

Transcript for Safeguarding Leads

[Introduction]

Hello, and welcome to our Safeguarding Leads webinar. This webinar is two sessions, with each session lasting for two and a half hours. We'll have a five-minute break around halfway through each session. 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 call our helpline 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 call our safeguarding helpline.

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 everything that you do, thank you. I hope that the message you get today is that you never have to do safeguarding alone. As we begin, I just want to tell you about our helpline; you may want to pop the number into your phone now if it's not already there. The helpline 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- nine to five Monday to Friday for those regular questions about policies, guidance and process 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.

This is a UK-four-nations-friendly course. The principles for Safeguarding Leads that we cover throughout the webinar are applicable across all four nations and we will highlight any terminology that is nation specific.

We have four outcomes that we want to achieve in this course - we want to think about your role in the safeguarding context, understand good recording practice with statutory services and referral thresholds and finally, knowing how to embed safeguarding culture into your organisation.

[Module One]

So, as we begin module one, you may want to just think for a moment what title you are given in your organisation.

Sometimes, different organisations will use the term 'person in charge of safeguarding' or 'designated person for safeguarding', so there may be different terminology used.

Generally, we use the phrase 'Safeguarding Lead' as an overall point of reference. It's straightforward, and the Charity Commission in England and Wales uses that term. Scotland

and Northern Ireland don't have a preferred term, but they do assume someone will have managerial or supervisory oversight of safeguarding and OSCR [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator] Scotland recognise procedures should be in place for all to be accountable, and that you must have reporting structures. So having a key person, whatever title they're given, is central to that need. I wonder, as you come to this course, whether you are someone who is new to the role of leading on safeguarding or deputising, or whether you're experienced and doing this as a refresher.

Let's consider what this role involves and what's expected of us. Firstly, we should act as an advocate on behalf of people who come to our services and activities, secondly, we need to act independently at times and be prepared to report concerns to the local authority, or even to the police. Thirdly, we need to oversee the preparation, review and implementation of safeguarding policies and ensure that they're regularly reviewed every year. Finally, our job is to lead the way in

safeguarding. We mentioned earlier that this is a four-UK-nations course, so to support, this you'll find that the handbook contains a lot of information about safeguarding law across the four nations of the UK, the different statutory authorities; the agencies that you may have to connect with, and their roles and names across the four nations of the UK. Please do use this reference material to refine your own understanding and refer to as and when questions arise. It also gives details on the charity regulators across the UK as well.

As we look at the specifics of your role, I wonder what your current worries or concerns are. If you're someone new to the role, you may be feeling quite daunted, you may think it's going to be an overwhelming task. If you're more experienced, you may already have some good procedures in place and some good mechanisms for managing the role. Or you may want to review some of those mechanisms as you go through this course. I wonder too, if some of you will have some positive examples of where your lead role has worked well that you

could share with others. Peer learning is so valuable, so we welcome this throughout the webinar.

The role of Safeguarding Lead is certainly never going to be easy, and we're here to support you in that role and of course, as we said, you can use our helpline if you get stuck with problems and questions around this role.

Remember, just because you've taken on this role of safeguarding lead or deputy, it does not mean that you must carry the load alone. Safeguarding really is everyone's business. Of course, your role means you are the one 'taking the lead', but part of leading means encouraging everyone to be the eyes and ears of your organisation. You will be helping others notice things that are difficult, uncomfortable, concerning, and building a culture where they willingly come to you with those thoughts. You cannot be everywhere at once, you cannot be present at every aspect of the projects/activities that go on within your charity, but you can be the person that people can get in touch with and share their concerns. This course is to help you on the journey because this is a journey

for all of us. However long we've been in the role, 'creating safer places' is a journey, not a destination. We will never be able to say it's ticked off, finalised or sorted. We're constantly learning about how to make this role work in practice, so there's no pressure to get it all right immediately. If you are new, what is important is simply taking the first step. For the more experienced, it's about identifying the next step - adding a little bit more knowledge and experience. Step by step, one task at a time. Of course, it's not an isolated role and we have to operate within a structure that overlaps significantly with other roles. You will have to liaise with other people at different times, for different reasons. Some of those interactions will be with those within your own organisation, some interaction will be external. So internally, we want to consistently communicate the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Some of you, as a charity or a faith group, may be linked with a wider network, denomination, or umbrella body. If so, they may well have guidance and policies they expect you to follow as a Safeguarding Lead. Similarly, they might have resources to

help and support you as well. Within your actual organisation, other people will be involved in running things. You may have a large group of staff, or you may be small and entirely dependent on volunteers. You will certainly have people designated as trustees or Board of Trustees. They may have again, different names for example, elders or deacons. Others may have governance responsibilities with no established titles. These are the people who have a statutory duty regarding safeguarding from the point of view of the charity regulators. The regulators would expect the trustees to hold an overall governance view of safeguarding, so you as a safeguarding lead or deputy do need to make sure that one of your board is willing to become a designated trustee. This person should take a particular interest in your work and be someone you can turn to for advice. You won't necessarily tell them details of any case, but simply sharing that you're dealing with a particular case and need a little bit of support can make a real difference to your emotional and mental wellbeing. Other individuals will play a role in leading different parts of your organisation. Your

job is to liaise with them, and talk about how safeguarding applies to their particular activity.

You may also want to work alongside people involved in recruitment. Safer recruitment is a vital part of how we make our culture a better, healthier place. Safeguarding applies to all of our workers; our unpaid workers, or volunteers and our paid workers, the staff. Safer recruitment is an important tool to utilise at all levels of our organisations. It's designed to protect our service users, the people who come to take part in our services or activities in our organisations. We want them to feel safe when they interact with us. As you can see, there are differences between these different roles, but they all overlap with safeguarding. This means that we have to communicate well internally in order for our safeguarding efforts to be effective.

Let's consider the external connections that interact with our role as Safeguarding Lead. This might include specialist charities, like Thirtyone:eight and community support groups of

all kinds. Part of our job as Safeguarding Lead is to find out what exists in our geographical area, or our local authority area, and to be informed what groups deal with aspects of safeguarding that we can signpost people to. Another external connection is the charity regulator – the governing bodies associated with our organisations. You also need to consider the local authority, children's social care, adult social care and education. If you have schools nearby, you may want to make links with them. In the background of that is the policy and research that informs the safeguarding standards we need to comply with. No standard safeguarding policy, either the template ones we have at Thirtyone:eight, or in any charity or organisation, is created on a whim. It's built on government legislation and guidance, which is itself born out of research into issues that affect children and adults at risk of harm. You will come have contact with some of these external groups, directly or indirectly, while you are in this role.

In the same way our policy documents are based on law and guidance, we also don't have to think up definitions or best

practice by ourself. Part of your role is to take these principles and contextualise them for your organisation.

In thinking about the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy role, let's understand and accept that it can be quite complex. Many of you will have skills from your lived experience, your professional life, family life, and from reading from training.

Most people who come into this role don't do so with a safeguarding background. So, while that may be a useful addition, it isn't essential. Skills that are fundamental to this role include being a good listener, or having strong administration skills. You may be excellent at managing other people, or encouraging others to be involved and aware, you may also be somebody confident in dealing with difficult conversations.

Which of those are your skills? What other skills can you identify? Where are you feeling skilled or under skilled? Are there ways you can address the areas you feel are missing? Could you have a Deputy – if you haven't already got one – who is strong in the areas you're weaker? Could you, as a Deputy, support the lead person by applying your skills to the

wider role of Safeguarding Lead? Could your organisation agree to pay for you to go on extra training? Could you have a mentor who has been or is currently a Safeguarding Lead?

We can also think about developing our capacity, by which we mean the time that we have available, as well as our skill set.

We can only do what we're able to do in the time we have, so we may need to manage the expectations of others if they're

requiring too much of us. Some of you may be in a large

charitable organisation where this is part of a paid role, but

many of you will be voluntary and that will influence your

capacity and availability. If you're a volunteer, your time is a gift

to your organisation. But for all of us, paid or voluntary, we

need to think about efficiency - how we manage our load. We

need to work smarter, not harder. What work can be shared

with others? Can you simplify any of your processes?

