

# Working alongside safeguarding professionals

Handbook

# Introduction

Welcome to the Thirtyone:eight Working alongside Safeguarding Professionals course. This handbook accompanies the course, and contains the case scenarios, discussion questions and tasks we will be using in the training as well as some additional information and signposting.

This course is designed for all four UK nations and the handbook has nation-specific sections, as well as the content that applies across the UK. Transcripts of learning are available to evidence how this course meets the requirements of the Child Protection Learning and Development Framework for Scotland and some elements of Group C of the National Safeguarding Training, Learning and Development Standards for Wales.

Safeguarding while working in faith and community groups can be challenging: Our work often has a 'front row seat' to people's lives, but the statutory [legal] responsibilities for safeguarding mostly sit with Safeguarding Professionals, and cultivating a healthy working relationship between us and them can take work. Learning to collaborate with these Safeguarding Professionals means that we're protecting those 'at risk' and simultaneously making sure that the importance of individuals' faith and belief isn't missed.

We look forward to supporting you as you work alongside Safeguarding Professionals and help create safer places.

The Thirtyone:eight team

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# Questions and Exercises in the webinar

Throughout the webinar there will be opportunities to have discussions, share knowledge and participate in activities to apply our learning in context. These are included here for reference only. There is no need to work through anything in advance.

## Module 1: Roles and Relationships

### Case Scenario – Questions for discussion:

- 1) What role can you play in this situation?
- 2) What goals do each of the parties appear to hold?
- 3) Are any of them shared, are any oppositional?

### **Dory:**

Mo and Dory have been on-again-off-again attendees of your faith community for several years. They have two boys. Recently, they broke up due to Mo's escalating abuse of alcohol. Children's services are now involved after the school referred one of the boys for angry outbursts and concerning attitudes towards females. As part of their child protection investigation, social workers are considering Mo's ongoing access to the boys.

Dory has asked you to attend the next meeting to help make her voice heard and inform the decision-makers that she doesn't want Mo to see the boys.

### **(Following 'Your Role' information):**

Reflect on the tone of the safeguarding records you currently maintain. If you were to read these records aloud in front of those you support, would this create any issues? If so, why?

## Statutory Agencies role in safeguarding:

The table below gives a general overview of what the various statutory agencies do and how they're overseen and regulated. The specifics will vary between local authorities and UK nations, and there are current moves to simplify the system with over 100 regulatory bodies currently in place[1]. We include this here to highlight that – in contrast to the current faith and community sector which lacks any substantial regulation – safeguarding professionals in statutory agencies are strongly accountable to these regulatory bodies. This accounts for some of the differences between roles when safeguarding together.

Statutory Agency	General duties	Safeguarding duties	Laws and regulatory bodies
<b>Education</b>	Provide free education for all	Identify and report concerns, support vulnerable students	Department of Education Ofsted
<b>Local Social Services</b>	Child and adult safeguarding. Care planning	Protection plans Investigations Monitoring and reviews	Nation specific, e.g.: Social Work England, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Ofsted
<b>Health care</b>	Primary, secondary and emergency health	Patient advocacy Reporting concerns	General Medical Council (GMC), Care Quality Commission
<b>Police</b>	Public order Crime prevention	Emergency response Protecting the vulnerable	Nation specific, e.g.: Police Investigations and Review Commissioner
<b>Multi-agency/regional</b>	Information sharing Monitoring	Risk assessment Collaboration	Any/all of the above where those services were involved

**Key Action:** When working alongside safeguarding professionals, our three possible 'roles in the process' are:

- 1.To safeguard the 'at risk' individual
- 2.To support and advocate
- 3.To support the safeguarding process

What do you need to do to be more effective in your role? Improve your legal literacy? Make a mental shift from 'only being there as a support'? Or perhaps better understanding the challenges currently facing safeguarding professionals?

## Module 2: Referral to resolution

**Pause and record:** Take a moment to note down what details you'd make a record of, ahead of contacting adult services.

### Case Scenario: Geoffrey (part 1)

Geoffrey, an elderly gentleman, regularly attends your coffee mornings. You've seen changes in him that you're concerned about. He was known for coming in a different matching tie and socks each week, always looking clean and with styled hair. Lately, he's been coming in soiled clothes, his hair is much longer, and he seems to have lost a lot of weight quickly. His wife recently died, and his adult children had mentioned hiring a care company to support him. Your safeguarding lead informs Adult Services as you believe Geoffrey may be neglecting himself.

### Review your Safeguarding notes from 2021.

- 1) What is helpful?
- 2) What is unhelpful?

**Part 1: Record of concern about a child/adult's safety and welfare**

(for use by any staff/volunteers– This form can be filled in electronically. If the form is handwritten care should be taken to ensure that the form is legible)<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Child/Adult's name (subject of concern): <i>Geoffrey P.</i>	Date of birth/age: <i>About 80.</i> Child/Adult: <i>Adult</i>	Address: <i>23 Cherry Tree Ave.</i>
Date & time of incident: <i>10am. 21/04</i>	Date & time (of writing): <i>2pm 28/04</i>	
Your Name (print): <i>A.N. Body</i> Role/Job title: <i>Group Leader</i> Signature: <i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>		
Other members of the household <sup>4</sup> : <i>Grown up son, Steve. I gave him a call.</i>		
Record the following factually: Nature of concern, e.g. disclosure, change in behaviour, demeanour, appearance, injury, witnesses etc. (please include as much detail in this section as possible. Remember – the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)	<i>I saw Geoffrey last week and noticed that he just isn't looking himself. He's lost a lot of weight, his hair is scruffy, and his clothes aren't matchy like he normally has them. I thought to myself that it didn't seem right, but forgot until he didn't make it to this morning's coffee meet up.</i>  <i>Geoffrey did lose his wife recently. I think he's finding the grief too much to deal with.</i>	
How did the concern come to light?	<i>Just what I noticed.</i>	
What is the child/adult saying about what has happened <sup>4</sup> ?	<i>Didn't speak to him about it.</i>	
Any other relevant information. Previous concerns etc.	<i>Steve said he'd sort it, so maybe it's already sorted.</i>	
Date and time of discussion with Safeguarding Lead <sup>5</sup> : <i>1pm, 28/04</i>		

Check to make sure your report is clear to someone else reading it.

**Please pass this form to your Safeguarding Lead without delay**

## Case Scenario: Geoffrey (part 2)

Four years have passed since you became concerned about Geoffrey, and he recently passed away. You've now been called as a witness at a coroner's court inquest. At the time of your concern, you did pass on a safeguarding report to your safeguarding lead who contacted Adult Services, as you believed he may be neglecting himself. Adult services deemed Geoffrey to have the capacity to manage his care, wellbeing and nutrition and did not take the concern any further. Since Geoffrey was seriously malnourished at the time of death, but employed a paid carer, his case is now at coroner's court. You had heard that there was also a police investigation happening.

**Mini Case Scenarios** – what is the primary reason for your involvement with the safeguarding professionals?

- 1) Safeguard the individual
- 2) Support / advocate
- 3) Support the safeguarding process

**Rupa.** Rupa is currently subject to a child in need plan and lives with her parents who feel that, because Rupa is not white and because the family is religious, that the social workers aren't really understanding the cultural contexts of some of Rupa's feelings and comments. Her mother says to you; "They're not overtly racist, there's just lots of little things I can't quite put my finger on. I feel like they look down on us and I don't know how to talk in the educated ways they do." You've been invited to attend Rupa's child in need meeting.

**The 'holy man'.** An individual, who used to be an elder, left before you started attending the faith community, so you never met him. You heard that he was a 'holy man', but some people also said he made them uncomfortable. The police have asked you for any safeguarding records you might have about him, but your current leadership team don't want to get involved with any investigation. You haven't been told what the police are looking for.

