healthy boundaries modelled.

[Break 1]

Okay, so that's the end of the first part of our training. We've completed module one, and we're going to go into our first break now, so take five minutes and I'll see you again soon.

[Module 2 - Power]

Okay, I hope you had a good break. We're now going to move into our second module, which is around power.

In this module, we'll consider where and how we hold power in our roles and how to manage this power. We'll look at the general and the legal meaning of positions of trust. We will think through how we model safe behaviours and recognise the risks in our strengths. And finally, we'll explore how we can use power well.

Let's start with a discussion. I'd like you to pause and consider, where do you hold power in your role?

So, possible answers could include that you have a leadership role in your organisational structure. It could be because you are supporting people at times of need and vulnerability, and so in the dynamics of that relationship, you hold power. In your community, there may be a deference towards you and your perceived status as a spiritual leader. We might hold power because we have the expertise or knowledge that somebody needs in a particular situation. We might hold power through a level of education and training that we have. It could be because our role gives us access to people's information, to their homes and other aspects of their lives. We could hold power simply because of other aspects of our social identity, whether that be our age, our class or our gender, or anything else.

We're going to consider the concept of a 'position of trust' now. The term 'position of trust' has a legal and a general meaning. In general terms, you might

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be perceived as trustworthy because people trust your organisation. For example, somebody might think 'I trust this church or this faith group and they've given this person a role, so they must be safe and trustworthy too. This is a very natural, very human response. There is an element of power in this perception. In churches and faith groups, the perception of trustworthiness and the power that comes with it can go even beyond this. For some people, the fact that you are in pastoral ministry means that God has called you or appointed you, and this may mean that they're less likely to challenge or question you, and that your words have an added weight, even if you're not doing anything to deliberately foster this impression.

Position of trust is also a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contract with children. It's against the law for someone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even that if that child is over the age of consent. Examples of positions of trust include teachers, care workers, youth justice workers, social workers, and doctors. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, changes to the law made in 2022 extended the definition to include faith group leaders and sports coaches to this list. Currently, the positions of trust law in Scotland remains as originally set out in the Sexual Offences Act of 2009, which doesn't cover religious or sports

settings, but interested groups are campaigning to get this changed. It's in our Thirtyone:eight manifesto, for example.

So, having recognised that our role gives us a position of trust, we also want to acknowledge that we all have individual gifts and strengths that mean we fulfill our role in unique ways. I wonder what it is that has drawn you particularly into pastoral ministry. Did you feel a call from God? Were you encouraged to do it by other people? Were you responding to a need in your community? Is it a natural outworking of your gifts? Is it in obedience to a teaching of the Bible or a desire to serve others?

What are your strengths as a pastoral minister? If you find it hard to identify this for yourself, maybe think about how other people in your community would describe you. Are you an empathetic listener? Are you a practical helper? Maybe you're an inspiring teacher, an encouraging mentor or a fearless advocate? Recognising our gifts and strengths is a helpful part of self-awareness that really can make our ministry safer. When we have this awareness, we can recognise where we might be finding fulfillment and joy, what our natural tendencies are, and where people might be relying on us or looking to us as an example.

After recognising our gifts and our preferences, the next step is to humbly acknowledge that there may be risks for ourselves and for others in the way that we are drawn to minister. For example, if someone is 'servant-hearted' and

'always willing to go the extra mile for others', this could be a huge blessing for their community. It does also carry a risk, though. That person might burn out, just become exhausted and overwhelmed by the needs in their community and by working beyond capacity. Those who they're serving might develop unrealistic expectations of what this person can bring to their lives and end up hurt if these expectations aren't met. Their teams might see this as a model to follow and work beyond their own safe limits.

The object of this reflection isn't to discourage you or to make you cynical or to feel guilty about your gifts, but rather it's to encourage healthy awareness so that we and our communities can thrive.

If we can recognise the inherent risks in our strengths, we can work to mitigate them. It's about intentional awareness. We can build support and accountability around ourselves, and ask each other for supportive challenge about the things we may not notice ourselves. If any of you have ever inadvertently caused harm where you've been trying to help, you'll know how painful this can be. Recognising the risks in our strengths can be a way to avoid this, enabling us to celebrate our gifts and to use them for the good of our community and in the service of God.