It's worth taking a moment to take stock. What do you already

know? For instance, do you know your local authority website

and the route for reporting concerns to them? Are you a

member of Thirtyone:eight? If so, you can access a lot of

information on our Knowledge Hub. Other websites such as NSPCC and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures app can be a wonderful resource. What connections do you already have with those holding overlapping roles internally and outside of your organisation? What connections might you need to make? What information do you need to find out, for example, is it helpful to identify a domestic abuse service in your area before an issue arises? How does your role fit with other leadership roles in your organisation? Are you part of a team? Do you use support from a wider network? In your handbook, there is an audit tool that will help you to think through these questions. The answers you put in the audit will help you focus on what parts of the Safeguarding Lead role are most urgent for you to address. So again, it's thinking just about focusing on two or three of those issues at a time to make progress. The audit tool is designed to break down the complexity of the role. It thinks about your skills, your capacity, your knowledge and understanding the role of others, and it asks you to try to analyse whether you are on red, amber, or green with each of

these: Red represents that this is an area you need to develop and is a priority to address. Amber represents that you have some elements, but improvement is needed, for instance, you may have a policy, but it's not been reviewed for two or three years. Green represents a level of confidence or completion of task in that area – these are areas which don't currently need further development. At the end of this audit exercise, you should have a more concrete understanding of where you can focus your attention as safeguarding lead.

We recommend having a role profile and an agreement on the time commitments that are expected. Having this clarity means that there's shared expectations between the safeguarding lead and the leadership team. Considering our role, looking at our self-audit and the connections we have and need to make should give us what we need to be formulating an action plan. But remember what we've said about this being a journey, so don't try to do everything at once.

Of course, our role does involve overseeing the policy. That includes making sure that everyone on the leadership knows

what that policy is and where to find it, and that it must be reviewed annually. You will need also to coordinate training. That doesn't mean you've got to present the training yourself, but you're responsible for identifying who in your organisation needs to do foundation and advanced safeguarding training, and makes sure they do it. You should also keep a record of dates so it can be updated as recommended (currently every three years). As an indication, anybody doing face to face work with children or young people, or with any adults at risk of harm and abuse, must attend training. Various training providers exist; your local authority, Thirtyone:eight, and several other charities.

Another non-negotiable of your role is record keeping, but as we said earlier, this might be where a deputy can help if they're gifted in admin. You need to think that through what records need to be kept and where they can be securely stored.

You certainly need to think about how you coordinate your response to safeguarding concerns. So, for instance, how do people know that they come to you with a concern as the

safeguarding lead or deputy? What information is out there that really makes your position in the organisation clear to everybody in your organisation? Do you have concern forms? Do you have a safeguarding email address? Do you have a separate phone line that people can call? It's important that we keep any concern forms, information from emails, etc. in as secure a way as possible. In the future, that record could be needed by a social worker, or the police, or even by courts. That means our system should be clear, organized, and accessible for if/when a local authority needed to see it. If we keep records online or written records, it's good practice to cross reference those records, so one will lead you to the other. Bear in mind that you won't always hold this role, so in the future, someone else may need to be able to understand the information as comprehensively as you do. Whether we've got something online or on paper, both of those need to be secure and of course, you need to remind your trustees that they have ultimate responsibility for safeguarding, so they should support you in all aspects of your role.

On the other side, it's worth also mentioning what our role does not entail. This is very important because we need to think about safeguarding ourselves as well as everybody else. If you're in a paid role, you may want to think what other responsibilities you need to balance the safeguarding role with. If you're voluntary, you need to again recognise as we've said that your time is a gift. How do you balance this volunteering with your other life responsibilities? If you're part of a large organisation, you may be able to develop a safeguarding team of three or four people which includes the Lead, the Deputy, somebody who does all the criminal record checking work as a third person and a fourth who supports safer recruitment processes. What you do not have to do is to work excessively, work yourself into the ground and become burnt out. You don't have to do everything yourself; you do not have to know everything about safeguarding, indeed, none of us can. When it comes to safeguarding, we're all on a learning journey. It's a constantly evolving area. Every time a new case makes the headlines, we learn something new, or we should. Every time

the government writes another report from a high-profile case, we learn something from it, we're all learning the whole time. You don't have to do this job without support, because it can be an emotional weight at times. Identify places you could get support. Maybe in your area, there are counseling options you can access. Maybe your network, or wider group that you belong to, could offer support in some way. There's also a list of people who are trained counselors on the British Association for counselors. Sometimes that emotional burden can be particularly heavy if we have had to report, for instance, about somebody that we've known for a long time, somebody we see as a trusted colleague, or even as a friend. And yet someone has brought us an allegation or concern about that person's behaviour that we must respond to. You will need to think about your own emotional safety at such a time.

Another thing your role does not include is to be available to your organisation on call 24/7. This, again, is very important.

Look after your time. You are allowed to have a life. That's another value of having a Deputy as well as a Lead so that you

can tell each other for instance, when you're having a weekend away, or when you're away on holiday for a week, or simply when you're having downtime and don't wish to be disturbed, and then that other person can make themselves available or signpost people in your organisation to our helpline. A healthy safeguarding culture includes how we care for ourselves, which in turn leads to better working practice in our organisation.

However, the role does imply that we do need to keep up to date with safeguarding information, but this responsibility can be shared between the Lead, the Deputy, and the trustees. You can sign up to regular updates from Thirtyone:eight or NSPCC. You can also be aware of keeping an eye on the media. So, for instance, at the end of last year, the IICSA report issued their final report after many years work. That's the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. With those reports, it's helpful to read the executive summary at the beginning and read the recommendations or findings. That helps you be prepared and informed for learning that will inform upcoming policy.

Our role must never be a token role in our organisation. Your job will be to make sure that your organisation takes your role very seriously, as a living foundation stone for a healthy culture in your organisation. As workers in safeguarding we must recognise, too, that we can never eliminate every risk. Our job is to put in place policies and procedures to minimise those risks as far as possible.

Even with the best policies and processes in place, things still go wrong. If you have a case, which has been difficult, it's helpful to have someone who can debrief with you. So maybe somebody to do with recruitment, or a pastor, leader or manager within your organisation, or a line manager. Please, of course, do not share information about an actual case with that person, but there's great value in unpacking your feelings, learning points and pressure you felt. Putting a plan that prevents overwhelm is always better than becoming overburdened and unable to sustain the role.

Aside from this role, what sort of things do you do in life to help look after yourself when you're feeling pressurised? Do you

run? Or are you someone who curls up on the sofa with a book, or with a good TV show or film? Or do you like walking out in the fresh air? Or do you have pets to help you unwind. There are all kinds of healthy things we do to de-stress. Take advantage of those relaxing activities to make your role sustainable.

Another factor that impacts how effective we can be in this role is the way in which our attitudes and values impact our decision making, even (and especially) when we're unaware. There's a helpful tool we use called 'social graces'. It takes the letters in the word 'graces' to identify social characteristics. G, is used for gender and geography. In other words, our gender may impact our response to, and geography, where we grew up, where we're living now, where we've come from will also be part of our identity and that of others. Then R, our race, our religion, those things certainly impact our response to different situations.

Then the A is age, ability, appearance. C we think about social class and culture. E, we think about ethnicity, education,

employment, and the S, sexuality, sexual orientation, spirituality.

All of these aspects of life will bring to the surface our own attitudes and values, because all those things have contributed to how we feel about different situations that we come across and, more fundamentally, will form our social identity. They will also signal potential bias that we may have. We want to be able to ask ourselves challenging questions.

I'm going to read a statement and I want you to think how you react to this statement. Would you think yes, that's okay, or no, that's not okay or would you be in the middle or not sure. Here's the first statement: A man has brought his new girlfriend along to church. He's been divorced for 18 months, and there were rumors that his last wife left him because he had hit her on one occasion.

This scenario is asking you to think how you would feel about this person coming to your church or your organisation? Is that okay? Whether consciously or not, our thoughts around relationships will colour our response. Consider what you feel

about marriage and divorce. What do we feel about that rumour about that his wife had left him because he hit her on one occasion. Our views on marriage, relationships, domestic abuse will all interact here. While it looks like this is a safeguarding issue, can we hold in mind that it was a rumour? Is there any evidence for that? On a practical level, our job would be to look at our safeguarding file and see if we had anything on record about this man, or his wife, or this new girlfriend - have they accessed our organisation for anything in the past? Does anyone else know any of these people involved? Beyond that, the key thing is to recognise our own reaction and personal opinions. And think about how that might impact how we respond.

