

# Transcript for Safeguarding Children and Young People Webinar

## [Introduction]

Hello, and welcome to our safeguarding children and young people webinar. This webinar is two and a half hours long and we'll have a five-minute break around halfway through the 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 children and young people that we cover throughout the webinar are applicable across all four nations and we will highlight any

terminology that is nation specific. There are nation specific sections in the handbook outlining key practice models, terminology, legislation and safeguarding timelines. Please take a moment to find the section applicable to the nation or nations in which you work, but do feel free to explore the others too since they provide examples of best practice. For example, if you work in Scotland, the national practice model of Getting It Right For Every Child, known as GIRFEC, and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, are a key part of your safeguarding framework. No doubt you'll be familiar with them from signage in NHS buildings, schools, or other public spaces. However, thinking through how we enable our children and young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors, as is laid out in that model, will be of interest to all of us working in this area. So, reading about this model is an enriching experience for everyone. Similarly, the Wales' safeguarding procedures are designed to bring together 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 on a website and an app and much of their information is helpful for those working in any nation. All four UK nations have legislation and guidance that recognises the rights of children and young people to live free from abuse and neglect, and the responsibility of all of us who work with children and young people to safeguard them.

This is the learning journey we'll be going on during this webinar. We have five modules of varying lengths based on the five R's of safeguarding: recognise, respond, record, report and reflect. Each module includes taught content and opportunities for interaction. We also encourage you to keep those questions coming, either in the chat or by unmuting and participating whenever you wish.

Before we go into our modules, I invite us all as a group to pause and consider, why do we safeguard children and young people? Please type your thoughts into the chat or unmute and share. Perhaps this could include things like a moral duty, part of your faith, part of the

work that you do to make safe places, to prevent harm, recognising children's vulnerability and their reliance on adults. Thank you so much for all of those suggestions. It's really good to recognise our motivations and be encouraged by them as we start our session.

## **[Module 1: Recognise]**

Let's start module one. In this module, we'll begin by laying out some clear definitions and statistics - recognising what safeguarding is and what a child is, which is more complex than it sounds, and the scope of our safeguarding task. We will also recognise the categories of abuse as defined in legislation and explore other major contemporary concerns that put children and young people at risk of harm.

So, what is safeguarding? Here's a quote from Douglas and Fourie in 2022. "Safeguarding is concerned with ensuring a person is free from harm, risk and danger, and that the individual can access the support they need to thrive and do well in life." Many of us will recognise that safeguarding is about protecting people from danger, though for some safeguarding may be a new term or concept, but the second part of

this definition highlights a positive, proactive part of the safeguarding task. We aren't just reacting when something goes wrong. We're creating environments and signposting to support that can enable children to thrive. Safeguarding is a vital consideration in any place where vulnerable people like children and young people are welcomed. Many environments like schools and care settings are highly regulated, and there is an expectation for strong safeguarding arrangements. Many of you will have professional and personal experience of this. For example, to visit my children's school, you have to use an intercom to get access through a metal gate, sign in at the office, wear a visitor's pass and be accompanied by a staff member. For our churches, faith organisations and many charities, our contexts are more complex than this. We have to balance open doors, a welcome for all and a culture of creating family, which are all good things, with a recognition that we have a duty to protect the vulnerable. There is also the sad reality that those who wish to perpetrate abuse may even target such environments as places with easy access to potential victims. This



knowledge is a key reason why we want to equip and empower you in your safeguarding task through this training.

Let's consider our second definition, who is a child? The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defined a child as everyone under 18, unless under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier. The Northern Ireland Children Order (1995), defines a child as a person under the age of 18. Section three of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 states that a child is a person who again is aged under 18. In England, a child is also defined as anyone who's not yet reached their 18th birthday. Child Protection guidance points out that even if a child has reached 16 years and is living independently, in Further Education, a member of the armed forces, in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, they are still legally children and should be given the same protection and entitlements as any other child. In Scotland, the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 includes all

children and young people up to the age of 18. Where a young person between the ages of 16 and 18 requires support and protection services, we'll need to consider which legal framework best fits each person's needs and circumstances. The national guidance for child protection in Scotland gives more detail about this and explains how professionals should act to protect young people from harm in different circumstances. Sometimes it's very clear that the person we're safeguarding is a child. But it is good to recognise that it can be nuanced and more complex than this. For example, a 17-year-old living in Northern Ireland might view themselves as an adult, and may be considered as such by others, because they don't live with their parents and they drive a car, yet child protection duties still apply to them. It's important that we understand what our responsibilities are towards the young people we're supporting, and get advice from our Safeguarding Lead when are unsure about decision making, consent, reporting and such things.