(continued)

## Mini Case Scenarios: (continued)

**Joanne.** Joanne comes to your 'music for toddlers' group and has asked you whether you know about any parenting courses. As a victim-survivor of childhood trauma, she shares with you that when Zach is loud or defiant, she explodes verbally and by slamming things like doors. She doesn't always see the reaction coming and doesn't know how to control it, and she thinks she's reacting more. After talking at length, she decides she will only self-refer to children's services if you come with her.

**Group task:** What practical things do you do to build and maintain strong relationships with safeguarding professionals?

**Pause and consider:** What healthy coping techniques can we use to navigate less-than-ideal resolutions?

**Key Action:** Complete the 'practical tasks' checklist in the handbook. Are any incomplete tasks urgent?

## Module 3: Communication and collaboration

### Case Scenario – Questions for discussion:

- 1) What were the communication issues here?
- 2) What supporting role could the church/community group have played in this situation?

**Reflect:** What concerns does your faith and community group have about the involvement of safeguarding professionals?

## Case Study – the Orkney Child Abuse Scandal

The Orkney child abuse scandal involved the removal of nine children from their homes in Orkney, Scotland, by social workers and police due to allegations of child abuse.

This case became highly controversial and led to significant public and media attention.

**Families Involved:** The scandal primarily involved four families connected with the church, including the "W" family, whose father had previously been convicted of child sexual abuse in 1987.

**Initial Allegations:** Concerns were raised in late 1990 when a teenager from the "W" family accused her brothers and a clergyman of sexual abuse. This led to further allegations involving other families and claims of ritualistic abuse.

### Key Events:

- Disclosure: Following the allegation, the "W" children were taken to safe locations
- Investigations: The children were interviewed multiple times by police and staff. Some children exhibited behaviours and provided accounts that seemed to confirm aspects of the allegations.
- 'Dawn Raids': In 1991, social workers and police removed nine children from four family homes under Place of Safety Orders.
- Legal Proceedings: In April 1991, Sheriff David Kelbie dismissed the case, calling it "fatally flawed" without hearing the evidence. The children were returned home, and no prosecutions were made.

Overstretched and under-resourced social work department: The social workers allocated to support the mother in 1989 found it difficult to communicate with her due to the frequent presence of her church friends. This hindered their ability to work effectively in the interest of the children's protection. Sheriff David Kelbie later described the case as "fatally flawed" and "incompetent".

Church friends supporting the mother's wishes: The church friends often supported the mother's wishes over the safety of the children. For instance, when social workers and police went to the house to uplift the youngest child, they were told she was in Kirkwall with an older sister. Later, it was discovered that she had taken sanctuary in the local Parish Church. A church friend lied about the child's whereabouts at the mother's request.

**Pause and consider:** What do the holy scriptures say about the vulnerable? Justice? Abuse? Would those you're partnering with know these things?

**Mini-Case Scenarios** – How would you build a safer culture in the following situations?:

1. The report of marital rape in a family where submission to husband is a firm theological belief.
2. Children in unregulated religious education settings at the expense of a well-rounded education.
3. An aunt talks about 'that evil child' when referring to a child with epilepsy.

**Pause and consider:** How can our faith and community groups offer resilience-building solutions. This can be preventative, or post-referral.

**Key Actions:** Amplify service-users voices. Collaborate for safer faith communities.

# UK Safeguarding Law and Guidance

Our day-to-day safeguarding practice is based on laws made by one of the 4 UK Governments (Westminster, Holyrood, Stormont and the Senedd). Some laws apply to the whole of the UK, and some to specific nations.

Governments also issue national guidance to help workers practically apply the law.

The following tables show some of the key safeguarding laws and guidance for the 4 UK nations. There are several other laws that inform the criminal justice aspects of harm and abuse too. You do not need to know the details of legislation and national guidance for your role, it's enough to have an awareness that there is a legal framework for safeguarding that underpins what we as children's and youth workers do. For those interested in the details, the full documents are available online by searching the names and dates given here.

England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Safeguarding Children Laws and Guidance			
Children Act 1989 and 2004	The Children (NI) Order 1995	Children (Scotland) Act 1995	Children Act 1989
Children and Social Work Act 2017	Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014	Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007	Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 and Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
		UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024	
[Guidance] Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) England (updated 2026)	[Guidance] Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland 2017	[Guidance] National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)	[Guidance] Working Together to Safeguard People vol 1- 6

# UK Safeguarding Law and Guidance (continued)

England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
[Guidance] Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated annually)	[Guidance] Safeguarding for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Procedures Manual (2017)	[Guidance] Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)	[Guidance] Wales Safeguarding Procedures
Safeguarding Adults Laws and Guidance			
The Care Act 2014 The Mental Capacity Act 2005	Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership Key Documents (2015) <sup>4</sup> Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016	Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and Code of Practice (2014 updated in 2022) Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000	Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 Mental Capacity Act 2005
Vulnerable Groups Laws			
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007	Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 Police Act 1997 (as amended)	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
Equal Opportunities Laws			
Equality Act 2010	Disability Discrimination Act 1995	Equality Act 2010	Equality Act 2010
Rehabilitation of Offenders Laws			
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978	Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Position of Trust Laws			
'Position of trust' offences within ss.16 – 19 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 now include situations where certain activities take place in a sport or religion (as amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act, 2022).	Section 5 of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 known as 'Abuse of Position of Trust'	'Positions of trust' law in Scotland remains as originally set out in the Sexual Offences Act (2009), which does not cover religious or sports settings.	'Position of trust' offences within ss.16 – 19 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 now include situations where certain activities take place in a sport or religion (as amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act, 2022).

Safeguarding legislation across the UK is informed and underpinned by:

- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- European Convention on Human Rights 1953
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998

# Safeguarding in England

The following pages contain useful information for those working alongside safeguarding professionals in England.





## Safeguarding glossary:

**Children's Social Care Services** – services provided by local authorities that are responsible for safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. Your organisation's safeguarding lead may refer concerns about a child to them so they can act to protect the child and support families and carers.

**DBS checks** - criminal record checks used to help make safer recruitment decisions. The level of check you need depends on the activities involved in your role, this may be basic, standard, enhanced or enhanced with barring. An individual can only apply for a Basic Disclosure themselves.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** – person in Social Services responsible for managing and overseeing concerns, allegations and offences relating to staff and volunteers in any organisation across a local authority area. May also be known as Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA)

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)** - these are teams made up of professionals from different agencies including social work, police, health, and education. The team usually provide an early triage and multi-agency assessment of safeguarding concerns in respect of both children and adults. Many Local Authorities in England have a MASH team, but not all.

# Statutory agencies & regulatory bodies

Statutory Agency	General duties	Safeguarding dutie	Laws and regulatory bodies
Department of Education	Provide free education for all	Identify and report concerns, support vulnerable students	Department of Education Complaints Ofsted
Social Care England	Child and adult safeguarding. Care planning.	Protection plans Investigations Monitoring and reviews	Ofsted
NHS England and Department of Health and Social Care	Primary, secondary and emergency health	Patient advocacy Reporting concerns	e.g., General Medical Council (GMC) , The Care Quality Commission (CQC) <i>Speak to the specific team to find out what regulatory board they come under</i>
Police	Public order Crime prevention	Emergency response Protecting the vulnerable	College of Policing and Police Crime Commissioner

## Safeguarding guidance, policy and inquiries specific to faith groups:

Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance stresses the importance of all organisations partnering with statutory agencies to protect children from harm.

- Only two paragraphs in the guidance address safeguarding within a faith context.
- Attention to faith settings has decreased in each revision since 2010.

**The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA, 2022)**, also applicable to Wales, highlighted the need for improved collaboration and understanding between statutory services and faith-based organisations to address safeguarding concerns effectively. However, it does note that this is difficult as, “Compliance with the guidance is not legally enforceable and religious organisations are under no duty to follow it, or even to take it into account”.