Here's another example. Someone is attending a course at your organisation, and they disclose that they're about four months pregnant, then you notice that this woman is smoking outside during the break. So again, do you think it's okay, not okay, not sure? Well, this one will bring out our own attitude to smoking in general, and to pregnancy. We're going to think how

that will impact how we speak to that person, whether we mention this or not, and it may depend how long you've known them, how long they've been attending this course. All kinds of things will impact how we respond to that, but our job is to know ourselves and recognise our reactions so that we don't respond in a skewed or harmful way.

Here's another example. A 15-year-old presents as female at home and at school, but they wish to be male when they attend the youth group. Their parents are unaware of this situation, what do you do? Again, a difficult one that for us will bring to the surface our own attitudes about gender, about transgender, about young people and their access to information around this, about family life in general, about young people and the difficulties that young people face growing up in today's world.

So how would we feel about that situation?

Here's another one to think about. A 13-year-old girl is self-harming on a regular basis. She says that her parents are the cause of her pain and sometimes she has ideas of suicide. You also believe that her parents are first generation immigrants

and have lower English proficiency. Is this situation okay? Not okay? We're not sure? Well, that's certainly going to be 'not okay', it sounds very distressing, doesn't it. But again, it will bring to the surface our own views or knowledge about self-harm, about family life, about suicide. These are difficult, tough situations to think about. Would your understanding of the parents' background affect your response? The girl may be struggling with a clash of cultural experiences and expectations, or she may not. We can't assume that this is part of her story nor assume that this is all of it. There are practical elements to consider – will social services or other support agencies need to engage an interpreter for any meetings with the family? Could the parents' experiences of authorities in the UK or country of birth affect their response? When responding to any situation, it's important as Safeguarding Leads that we do the two activities here – stripping back the information to identify if someone is at risk of harm and then reflecting on the wider situation to respond in the best way we can. In all of these examples, there are moral dilemmas that these

statements raise, issues where we would have to examine our own thinking and feelings about them before we took any action, but also safeguarding implications that we have to untangle from our own histories and opinions. We need to be particularly mindful of attitudes and values that impinge on our own responses to safeguarding in the spaces we're responsible for.

Think back to those scenarios, what was your gut response? Did anything make you uncomfortable? There are lots of local authorities who offer training on unconscious bias and there are online courses that you can access easily. Again, consider what would be helpful for you in terms of your own understanding of self. That brings us to the end of this module. We've looked at your role, what it might entail and what areas need your immediate attention. We have thought about your well-being, the importance of self-care, and we thought a little bit about our own attitudes and values.

[Module Two]

We're now going to begin module two. In this module, we'll think about the theological or ethical context of safeguarding as a Safeguarding Lead, then we're going to think about legislation and guidance, and we're going to look at the 10 standards we must structure all elements of our safeguarding. So, beginning with our theological and ethical context. Why does this matter? From a Christian perspective, there are several examples in the bible of words which mean 'to safeguard' or 'security against danger'. That suggests that the principles of safeguarding are reflected in biblical texts. One example of this is Psalm 121, where it talks about God being the 'keeper of the House of Israel'. If we also think about Genesis 1, that people were made in the image of God, we can see that Christians believe in the inherent dignity and worth of every human – if all reflect the image of God, then surely it is a priority to keep all people safe, as God does in Psalms. The Bible is the living word of God, his heart for justice is reflected in every aspect of safeguarding. Applying biblical principles to safeguarding practices enables

us to create a fairer and more just life for all and helps us keep sight of the bigger reasons many people choose to invest time into safeguarding those in their care. It is the life-giving words of the Bible that point to God's solution to restore a broken and hurting world. I'm sure many of you from other faith groups will relate to those same principles, and humanistic thinking as well, about valuing the life and dignity of every individual person.

Christians and others believe that we show our love for God when we keep His commands and keep people safe. We are obeying the Bible's instruction, to act justly, love mercifully, and walk humbly before our God. Jesus was concerned about those who were not kept safe, the poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed. He also condemned those who seek to remove a person's worth and dignity. In Matthew, Jesus said, two things about worth and dignity - whoever welcomes a child in his name welcomes himself, and that if we cause 'any of these little ones to stumble', it will be better for that person to have a millstone hung around their neck and be thrown into the sea.

That gives us a sense of the importance Jesus put on keeping people safe.

Similarly, what do you think about when you hear the word ethics? How does that apply to safeguarding? Maybe give yourself a moment's pause to reflect on that word and what comes to your mind. Some of the words you may have thought about would be justice, morality, safety, person-centered, listening to survivors, accountability, human rights, kindness, righting wrongs, stopping abuse and harm, people's worth and dignity, inclusion, equality, being valued, do no harm principle, balancing of power dynamics, honesty. That's a few ideas you may well have other things you've thought of yourself.

Essentially, ethics are the moral principles that govern a person's, or an organisation's, behaviour. It creates a framework for what we see as right and wrong and therefore signposts to why safeguarding is important. The Care Act in England and Wales in 2014 has an ethical approach built into its foundations. While the legislative jurisdiction belongs to England and Wales, the ethical framework is useful for

everyone to consider in relation to our safeguarding practice.

So here are some points from that framework: Firstly, what does the terminology in the framework mean? It discusses empowerment, which is people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions, and informed consent which is giving people information to allow them to make choices around their own life, both of these are important ethical concepts. Secondly, we should have a focus on prevention because, of course, it's better to take action before harm occurs. That means putting in place safeguards and doing things like risk assessments that will prevent harm ever happening. Thirdly is an awareness of proportionality, which is making the least intrusive response, that is appropriate to the risk that's presented, and then stepping back when we have put safeguards in place. Fourthly, we should consider protection, or our immediate response for those in greatest need. It may involve supporting them or representing them, but whatever the method we adopt, we should make sure they are protected.

Number five is partnership, which can take many forms but

often includes finding solutions for people through local community services. Communities have a key part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting, neglect and abuse. It is very important that in faith communities and charities, we look around our geographical area and community to see what other expertise is there that we can draw on, and to use the statutory authorities when we need to. The sixth principle is about personalisation, making safeguarding personal. This means we place the person at the center of everything, recognising that they are the expert in their own lives. It requires us carefully, and attentively listening to what a person wants, to what they think will help them, support them and keep them safe. The seventh principle is accountability and transparency in all of our safeguarding practice. This is something we'll return to at the end of the course. Accountability means that we must, as a charity, be registered with our charity regulator. They are the regulatory bodies who oversee all charitable activities and, as faith communities are often registered charities, they have to be accountable to external regulators, as well as to our own

organisation or structure. There are three regulators in the UK with specific jurisdictions - the Charity Commission for England and Wales accountable to Westminster, the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland accountable to Stormont, and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator [OSCR], accountable to Holyrood. The details of this are in your handbook. If your organisation is operational across more than one UK jurisdiction, you do need to be aware of exactly to whom you are accountable, irrespective of which regulator you're registered with. If there is a serious concern, or what's known in Scotland as a notifiable event, it's ultimately the organisation's trustees who are accountable to the charity regulator to report these, not the Safeguarding Lead. This is why Safeguarding Leads/Deputies should work with a trustee willing to take a particular interest in safeguarding. However, if your organisation is dealing with a significant safeguarding concern, even if the legal responsibility doesn't sit with you, you may well still be involved in preparing the report for the

regulator, together with the trustee/s. Reports like these are one of several reasons why record keeping is so vital.

Each of the three charity regulators have similar functions, but some of the details are slightly different. The legislation underpinning each is different, and you need to make sure that you know what your regulator/s require – you can find this information on their websites.

While we do have a duty to pass on information to relevant people, it's the role of statutory bodies and regulators to investigate, not ours as Safeguarding Lead. First and foremost, reports or concerns will be passed on to the police or social services, depending on the situation but especially if it involves a crime, and when anyone is at immediate risk of harm. If it's serious, as well as reporting it to the regulators, we may also need to report it to our insurance company.