Finally, to finish this opening section we've got some stark statistics to give us an understanding of how prevalent abuse is and why this is important. In 2022, the NSPCC estimated that half a million children a year suffered abuse in the UK. And the 2020 crime survey for England and Wales estimated that one in five adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced at least one form of abuse before the age of 16. These statistics aren't included here to depress us or make us despair, but it helps us realise that if you work with more than five young people, the statistics indicate that one of them may experience or have already experienced abuse. So, awareness and knowing what to do if you're worried is really important.

It's also important for us to acknowledge right at the beginning, that we cannot recognise a perpetrator of abuse by sight. The reality is that it could be anyone. Whilst it's important to teach stranger danger, and online there is a greater percentage of perpetrators who are strangers, the reality is that children who are abused are usually abused by someone they know or is known to their family, or community circle.

Someone of any gender can be a perpetrator of abuse. In the past, we may have had this unconscious bias that only men are perpetrators of abuse. However, I'm sure we can all think of cases we've heard about in the news, where the perpetrators have been female, for example, the nursery worker Vanessa George or Ghislain Maxwell, more recently. It is difficult to contemplate, but it can be a child's own parent or carer who abuses them. And sibling abuse is also a growing area of awareness. Abusers could be other children; it's essential that we recognise that abuse carried out by children is still abuse. We must respond in the same when a child is at risk of harm. This type of abuse used to be called peer-on-peer abuse, but this isn't always accurate, children from babies to 17 years old aren't all peers, so now we refer to child-on-child abuse. A quote from someone with lived experience of this, from the website 'Everyone's Invited', said in April 2023: "It was done to me by one of my friends, he grabbed me and pulled me to the wall, putting his hand under my skirt. The rest I shall leave out." We're hearing more of these voices now and it's important that we recognise and respond to them. We also recognise that people in positions of

trust in all areas of society, including the church and faith leaders, celebrities, politicians, police, teachers, sports coaches, could be perpetrators of abuse. Some people will actually seek to hold a position of trust because of the access, influence and power it gives them with children and young people. People from all backgrounds, faiths and cultures can be perpetrators of abuse. It is true to say that anyone can be a perpetrator of abuse but not everyone is - we have to hold these two truths in tension if we're going to have a balanced perspective.

### **[Categories of abuse and major contemporary concerns]**

We have categories of abuse, defined in legislation, across our four nations when it comes to safeguarding children and young people. These categories are; physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. Financial abuse is an additional category for children in Welsh law, where legislation doesn't separate adult and child safeguarding, but rather talks of safeguarding people. Children could be affected by financial abuse if, for example, benefits or disability

payments are being withheld or not being spent on the child. These forms of abuse will be explored further in the scenarios in module two.

We've also got some major contemporary concerns that we need to consider when we're thinking of safeguarding children and young people. I'd like you to take part in a poll now. For all these major contemporary concerns, consider how familiar you are with each one and just give an indication - are you very familiar, fairly familiar, you've heard of the term but don't know details or you're not familiar at all. For anyone who can't access the poll, the categories are: online crimes and abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, child abuse linked to faith or belief, child-on-child abuse, accelerated pace of grooming, radicalisation, and spiritual abuse. The polls we use in Zoom are all anonymous, so don't be shy, it's just a way to get an overall sense of where we are in the room.

As we go through, if you are very familiar with one of these major contemporary concerns, please unmute and share a short definition so we can learn from each other. Online crimes/abuse is an area where

reports are rising. Children and young people are being groomed and exploited in the online world. For example, being coerced to perform sexual acts, the production of abuse images that perpetrators can use and sell, or doing dares that can cause significant harm. The online world is a key environment for many of our children and young people; it is part of daily life. It is an environment that we need to consider in terms of safeguarding as it is constantly moving and hasn't been part of our own childhood for many of us adults. Parents, carers and youth and children's workers might either be unaware of potential risks or feel ill-equipped to deal with them. Resources are being developed all the time to support online safety. A few really helpful ones will be given by the co-host in the chat. If you have got others that you'd like to suggest, please include those so we can learn from each other. We've got the National Online Safety website and app, which is so helpful as it's got frequently updated news and guidance on different games and apps and devices, and tutorials for carers of different age groups. Scotland's Parent Club has also got a useful part of their website about online safety. And there's Childline's Report Remove tool to help young

people confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove these from the internet. And the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre is there for children and young people to report online abuse.