# Levels of safeguarding intervention

## For children:

Early support – As soon as problems emerge. Aims to prevent statutory intervention.

Examples can include teachers being concerned about a child's lack of lunch leading to an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** where it's discovered a parent is struggling with financial struggles and anxiety. It could lead to referrals being made to charity groups who provide the extra support needed for the child to thrive.

Child Protection Interventions – When the situation is such that the local authorities must intervene with or without the agreement of the family/individual to protect a child from harm.

An example includes a **Child Protection Conference**. From there, it may be decided that the child needs to be made subject to a child protection plan. Risk is monitored, and outcomes could be removal of the child, and long-term, either reunification or a permanent placement when no alternative is found.

Children may then become Looked after children (also known as Cared for Children or Care Experienced) or Previously looked after children, and future safeguarding concerns will be handled by specialist social work teams.

## For adults:

Early support – Often falling under the banner of: (i) Early Intervention, (ii) Prevention and Wellbeing Services and (iii) Strength-based or community-led support (concepts from the Care Act 2014)

Examples could include that recently bereaved Geoffrey is referred for a community worker to help him find a bereavement group or a social club, as well as helping apply for his bus pass and practicing the route with him, so he can practically access that support.

# Levels of safeguarding intervention (continued)

Mid-level: Multi-agency Risk Management (MARM):

This is a collaborative approach to manage and mitigate risks for adults who:

1. Have the capacity to make decisions but are at risk of serious harm or death due to factors like self-neglect, risk-taking behaviour, or refusal of services, but
2. Do not meet the criteria for statutory safeguarding but still require a coordinated response to address their risks

Examples of interventions can include arranging regular counselling sessions for an individual experiencing severe anxiety and depression, or attending community groups.

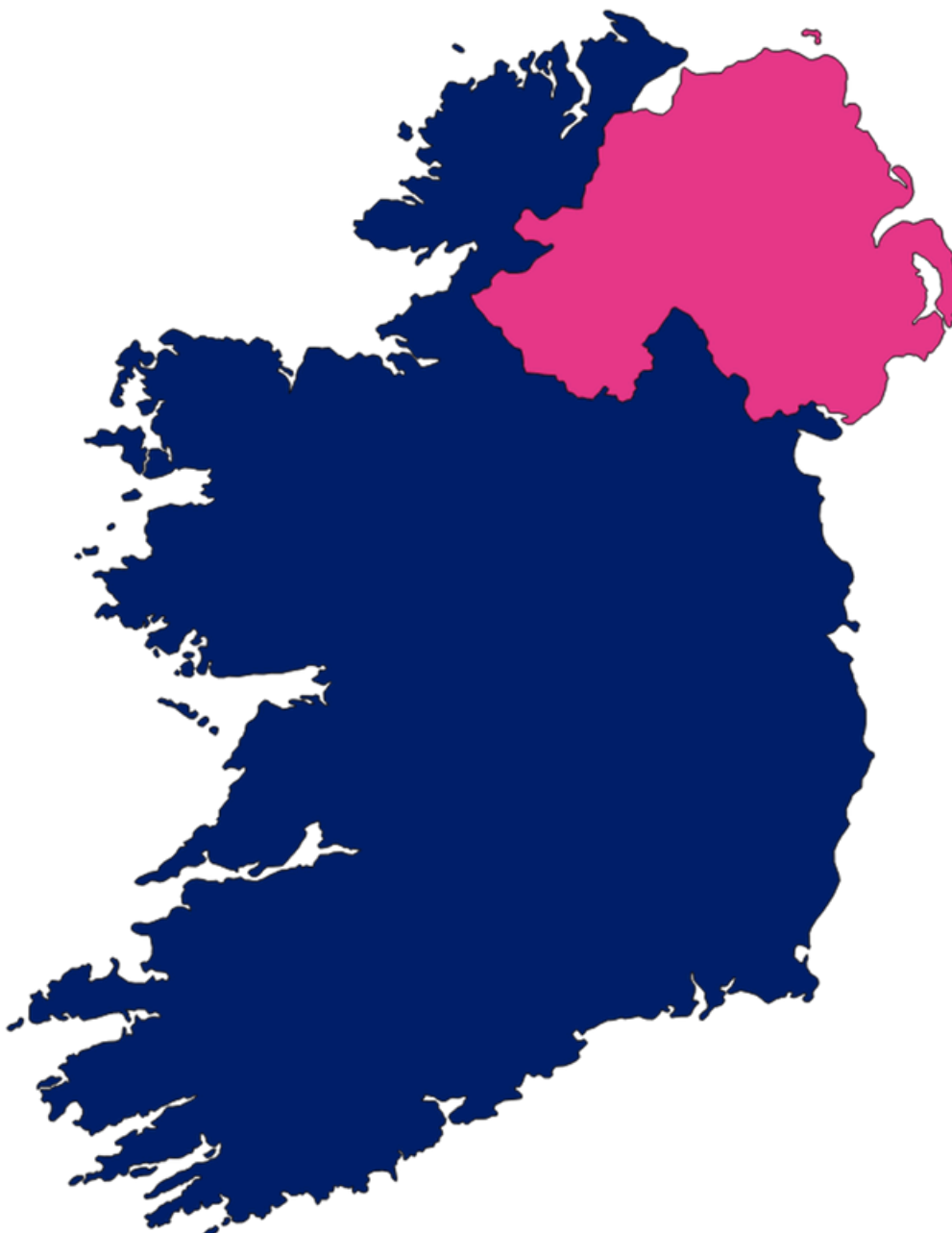
Safeguarding intervention – Firstly, three criteria must be met:

1. The adult has care and support needs;
2. Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
3. Are unable to protect themselves from that abuse or neglect.

An example could be that an adult is at risk of abuse by his carer but wants to stay with them. After assessment, it's decided he doesn't have the mental capacity to make that decision, so the court decides he needs alternative accommodation. This intervention falls under the 'court of protection'.

# Safeguarding in Northern Ireland

The following pages contain useful information for those working alongside safeguarding professionals in Northern Ireland.





## Safeguarding glossary:

**Access NI Checks** - criminal record checks used to help make safer recruitment decisions. The level of check depends on the activities involved in your role.

**Northern Ireland Gateway to Children's Social Work Services** - your safeguarding lead will contact your local Gateway team when children and young people need social services support. Your safeguarding lead will also report to Gateway Services if they receive an allegation against an adult who works with children and young people.

Wherever you live in Northern Ireland, the Regional Out of Hours Social Worker Service (RESWS) can be contacted through one central telephone number: (028) 0800 197 9995. or via email: [resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:resws1@belfasttrust.hscni.net). This provides an emergency social work response across Northern Ireland on an out of hour's basis: 5.00 pm to 9.00 am weekdays, 24 hours at weekends and bank holidays to Children and young people, Older people, People with mental health problems, People with learning difficulties, People with physical disabilities, and Families and carers of all these groups.

**Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)** - SBNI is the body with responsibility for agreeing how key agencies will cooperate and work together to promote the safety and welfare of children in Northern Ireland.