Across the four UK nations, there are different pieces of legislation, as we've said, and we need to make sure that we

look at what is relevant to us and there are key pieces of information in the handbook that will help you with this. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) is a key piece of work in England that you will need to look at if this is where your organisation works. It's a guide for interagency working to protect the welfare of children. This is where you'll find the categories and definitions of abuse, and it enables agencies to map out how they can work together to keep children safe. As part of that, it's important to know that faith-based organisations and charities are not exempt from the expectation to work in partnership with other agencies. Another key piece of legislation is the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) that came in the wake of the Soham Murders. Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells were killed by Ian Huntley, and this Act came into being, following the Bichard Inquiry. This led to the establishment of the Independent Safeguarding Authority, which ultimately led to what we now know as DBS – the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Children Act (1989) and (2004), gave us the guiding principles that the welfare of the

child should be paramount, and set out parameters for Child Protection investigations under Section 47, assessing children in need under Section 17, and care proceedings under Section 31. Those are things that social workers will need to know about. The Care Act (2014) is a huge piece of legislation because it was the first statutory guidance around caring for adults. Prior to this there was just good practice guidance, but this gives key principles and ways of working with adults at risk, and adults with care and support needs. The Welsh legislation is very similar, key legislation it's worth knowing about includes Working Together to Safeguard People (2018) and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014), Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act (2006).

In Northern Ireland, key legislation includes Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2017), The Children's Order (Northern Ireland) (1995), Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland [SBNI] Procedures

Manual, and the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Order (2007).

In Scotland, legislation that informs your practice includes Children and Young People Act (2014), the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021), the Disclosure Bill (2020), Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act (2007) and Code of Practice (April 2014). Keep in mind that in Scotland, there are different age thresholds for childhood or adulthood depending on the context and which piece of Scottish law applies. For child protection purposes, a child is seen as someone under the age of 18 in all nations of the UK. The law in Scotland holds more nuance when it comes to 16–18-year-olds, so again, do make sure in Scotland that you become aware of those details. The Protection of Children in Scotland Act (1995), and the Children and Young People Act (2014) defines a child as being under 18 years old, but the Children's Hearings Act (2011) defines a child as 16 years old or under, unless the child's hearing process has started before their 16th birthday, then it can run until they're 18 years old. Furthermore,

under the Children and Young people (2014) Act, people who are 16 years old to 18 years old can also be considered under adult protection legislation and yet, the moment they enter a school building, they're also considered children, which can be confusing. In Scotland and Wales, 16 and 17 year olds can vote in elections (devolved national and local elections), until February 2023, could get married with their parents' consent, can drive a car and they can have control over their own finances, so at that later stage of teenage life, the parameters around who is 'a child' are less clearly defined.

The ten standards framework is another way we can develop good safeguarding practice.

The first standard is governance. We want to create environments with strong policies and procedures that can actually prevent much harm and abuse from occurring. Our governance also informs how we respond to abuse as and when it does occur. Your Board of Governors or Board of Trustees is appointed to have that legal responsibility for how a

charity is organised, in line with the guidance and expectations of the regulator.

Number two is the culture of an organisation, and how it sets the tone for safeguarding. Culture can be a difficult concept to pin down, but what we mean by that is simply 'the way things are done around here'. It includes the customs, values and beliefs that are evident in those working in – and on behalf of – the organisation, and its activities. The development of a safer and open culture helps everyone and includes things such as having open communication, the ability to talk about anything that worries us, accountability structures that are clear and well established, and agreed processes for decision making.

Number three, our safeguarding policy. This is the document that sets the standards and expectations for your organisation around safeguarding and outlines your commitment towards making your setting a safer place. You'll remember we've already said that we don't just make these up without thought, we use what is already in place, we can get guidance from other organisations like Thirtyone:eight that already have

template policies that we can then adjust and make personal to our setting.

Number four is safer recruitment, which is about choosing the right staff and volunteers for your organisation. This includes deciding and defining people's role descriptions, doing checks, and making sure ongoing support and supervision is in place for all workers and volunteers. Following a safer recruitment process for all roles within your organisation minimises the likelihood of those seeking to harm or abuse others getting access to vulnerable groups. A great resource here is the workers Pocket Guide, which is available on our Thirtyone:eight website. Safer recruitment is a critical part of creating a safer environment and although there's significant overlap between whoever heads that up and the Safeguarding Lead role, it can and often should be held by another individual. We do have a separate training course on this topic.

Leading on from that, number five is training and awareness. Safeguarding training will equip and empower your staff and volunteers to know, understand and have confidence in how to

respond well to safeguarding issues and work within appropriate boundaries, which can reduce the risk of abuse occurring. So have a think about what groups of people in your charity or organisation may need to be trained. Anyone who does face-to-face work with children, young people or adults at risk must have safeguarding training. What other training might be helpful? Remember to look broadly at what you as an organisation should be providing to support people to work well. Number six is working safely, which includes doing risk assessments and keeping them up to date and accurately reflecting your current activities. Safer working also means your organisation should promote and follow practices that enable your workers to run activities safely, develop healthy relationships, and minimise any risk of false accusation. This includes how we communicate, and the use of online or digital forms of communication and codes of conduct.

Number seven is managing workers. All workers – paid and voluntary – should be appropriately managed, supervised and supported in all organisations, and there needs to be clear

accountability structures. This is particularly so for those working directly with children, young people, or adults at risk of harm. All workers should be well supervised by a named individual, and good communication between worker and supervisor is essential. This is an area that some churches and charities have not been good at in the past, so think carefully about how we can establish clarity around that for our workers, making sure that when we first accept a volunteer, that inform them who leads this team, and confirm that they're happy to work under their guidance? Make it clear that team leaders should meet regularly with that team to check how things are going.

The next principle, number eight, is about partnership working. Working in partnership can cover anything from an organisation letting out your premises to other people or other groups, to working together, either within the same region or outside of the UK to fund, support or deliver activities. It's important to make sure that your partners hold the same safeguarding standards as your organisation.

Number nine, responding to concerns as a Safeguarding Lead.

This is a key standard for you as an individual in this role, but also more widely. In fact, all staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk must know how to respond to a concern. This is the one area where basic and appropriate training must be given.

Number 10 is about working with people who could pose a risk.

Some organisations, especially churches, and other faith groups are places that are open to everybody. They are open to the public to walk in, where children and adults can mix freely and join in activities together in proximity. This reality means we should also recognise that this means that people who pose a risk to others have access to vulnerable groups. It might include those who have been convicted of offences, including sexual offences, relating to children or adults.

Research tells us that those people are likely to look closely at faith organisations as possible places where they can find a way in and expect a warm welcome, and then become embedded into that group before grooming somebody to

abuse. So, any ongoing risks need to be managed effectively, and those who pose a risk need to be appropriately supported as well. Again, there's a bit of guidance in your handbook to help you reflect on that and we do have another training course on managing risk. If you do find yourself in that situation of somebody with a history of offending coming to your organisation, always get help to assess and manage risk. You can phone our helpline or seek advice from your own overarching network or denomination or leadership. You will need to make a contract or agreement with that person, and you will get guidance and help from other people in how to do that.

Throughout this module, we've thought about the theological and ethical context and framework, about unconscious bias, about legislation and guidance and the regulators across the four nations and we have looked briefly at 10 standards as a framework.

[Session Two]

That brings us to our second session. In module three, we will look at good recording practice, referring to statutory authorities, what this looks like and what we do need to know or not need to know, and exploring referral thresholds where we'll look at a couple of scenarios to help us with that. Then finally in module four, we'll discuss how we embed a safeguarding culture that's robust enough to work in hybrid (i.e., online and in-person) environments, crisis management, ongoing training and identifying next steps both personally and for your organisation.

[Module Three]

So, let's jump into three very important aspects of the Safeguarding Lead role: good recording, referring to statutory services, and exploring referral thresholds. Thinking about record keeping, I wonder whether you currently keep good records of concerns? Perhaps your answer is an immediate 'yes' or 'no', or maybe it's even an 'I'm beginning to'. This may depend on how long you've been in the role, who was doing the

role before you, what procedures they had got in place for record keeping and reporting. You may have to adjust that, and you may decide to improve the system. You will all be working from different kinds of buildings with different resources at your disposal, so we do know that a proportional approach will look different for each of you, but remember that records of concerns must be kept, and that means little concerns, as well as serious ones. Secondly, I wonder if you would describe yours as being 'kept in an appropriate format'? You may want to say yes or no, or you're not sure because you haven't yet looked at them if you are very new to the role. Again, one of your actions must be to look at what systems are already in place. Are they organised in a format that's easy to follow, which you can make sense of and use? The third question to consider is, do we complete records in a timely manner, once concerns are reported to us? So have you noticed, perhaps in the file that the previous person in the role has recorded that they had a message or a phone call or an email from somebody, but the record shows that their full reporting of that

is dated sometime after the original message. Making sure that we keep up to date and record notes in our file quickly, as soon as possible may be another action point to add to your plan.