During interviews for the Truth Project, which was part of the IICSA (Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse) Report, sending nudes was frequently described as commonplace. We've got a partial quotation here on the slide, the longer quote says: "The whole Snapchat thing and sending nudes on Snapchat is just normal." Many participants also felt that their parents were not fully aware of the risks posed by the internet and social media culture. A participant called Kaya said, "My mum had no idea about it. So, by the age of 10, or 11, I was probably speaking to people I shouldn't be."

Domestic abuse is also a growing concern in our nations, with a dramatic increase of disclosures and requests for support during the pandemic. Children living in a home where domestic abuse is taking place are at risk. The Domestic Abuse Acts across all UK nations in



2021 increased the legal powers to protect those who are experiencing domestic abuse, including recognising children in homes where domestic abuse is occurring as victims in their own right, and prosecute perpetrators of it. When a child is living in a home where domestic abuse is occurring, we need to pass on concerns to our safeguarding leads or coordinators. These children need safeguarding from the emotional damage this can cause, and a child protection response is required. Remember, domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. The law now recognises coercion and control as domestic abuse. Domestic abuse law also applies to young people aged 16 and 17 in controlling, violent or emotionally abusive relationships. The charity Restored released their study 'In Churches Too' in 2018. 1 in 4 people in their sample group of church goers had experienced abuse in their current relationship.

CSE stands for child sexual exploitation. Organised crime groups will groom children and young people in order for them to be sexually exploited. There are three stages to this process - recruitment, control

and exploitation. High profile cases you may well be aware of include Rochdale, Rotherham, Telford and Oxford. Scotland's Parent Club has information and guidance for parents and carers on this contemporary issue, including some helpful advice about starting conversations with your children.

CCE stands for child criminal exploitation. This is where organised crime groups will groom children and young people in order for them to be criminally exploited. We see this in the drug trade with children and young people being exploited in the selling, distribution and movement of drugs. Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime Agency, 2019). County lines is one often discussed example of CCE. Gangs are another. Again, we can recognise those three stages of recruitment, control and exploitation. We can also think of other areas where children are criminally exploited, including modern slavery. A high-profile case that we heard of recently is that of a Mo Farah who was trafficked into this country

and then used as a modern slave. Trafficking refers to the movement of an individual for the purposes of exploitation, that could be across national borders, but it might be from one house to another, or one postcode to another. You might also have heard the term extra-familial harm, essentially this is harm that occurs to children outside their family settings. It's the risks to children that arise from within the community or peer group, including sexual and criminal exploitation. It recognises that developmentally, adolescence is a time of exploration, increasing independence and risk taking. Young people become more engaged with - and influenced - by peer norms and relationships, and other adults, groups and communities not connected to their families, including in the online sphere. These extra-familial contexts can pose a new set of complex risks at the interface with criminality. That definition is from the Innovate Project, and there is a link in the chat if you want to learn more.

The next contemporary concern to focus on is child abuse linked to faith or belief. This is where faith or culturally-held beliefs lead to the

abuse of children. An example of this would be female genital mutilation, otherwise known as FGM. There will be culturally held beliefs surrounding this practice in some communities. Some families do not recognise these practices as abusive and in fact, believe they are doing their best to protect their children from unwanted sexual attention or what they consider to be inappropriate sexual desires or sensations. But within the UK, it's illegal, which is why it's labelled mutilation. Other examples of child abuse linked to faith include breast ironing, where hot or heavy implements are used to inhibit the growth of a child's breasts; and child witch accusations, where a child is labelled as being possessed and needs the evil to be taken out of them. And there are harmful practices that are forms of physical and emotional abuse associated with this.