The SBNI is responsible for the Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures which explain the actions that must be taken when there are concerns about the welfare of a child/young person. They will also review cases where children have been significantly harmed or have died. They are a source of lots of information and resources. <https://www.safeguardingni.org/>

## Statutory agencies & regulatory bodies

Statutory Agency	General duties	Safeguarding duties	Laws and regulatory bodies
Department of Education	Provide free education for all	Identify and report concerns, support vulnerable students	General teaching council for Northern Ireland
Social Care in Northern Ireland	Child and adult safeguarding. Care planning.	Protection plans Investigations Monitoring and reviews	The <a href="#">Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care</a>
Department of Health	Primary, secondary and emergency health	Patient advocacy Reporting concerns	Independent Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)
Police Service of Northern Ireland	Public order Crime prevention	Emergency response Protecting the vulnerable	The Northern Ireland Policing Board

### Safeguarding guidance, policy and inquiries specific to faith groups:

[Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People](#) provides the overarching policy framework for safeguarding children and young people and is a key text for all those involved in safeguarding children and young people. It includes a more well-rounded section on Voluntary, Charitable, Faith and Community-based Organisations than the other UK nations currently have. This has a focus on the basic knowledge those in faith communities should hold, and the necessity of reporting.

The **Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland** has an [Interfaith Sub-group](#) – a collaborative effort that looks to support partnership working.

This comes with the knowledge that faith communities have also been a place where many have suffered harm and abuse. At the time of writing (April 2025), the Northern Ireland Executive Office are calling for victim-survivors to share their stories: [Victims and survivors of historical child abuse in faith settings encouraged to share their experiences.](#)

# Levels of safeguarding intervention

**For children:**

**Early support** – Also known as **early help or family support** this is usually delivered through [Family Support Hubs](#) - a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services, or work with families who need support. Family support hubs support access to early intervention family support services for families and children. Putting in place a package of support may address the risks and prevent the risks from escalating.

**A 'Child in Need'** – Where a child has been assessed as being a 'child in need', there is a requirement to provide a range of personal social services appropriate to the child's needs. The **Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI)** framework is used to assess the child's needs and the most appropriate forms of intervention. Services should be planned and provided, in consultation with families, by professional staff and voluntary organisations with the appropriate skills and resources to meet those needs.

**Child protection intervention** – This is when statutory intervention is believed necessary to protect the child. The first step is usually through **Gateway services**, which all safeguarding concerns should be passed on to. A **Child Protection Case Conference** may be held, and if there's the belief that the risk is significant enough, they'll be added to the **Child Protection Register**. The child is given a **Child Protection Plan**, and if risk continues statutory intervention such as a **Care Order** may be given by the courts.

# Levels of safeguarding intervention

## For adults:

Safeguarding includes activity which prevents harm from occurring and activity which protects adults at risk where harm has occurred.

**Early support** – The tiered approach of early intervention and, if needed, intervention, comes from the Department of Health’s Adult Safeguarding Policy (2015). This applies to all organisations, including the voluntary and faith sector. The first step is to manage low-level concerns. Examples can include involving the community and voluntary sector, social prescribing and advice.

**Statutory Safeguarding Intervention** – are led by social workers within each of the Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) and/or PSNI officers.

This happens when an adult is ‘in need of protection’, meaning they are:

- 1) aged 18 or over,
- 2) exposed to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect
- 3) which may be increased by their: Personal Circumstances (such as age disability, special educational needs, illness etc.) and/or...
- 4) Life Circumstances (such as isolation, socio-economic factors and living conditions, and,
- 5) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and,
- 6) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause him/her to be harmed.

This triggers an **Adult Safeguarding Referral** to the **Adult Protection Gateway Service** within each HSCT. The referral is screened and if it meets the threshold, there will be a case conference and investigation and, where needed, a **Safeguarding Protection Plan**.

# Northern Ireland's UNOCINI

**The key information for you to know is that there is a standardised referral process called UNOCINI. Your safeguarding lead/senior management will be aware of the details and application of this.**

The acronym stands for Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland. It was developed to improve the quality of assessment and improve the partnership of everyone involved in a child's life. It's unique to Northern Ireland.

It's a shared tool that should be used by all organisations involved in a child's life. It's worth considering the following when making notes on safeguarding concerns in Northern Ireland as these may help your safeguarding lead when it comes to referring on a concern.

1. **Needs** – deficits in any aspect of the child's life, which have an impact upon their well-being and development.
2. **Strengths** – aspects of the child, their life, the family circumstances and the environment, which are positive.
3. **Existing and/or Potential Risks** – matters which may impair or endanger the child's safety and development.
4. **Resilience and Protective Factors** – relationships and structures that promote the wellbeing of the child.

# Safeguarding in Scotland

The following pages contain useful information for those working alongside safeguarding professionals in Scotland.





## Safeguarding glossary:

**Children's Social Work Services** - every local authority in Scotland has a Children and Family Services department. They have a duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children in need in their area. Your organisation's safeguarding lead or the child's Named Person (see below) may contact them about children and young people you encounter in your organisation.

**Disclosure Scotland and the PVG Scheme** – Disclosure Scotland is the body responsible for criminal records checks undertaken as part of a safer recruitment process. Staff and volunteers who work closely and / or intensively with children may need to sign up to the PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) Scheme depending on the nature of their work. Organisations also have a duty to report allegations about an adult who works with children and young people to Disclosure Scotland.

**Named Person** – every child in Scotland is assigned a 'Named Person' to act as a single point of contact for their support and protection. A child's named person is initially the midwife, then the health visitor, and then the headteacher/guidance teacher at their school. Your organisation's safeguarding lead may liaise with a child's Named Person in order to support or safeguard the child.

# Statutory agencies & regulatory bodies

Statutory Agency	General duties	Safeguarding duties	Laws and regulatory bodies
Education Scotland	Provide free education for all	Identify and report concerns, support vulnerable students	General teaching council for Scotland
Social Care	Child and adult safeguarding. Care planning.	Protection plans Investigations Monitoring and reviews	Scottish Social Services Council
Public Health Scotland	Primary, secondary and emergency health	Patient advocacy Reporting concerns	Care Inspectorate
Police Scotland	Public order Crime prevention	Emergency response Protecting the vulnerable	Scottish Police Authority

## National Guidance on Child Protection in Scotland:

This guidance states that Safeguarding Leads within faith organisations should be available for consultation. They will work with social workers and police officers as and when required. However, training, involvement in case decisions, and reporting is currently not mandatory, neither are position of trust laws currently applicable for faith and community groups.

Like other UK nations, the **Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry**, which is ongoing, highlighted that faith communities have been a place of harm for some individuals. The Redress Scotland scheme provides financial compensation to the victim-survivors of abuse and many religious organisations have contributed to this, acknowledging their role in past abuses and being part of the collaborative effort to recognise the harm caused.

# Levels of safeguarding intervention

## For children:

Early support – In Scotland, child safeguarding is built around the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) model, which has a strong emphasis on early intervention.

A child's Named Person (midwife, health visitor and later a teacher) will consult with the parents and other professionals and create a Child's Plan. Examples of interventions include mental health input, adaptations at school, and family support services.

Child Protection Intervention – **When the child is at risk of significant harm** a Statutory intervention is triggered.

Anyone can raise a safeguarding concern. **An inter-agency Referral Discussion (IRD)** takes place and an **investigation** is launched.

A Case Conference may be held, and if there's the belief that the risk is significant enough, they'll be added to the **Child Protection register**. A **child protection plan** is developed and monitored.

## Getting it Right for Every Child - GIRFEC

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is the national approach in Scotland to improve children's outcomes and support their wellbeing.

It focuses on offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It encourages children and their parent(s) to work in partnership with the services that can help them. GIRFEC will be familiar to most parents and people who work with children – it's displayed in every place of learning and NHS building and is highlighted to parents pre- and post- birth.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 aims for a single framework – a Child's Plan, to be available for children who require extra support to address their needs and their wellbeing.



## For adults:

Early intervention – this focuses on supporting adults before harm occurs, or while they're still at a 'low level'.

This can look like: **Advice, advocacy or guidance**, help to connect with voluntary services and **building protective factors** to reduce risk – this includes befriending schemes and home adaptations.

Statutory Safeguarding intervention - The three-part test for statutory intervention[1] is:

1. They are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests;
2. Are at risk of harm; and
3. Because of disability, illness, or mental disorder, are more vulnerable to being harmed than others.