Good record keeping also considers what our records might be needed for in future and are they sufficient. For example, if a social worker or a police officer asked for them several months after the issues came to your attention. Are you confident your records would be thorough, accurate and clear enough to remind you of the exact details of that case and that concern?

The aim in our note taking and record keeping is to create something we can pass on later, that is understandable and usable.

So, good recording practice, and accurate recording and retention of records is a part of your role as Safeguarding Lead or Deputy. If you are a Deputy, then this is another vital way you can support the Lead role.

Before we explore what we need to include in our safeguarding records, we will just pause and recognise that good recording practice also includes storing our records securely. We need to

be aware of GDPR principles and remember that this legislation is there to help us to do things safely and legally. It's not there to stop us from sharing information – safeguarding concerns always trump GDPR considerations, but we still need to be careful about ensuring the information we keep is both accurate and secure. Perhaps you can think about developing an online system rather than paper files. Maybe you've already started that but remember if you do transfer things to an online system, that you should keep your written copies in file that you already have, unless you digitise the copies you have. Certainly, if people bring you a disclosure or a story of concern on a piece of paper, you must keep that written record on file securely as well because that could be needed again by police or courts.

Any sensitive personal information must be kept in a locked filing cabinet with access limited to two people, usually the lead person and a deputy. Of course, if you're storing things in the Cloud or any online system, do it securely with password protection. Many charities and organisations will have a safeguarding email – 'safeguarding@...' followed by the name

of your food bank, church, or other organisation and this will be a way that people can contact you securely about concerns.

You will need to have separate files for every case, for every individual person and every separate incident that comes your way, so you don't mix things up. If an incident involves more than one person, have a separate page for each individual person clearly labeled. You may have a policy from your head office or your network or denomination that you come under, so we also encourage you to find out what the wider organisation's policy is and adhere to it. They may have specific guidance around record keeping and keeping up to date with GDPR regulations, and again, our helpline can advise you on these issues. One additional thing to consider in charities is, what will happen to records if your organisation closes down? You would still need to keep safeguarding files unless it can be transferred to an area office or head office of a larger network. It's worth considering the hypotheticals of 'if that were to happen, what would we do?' Who would be responsible for the long-term secure storage of records? How could police or social care

access information we hold 10 years after your charity has been wound down? One thing you could do is develop something called an information asset register, which is a rather posh name simply for some sort of spreadsheet or log, which just shows you details of the information you hold from which dates and where it's stored. Typically, it includes an entry number, who has access to the information, if personal information included, what risks are involved, and what length of time do you need to retain that piece of information, and importantly – whether there a safeguarding value attached to this piece of information. It's worth reviewing this every few years. You would make clear on that, what information does have a safeguarding value attached to it. There are some case management systems you can use, which you will find listed in the signposting section of your handbook. Plus, you can utilise free systems, such as Google Docs, which aren't designed specifically for record keeping but can perform the same function. Having a sign off and sign on sheet showing who has access to file, when it was accessed and why limits the

unnecessary sharing of information. This is particularly important when you are passing on the role to someone else, so the dates of transition are clear.

So, let's sum up some essential principles of recording: One, do not investigate, it's not up to us or the person bringing it to us to decide what is true or not. We must be careful that we make notes within an hour of something being brought to us, it must be that same day, and it must be an accurate recording of what has been seen and heard. You and the person who first took that concern or disclosure or saw something or heard something, should make a report which includes having a date, time and place of the incident, and all other connected details. You'll record facts, not opinions; who said what and to whom, where did this happen, where you were, where did the person observe this or hear this, who else was around, who else was involved, what was happening at the time, any details about any clear abuse, details about behaviour or response or language at the time.

Remember, we often think about using those R words - recognise the possible safeguarding issues, respond carefully and completely, and fully record in detail factually, refer it on to the police and social care, and reflect on what you must learn from it. If you see any physical signs of harm on anybody at any time, we should be recording the shape, the size, which part of the body that was on. You need also to record any immediate action that you took or the person bringing the concern to you took. You can also use W words - the when, where, what, why and how words to help you in your recording. Clearly with all situations, you would keep confidentiality as carefully and closely as possible. That means that the fewest number of people know about this as is possible. Really, it's about thinking 'who needs to know?'. You need to look at any historic concerns or observations that you already may have on file. It would be good to think about whether you had any risk assessments already relevant to these cases, and if not, whether you need to start one immediately. You would also need to record any changes you want to make to your risk

assessment resulting from the concerns you've dealt with.

Now we're going to do some deeper thinking about the kind of language, or terminology, we use in our records. We need to make sure we're using non-victim-blaming language. This means that we don't place blame on the victim for the abuse or harm they have experienced by the way in which we speak about them and their situation. Instead, our records focus on the perpetrator or the actions that may have caused harm.

Victim blaming language is any language that implies, intentionally or unintentionally, that a person is partially or wholly responsible for the abuse or harm that happened to them. This is harmful and can wrongly place responsibility, shame, or blame onto a victim, making them feel complicit or responsible for harm that they've experienced. In fact, an abuser or a perpetrator can play on trying to force them to accept the blame. We may be aware of victim blaming on social media, it happens in face-to-face interactions and in other spheres too and it can have a huge impact on people who have

experienced abuse, so how we word our reports is vital to avoid this. We mustn't create a barrier to pressing charges or prevent a victim or survivor leaving a harmful situation by a poor choice of wording in our reports. The theory of this can be a bit tricky to grasp, so here's some examples: You may hear somebody say or even write down, 'Mum's relationship places the children in an unsafe situation', as opposed to 'the violent outbursts of anger displayed by the partner places the children in an unsafe environment'. We need to be careful with our words and not suggest the mother has freedom of choice, without knowing about her individual history, financial capacity, fear of repercussions, etc.

Sometimes people will share about a harmful experience, but the details of the story seem to change. This is particularly common for those who've experienced trauma which is impacting memory, or sequencing, and we can't underestimate the complexity many of these lived experiences hold, so often a victim/survivor may simply be sharing a different aspect of the situation. It's important to recognise that as many of us work

with refugees, asylum seekers, people fleeing places of disaster and harm and more local traumatic situations, it can be very hard to retell their story in a clear way, or even to make sense of it in any way. If in our reporting, we portray the victim as inconsistent and untrustworthy, we can unintentionally be a barrier to them receiving the support and justice they deserve.

In child sexual exploitation cases, which we sadly see frequently in the news, young people are abused by groups. In the past, it may have been said, 'the girl shouldn't be out so late and without parental supervision,' and she may have been labeled as 'promiscuous' and 'naughty'. Nowadays, police, social care, and others will recognise that those who experience child exploitation are victims. They have not chosen to be abused by several people, to suggest this was their doing is not a factual representation and can be extremely damaging.

What we must do is record the facts of harm that may have occurred, rather than labeling someone as over sexualised or promiscuous. This concept of 'appropriate recording terminology' could be another area in which to train your own

volunteers and workers, helping them to think carefully about how they word the written concerns they pass to you.

We're now going to think about what happens when we receive a concern. I'm going to read to you a concern that might come to you as Safeguarding Lead and I want you to consider what you would do in this situation: What are your action points? What might you do straight away, or what might you do later? What about gathering information, and from whom might you need to get more information? What kind of details will you record?

This is a phone call that comes to you as Safeguarding Lead.

“Hi, it’s Asif. I’ve got a bit of a situation here at the after-school club. I was just finishing up some paperwork when a parent of one of our girls came back and asked to speak to me. She wasn’t making much sense and seems to be veering between saying it’s all probably fine and saying that it’s a huge issue. Her daughter is at home and I’m not sure what to advise her. She has told me that her daughter was angry and upset on the

way home. The daughter was reluctant to share but it seems like for a while she's been privately messaging an older lad she met here. He'd asked her to send some topless selfies some time ago, which she did. Today, another friend said that she'd seen the pictures shared in a group. The mother wants to call the police, but she doesn't know the name of the boy concerned because her daughter is now refusing to say who it was because she doesn't want to get anyone into trouble. She says she loves him, and he only did it because she'd made him angry. I'd be grateful for your advice, what shall I do?"