Next, we come to child-on-child abuse. Terminology has changed from peer-on-peer abuse because not all children are peers, as we said before. Websites like Everyone's Invited have given voice to those experiencing sexual assault in school. In Scotland, there's been a

recent focus on the extent and impact of sibling abuse. A 2021 report by the child sexual abuse centre states that sexual abuse involving child siblings is thought to be the most common form of intra-familial sexual abuse, perhaps up to three times as common as sexual abuse of a child by a parent.

Let's consider the accelerated pace of grooming. Now, we recognise that grooming is not a new concept and is a part of many forms of abuse. But research shows that the pace of grooming in our faster-paced world has also increased; it has accelerated at an alarming rate in recent years. For example, a perpetrator might use different platforms and social media accounts to contact multiple children at the same time and see who responds, or contact the same child across multiple platforms and devices. The timescale from initial contact to perpetrating abuse is diminishing.

Radicalisation is where children and young people are indoctrinated with extremist ideologies. During COVID-19, the far right were very active spreading extremist views online. Teachers and youth workers

are currently being trained in the language associated with in-cel culture. In-cel is short for involuntary celibate, wanting a sexual relationship and not having one. Online in-cel groups promoting extremist views have been linked with promoting abuse and violence. There's a link to a report in the chat if you want to know more about this area.

Spiritual abuse is an emerging area of awareness too. It is not currently a statutory category of abuse in legislation, but it is important for our faith communities to understand. Oakley and Kinmond define spiritual abuse as coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. And the person experiencing this feels it as a deeply emotional personal attack. Abuse may include manipulation, exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture, using the pulpit to control behaviour, requiring obedience to the abuser, or the suggestion that the abuser has a divine position.

The subject might be isolated from others, particularly those outside of the abusive context.

## **[Module 2 – Respond]**

We're going to move into module two now, which is our second 'R' - respond. In this module, we're going to be looking at the signs and indicators of abuse, so we can respond to them when we recognise them. We're going to think through some case studies to explore what responding to concerns might look like in practice. And finally, we'll be reflecting on the effects of abuse and why responding well is so important.

We want to respond to things that we notice with caring curiosity. If you notice that something doesn't seem right, pass on your concern.

Responding doesn't necessarily mean involving outside agencies. But it does mean being attentive to changes and not ignoring your instinct that something might be wrong.

The physical and emotional impact of abuse can affect a child's behaviour. They may become more withdrawn, nervous, flinching, or

watchful. They might display some of the behaviours they've witnessed or received, becoming more aggressive or angry, threatening, or began to show sexualised behaviour or language that they didn't use before, or you wouldn't expect at their age and stage of life. Behaviour is a way to communicate. So, if you notice this change, and it makes you wonder, pay attention to this instinct, and pass on your concern.

Sometimes we actually see physical signs of abuse - cuts, burns and bruises, a child is limping or in pain for example. Of course, normal, non-abusive childhood can lead to bumps and bruises and even broken bones, but a child in pain should raise our caring curiosity. A physical injury might be a sign that something isn't right. Pay attention to those signs and pass on any concerns you have.

Abuse can also have an impact on relationships. A child might become fearful when a certain person is present. They might distance themselves from people they were previously friends with. They might become increasingly dependent on another person. Relationships of all kinds can become difficult as trust has been broken.



We also know that poor mental health in children is on the increase with reports of self-harm, anxiety and depression becoming major issues. So, consider, does this young person need support and signposting to thrive and be well, as we had in that definition of safeguarding at the beginning? Could the poor mental health they're experiencing stem from an experience of abuse?

We mustn't investigate the concerns that we have, that's the role of other professionals. We balance the tension of 'it might be, but it might not be' by passing on anything that we notice so we can protect a child from harm and enable them to access the support they need to thrive.

We're going to spend some time in breakout rooms now, looking at scenarios which will help us draw out some signs and indicators of abuse. Please have a go and know that this is a safe place and that we're all learning. This is a time to ask questions and suggest ideas.

The name of your breakout room will be on the joining invitation so you can find that scenario in your handbook. Please can one person from the group read out the scenario so that others can follow along? Also,

please nominate somebody to give feedback to the main room when you return. We'd like you to consider what, if any, are the indicators or signs of abuse? Can you identify the category or categories of abuse that you would be concerned about? And how would you respond? You'll have six minutes in your group with a one-minute countdown as an indicator that you'll need to bring your discussions to a close, and then you'll automatically be brought back to the main room where we'll take some feedback.

[Breakout Room feedback on particular scenarios would occur here.]