We are going to have a short discussion now based on some mini scenarios that you can find in your handbook. As we consider each person, can you identify any

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potential risks in these strengths, and how can those risks be reduced? And just to reiterate before we start, these things that you'll hear about <u>are</u> strengths, the fact that someone has these gifts is wonderful, and we want to celebrate it. This exercise isn't to squash that, but to put safeguards in place so we can avoid pitfalls and for the whole community to flourish and benefit from these strengths. Our first person to consider is Connor. Connor is a lead pastor. He's an inspiring preacher. His sermons are often passionate and personal. Attendance at his church has increased since he started leading, particularly among the local student population. So, it's great news that Connor is part of his church community and serving in this way. But can you identify any potential risks? We might consider that Connor's platform could enable him to cause emotional or spiritual harm through what he says in this position. I'm not sure whether you've ever come across the phrase 'the myth of homogeneity'. This means that there's this human tendency to believe that because there is good coming out of a situation, that there can be no bad. But actually, as humans, we are often this messy mixture of both! And so, because the church is growing and reaching young people, which is a desire for many of our churches, people may be less likely to see, or feel less able to call out, any unhealthy behaviours.

The student population might be vulnerable through their relative lack of life experience, and perhaps from being away from family or support networks. The

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church and Connor are at risk of focus on celebrity, of holding Connor up as a sort of shining example and making him, rather than Jesus, the focus of the church community.

So how could we reduce these risks?

We can put in place strong support and accountability for Connor. Who is he talking to? Who is he checking in with? Is there someone in the community who can bring constructive challenge and support him in healthy ministry? There could be safeguarding training as well, including on healthy cultures and understanding spiritual abuse. It would be a good thing to share out the preaching responsibilities in this community, and to platform a variety of people, so there's not that reliance on Connor preaching. It is also important to have clear messaging about safeguarding and a safe culture within the wider church. This community might also think creatively and encourage Connor to serve in other ways too. For example, how often does he do the washing up and be seen in those different positions that don't maybe have quite that same status attached? And have we got a variety of people to support the student population, who can identify helpful signposting for them and things like that.

Okay, our next person to consider is Kwasi. Kwasi is a member of the pastoral team. He's a natural host. He's a great cook, and often invites people over for dinner, particularly those new to the church. He makes people feel welcome and

at ease. Again, another absolute gift to his community. But what might be the risks? We could think about the relative lack of accountability and transparency having people in his own home. We might want to think, is there anyone else at home? What does this change in the dynamics? Is anyone else at risk? Or could they pose a risk? There's opportunity for physical, emotional, sexual harm for Kwasi and for others. How would we reduce those risks? Again, through support and accountability for Kwasi. Other members of the pastoral team could be part of these welcome meals, for example. We can reduce risk by having safeguarding training, especially around appropriate boundaries, working with vulnerable groups and how to pass on concerns. We could think carefully about who to invite, for example, making sure that, if Kwasi is hosting these meals as part of his pastoral ministry role, that he is inviting groups of people, not being one to one with a vulnerable person.

Next, we're going to think about Grace. Grace is a hospital chaplain part of the prayer team in her local church. She is an amazing listener. Her own life hasn't been easy. She has a non-judgmental empathy that people are drawn to. Again, wonderful gifts. But what could be the risks? These could include emotional harm for Grace if she's listening to lots and lots of difficult things, perhaps even vicarious trauma, where somebody feels traumatised through exposure to somebody else's traumatic situation. Grace could experience burnout. There

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might be triggers for Grace from her own experiences. There's a risk of blurred boundaries, of co-dependence and unhealthy attachments. There's a risk that people could talk to Grace rather than seeking safeguarding advice and support. Grace could offer support beyond her capacity and expertise, and when she's acting beyond expertise that potentially puts people at further risk of harm.

How would we reduce those risks then? So again, support and accountability for Grace, clear messaging in their church community about where to go if support is needed, including posters with specialist signposting. Grace needs safeguarding training, particularly around passing on concerns, the boundaries of confidentiality and supporting those who've experienced abuse and trauma.

Our fourth person is Orlaith. So, Orlaith is a part time church administrator and a member of the pastoral team. She's a great organiser, practical and efficient. She's generous with her time. She's on every committee and often runs the church outreach events. Nobody knows what the church would do without her.