Give yourself time to think through the points that we've been asked to consider with this little case. What actions would we take? What information might we need to gather? And what details should we record?

This could be an extremely serious case, and it seems as if there could have been a crime committed with indecent images of a child being received and shared. So, our first action would be to report this to the police. The scenario told us that the mother was thinking about doing that and we could assume it's

ok to leave it up to her, however, this is not the case. It is our duty as Safeguarding Lead to report to the police straight away (even though this has occurred outside normal working hours) as we have heard a concern through our worker that a child may be the victim of a crime. Before we discuss this case in any more detail, let's remember what we said earlier in this training, that you need to look after yourself and you do not have to be available 24/7. So, what if Asif couldn't get hold of you immediately? Would he know what else to do? That's another value of a Deputy, there's another number people can call. It also underlines the value of training our children's and youth workers so that if they couldn't contact anybody within the organisation, they could use our helpline to get advice, but also know that they too have a responsibility to call the police if a crime has been committed. So, discussing situations like these with your staff and volunteers in advance could be very, very valuable.

The law prohibits the taking, possession and distribution of indecent images of children. All three of these areas are

crimes. Because of that, one thing we must not do is to take the girl's phone and try to look at any pictures – it would be a crime for us to look at those images. This is the job of trained police officers, so the mother must not try to forward any pictures that she finds on her daughter's phone. What about the other boys who are allegedly involved? Should you tell them? The answer is no. Our job is to call the police and to call Children's Social Care, or the integrated team in your area. The police may do that, but we should do it as well. You may need to find an 'out of hours number' for this, but you would need to record this with them immediately.

Once we've recorded and passed on our concern, remember it isn't our job to investigate crimes, or serious safeguarding issues like this. What we need to get is the name of the girl, and the name of the mother and their address, and the age of this girl, and of course, we then think about details that we would record. We would record Asif's full name, his address, his age (to confirm that he is an adult), and the time at which he phoned you. You would also ask Asif himself to record this for

you and you would ask him to record the date, the time this happened, and for a register list of the other young people who were there that afternoon, because the police would need that as well to follow up the concern. Your job as a safeguarding lead is to also consider what support you may need to offer Asif. Thank and affirm him for phoning you, because he did the right thing in following your policy, but you may need to sit down with him afterwards to debrief on the situation. As the case unfolds, give him further support. Clearly you would encourage him not to discuss this with others, but of course, police and social care may want to talk to other youth leaders, and to talk to the young people who are there to find out what else has been going on. It may be that you, as Safeguarding Lead, will talk to the whole of the after-school club team and encourage and support them while this is being investigated. Then you may want to think about what support you can offer to the girl and her mother. Encourage Mum to offer reassurance to her daughter that she is not going to be in any trouble and that it is important to involve the police as there is a need to

protect other young people. Also reassure her that there is a way of getting rid of the images if they have been posted anywhere online; Childline's Report Remove tool is a way to confidentially report indecent images and get them removed from online spaces. They may both be feeling conflicted, that they've started this significant sequence of events, so do encourage them and make sure that they know that they did the right thing. Even though the girl wasn't willing to give details at the time to the mother, the police and social care are well experienced in how to talk to children and young people about things like this, so they will get that information from her. When receiving a call like this, inaction is never an option. We might feel ourselves reacting to the situation and feeling too overwhelmed to respond. But, we have heard about a crime where children are being harmed, we have that obligation to involve outside agencies. Remember how we discussed how our role involves linking with people internally in our own organisations and externally with other people involved in

safeguarding? This is a clear case in which contact with external agencies is essential and a matter of urgency.

We now have a second situation where we can think through similar principles. What actions might we need to take? What information might we need to gather? And what details should we record?

“You run a local food bank. One of your clients came in today to ask if she could get another food parcel. When she came in, you notice the female was pregnant and you didn't know this before today. She's recently left her husband who was abusive towards her, and their child witnessed this. A volunteer delivered a food parcel to them three days ago and noticed the house was very smelly and untidy. The six-year-old daughter was there at the time, she was quiet, and unkempt, and you don't know why she wasn't at school. The family have been using your food bank for some time now and were originally referred to you by social services. You don't know if social

services are still involved, but the mother seems very wary of any services being involved with the family.”

If you are the Safeguarding Lead at this food bank, what would you need to do? First of all, you’ve noticed that the woman was pregnant, and we need to recognise that an unborn child does come under safeguarding procedures, even though legally the fetus is not a human being until the moment of birth.

Safeguarding allows us to put protection in place if needed for an unborn child. This is normally in cases when children's social care and health professionals are aware or concerned that the mother is abusing substances, particularly alcohol. We currently have no indicators that there’s been any issue around substance abuse, but we are aware that there’s school abuse and some environmental indicators that suggest the mum could use additional support, so we would want that professional input who know what to look for and how best to safeguard all those involved. If they were to discover that alcohol abuse is an issue during pregnancy, they’d need to follow up. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is where a mother is drinking heavily in a way that

could damage that fetus, and it can cause serious damage, so this is seen as a safeguarding issue. Usually, a midwife and a social worker would work together in supporting that parent to reduce their alcohol intake to protect that fetus.

In our scenario, we would not ask the mother whether she was drinking, but we would report the concerns we had, and the facts we were aware of to children's social care. The outcome, any conversations with the family and any intervention would be up to statutory services to decide – sometimes based on other information that they hold, and we don't – on how to proceed. Let's recognise too, that although this family had been involved with social services in the past, it doesn't mean that they are now. Let's not just assume that they are, because social care will often do a piece of work with a family over a period of weeks or months and then they will finish that work and step back. Previous social care involvement doesn't tell us about ongoing monitoring. Social care may not know about the rumoured domestic abuse, they may not know about the

separation, they may not know about the pregnancy, they may not know about the six-year-old's school absences.

Our duty is to pass on the information and concerns we hold about this family. Another action point for us is to record the details in an accurate and timely manner. We should record everything that our volunteer has told us about this client, get them to write their own report in their own words, and remember that reports need to be dated and signed. The fact the mother was wary about services being involved should cause us to wonder. If someone doesn't want social care involvement, is there something that they want to hide from services? We can't assume we know the answer, but it should lead to caring curiosity. Let's remember too that an element of unconscious bias could be at play – statements about a messy house and the child being unkempt are subjective statements that we need to be somewhat cautious of. Perhaps this volunteer is extremely tidy and saw some bits and pieces lying around in the house that they would not allow to happen in their own home, but it may not mean that the untidiness was at a

serious level. And the same with the child being unkempt, if the child was being kept home because she wasn't well, then maybe she was looking a bit unkempt, and all children, of course, will look a bit scruffy and dirty at times, or children will have clothes with food spilled down them at times, and if the mother is exhausted with the pregnancy, and the child wasn't going to school, she hasn't put her in clean clothes that day, it may not be anything serious. Again, we have different standards, and we have to recognise any bias here either our own, or from the volunteer who brings us this information. Of course, when preparing our volunteers who are going to deliver things to homes, we could train them in scenarios that help them to think how to greet a child that they see in a home. So, this volunteer could say, 'Oh, hello there, you're not at school today'. Just in a casual way, not turning and accusing the mother of keeping the child home unnecessarily. Remember also that some families homeschool their children.

If we happen to know that the child is registered with a school and what school they attend, we as a Safeguarding Lead, can

ask to talk to the Safeguarding Lead at the school. Every school must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead, and we could simply share the information we have. Again, if we do phone a school, it is likely that we wouldn't be able to talk to a Safeguarding Lead immediately, unless we're known to that school because we go in for other reasons. They would phone the food bank back to check out who you are, and to make sure that you are the Safeguarding Lead at that food bank. When they then contact you, you can have that open conversation, knowing that they, like you, have safeguarding understanding and responsibility, but in a professional role and with the ability to progress concerns. The other thing to consider yourself would be is there any other support that you as a food bank can offer? Is there signposting we can do to other community organisations that this family might benefit from? As a Safeguarding Lead, sometimes it's useful to ask ourselves: what might be the worst-case scenario here? Are there other children in that family besides the six-year-old and the unborn child? We may consider anything else we've known previously

about the family, or any low-level concerns that have been recorded in our safeguarding file. Are there serious signs of poverty or deprivation in this home? Social workers use a term called ACEs - Adverse Childhood Experiences. It could be that this family has had some adverse situations which are impacting on the well-being of all in the family, so you will put together everything that you know, everything that's been on your file before, and you will share this with Children's Social Care.