[Physical Abuse]

Physical abuse covers any means of causing physical harm to a child. It is common in cases of physical abuse that parents or carers will avoid seeking medical attention, because they don't want injuries or illnesses documented or questions asked about how they have occurred. So, if we've got a child or young person with an injury or ongoing illness, that we would have expected to have medical treatment and there hasn't been any, we need to pass this information

on to our safeguarding lead. A rarer form of abuse to be aware of is fabricated or induced illness, where a child's parent or carer deliberately exaggerates symptoms or induces illness. Another thing to be mindful of is where injuries are not consistent with the explanation given about how they occurred, or there's inconsistency within that explanation. With injuries to unexposed parts of the body, we need to be curious, as when a child or young person has an accident, it's usually the exposed parts of the body that get injured. Similarly, if a non-mobile baby has injuries, this would be cause for concern as it is more difficult for the injury to happen accidentally. Police are now recommending awareness of recurring injuries appearing in the same place on a child's body, as well as in unusual places. For example, a case was identified by a teacher who realised a child's ear was often bruised and tender and it became apparent that the parent always grabbed the child by the ear lobe when they were angry. We must always be mindful as well that injuries and bruises present differently on different skin tones. We need to educate ourselves around what to

expect with the people that we're caring for so that we don't miss any signs.

While we're considering physical abuse, it's also important to see the intersection with physical discipline. Parents discipline and parent differently across the wonderfully diverse expressions of family in our nations. I'm sure you can think of ways that you parent, or were parented, differently from other people that you know. Physical discipline may or may not be part of your own background and raising it here is not about judgment, but it is about awareness. It's important for us to know what the law is within the UK. In Scotland and Wales, physical discipline of any kind is illegal. In England and Northern Ireland, reasonable physical discipline is permitted. There is guidance around what is reasonable, namely, that is that it has to be your own child; you can't use an implement; there can't be marks left behind from that discipline and it can't be a repeated action. Some parents link particular Bible passages or cultural expectations to certain discipline methods, but it's important that we remember that biblical interpretation

and cultural norms should not exceed the law. A physical injury that results from harsh physical discipline might trigger a statutory investigation.

### [Neglect]

Neglect as a form of abuse is about failing to meet a child's needs. Children rely on their adult carers to meet their basic needs for food, warmth, shelter, safety, love etc. Persistently failing to meet these needs is neglect. If a child or young person presents as undernourished or obese, we would respond with caring curiosity. The same with other physical signs, such as not having clothes to keep them well in the weather, wearing the same soiled or ill-fitting clothes multiple times, having poor hygiene. We need to be aware that in a cost-of-living crisis, more families are experiencing poverty. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional, but we still need to respond to safeguard that child.

Failing to thrive is a term that professionals use to describe a child or young person who is not meeting their developmental milestones in the

way they will be expected to. And this is what the workers have recognised in the scenario about Rhys. The Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act of 2014 defines neglect as the failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social, or psychological needs, which is likely to result in impairment of the person's wellbeing, for example, an impairment of the person's health, or in the case of a child and impairment to the child's development.

Failing to protect a child from physical or emotional harm is also neglect. We often think of abuse as being active, but it's also important we acknowledge that not doing something can also be abusive, such as when an adult carer is failing to prevent a child from coming to harm. For example, having a dangerous home environment, not assisting a young child to cross a busy road safely, failing to adequately supervise a child to keep them safe. These can be forms of neglect.

[Emotional Abuse]

Emotional abuse is harm to a person's mind and wellbeing. That could mean conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate. It might be singling them out and treating one child very differently to others in their family. Inappropriate expectations for the child's age or development can also be emotionally damaging. These expectations might be too high or too low. There are a broad range of healthy expectations to have of our children. But we need to recognise that when these aren't appropriate, they can be very damaging. Similarly, being extremely under or over-protective can cause emotional harm.

Whilst we are considering expectations, it is good to acknowledge that some children or young people are young carers due to the needs of another family member. This isn't an abusive expectation, but it may mean that a child needs some extra support to maintain their own wellbeing in this responsible role. If you're ever aware that a child or young person is a young carer, just pass this information on to your

safeguarding lead so that they can ensure the child or young person has all the appropriate support in place.