What are the risks for Orlaith? Exhaustion, again and perhaps burnout. There's potential for blurred boundaries. Perhaps, if she's involved with everything, as with Connor, are people less likely to see, or less able to call out, any unhealthy behaviours because the narrative about all her is so positive. Over dependence on one person means events and activities may not be safe. What happens if, on the day, she's not there – could the event still go ahead safely? We need to think

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about the message being sent to others about the church's expectations as well. If she's on every committee, and this is being really praised, this could be seen as the benchmark for being valued and accepted.

How could we reduce those risks? It could be through support and accountability for Orlaith. There is also a need to train others in the community to take on key roles and build teams, and don't be afraid to reduce activities. If there aren't enough volunteers to run them safely, there can be more harm done in running an activity or an outreach event unsafely than not having it at all. Orlaith needs safeguarding training, especially around the signs and indicators of abuse, and referring concerns.

And finally then, Carmel. Carmel is part of the worship team. She's passionate about prayer and listening to God. She often shares pictures or words with individuals and the wider church in worship gatherings.

The risks in this situation could be, again, Carmel has the potential with that platform to cause emotional and spiritual harm through what she says. People may be unwilling to call out unhealthy behaviour if she's seen as speaking from God. There's a relative lack of accountability when she is sharing with people as well.

How could we reduce those risks? Again, through support and accountability for Carmel. Also, through clear messaging within the church about how and when,

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and with what safety measures, people share pictures and prophecies and words of knowledge. We can support Carmel through safeguarding training, including around understanding spiritual abuse.

Lots of food for thought there, and I just want to think as we conclude this section about the wider church culture. All of the people in these mini scenarios have recognised pastoral ministry roles with the responsibility and additional layers of support and accountability that go alongside this. It's also worth considering what is needed to create and maintain a healthy church culture that goes beyond those formalised roles. We don't want to make safeguarding a barrier to the organic care and support networks and friendships that grow within the body of our communities, these are precious things. We don't need people to seek formal permission to invite other people for dinner or to pray for each other.

However, we do want to reduce risk and create safe communities, and modeling safe behaviours in our roles is a key way we can do this. It's part of setting that culture. When people see the care that we take and an openness and accountability in our actions, then this can send a really powerful message. How else might we shape a healthy culture through the whole church?

Before we move on from this reflection on strengths and gifts, I want to ask - how about you? What are your own strengths and gifts? Can you identify any potential areas of risk in these? How could these risks be reduced by yourself or

through the support of your wider community so that these strengths are a real blessing to be celebrated? Now, there's no obligation to share here, but if it feels comfortable to do so, we would love to hear from you. Otherwise, just take a couple of minutes to reflect.

We're almost at the end of our section on power now, and we've been coming at it from quite a cautious point of view, and that is right. Misuse of power is a cause of much pain. But, is power bad? We've got this quote from Martin Luther King Jr on the screen, it says, "Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice." It's part of a longer quote that you may have come across before. In his 1967 book 'Where do we go from Here: Chaos or Community' King writes: "Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anaemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love." In several translations of the Bible, the world word power occurs 1123 times. It's an important word in the Bible. God is often described as almighty, powerful, strong, a fortress and a deliverer. God's power is a source of hope for us, it is good, and he promises to give it to us, His people.

So power is not bad, but we have to use it well. Jeanette, a wise colleague of ours, has a safeguarding mantra that goes like this, "Hold power lightly. Use power wisely. Share power widely." It's a great policy!

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As we finish this module and before we go into our next break, let's think, how do we use power well?

As pastors, chaplains and pastoral ministers we can, to a greater or lesser extent, be seen to represent God, or at least the church, to people in our communities, the things that we do and say, the way we react, also the things we don't do and the things we say silent about will have an impact on people and send a message beyond our status as individuals. This is something we need to acknowledge and take seriously.

Imagine, for example, that somebody is experiencing domestic abuse in your community. Statistically, this is very likely to be the case. There's an appendix on domestic abuse in your handbook if you are supporting someone through this. If that individual came to you and asked you to pray, and you prayed that they would have the strength to endure, you gave them Bible verses about submission or turning the other cheek, the permanency of marriage or the importance of forgiveness, they may feel that seeking safety is going against God's will, or perhaps that they would not be supported by the church if they did seek safety or justice. What would the difference in experience be for the victim-survivor, if you just listened to them, if you gave them your time, perhaps a warm drink, asked them what they needed, offered some helpful signposting. How about if they asked you to pray and you spoke of justice, the value and dignity of

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all humanity and a God who cares for the hurting and oppressed? How might it change their situation if they came to church and saw posters about local support agencies, that yours was a community where abuse was spoken and prayed about without shame and fairly regularly, that there was a strong emphasis on safety and a clear messaging about talking about concerns?