If this threshold is met, there's be a duty to inquire which will lead to an Adult Protection Case Conference and if there's enough need, an Adult Protection Plan. Examples of intervention can be a banning order preventing someone entering an 'at risk' adult's home.

[1] From the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

# SHANARRI - Wellbeing Indicators:

Promoting a child's wellbeing is at the heart of GIRFEC. All those who work with children and young people in Scotland should consider how the eight wellbeing indicators are played out in their role in the life of the child, and their family. In fact, a situation will only be considered a safeguarding concern where one or more of these areas are seen to be lacking.

The acronym 'SHANARRI' can help us remember them:

**Safe** – growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect.

**Healthy** – having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.

**Achieving** – being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

**Nurtured** – growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity.

**Active** – having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

**Respected** – being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.

**Responsible** – having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.

**Included** – having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community.

In practice, the eight indicators can be interconnected and overlapping.

# Safeguarding in Wales

The following pages contain useful information for those working alongside safeguarding professionals in Wales.





## Safeguarding glossary:

**Children's Social Care** - these are the local social work departments that work with children and families. These departments may have different name according to where about they are located in the country. Your organisation's safeguarding lead may refer to them if there a concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** - person in Social Services responsible for managing and overseeing concerns, allegations and offences relating to staff and volunteers in any organisation across a local authority area. May also be known as Designated Officer for Allegations (DOFA). In Wales this is for Children and Adults.

**Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH)** - these are teams made up of professionals from different agencies including social work, police, health, and education. The team usually provide an early triage and multi-agency assessment of safeguarding concerns in respect of both children and adults. Not all areas have MASH teams.

**Regional Safeguarding Boards** - there are six Regional Safeguarding Boards across Wales. They sit under the National Independent Safeguarding Board Wales. Their role is to oversee safeguarding arrangements in their region; ensuring that agencies co-operate, people are protected, and safeguarding is promoted. They are also useful sources of information, training and support.

**DBS checks** - criminal record checks used to help make safer recruitment decisions. Depending on your role, this may be basic, standard, enhanced or enhanced with barring. An individual can only apply for a Basic Disclosure themselves.

# Statutory agencies & regulatory bodies

Statutory Agency	General duties	Safeguarding dutie	Laws and regulatory bodies
<b>Education Wales</b>	Provide free education for all	Identify and report concerns, support vulnerable students	Education workforce council
<b>Social Care Wales</b>	Child and adult safeguarding. Care planning.	Protection plans Investigations Monitoring and reviews	Care Inspectorate Wales  Regional Safeguarding Boards
<b>NHS Wales and Department of Health and Social Care</b>	Primary, secondary and emergency health	Patient advocacy Reporting concerns	e.g., General Medical Council (GMC) , The Care Inspectorate Wales <i>Speak to the specific team to find out what regulatory board they come under</i>
<b>Police</b>	Public order Crime prevention	Emergency response Protecting the vulnerable	College of Policing and Police Crime Commissioner

## Safeguarding guidance, policy and inquiries specific to faith groups:

Working together to Safeguard People (2014) have an additional guide Working Together to Safeguard People: Code of Safeguarding Practice which acknowledges that faith groups, along with other community organisations, play a vital role in supporting the well-being of people in Wales. The guide encourages faith groups to collaborate with statutory agencies and adhere to safeguarding policies, training, and processes to protect those at risk.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA, 2022), also applicable to England, highlighted the need for improved collaboration and understanding between statutory services and faith-based organisations to address safeguarding concerns effectively. However, it does note that this is difficult as, “Compliance with the guidance is not legally enforceable and religious organisations are under no duty to follow it, or even to take it into account”.

## National Safeguarding Procedures:

These were designed to bring together the key laws, policies and guidance and turn them into procedures so that everyone who works with children – whether in the charity sector, education, social services, or police – have a shared understanding of what is expected.

These helpful resources can be accessed:

- Online
  - In Welsh: [www.diogelu.cymru](http://www.diogelu.cymru)
  - In English: [www.safeguarding.wales](http://www.safeguarding.wales)
- On the Wales Safeguarding Procedures App
  - Via the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.
  - A desktop version is available at: [www.myguideapps.com](http://www.myguideapps.com)

## National safeguarding training, learning and development standards

Wales has a framework clearly outlining required training for all levels of practitioners. These are arranged from Group A – F, with each group having memorable principles, expected knowledge and processes. The principles of this course, which is aimed at those with a specific safeguarding responsibility within their organisation, or reason to interact with safeguarding professionals, sits within Group C.

Course transcripts are available to evidence you've met the requirements of the framework.

Memorable principles for this group are:

- I understand that voice and control of people is key to decision making – child/person-centred practice
- I understand everyone's roles and responsibilities in the safeguarding process
- I show the ability to make clear and proportionate decisions

For more information on Group C and the standards generally, see: [Safeguarding standards group C | Social Care Wales](#)

# Levels of safeguarding intervention

## For children:

Early support – In Wales, The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, part 2 includes a duty to promote wellbeing and prevent the escalation of need.

This low-level intervention can include multi-agency involvement, address what could be underlying issues, such as providing transport to school where absence is a recurring issue. Parenting classes are a common intervention, as is the inclusion of voluntary groups to support the child and families. Unlike other nations, Wales places a legal duty on local authorities to provide early help.

Child Protection Intervention – Working Together to Safeguard People requires statutory involvement when a child is at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, or their development is being significantly impaired, and there's a need for care and support.

In Wales, there is a mandatory duty to report which can lead to a **child protection conference**, leads to the creation of a **care and support protection plan** and in cases of urgent need, there may be an **emergency protection order** or care order for the child.

## For adults:

Early support – Local authorities in Wales have a legal duty to provide information, advice and assistance as well as **preventative services**. There is a strong emphasis on promoting wellbeing.

Examples include advice services, connection to voluntary services and even help with self-neglect if there is no immediate risk. Social prescribing is common.

## Levels of safeguarding intervention (continued)

Statutory safeguarding interventions – As with children in Wales, Working Together to Safeguard People requires statutory involvement when an adult is at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, or their development is being significantly impaired, and there's a need for care and support.

There is a mandatory duty to report concerns, following which the local authority will run an enquiry into whether intervention is needed. This may lead to a Safeguarding strategy meeting and/or a protection plan.

An example is a non-verbal adult with unexplained bruises. This would likely lead to a statutory safeguarding intervention.

# Mandatory Reporting:

The duty to report a child at risk of abuse, neglect and / or harm is a requirement in Wales. They offer the following guidance (full information available [here](#)).

For the purposes of this guidance a duty to report to the local authority will be taken to mean a referral to social services who, alongside the police, have statutory powers to investigate suspected abuse or neglect. The term 'practitioner' has been used as a blanket term to describe anyone who is in paid employment as well as unpaid volunteers.

A report must be made whenever a practitioner has concerns about a child under the age of 18 years who:

- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

If any person has knowledge, concerns or suspicions that a child is suffering, has suffered or is likely to be at risk of harm, it is their responsibility to ensure that the concerns are referred to social services or the police who have statutory duties and powers to make enquiries and intervene when necessary.

## **THIS IS NOT A MATTER OF PERSONAL CHOICE.**

### 'At risk'

The use of the term 'at risk' means that actual abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm do not necessarily need to occur, rather without interventions by services actual abuse and neglect are likely to occur.

Example: A practitioner becomes aware of a parent who is struggling to manage the challenging behaviour of their child and has indicated they are worried they will harm their child. A referral should be made before the situation deteriorates to the point whereby, they may resort to physical or emotional abuse.



## Building Safer Cultures

Creating a safe and protective culture isn't just about having a safeguarding policy – it's about the values, attitudes and behaviours that shape how we care for one another, speak up about concerns, and respond to people in need.