Emotional abuse also includes subjecting children to situations or behaviour that causes them to feel frightened or in danger. When we think of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, children are threatened and coerced and may be terrified for their lives. Living in a home where domestic abuse is occurring or other situations that involve atmospheres of threat and fear, experiencing modern slavery, gang violence, cuckooing (where a home is taken over for criminal purposes such as drug distribution) for example, can cause emotional harm. Emotional abuse occurs alongside other categories of abuse, but it is important we recognise it as a category in its own right.

#### [Sexual Abuse]

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child into sexual activity. Like with physical abuse, it's important that we recognise the broad range of ways in which a child or young person can be sexually harmed. It can be penetrative sex, but it also includes any sexual contact or touching,



whether or not the child is aware of what's happening. It might involve children looking at adult sexual content. If we had a child or a young person using age-inappropriate sexual language or talking or playing in a way that means we think they've seen things that are not appropriate for their age, we need to pass on these concerns to our safeguarding lead.

We know that sexual abuse may involve children having their photo taken or being filmed to produce abuse images. As we consider this, we need to be aware that there are three aspects to the legislation regarding indecent images of children. These are: the production of indecent images, the distribution of indecent images and the viewing of indecent images. So, we would never view a device where there were reports of indecent images or videos of children. Otherwise, we could potentially be viewing those indecent images of children and therefore breaking the law. Any concerns regarding indecent images need to be escalated to the police through your safeguarding lead, as the police have the legal powers to view the images and ascertain the content of

them. We can hear the voice of someone with lived experience here: “He showed me pornographic magazines to start with and then it went on from there. He did truth or dare with me and it always seemed to end up with him touching me and doing stuff.” That quote comes from a blog called ‘It's not okay’.

The case scenarios we have just considered highlight the challenges that you and I face when seeking to identify potential signs and indicators of abuse. We will rarely have a complete picture, rather it's just a snippet or a piece of the jigsaw. We recognise that we live in a multicultural society where families live and parent differently. There's a broad and diverse range of healthy expressions of family life, which should be celebrated and welcomed. However, it's also important that we acknowledge abuse can and does occur within families. So, it's essential that we understand the families with whom we work so that we notice changes in behaviour in our children and young people. We also acknowledge that accepting that a child may be experiencing harm is painful. We don't want to believe it and it can be more

comfortable to ignore the signs or find other explanations for the changes we notice. This can be particularly true if we know the family well. Just having that self-awareness and recognising our own barriers can be a powerful thing. The essential principles to keep in mind are that children and young people have got the right to be safe, and we must never try to justify abuse or the harmful actions of others.

One main motivator for adhering to these principles is a recognition of the effects of abuse. Abuse can affect all aspects of a person's life and these effects can be long lasting. A child may sustain a long-term physical injury. There are also links between abuse in childhood and self-harm. Children may experience emotional impacts such as nightmares, intrusive thoughts, triggers, flashbacks, a damaged sense of self, depression and anxiety. There can also be a social impact, as it can damage someone's ability to trust, to make friends, have relationships and respond to authority figures. Abuse can affect a child's ability to focus at school, and therefore have a long-term impact on exam success and even future earnings.

It's also important for us to consider trauma. Trauma describes a situation or a response to situation when we felt unsafe, and what's traumatic is personal. Other people can't know how you feel about your own experiences or if they were traumatic for you. You might have similar experiences to someone else but be affected differently.

Trauma can include events which make us feel frightened, under threat, humiliated, rejected, abandoned, invalidated, unsafe, unsupported, trapped, ashamed or powerless. Trauma can happen through one-off or ongoing events; being directly harmed; witnessing harm to someone else; living in a traumatic atmosphere or being affected by trauma in a family or community. As we work with the children and young people in our care, it's important to understand that trauma can affect behaviour and responses to situations. When we work to become trauma aware our approach moves from, "What's wrong with you?" to "What do you need? What happened to you? What's your behaviour telling me?" We can then seek to build safe and trusted environments where we listen and support those who have experienced trauma and avoid creating situations where someone

might be re-traumatised. Someone with lived experience of trauma wrote on the *Mind* website, “For me, the memories have always been like a song I get stuck in my head. They play over and over and sometimes I remember the words and sing along and sometimes it's just the instruments. They never really go away. Sometimes it gets so loud, I can barely hear myself think.” There are some links in the chat to some resources explaining trauma informed practice if you want to know more.