In both of these scenarios, your words and your actions have an influence and an impact on somebody's life. That's one definition of power, having influence and impact on somebody's life, isn't it? The outcomes in each case are very different, though.

We can't help having power in our role, and it can make us a bit uncomfortable to think that we have. But we can choose to use that power well - to empower others, to point people to Jesus, to advocate for justice, for example.

So, let's finish with a short discussion around this. How could you use power well in your role? Some ideas might include that we can point people to Jesus through our words and our actions. We can use our words to build people up, to strengthen and encourage. We can connect people and help establish supportive communities. We can advocate for each other. We can amplify voices. We can move over and give our platform to somebody else. We can call out injustice. We can be part of somebody's restoration and recovery. We can enable someone to seek safety. We can be what's called a resilience resource, a safe and positive

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connection for people who've experienced adverse childhood experiences and trauma. We can model safe behaviours in our community. We can cultivate a healthy culture, and we can be a protective factor in somebody's life.

[Break 2]

OK, it's time for our second break now, and when we return, we'll go through our two final, shorter modules.

[Module 3 – Processes]

I hope you had a good break. We're now on to module three, in which we're thinking about processes. A shared understanding and clear expectations really can help your community be a safer place for all. The processes we use to protect ourselves as staff, volunteers and the people that we're serving too.

In this module, we'll be identifying the processes we need to have in place to keep our communities safer for everyone. We'll be discussing policies and procedures, codes of conduct, record keeping and referral, supervision and support. We'll start by looking at a scenario to illustrate why these different processes are so important.

As you listen, consider, what are your concerns here? What are your safeguarding responsibilities in this situation? And what processes would make this situation safer?

Here is our scenario: A parent of one of your young people comes to talk to you. They are upset and angry. Their 16-year-old was tearful and withdrawn after last Sunday's worship service, and eventually told their parent that they won't be coming to church anymore. They are not a good enough Christian, and God couldn't love someone with so little faith. After talking more, the parent found out that their child had gone to the prayer room after the main service to pray with someone about worries over their upcoming exams and some difficult relationships at school. The adult they spoke to told them the only relationship that should matter is their relationship with God, that that should be enough to sustain them in everything. They also said that anxiety is a sign that they don't trust God enough. The Bible says don't be anxious about anything so they should be obedient to this command. The adult then stood up, put both hands on the child's head, and prayed for God to forgive their sin and live a life worthy of His love.

Okay, what are your concerns here? Firstly, the child, are they ok? Being withdrawn and tearful and that they don't feel good enough to come to church are worrying signs. There might have been emotional harm here. This child has had some unhealthy and harmful messaging about themselves. We may think that, actually, this pastoral minister misrepresented God's love, and this can have a

spiritual impact on this child. There was physical contact with the child. There's manipulation. It could be that they're inducing guilt or shame.

We might have a concern that a child was in a prayer room, one to one with an adult. We can think through the power dynamics in that situation, there's that child - adult power dynamic, but there's also the dynamic of someone representing the church speaking over somebody. The scenario doesn't mention things like gender, ethnicity, language, education, ability, sexuality, but these other factors might be relevant to.

We might think about that pastoral minister, who may have had good intentions. There's no accountability for them. There's a lack of transparency, a lack of healthy boundaries. This pastoral minister might be open to allegation. What might the impact be on this minister, if they have unintentionally caused harm?

This report might make us have concerns for the wider church as well. Who else in our community may have had similar experiences?

Our second question then is, what are your safeguarding responsibilities? We can identify our responsibilities using the 5 'R's of safeguarding: The first one is 'recognise' - we want to recognise that there is a safeguarding risk. There's a potential for emotional harm to the child and for others who go to prayer ministry. Our second 'r' is respond. Want to respond well to this parent. Thank them for coming to talk to you, reassure them that you're taking it seriously. We don't want

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to minimise or excuse or say, "Oh, well, I'm sure they didn't mean it like that," and reassure them that we're going to pass on this concern.