### 5 Building Blocks of a Safer Culture:

1. **Visible Leadership** - Leaders speak openly about safeguarding, take concerns seriously, and model humility and accountability.
2. **Shared Responsibility** - Everyone understands that safeguarding is part of their role – not just the safeguarding lead's job.
3. **Openness and Listening** - People feel safe to raise concerns without fear of blame or dismissal. Children and adults are actively listened to.
4. **Safe Practices** - Activities are risk assessed, volunteers are safely recruited, and concerns are recorded and responded to.
5. **Ongoing Learning** - The community reflects together, reviews safeguarding regularly, and learns from past failures and best practice.

# Building Safer Cultures Continued:

## Reflective Exercise: What Can We Learn from the Victoria Climbié Case?

Victoria Climbié was an 8-year-old girl who died in 2000 as a result of horrific abuse and neglect. Despite contact with social workers, health professionals, police, and faith leaders, opportunities to intervene were missed. Her case led to major changes in child protection across the UK. Faith communities were mentioned in the public inquiry. A pastor who was close to Victoria and her aunt had concerns, but didn't report them to safeguarding authorities.

### Reflection Questions:

1. How do we respond when we feel something isn't right?
2. Would we know who to talk to if we were worried about a child or adult at risk?
3. Are there any barriers in our setting that might stop someone raising a concern (e.g. fear, loyalty, status)?
4. What would help us become a community where it's safe to speak up?

Encourage your team to reflect privately or in discussion. Use this as a springboard for change.

### Simple tasks to build a safer culture:

- Make sure your safeguarding poster or contacts are visible and up to date
- Hold a 5-minute team talk on what 'safer culture' means to your setting
- Ask one child, young person or adult: What helps you feel safe here?
- Invite someone outside your core team to challenge your current safeguarding practices

### A bigger task that builds a safer culture:

Consider the Safeguarding Standards award - Independently assessed against our 10 Safeguarding Standards, it'll help your organisation identify its current strengths and any areas where extra work may be needed to further embed safeguarding within your culture and identity. Find out more here:

[National Safeguarding Standards Award](#)



**Safeguarding  
Standards  
Award**



## Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief [CALFB]

Child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB) involves harmful practices based on beliefs in witchcraft, spirit possession, or ritual abuse. Children displaying behavioural problems, learning difficulties, or mental health issues may be wrongly perceived as possessed or having evil spirits. This can lead to significant harm, including severe beatings, torture, and even murder, as seen in high-profile cases like Victoria Climbié and Kristy Bamu. These practices are not confined to any one faith, nationality, or ethnic community, and have been recorded worldwide. Fear of the supernatural is also used to exploit children through trafficking for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation.

### **Considerations for faith and voluntary groups working with safeguarding professionals**

**Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness:** Faith and community groups should be aware of the cultural contexts and beliefs that may contribute to CALFB which can help to identify, report and ultimately prevent abuse.

**Education and Training:** The voluntary sector should be educated about the signs and indicators, and harmful effects of CALFB. This includes understanding how fear of the supernatural can be used to control and exploit children.

# Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief Continued:

**Collaboration and Trust Building:** Establishing trust and collaboration with safeguarding professionals is crucial. Faith and community groups should work together with these professionals to promote child protection practices and address CALFB effectively.

**Community Engagement:** Engaging with the wider community to raise awareness about CALFB and its consequences is essential. Faith and community groups can be a comfortable and safe place to educate community members and encourage reporting of abuse.

Faith and community groups can work effectively with safeguarding professionals to address and prevent child abuse linked to faith and belief, helping to ensure the safety and well-being of children in their communities.

For more, see:

<https://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/calfb/>



## Connecting with your local safeguarding professionals

Collaborating with safeguarding professionals often happens as the result of responding to a live safeguarding concern, but it can be helpful to build those links proactively. Safeguarding processes can change depending on your location. Spend some time now getting the following information:

<b>Safeguarding professional / statutory agency:</b>	<b>Contact details:</b>
Local authority's website	
Contact for adult safeguarding concern – normal contacts and out of hours	
Contact for child safeguarding concern – normal contacts and out of hours	
Local Health Visiting team and GP Practices connected with the community you're serving	

# Connecting with your local safeguarding professionals (continued)

Safeguarding professional / statutory agency:	Contact details:
Multi-agency area team? Including a link to multi-agency reporting form, where applicable.	
Regional area[1] [1] Regional Safeguarding Board [Wales]   Council Child Protection Committee (CPC) [Scotland]	
Local Community and Voluntary Service	
Contact when alleged perpetrator holds a position of trust[2]	
Domestic abuse services/resources	
Services specific to your location / area of work	

[1] Regional Safeguarding Board [Wales] | Council Child Protection Committee (CPC) [Scotland]

[2] England: Local authority designated officer (LADO) | Northern Ireland: Gateway services or Designated officer for child protection (DOCP) | Scotland: Multi-agency public protection arrangement (MAPPA) or local social work team | Wales: Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officers, often know as Allegations Management Coordinator and Regional Safeguarding Boards

# Faith literacy for Safeguarding Professionals

In a safeguarding context faith literacy means having the awareness and sensitivity to:

- Understand how faith may shape identity, values, and decisions
- Recognise both the protective and risk factors within faith contexts
- Communicate respectfully and effectively with people from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds
- Navigate situations where faith and safeguarding concerns intersect

Faith and belief can be central to people's lives, including children and adults at risk. It can be a source of strength, belonging, and resilience but also, in some contexts, it can become entangled with coercion, shame, secrecy, or misuse of power.

Being faith-literate helps professionals to:

- Build trust with families and individuals from faith backgrounds
- Recognise barriers to disclosure (e.g. stigma, honour, fear of exclusion from a faith group)
- Understand how religious beliefs may impact:
  - Perceptions of harm or protection
  - Consent, autonomy, and decision-making
  - Responses to abuse, including forgiveness or silence
- Navigate spiritual abuse, cultural taboos, or misuse of religious authority

## Free Resources to Build Faith Literacy

Here are some free, UK-appropriate resources to help professionals deepen their understanding:

1. Thirtyone:eight Lunch and Learn panel discussion – COMING SOON!
2. NSPCC Learning: Safeguarding in faith communities: [Safeguarding in faith communities | NSPCC Learning](#)
3. Inter Faith Network for the UK (recently dissolved but resources still available): [www.interfaith.org.uk/resources](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources)



## Healthy coping techniques

Sometimes, as staff and volunteers supporting people in difficult circumstances, we may be involved in safeguarding concerns that don't lead to a clear or satisfactory outcome. This can leave us feeling worried, powerless, frustrated, or even guilty. How we care for ourselves and each other after these experiences is important: Your responsibility is to report and respond – not to carry the outcome.

### Healthy coping techniques

#### 1. Talk about it (safely)

- Arrange time to debrief with a supervisor or safeguarding lead
- Avoid “holding it all in” or relying only on informal chats with peers

#### 2. Acknowledge your feelings

- It's okay to feel sad, angry, helpless, or unsure
- Writing down how you feel in a private journal or speaking it aloud can help release tension

#### 3. Focus on what you did do

- You listened
- You noticed
- You acted and followed procedure

# Healthy coping techniques (continued)

## 4. Set boundaries

- Don't try to keep checking in with the individual unless it is part of your role
- Avoid seeking information from professionals that hasn't been shared with you – this protects both them and you

## 5. Engage in restorative activities

- Take time to do something grounding (e.g. walking, music, prayer, creative activity)
- Talk to someone you trust about your own emotional and spiritual wellbeing

## 6. Stay informed, not overwhelmed

- Ask your safeguarding lead for general updates or lessons learned from the situation, if appropriate
- Accept that some information may be confidential – and that this is to protect the person involved

## When to Seek Extra Support

It's a strength to ask for help. You might need further support if you:

- Can't stop thinking about the situation
- Feel physically or emotionally overwhelmed
- Notice changes in sleep, appetite, mood, or motivation
- Start to withdraw from your volunteering or lose confidence

In these cases, speak to your safeguarding lead, your team leader, or GP. Some organisations also offer free listening services or faith-based pastoral care.