ACEs is the acronym for Adverse Childhood Experiences. Stressful or difficult experiences in childhood can have long term physical and mental health effects. Experiencing abuse in childhood is an ACE. Research shows that these experiences are linked to increased rates of heart disease, diabetes and cancer, as well as the more commonly recognised mental and emotional impacts. Adverse Childhood Experiences of any kind can also increase the risk of an individual experiencing abuse and neglect. A body developing under significant amounts of toxic stress is like a car with its engine constantly running;

damage will be done. A quote from the Scottish Government says, “We know that adverse experiences can potentially impact children's long-term health and life outcomes. It's crucial for children and young people to get the right help at the right time, as this mitigates the negative impact of adversity and trauma, and reduces the likelihood of long-term negative consequences into adulthood.”

It's not easy to hear all these things. But we're going to finish this slide just by saying, don't despair, there is hope. The effects of abuse are real, and they can have a huge impact on a child's life. It's so important that we acknowledge this. However, there's also research to show that a good response, early intervention and safe relationships with adults help build resilience and can limit the long-term damage. This is another reason why we want to equip and empower everyone involved in a child's life - to recognise abuse and speak up to protect them.

If a child or young person tells us that they have experienced or are experiencing abuse, the way we respond can have a powerful impact. Here are some positive ways to respond: One of the biggest gifts we

can give someone who is telling us something painful is our time, presence and attention. Show you are listening through body language, facial expressions and lack of distractions. Listen well and let them speak. The reality is our heart will be pumping and adrenaline flowing. It's important that we communicate with our body language and tone of voice, that we are emotionally available to the child or young person with us. It's important that we don't show disgust, disbelief or impatience as this could cause the conversation to close down. Telling someone that you're being abused is scary. Reassure the child that they've done the right thing by telling you, that they are valuable, and that they have the right to be safe.

As we respond, be mindful that we don't promise secrecy or complete confidentiality. We never say, "You can tell me, I won't tell anyone."

How would you explain the boundaries of confidentiality to a child or young person that you know? It might be something like, "I just need you to know if I'm worried that you or someone else isn't safe, I'll have to pass on the information to someone who can help." Telling a child

what to expect from us will help to build trust, which is so important in a vulnerable situation- they mustn't feel that we have tricked them into telling us.

We mustn't ask leading questions or try to investigate the situation.

This isn't our role, and we can compromise any official investigations if we respond inappropriately. Don't try and be a superhero and solve the child's situation all by yourself. Seek support from your safeguarding lead, or the emergency services if someone is in immediate danger. We'll talk more about these next steps in the following two modules, record and report. You may also need support for yourself as discovering that a child has been experiencing abuse can be really distressing.

Don't try and find reasons for why something happened or try to make a child feel better by minimising what they have experienced. We might inadvertently make the child feel they're to blame for what they have experienced, that they should just put up with it or they've made a



mistake in coming forward. So be mindful of those do's and don'ts when responding to concerns.

### **[Module 3: Record]**

We'll go into Module Three now, which is about recording. In this module, we're going to think through: why it's important to record any concerns - however small and however often, when we might need to record something and what information we should include in a safeguarding record.

As we start this module, it's good for us to consider what might make some children or young people more risk of experiencing harm than others. Take a minute to pause and consider and then type your thoughts into the chat or unmute and share your ideas.

In the IICSA executive summary, it said that disabled participants are twice as likely to describe such experiences [of abuse] as non-disabled participants, and those who lived in a care home were nearly four times as likely to have experienced child sexual abuse as those who had not. Those who had experienced childhood neglect were nearly

five times as likely to have experienced child sexual abuse as those who had not. And so we recognise that abuse can happen anywhere, to anyone and by anyone, but there are those who have an extra level of vulnerability, and that perpetrators of abuse seek to exploit vulnerability. We need to have that caring curiosity and be particularly mindful of some of our children and young people.

Many forms of abuse involve a process of grooming, understanding what this is and how we might recognise it is an important safeguarding tool. We encourage you to record even small concerns because we want to be able to safeguard a child before harm occurs. Recording signs and indicators, however small, can be instrumental in building an accurate picture of what may be happening, and enable us to take preventative steps or respond quickly.