The third 'r' is 'record'. We need to make a written record of this conversation, pass this on to your safeguarding lead. The fourth 'r' is 'report', pass on the concern to your safeguarding lead within 24 hours. And then the fifth 'r' is 'reflect'. The prayer ministry team, alongside the safeguarding lead, need to reflect on procedures around prayer ministry to make it a safe space for everyone.

Imagining that we're part of that reflection now, what processes would make that situation safer? Having clear policies and procedures around prayer ministry is really important. We can think through our physical space. We don't want any one-to-one ministry occurring behind closed doors. We've got additional considerations for safeguarding under 18s and adults at risk of harm. It may be that children only pray with their known leaders and with parental permission. A clear code of conduct for prayer ministry is needed, including some guidelines around physical touch, passing on safeguarding concerns, things to avoid such as shame or blame or telling someone what to do, for example.

We would also want safeguarding training for as wide a number of the church community as we can and also training around healthy behaviors and power

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dynamics for those in pastoral ministry. There should be support and supervision for anyone in ministry to debrief, ask questions and stay accountable.

Let's move on from that scenario to think about our processes now. First, we'll consider policies, procedures and codes of conduct.

Policies are the documents in which we lay out our commitment to the community we serve. They're informed by a few things. Firstly, the law. They should show that we comply with safeguarding legislation that is designed to keep vulnerable people safe. Secondly, our values, what's our heart, what's our aim? What kind of community do we want to be? For example, if we aspire to be a community where vulnerable people are empowered and included, our policy should reflect this. Thirdly, our practices. Our policies should be relevant to our day-to-day activities, informing anyone who reads them how we fulfill our commitments.

What's the difference between policy and procedure? So, our procedures are the practical, step-by-step ways that we fulfill our policy commitments. For example, your safeguarding policy may state that all pastoral ministers will be safely recruited. Your safer recruitment procedure will have the steps and timescales of how this happens.

Finally, codes of conduct. These should exist for every role in your church. They should lay out clear expectations for anyone who takes on that role, including

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what activities the role involves, what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, boundaries, safeguarding responsibilities, everything like that. They create a shared understanding. They don't have to be overly formal, but they should be very clear and practical. If you don't already have codes of conduct for roles in your church, I encourage you to create them alongside your teams. This will lead to some very helpful conversations, and you might be surprised about how different team members interpret the same role, collaborating on this will be a really useful exercise.

Has your organisation got these documents then? Do they reflect the reality of your pastoral ministry on a day-to-day basis? And when did you last read or review them? Have those questions in your mind and revisit them over the next week or so.

Another couple of aspects of safeguarding process is record keeping and referral. Do you know what should be included in a safeguarding record? It would be great to hear some responses from the room. We need to record the who, what, where, when of a situation, including the person's own words, as much as possible. And these should be factual documents, not based on opinion. If this is a completely new concept for you, I would encourage you to take up some foundational safeguarding training where it's explored in more detail.

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Make a record whenever you're concerned that someone isn't safe or that you're concerned for their wellbeing. Make records of each new concern or incident, don't worry about repeating yourself. We need to see patterns emerge so having multiple records about the same person can be really helpful. Don't wait to be told that someone is experiencing abuse, record any signs and indicators you notice. You may think that if something was really wrong, then the person you are ministering to would just tell you. However, there are many reasons why a person may not tell, for example, fear, pride, shame, worry about what will happen next - so make a record of any signs of harm. You need to make your record as soon as possible and pass it on to your safeguarding lead within 24 hours. We don't keep safeguarding records at home or leave them on a desk in a shared office. It'd be worth checking whether, for your church, you have a particular template or online form that you're expected to fill in with concerns. Also, are there other records you keep as part of your role? You might have a visiting book, for example, but make sure you keep safeguarding records separately from the general visiting records or entries in a shared book.

Now referral, or we sometimes say 'reporting'. If there's an immediate risk of significant harm, we call 999, it's just the same in our ministry situations as in any other part of life.

If you're worried about someone's safety and wellbeing, but there isn't an immediate risk, we still want to talk to your safeguarding lead as soon as possible, certainly within 24 hours. You may be worried about breaking the confidences of the person who has talked to you. This is natural. However, a person's safety and wellbeing is paramount and you have a responsibility in your role to pass on concerns. If you're not sure it's safeguarding, you can always talk to the lead about a situation without naming the person in the first instance.