## How the criminal justice system interacts with safeguarding

Safeguarding situation	Criminal Justice System Involvement
A child or adult is believed to be abused or harmed	Police investigate and gather evidence. This is often parallel to Social Care involvement.
There's a risk of significant harm or likelihood of significant harm	Police and social workers may conduct a joint investigation.
Abuse is confirmed and meets criminal threshold	The CPS (or Procurator Fiscal in Scotland) decides whether to charge someone.
A person is charged with an offence	The case goes to court. The victim may be a witness, often with special support.
Someone is convicted of abuse	The courts may issue protective orders (like Restraining or Barring Orders).
The person is a known risk to others	They may be placed on a sexual offences register or barred from certain work.



## Language and terminology

In safeguarding practice across the UK, how we record information matters just as much as what we record. Language shapes perception. It influences decision-making, relationships, and the level of dignity afforded to those we are supporting. Using people-centred language ensures that safeguarding records avoid reinforcing stigma or bias. **Records that reflect empathy and accuracy build trust, especially when people access their own records or are involved in multi-agency processes.**

### People-centred language is:

- Respectful: It avoids labels or judgement.
- Strengths-based: It recognises the whole person, not just their risk or needs.
- Accurate and neutral: It describes behaviours and observations without assuming motive.
- Rights-based: It supports the individual's autonomy and voice.

It focuses on the person first, rather than defining them by their circumstances, health, disability, or risk.

# Language and terminology (continued)

## **Best Practice for Language in Records**

1. Use factual, non-judgemental descriptions
2. Distinguish fact from opinion – and clearly state if something is a concern, allegation, or observation
3. Avoid blaming language
4. Use the person's own words, especially when recording disclosures

## **Example Scenario: Youth Group Volunteer Report**

Less appropriate: A girl in the group is emotionally unstable and disruptive. We think she needs therapy.

People-centred alternative: A young person in the group appeared upset and withdrew from activities. When approached, she said she didn't feel safe at home. She has been referred to the safeguarding lead for support.



## Safeguarding Assurances

When faith or community groups provide socially prescribed or formally commissioned services and are working with people referred by safeguarding professionals, they're likely to be asked to provide safeguarding assurances.

### 1. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

- A clear safeguarding policy
- Procedures that follow national guidance in your part of the UK
- Clear reporting routes for concerns of disclosures
- Inclusion of whistleblowing, how you'll manage allegations and record keeping procedures

### 2. Named Safeguarding Lead(s)

- Identifiable person(s) who holds the primary responsibility for safeguarding
- Clear role and training documented
- Clear alternative arrangements for when the Safeguarding Lead isn't available

### 3. Safer Recruitment

- Evidence of safer recruitment practices for staff and volunteers
- Criminal record checks (e.g. DBS in England/Wales, PVG in Scotland, AccessNI in Northern Ireland)
- References, role descriptions, and risk assessments for volunteers in regulated activity

# Safeguarding Assurances (continued)

## 4. Staff and Volunteer Training

- Safeguarding training appropriate to role and refreshed regularly
- Training conforms with national standards, where applicable
- Records kept of who has completed training and when

## 5. Partnership and Information Sharing

- A clear understanding of confidentiality vs safeguarding (i.e. when to share information)
- Willingness and ability to engage in multi-agency working
- Use of secure communication when handling personal information
- Consent procedures (and understanding when consent is not required to share a concern). You can find details [here](#).

## 6. Risk Assessment and Safe Environments

- Risk assessments in place for activities, venues, and individuals (where necessary)
- A clear code of conduct for staff and volunteers

## 7. Governance and Accountability

- Safeguarding oversight at board/leadership level (e.g. trustee or senior leader with safeguarding remit)
- Regular review of safeguarding policies (at least annually)
- Evidence of incident logging and response (with anonymised examples if needed)
- Complaints process accessible to service users

## 8. Understanding of Specific Safeguarding Contexts

(You may also need to demonstrate awareness of):

- Domestic abuse
- Exploitation (e.g. modern slavery, county lines)
- Spiritual abuse or coercive control (particularly relevant in religious settings)
- Mental health and capacity
- Cultural competence and equality
- Safe pastoral or prayer practices

# Safeguarding Assurances (continued)

## 9. Insurance and Legal Compliance

- Evidence of public liability and professional indemnity insurance
- Any relevant registrations or regulatory requirements (e.g. charity commission, care standards where applicable)

## 10. Records and Consent

- **Secure storage of safeguarding records**
- **Awareness of data protection laws (e.g. UK GDPR)**
- **Clear consent procedures for participation, photos, sharing information – especially where children or vulnerable adults are involved**

**Statutory partners (e.g. the NHS, local authorities, or integrated care systems) may also request:**

- Participation in safeguarding audits or quality checks
- Written Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with safeguarding clauses
- Evidence of supervision and reflective practice for frontline workers or volunteers, they may also ask for anonymised examples of referrals made or information sharing with other agencies.



## Serious Case Reviews

**Serious Case Reviews are a formal process that happen when someone – usually a child or an adult at risk – experiences serious harm or death, and safeguarding concerns were known or should have been known.**

Stanley O’Neill, a dementia patient, was admitted to the Mater Hospital in Belfast on 6 December 2022 and passed away on 20 December. An investigation revealed significant shortcomings in his care, including inadequate personal hygiene, lack of oral care, and insufficient response to multiple falls. A serious adverse incident report highlighted failures in communication with his family and in reporting safeguarding concerns promptly. **His death is believed to have been preventable.**

The purpose of these reviews is to learn how it can be prevented in the future.

These reviews are commissioned by safeguarding boards or partnerships, and involve multiple agencies (e.g. social work, police, health, education, and sometimes faith or community groups, although terminology differs across the UK).

## Serious Case Reviews (continued)

	Children	Adults
England	Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR)	Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR)
Northern Ireland	Case Management Review (CMR)	Safeguarding Adults Case Management Review (SACMR)
Scotland	Significant Case Review (SCR)	Significant Case Review (SCR)
Wales	Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)	Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)

### Serious Case Reviews:

- Examines what happened in the case, including agency involvement
- Looks at decisions, communication, missed opportunities
- Gathers the voices of professionals, and sometimes families or communities
- Makes recommendations for improvement at local, regional or national level
- Often results in training, policy change, or new tools to help frontline workers

### Serious Case Reviews and faith and community settings:

Even if we weren't directly involved, reviews often highlight themes relevant to us, such as:

- Not recognising early signs of abuse or neglect
- Failure to share concerns or escalate
- Cultural or religious misunderstandings
- Lack of confidence in challenging authority or "closed" communities
- Inadequate training or unclear roles

## Serious Case Reviews (continued)

**Each Serious Case Review represents a person whose death or the harm that they suffer is thought to have been preventable. This represents over 1000 individuals who could have been safeguarded better.**

**In your situations, turn reflection into action:**

After resolving a safeguarding concern, take time as a team or organisation to:

- Hold a debrief (with the safeguarding lead)
- Review what worked and what didn't
- Record lessons learned
- Update policies or training if needed



## Statutory Agencies – What they are/aren’t

Statutory agencies are public bodies that have a legal duty to carry out specific functions, usually related to public welfare, safety, and regulation. Examples include the police, social services, the NHS, and local authorities. These agencies are established and governed by law, and they are accountable to the public through government oversight and formal procedures. Volunteers are often the first to spot concerns and can play a vital role in guiding people toward the help they need. Knowing how statutory agencies operate—and what their responsibilities are—can help ensure that concerns are handled appropriately and safely.