We record every concern we receive but we're going to reflect a little more now on those cases where recording alone isn't enough and we also need to refer to the statutory services.

There are some notes in your handbook that will help with this, but it may be worth considering any experiences you've had in this area so far. Were those experiences of working with statutory authorities good or bad? Let me encourage you, regardless of past experience or nervousness of working with police and other services, when someone is at risk of harm, we have a

responsibility to pass that on to others, even when we believe the outcome might not be satisfactory to us.

What are the factors that would lead us to make such a referral? A key one is when there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or an adult. In these situations, we must refer it to either the police or to social care, or to both. If the concern involves a child and there could be harm, we have a legal obligation to report it immediately. If you have had contact with police or social care, you will want to make sure that you record that contact in your records. If you make a phone call, please make sure when you phone that you introduce yourself as the Safeguarding Lead. Remember that statutory services are types of government authorised care or service, so they have a clear job description of what they need to do. They work across a specific region, often a local authority, and they work with specific situations, so we need to help them to do their job well, by being clear in what we take to them. When you phone, explain your role, because 'Safeguarding Lead' is an official position. This means that they should get back to you with

information. If you phone as a member of the public, there is no obligation for them to tell you what they're going to do with your concern, but as a Safeguarding Lead from a charity, they do. It's useful to ask the name of the person you're speaking to, even if you can't speak to them again, you can refer to them in your next phone call. That can help communication flow more smoothly. When you first phone, it's often useful to start with, 'I'm a Safeguarding Lead calling about a safeguarding issue, am I speaking to the right person, or do you need to pass me to someone?'. When we do contact statutory agencies, it's useful if we as a charity can offer ongoing support and express a willingness to be included in multi-agency meetings and discussions.

It also makes a real difference when you've planned ahead, and already have the phone numbers for your local authority, social care and police. If you don't already have them, do take some time looking at their website so you're equipped ahead of an issue coming to light. These websites can be so helpful on several levels. They will help you become familiar with the

language that they use to discuss children's safety, you'll get a sense of other services and helpful activities you might be able to tap into and find out how their teams are structured. For instance, you may see things to do with 'early help', which is where they connect families with community organisations and they themselves will do more of a sort of introducing and signposting to those and then step back. They may describe a more significant level of statutory involvement such as a 'child in need referral,' or in the more serious cases, 'immediate child protection referrals'.

Your local authority website may also give you an indicator about thresholds between those different levels - early help, child in need, child protection. Another useful document you may want to look at is called Keeping Children Safe in Education, that's for England and Wales and is updated every year for schools in September. It underlines our obligation to refer children's concerns. You may also hear the language about thresholds, which are when something reaches the level of social care or police involvement. You may come across the

police terminology about 'achieving best evidence interviews', which is the route that they use for talking to children to make sure that they can enable a child to feel safe to tell their story. You might also read about 'trauma informed practice', which is now something that all local authorities are training their social workers in, and which as charities we would do well to learn more about. Another term they may offer training or support in is ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences or Adverse Community Experiences), that we mentioned earlier. This is a record of things that have happened in the past to a child, or to someone who is now an adult during their childhood, which will help to understand the trajectory of their life. It gives us some understanding that what occurs in the early stages of a person's life can impact their future in serious ways. So, for instance, where there is domestic abuse or misuse of substances in the home, it has an adverse impact on a child and the healthy environment they need to feel safe and secure is compromised.

So, let's remind ourselves of the principles. If you're unsure if a concern is sufficiently serious to be passed on, then call our helpline, 0303031111. And, of course, look at your local authority's website, which may outline their thresholds, and when they want you to pass on concerns. If we have a concern about a child, as we've said, we have an absolute obligation that it must be reported, even if it's a low-level concern, because it isn't up to us to decide how serious something is. It can be tempting to believe a concern is fairly minimal and want to wait till you hear something more serious, but we have to challenge that tendency and pass on low level concerns. Social care may already hold a pattern of low-level concerns about a child or family, your referral will add to this, and they can decide what should be followed up. We must also notify statutory services before we talk to any parent or carer about a concern – in fact, we must only do this under guidance from social care or police. If you have concerns about online abuse of children, we must report it to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (known as CEOP), they have a very user-friendly

website that's worth visiting. And of course, as we've mentioned earlier, with a serious incident or a notifiable event, we must report to our charity regulator and to our insurance company.

This is not something we need to be afraid of, it is simply fulfilling our obligations to keep them informed.

So summing up some of our referral principles: We need to share our role title, make sure that we are telling them that we're open to partnership working, be clear that we're calling about a safeguarding concern, and be prepared in advance by having notes with us of the full details of what we're going to pass on, and the details of who first brought us the concern.

Let's explore that idea of thresholds in a bit more detail. This is a complicated concept because this is so open to interpretation and you are absolutely not expected to be an expert. A good starting point is reading your local services' standards on thresholds, so you have a starting point. That said, if you're unsure, always pass on the concern. Social care may talk about levels of need on a continuum, so again, it's a scale not

an absolute. It's not up to us to decide if something has reached the level of significant harm, that is a social worker's decision. We have a duty to pass on concerns and the local authority have a duty to investigate and protect. Remember that for children, NSPCC is another source of help, especially out of normal office hours, because they can take steps to protect the child out of hours.

When the concern is about an adult at risk of harm or abuse, the reporting procedure is somewhat different. If the risk is of immediate and significant harm, we can report to the police without their permission, but normally, you would want an adult's consent first if possible. However, if you believe a crime has been committed, or that other people could be harmed by the person posing a risk to that adult, then we can pass that on without their consent, but we would always inform them of our actions and our reasons for doing so. With children, we can also report a whole family that seems to be under stress for them to access early help, support, advice and signposting. In

addition to where there's immediate risk of harm, if the family is under stress, we can report if a child is seriously ill or disabled, and they don't seem to be getting the care that they need. This enables the local authority to arrange for assessments of that child's or family's needs.

We must always pass on concerns about any adult who works with children if we believe that they could be harming, or could cause harm, to children or young people. In many areas, there is something called a LADO, the Local Authority Designated Officer. In Northern Ireland, reports about people in a position of trust are made to the Safeguarding Partnership. In Scotland, the report is made to the Child Protection Committees. There's more guidance on all of this in your handbooks. Northern Ireland has a good 'thresholds of need' model that will help you to understand about reporting levels. In England, there is currently no mandatory reporting law, nor in Scotland. In much of the legislation and guidance, there is an implicit expectation that you will pass on the concerns, and mandatory reporting is a recommendation of the final IICSA report – the Independent

Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. In Northern Ireland, it is mandatory to report concerns about children, and failure to report criminal activity is itself a crime. So, if you know a child has been harmed, and don't report it, you can be charged.

In Wales, there is also a mandatory duty to report concerns that a child is at risk and is experiencing or may experience abuse or neglect.

Obviously, as we've said, if adults don't consent to reporting, we must think more carefully, but we need to consider the safety of that adult themselves. Is their life in danger? Are they going to suffer serious significant harm if we don't report? If for some reason, you decide not to refer this concern on, there has to be clearly documented reasons in your file.

Remember too that children can abuse other children. This is much more prevalent than we might like to think. We used to hear the phrase peer-on-peer abuse, but now children's social workers talk about child-on-child abuse that makes it absolutely clear that may still be an age and power imbalance, even when both perpetrator and victim are under 18-years-old. This means

safeguarding needs to be put in place for both perpetrator and the person who's been abused and harmed. Abuse happens between siblings, cousins, friends at sleepovers, and camps and residential. Consider the Jamie Bulger case, that was children harming a younger child. In a more recent case, the death of a little five-year-old Logan Mwangi was caused by a 13-year-old involved with two adults in 2021. The 13-year-old was just as complicit in the murder as the two adults. Let's remember that with children, it's always better to over refer than to miss protecting a child or young person. If the social care worker informs us that the referral doesn't reach the level of them actioning any follow up, then continue to monitor the situation yourself, but don't regret passing the concern on. When we have made a phone call to social care or the police, it's a very good idea to follow that up with a written referral. Many social care departments in your local authority may have a concern form online on the website that you can fill in as your follow up to the phone call.