If your safeguarding lead isn't available, then check your policy for who to contact in these circumstances, you can always call or email our helpline for advice as well.

If you're visiting someone in an institution like a hospital, care home or prison, you might also need to talk to their safeguarding lead. Check with your own safeguarding lead before sharing information more widely though.

Referrals to statutory agencies will usually go via your safeguarding lead. In brief, organisations have a responsibility to pass on any concerns that a child may be experiencing, or at risk of experiencing abuse and neglect. In fact, in Northern Ireland, it's a criminal offence in itself, not to pass on information about a crime

If our concern is about an adult's safety and wellbeing, we usually need the adult's consent to refer to outside agencies, but there are exceptions. So always get advice from your safeguarding lead.

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In the past, and sometimes still today, there has been a feeling among faith groups that they need to deal with disclosures of abuse and other safeguarding concerns 'in house'. However, not only do we have a legal duty to refer to the agencies with the expertise and remit to protect and respond, we want to create safe cultures where we are transparent and accountable and honour the bravery of victim-survivors by being honest and open, rather than trying to silence them or hide when things go wrong. Reputation is of lesser concern than people's safety, but even from the point of view of reputation, showing ourselves to be open, honest and accountable and bringing things into the light is better than operating with secrecy behind closed doors.

If you don't feel that your concern has been acted upon and a person is still at risk of harm, follow the escalation process in your safeguarding policy – this may involve bringing the concern to a regional lead or external body. All organisations should also have a whistleblowing policy that lays out the process and acknowledges the rights of people to raise a concern that their organisation may be causing harm by its action or inaction.

Our final aspects of process are supervision and support. You should always have somebody to support you in your role. You might call this person your 'line manager' or 'team leader' or something else. This is the person who you would go to if you had questions about your role, to make sure that you are equipped

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for it, that your role isn't negatively affecting your own wellbeing or anything like that. If you can't readily identify who is supporting you in your role, this is something to discuss with your church leaders or trustees.

Supervision can mean to oversee somebody's work, to watch them, to make sure that they're working safely and in line with policy, but it also refers to regular meetings to support someone in their role. This second type of supervision is really valuable for pastoral ministers. Do you have regular, scheduled meetings with someone to talk about your role? This can be a formal meeting with a set agenda, or just a monthly / six weekly coffee and chat.

Churches are relational communities, so you may well have coffee with this person most weeks. But the difference with a supervision session is that the focus is on you in your role, and they may be asking you things like, "What's working well for you? What's challenging? Is there anything you need support with? What would you like to change?" It's also an opportunity for us to be kept accountable for any actions or behaviours that may not be harmful but are unhelpful, to be respectfully challenged with support and the opportunity to grow. When this is part of how we work, it prevents the harm and hurt that can occur if such things are left unchecked. Obviously, though, we don't wait until supervision if there is a risk in someone's behaviour.

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You might also have spiritual support and supervision as part of your role. This could be with the same person or with somebody different, a spiritual director, for example. Pastoral ministry is a privilege, but it's not an easy one. It can shake our faith and leave us tired, and our church communities really need to support us in it.

[Module 4 – People]

We have reached our fourth and final module, which is 'places'. Jesus's ministry took place in a wide variety of locations: religious buildings, private homes, public spaces, urban and rural areas, and our pastoral ministry can often be the same. In this module, we're going to consider risk and risk reduction for a variety of different locations. We'll consider the particular risks and vulnerabilities associated with the context(s) in which we minister and how safer working practices can reduce these risks and make our ministry safer for ourselves and others.

It would be great to hear from you now, where does your pastoral ministry take place?

Possible answers could include: in your church building, or the space that your church rents, in community centres, in your home, in other people's homes, in institutions – schools, prisons, care homes or hospitals, on the street, in other public buildings, across a wide geographical area, or even online. All of these

spaces have their own unique dynamics. We're going to identify and discuss the safeguarding risks that we might associate with particular places, and how these can be reduced. You'll see a large number of examples in your handbook. We're going to focus on three and you can also bring in your own context too. So, remember the main categories of harm and abuse are: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, financial abuse. You might also think about exploitation and self-neglect. The safeguarding section near the beginning of your handbook can help if you need a reminder.

[Note for transcript users – all the scenarios are included here, during the webinar fewer of the given examples will be addressed and the focus will be on delegates' own contexts].