### **What statutory agencies are:**

Legally responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk.

Required to follow strict protocols and procedures.

Staffed by professionals trained in law, healthcare, education, or social work.

Accountable through legislation, public scrutiny, and professional regulation.

Able to intervene when there are concerns about safety, welfare, or legal rights.

### **What statutory agencies are not:**

They are not always immediate responders; while they have legal duties, processes can take time.

They are not substitutes for community support but rather formal mechanisms that work alongside it.

Statutory agencies are a critical part of the wider network that keeps communities safe. The faith and community sector complements their efforts by offering compassion, connection, and trust—often the first step toward formal support.



## Safeguarding Elements and Terminology across the UK-nations

Safeguarding Element	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Children: Early Help / Early Intervention	Early Help	Early Intervention / Family Support	GIRFEC – Getting It Right for Every Child	Early Help / Integrated Family Support
Children: Front Door to Services	Children's Services / MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)	Gateway Services / Family Intervention Team (FIT)	Named Person / Social Work Duty Team / <a href="#">Child Protection Team</a>	Regional Safeguarding Boards
Children: Threshold for Statutory Involvement	Section 17 – Child in Need	Children in Need	Child in Need / Child Protection (via Child's plan and Children's Hearing )	Section 21 – Child in Need

# Safeguarding Elements and Terminology across the UK-nations (continued)

Safeguarding Element	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Children: Safeguarding Duty Trigger	Section 47 – Significant Harm	Article 66 – Significant Harm (Children (NI) Order 1995)	Child Protection Order	Section 47 (Children Act applies in Wales)
Children: Lead Safeguarding Professional	Social Worker / LADO (for allegations)	Social Worker / Trust Designated Officer	Lead Professional / Named Person / Social Worker	Social Worker / Designated Officer
Children: Child protection plan	Child protection plan	Child protection plan	Child’s plan	Child protection plan
Children: Child Protection Register	No longer used (ceased 2008)	Still in use	Still in use	No longer used (ceased 2008)
Children: Lead Safeguarding Body	Local Authority & Safeguarding Partnerships	Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)	Child Protection Committees	Regional Safeguarding Boards
Named Safeguarding Role: Allegations against a Person in a Position of Trust (PiPoT)	LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer	No LADO – Trust manages allegations via Gateway/Social Services	No direct LADO – managed by child protection teams	Allegations Management Coordinator / Designated Officer

# Safeguarding Elements and Terminology across the UK-nations (continued)

Safeguarding Element	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Adults: Early Intervention / Prevention	Early Intervention / Preventative Services	Early Intervention via Trust Community Teams and Voluntary Sector	Early Intervention / Anticipatory Care / Community Wellbeing	Preventative Services under Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act
Adults: Statutory Safeguarding Trigger	Section 42 Enquiry (Care Act 2014)	Adult Protection Process – Adult Safeguarding under SBNI policy	Adult Protection Framework (Adults at Risk of Harm)	Duties under Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
Adults: Safeguarding Investigation Called	Section 42 Enquiry	Adult Protection Investigation	Adult Protection Referral and Case Conference	Adult Protection Enquiry
ADULTS: Lead Safeguarding Body	Local Authority Adult Social Care / Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)	Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)	Adult Protection Committees (APCs)	Regional Safeguarding Boards



## Types of Witnesses

Post-referral, working alongside statutory agencies could involve being called as, or supporting, a witness. This can take various forms, so again, clarify what your role is, and maintain professional standards in that. In your role with a faith and community-based organisation, you're unlikely to be called as an expert witness.

**1. Witness of Fact:** You give evidence about what you saw, heard, or did – not opinion, e.g. a support worker reporting signs of neglect.

**2. Professional/Expert Witness:** You give opinion based on your expertise or qualifications – usually as part of your professional role, e.g. a social worker explaining risk factors and decision-making.

**3. Vulnerable Witness:** If the witness themselves is vulnerable – e.g. a child or adult at risk – they may:

- Give evidence behind a screen or by video link
- Have an intermediary help them communicate
- Have their identity protected in some cases

Your role in working alongside safeguarding professionals may include supporting vulnerable witnesses.

# Types of Witnesses

**4. Character Witness:** Sometimes used in criminal proceedings – they give evidence about a person’s character, usually for the defence, this is less common in safeguarding unless it overlaps with criminal court proceedings.

**5. Witness in safeguarding proceeding,** i.e., Family Court, Children’s Hearing (Scotland) or Coroner’s Court.

You might be asked to give a written report or statement, live evidence under oath and/or your views on what is in the best interests of the child or in the wellbeing of adults.

# Signposting

Please note: These links are accurate at the time of course preparation. Thirtyone:eight don't recommend organisations, but you may find these links useful when looking for support and guidance.

## **In times of crisis:**

Call 999 in emergency situations

[Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](#)  
[Coping with suicidal feelings | Childline](#)

## **Charity regulators**

[The Charity Commission - GOV.UK](#) [England and Wales]

[Home | The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#) [Northern Ireland]

[OSCR | Home](#) [Scotland]

## **Voluntary Organisations**

[NCVO | NCVO](#) [England and Wales]

[Representing, supporting, connecting and developing | NICVA](#) [Northern Ireland]

[Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) [Scotland]

## **Ombudsmen/commissioner**

Advice: [Complaining to an ombudsman - Citizens Advice](#) [England]

Advice: [Get advice in Northern Ireland - Citizens Advice](#) [Northern Ireland]

Advice: [Complain to an ombudsman or commissioner](#) [Scotland]

Advice: [How to use an ombudsman in Wales - Citizens Advice](#) [Wales]

## **Criminal Record Checks:**

[Gov.uk disclosure and barring service](#)

[Disclosure Scotland](#)

[PVG Scheme](#)

[Access NI](#)

[Criminal Record Checks for Overseas Applicants](#)

## **Thirtyone:eight Resource Links:**

[Thirtyone:eight Help Guides](#)

# Signposting: Resources Commonly Shared in the Webinar

Please note: These links are accurate at the time of course preparation. Thirtyone:eight don't recommend organisations, but you may find these links useful when looking for support and guidance.

These are shared in the order they're likely to be mentioned during our webinar. Some of these are also included in our signposting section.

## Module 1 – Roles and relationships

Definition of safeguarding, slide 9: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/safeguarding-people>

Quote from the Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse [IICSA], slide 14:

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20221216171718/https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/26895/view/child-protection-religious-organisations-settings-investigation-report-september-2021-.pdf>

Potential tension between the roles of Safeguarding Professionals and those involved in Safeguarding in faith-based organisations, slide 15:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/235702/0195.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/235702/0195.pdf) p.285.

Faith communities provide a 'helping environment', slide 16: Religion, Belief and Social work, by Sheila Furness and Philip Gilligan (2010), p.3

## Module 2 – Referral to resolution

How to engage in Social Prescribing: Faith Leaders, Theos, slide 30:

[https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/HowToGuide\\_FaithLeaders.pdf](https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/HowToGuide_FaithLeaders.pdf)

Judgement on appeal, slide 32:

<https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/media/25vetgyv/2025hcjac3-crown-appeal-against-sentence-in-causa-hma-against-lm.pdf>

## Module 3 – Communication and collaboration

Victim-Survivor voice, slide 37:

[https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/98290/1/Cornish\\_2025\\_CYSR.pdf](https://ueaeprints.uea.ac.uk/id/eprint/98290/1/Cornish_2025_CYSR.pdf) p.4

Victim-Survivor voice, slide 44:

<https://survivorsforum.womensaid.org.uk/forums/topic/ramblings/>