Let's just refresh again, that with an adult, if there is immediate risk of harm, for themselves or somebody else, we can refer without their consent. If the adult lacks the mental capacity to consent, our job as a safeguarding lead would be to make sure that people in our organisation know to report to us any concerns that they have any evidence they have and we may need to respond more quickly. Remember, of course, it's not our job to make the assessment; mental capacity is done by an adult social worker or by a GP, or other medic who's been trained in the Mental Capacity Act. So, we don't have to know the details, but we must make sure that any evidence is recorded carefully. As an overview of safeguarding concerns involving adults, reporting to statutory services occurs where: 1) There's immediate risk of harm, 2) There are mental capacity concerns, and/or 3) A crime is being committed and other people may be at risk. So, in this module, we've looked at good recording practice, referring to statutory services, and exploring referral thresholds.

[Module Four]

We now begin our final module in this training, where we think about safer cultures. What do we mean by safer, healthier cultures? How do we embed healthy cultures, and in doing so, build some preventative safeguarding measures into our organisations? How can we prepare for less common but significant issues that we might come across? Let's start with what we mean by culture. Everyone individual, family, organisation, people group and nation have a culture. It's 'how we do things around here'. Consider your organisation: Is it okay for people to turn up late for work or meeting? Is that accepted or frowned upon? What about how we dress, what is expected? What about small talk? Is it valued or outlawed? What about when it's people's birthday, do people bring cakes and everyone indulges? Is productivity prioritised over relationships?

Culture is constantly either reinforced or challenged, it's never static. What about if there's any elements of racism or misogyny in our organisation? Do we inadvertently reinforce

that or challenge it? Consider the unconscious bias that might show itself in our culture from time to time. All organisations do have a culture, and safe and healthy cultures don't happen without intentionality. We must identify the cultures we currently have, and how we want to move them forward. Safer, healthier cultures aim to prevent harm, rather than having to respond to it. The principles of safeguarding are a foundation in a good healthy culture, where we respect the values and nurture everyone - our service users, all our volunteers, all our workers. We empower and encourage and guide through appropriate use of Scripture, if we're a faith organisation, and we nurture leaders at all levels of our organisation, not just the one(s) at the top. We operate with a healthy regard for accountability, we model inclusion and participation, we guide in a way that maintains freedom of choice. We need transparent structures and accountability mechanisms for all of these elements to work.

All organisations have both formal and informal structures. The formal ones are written into guidance and policies, the informal

ones are often embodied by the groups that meet in the intersections of life within our organisation – that might be the parent and toddlers’ group, or the cleaning team. If those smaller groups are meeting under the auspices of your organisation, it's good for you as Safeguarding Lead to make links with them, and then you can help them to think about how safeguarding applies to their little group. Safeguarding culture doesn't just apply to the formal aspects of what we do.

For those on the further end of the informal spectrum, like the friendship-type meetups, of course, we won't be expecting their activities to be written into our safeguarding policy. With those more organised groups in a faith setting, like the musicians’ group or the care group in somebody's house, you will need to have specific safeguarding procedures from your policy that apply to that group. For faith groups, pastoral visiting is a good example. You need a clear code of conduct for pastoral visitors, clear reporting systems for them to come to you with safeguarding concerns, etc. all of which helps others to play their part in safeguarding. Perhaps include in your policy the

need to discuss any new ventures with the safeguarding lead. What about that informal way in which people in faith groups and other charities are sometimes appointed to positions just because they're a relation of a family member, or friend of somebody else already in one of those positions. Whether it's a trustee or a leader of a group, we must always put safer recruitment processes in place, and not assume that they're a 'safe person' just because they've always been around and their dad or their aunt held that role before them. These assumptions need to be challenged. The handbook on page 23 has a very good grid to help you to promote a safer culture. There are four boxes, looking at staff, volunteers, members, and visitors and it goes through different ways that you can promote your role with each of those four groups. On page 24 of the handbook, we have an online safety action flowchart, which is an increasingly important area to think about in your organisation. An online safety incident may be raised by a child or a worker and passed to you as the Safeguarding Lead.

If the world of online safeguarding is new to you, you may have to seek support – our helpline is one resource, as well as CEOP, NSPCC, your local council or your overarching denomination or network. Some incidents may be inappropriate, but not illegal. For example, you might respond to rude jokes very differently to the discovery of people sharing illegal material online. The accountability of workers when interacting with those in your organisation is really important, especially if that involves a child. Do we need to put more safeguards in place around what we expect in terms of behaviour? We may need to inform parents of children (if children are involved), we may need to do further risk assessments. If it's been quite a serious, inappropriate situation that may have included some bullying, then we will need to think carefully about referring people on for support if necessary. If the instigator of the inappropriate content is a worker, there may need to be disciplinary action, and follow up with debriefs, and a review of our policies and procedures about online contact. If a crime is reported to you, such as

grooming, or child abuse images, then we must report to the police. Illegal content can be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation and as mentioned earlier to CEOP if a child is at risk. If there is an immediate risk, obviously report to the police and they would advise us on any further steps we may need to take. Again, after dealing with the initial incident, it's important to debrief and analyse your processes and policies to apply any learning. If you have computers on your premises, for instance, make sure that there's a password-protected, signing in and out process for using them and that you know who has access to them. In other words, do take the time to do everything possible to keep things secure. If there is illegal material or activity on our organisation's devices, an agency such as the police may take away our machines to investigate fully. Risk assessments will need to be reviewed, and policies and monitoring methods reviewed.

In addition to our in-person and online spheres, when we're thinking about safer, healthier cultures, we're also thinking about governance and leadership. What are the structures that

are in place in our organisation? Are they accessible to everybody? Do people know the difference between organisational governance and spiritual leadership in a faith community? Is there a clear safeguarding lead? Hopefully that's you or your deputy. Are there photographs and clear contact methods available to anybody who is a service user at any part of your organisation? Safeguarding in your organisation should overlap, reinforce and interact with the wider culture of the organisation, rather than it being delegated solely to you and a deputy and ignored by other leaders. It must be a part of everyone's responsibility to keep safeguarding as a central concern. That's why a key part of your role is to continually raise questions and reminders, to point to policies, encourage training, etc. Again, culture isn't static, policies and procedures need annual review but small and consistent moves towards creating safer spaces makes a significant difference. As you conduct your annual review, keep in mind that your policy should reflect your current practice realities. Have things changed since the pandemic for instance? Have you got new

personnel or activities? Are your practices in line with your safeguarding policies? Let's remember what we said way back in module one, that the work of a safeguarding lead is a journey, not a destination. Consider what we said about internal connections and external connections, your safeguarding role should not be siloed off into a corner, it should not be left to you alone. So, everybody; the trustees, the leadership of any kind, workers and volunteers, anyone in HR, all need to be involved in supporting the Safeguarding Lead role. And externally, as we said, you'll have many people that can support you in your role, the statutory agencies, the non-statutory agencies, other charities, support organisations, like Thirtyone:eight, etc. As a safeguarding organisation, we base all our training, advice and resources on research and legislation across the four UK nations. As we approach the end of the training, consider where safeguarding currently stands in your organisation – does it overlap, reinforce and interact with the wider culture? If not, how can you see progress?

So, to review the learning journey we have been on together, over the course of this training, we've looked at four modules that Safeguarding Leads and Deputies should be equipped in. We started in module one by looking at the role of the Safeguarding Lead and Deputy, the main responsibilities, the potential impact of the role and how it interacts with other roles in the safeguarding sphere. In module two, we discussed how to create good safeguarding practice, how it interacts with theological/ethical considerations and legal considerations, and how policy goes together with practice. In module three, we thought through what it means to develop good recording practice, and understanding what referring to statutory services looks like and discussing, through scenarios, when referral thresholds are met. Then finally in module four, we considered how we embed a safeguarding culture, and identified next steps for you to progress safeguarding within your organisation. As we come to a close, we would like to take a moment to sincerely thank you for your investment in creating safer spaces for your service users. We recognise that this role is by no

means an easy one and want to thank you for your time and investment in this significant area. We believe that, as a result of your intentionality, harm can be both limited or entirely prevented. And while you may never know the impact of your role, we hope that you don't lose sight of its importance. Thank you, again.

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.