First of all, we have Blessing. Blessing regularly visits four housebound members of her church in their own homes, and occasionally others who would like support for a variety of reasons, such as bereavement, ill health or a family emergency. What safeguarding risks could arise through ministering in others' homes? And how could these risks be reduced?

Our risks for Blessing could include lone-working. Is she visiting by herself? There's potential for harm and abuse of Blessing in these situations. We need to think about her personal safety, especially when she's ministering to unknown people. How about those she is visiting? There's vulnerability due to care and

support needs or life circumstances of those who she's supporting. There is risk to them of harm and abuse by Blessing.

How could we reduce the risks for Blessing and those she's ministering to? Maybe our first consideration would be, do we have the capacity to visit in pairs? This is great for accountability and transparency and personal safety too, but I know that in some communities, this just isn't possible. If it isn't, then clear policies and procedures for lone working and accountability and support are essential. Blessing would benefit from safeguarding training, especially thinking about adults at risk of harm. Have we got a clear schedule of visiting with someone knowing where Blessing is and when to expect her back again? Simple practicalities like making sure she's got a phone and that it's charged reduce risk. Is there an emergency procedure? If she doesn't feel safe when she's visiting, what would she do?

Next, we'll consider Rita. Rita visits two local care homes every week, and is involved in prison chaplaincy once a month. Our risks for Rita could include, again, lone working. There's the potential for harm and abuse of Rita or by Rita. There's the vulnerability due to care and support needs or the life circumstances of those she's supporting. We can reduce risk by having clear reporting structures for the different institutions and church so that both can fulfill their

safeguarding responsibilities and to ensure a concern doesn't fall through the gaps in governance. We want accountability and support for Rita in this role. Again, perhaps there's capacity to visit in pairs or to clarify the arrangements in the institutions. Will there be someone with her all the time, for example, and if not, consider how we make lone working as safe as possible.

Thirdly, we have Clarence. Clarence is a street pastor. He takes teams of volunteers into the city centre every Friday and Saturday night to support people who are homeless and those coming out of the pubs and clubs.

Risks for Clarence are that he could encounter violence, and there's potential for harm and abuse of Clarence, or by Clarence, and there are also safeguarding risks for the wider team that Clarence is overseeing and supporting.

How can we reduce these risks? One way is through training for Clarence and the wider team. We need to have personal safety and emergency procedures, and make sure we've got clear lines of communication. Does the team work in pairs? Is there support and accountability for Clarence?

Next, we have Louise and Pasha. They host a small group in their home every fortnight. They have two children in primary school, and Pasha's mum lives with them as well.

In this situation, the risks could include the potential for harm and abuse of Louise, of Pasha, of Pasha's mum and of the children, or of those attending the

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group by household members. Are there any there any vulnerabilities or unhealthy behaviours in this group? There is a relative lack of accountability when groups are meeting in private homes.

How can we reduce these risks then? Well, through training. Also through having clear codes of conduct and procedures for small group leaders, especially around healthy boundaries, why and how to report concerns, confidentiality and consent. Also having support and accountability in place for them.

Next, we have Alf. Alf drives older members of his community to Sunday worship, senior lunch club and, occasionally, to medical appointments.

Our risks for this situation could include lone working. Also the potential for harm and abuse of Alf or by Alf. There is vulnerability due to care and support needs or life circumstances of those he is supporting. And we know that because Alf is driving to medical appointments, he is in something called 'Regulated Activity', which requires a higher level of criminal record check.

How can we reduce risk then? Through safer recruitment to start with, including an Enhanced Criminal Record Check that includes a check of the Barred List or PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Scheme in Scotland. Get advice from your registered / umbrella body for Criminal Record Checks about this. Then you to check Alf's driving licence and insurance documents to make sure he is able legally able to do this work. We need to give him support and accountability too.

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Is there anyone he doesn't feel safe or comfortable to transport alone? And this could be through worries about their behaviour or worries about their physical frailty, for example. Has Alf had some safeguarding training, especially around recognising and reporting harm? People often talk while they're on a journey, don't they? He may hear things in conversation or see signs that cause him to worry, and we want to equip him to know what to do in this situation.

Next, we have Alain. Alain is a youth pastor. He runs a weekly evening 'hang out' in the church hall. He facilitates youth Alpha once a year, and he wants to start one-to-one mentoring and discipleship with the young people next term.

The risks in this situation could include the other people using the hall. Who else is using the hall at the same time that this group is running and may therefore have access to the young people. There's potential for harm and abuse again, of Alain, or by Alain. The young people in the group are vulnerable due to their age. We need to think as well about who else helps at this group? How have they got involved? Have they been safely recruited? One-to-one mentoring of under eighteens needs really careful thought. There're several additional areas of risk here.

How can we reduce risk? We can risk assess all of the activities, including risk assessing the venue itself. Then there is the safer recruitment of Alain and the other volunteers. We should provide safeguarding training for all of them,

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focusing on children and young people, but also training around healthy cultures and understanding spiritual abuse for Alain. There needs to be support and accountability for him too. There should be additional careful planning, if the church is considering one-to-one meetings with young people. Think about, what's its purpose? What are the different layers of accountability for those involved? Choosing an open, transparent place with others around for these meetings. Of course obtaining parental consent. Everyone involved needs a code of conduct. The church needs to take time giving clear explanations of what this is for the young people and their families, with explicit communication that this is optional. The meetings themselves need clear boundaries of time and thought given to boundaries of communication and confidentiality. Alain and any others involved need to take part in regular reviews and supervision.

And finally, Donna. Donna volunteers at the food bank hosted at her church as part of the team welcoming guests and offering signposting and pastoral support. What are the risks here? As with our other situations, there is potential for harm and abuse of Donna, or by Donna. There are personal safety concerns, especially with unknown people. There is vulnerability due to care and support needs or life circumstances of those she's supporting. There's potential for over involvement and blurred boundaries, and also for Donna to advise beyond her expertise and capacity.

So how can we reduce these risks? We can do this through support and accountability for Donna. Also through safeguarding training, especially around adults at risk of harm, signs and indicators of abuse, and referring concerns. It would be beneficial to make links with other local agencies who provide specialist support so Donna can signpost to those with appropriate resources and expertise.

So now, just take a moment to think about your own context. What are the safeguarding risks where you minister and how could you reduce them? Consider your location, the groups you're working with, support and accountability, personal safety and any training needed.

Remember what we said at the beginning of the webinar that, as organisations, we also have a duty to safeguard our staff and volunteers. So, safeguarding involves keeping ourselves and our teams safe too. In all contexts, ask yourself these questions: Firstly, do I feel safe? Is the level of vulnerability comfortable for me? If not, please don't do it. Your church should not be asking you to do things that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. This is official permission to say no! What would need to change for you to feel differently? Would it be more support, clearer procedures, more training, or would nothing make a difference? Who can you talk to about this? Secondly, would I be happy to ask somebody else to do

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this? If not, then it's probably not okay for me to be doing it either. And then, thirdly, who's supporting me? Who am I accountable to? Who do I go to with questions or concerns?

And finally, am I sufficiently equipped? Equipped physically: do I have a phone for lone working, for example, the right insurance for when I'm driving? Intellectually: do I know what is expected of me, have I had sufficient training? Emotionally, in terms of support, capacity and rest. Spiritually, how's my own relationship with God? Where does my pastoral support come from?

As we come to the end of our session, let's circle back to where we started and reflect on what we've learned. We've identified that safeguarding is integral to pastoral ministry. We are safeguarding those to whom we are ministering (with particular responsibilities towards vulnerable groups) and ourselves and our teams too.

When we act to protect, and create safer cultures, we are acting as shepherds, bringing people into green pastures and beside quiet waters. We can enable people to come to Jesus without barriers, so he can refresh their souls.

We need to build in time for Jesus to minister to us too. Jesus rested, and he spent time alone with God to sustain his ministry, and we need to do the same. We need to remember to lean on the Good Shepherd as we take care of his

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sheep. He says to us, "Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Can we model being in that place of safety and rest, so that we can continue to serve without burning out, but also so that others can learn how to receive safety and restoration too?

So, as a final reflection to encourage us as we go, what sustains you when you are weary? And how do you rest?

[Thank you and feedback]

As we draw to a close now, we'd like you to pause and take a moment to consider what you have learned and how you can apply this to your practice as a pastoral minister moving forward.

Thank you for your participation in this Safeguarding in Pastoral Ministry training. We would really value your honest feedback, please complete the form and help us equip, empower and encourage more delegates in the future. Thank you.