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship of trust and emotional connection with a child or young person, gradually breaking down barriers, so that they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Those who groom will exploit any vulnerability to increase the likelihood a

child or young person will become dependent on them, and less likely to speak out.

It's important to record and report any concerns that you might have about someone's behaviour towards a child or young person.

Perpetrators will often specifically choose a child or young person.

They will take time to identify children or young people with vulnerabilities and then exploit these vulnerabilities to their advantage.

The voice of someone here with lived experience, “I just wanted to be noticed and he saw me. I wanted to feel like someone actually cared and he made me feel special. I wanted to feel worthy of gifts for once and he showered me. I wanted to show everyone else that I was somebody. And before I knew it, I was somebody, somebody to be abused.” That's from a blog called *The Teenage Whisperer*.

Those who groom will seek to gain access to the child or young person through befriending the support network around that child. By building a relationship with the young person's family or friends, they make themselves seem trustworthy, and increase access to the child or

young person without suspicion. Perpetrators might also try to isolate children from their friends and family, making the young person feel dependent on them to increase their power and control.

If grooming is happening in-person, physical contact will increase over time in order to desensitise the child or young person to touch. Non-sexual physical touch is often the final stage before abuse occurs. With younger children this might involve tickling, hugging or roughhousing; with adolescents it can involve hugging, touching them unnecessarily-like putting their hand on their leg when sitting side by side, or watching pornography. It might involve going into spaces where they're not usually allowed, to build up secrecy, make the child feel special or chosen and to test if they will tell. So just to say again, if you ever have a concern regarding someone's behaviour towards a child or young person, it's important that you record these concerns and pass them to your safeguarding lead. Record and report as many instances as you identify. If behaviour hasn't changed, or the concern hasn't gone away, keep recording and reporting. This will equip your safeguarding lead

and possibly the statutory agencies with the full picture and will enable them to act on a child's behalf.

Online, children and young people can build new relationships that are out of context from every other aspect of their lives. Those who groom will use the same sites, games and apps as children in order to gain their trust and build a friendship. Children can be flattered at first by the attention given to them by this new online friend, particularly if they're offering support, showing understanding or giving validation. However, they may also seek to manipulate, blackmail and control the child, potentially isolating them again from their friends and family. Grooming online often starts out public but moves across to private chats, groomers can use multiple online platforms to contact the same child. They can spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profiles and posts and then use this knowledge to help them build a relationship. Then, once a relationship has been established, they might encourage the child to communicate using a private or encrypted messaging service. This information is from the

NSPCC and IICSA in 2020. Online grooming can mean that the abuse takes place online or that it's building up to meeting offline.

Perpetrators will often share explicit content, encouraging children and young people to model what they see. It's important to say that harm is not exclusively sexual, but it can also be where children are encouraged to cause harm to themselves or others, like dares or tricks that can have devastating consequences. The grooming process is often much quicker online than offline. Online, offenders may feel they have greater protection through anonymity and are therefore more inclined to take risks. Not everyone is who they say they are online, and this can be a difficult concept for children to understand. Offenders can seek to elicit personal information and images very early on and use these later to bribe or shame and silence the victim. The Internet Watch Foundation found over 70% of identified child sexual abuse images in 2021 were self-generated.

If a child or young person tells you about something that they are experiencing online and it doesn't seem right, record and report your

concern. Another voice of someone with lived experience here, “I was groomed by a stranger over the internet in my childhood home.

Grooming is something that happens right under the noses of parents.”

It can be tempting to think that if something was really wrong then a child or young person would just tell us. However, it's important that we recognise that there are many reasons why this might not be the case.

And therefore we need to record any of the indications that we've talked about in module two - injuries using a skin map, changes in behaviour, observed interactions that cause concern, etc. Silencing the child is part of the grooming process and creating secrets, blackmail, threats, and coercion are used to achieve this. Another reason why children and young people might not tell us when they're being abused is that they might be scared of the consequences. If it's a member of the family who's abusing them, they might be terrified of splitting the family apart. They also might be scared that they won't be believed, that they will be thought of differently or labelled. Children may have been taught that the abuse is normal behaviour - that this is what

family members or friends do together and how they treat each other - and so the child might not realise that they're experiencing abuse. Children might feel embarrassed or ashamed or even to blame for what happened. A child simply might not have the language to tell us what is happening. They might be too young, non-verbal or speak a different language, not know the terms to express themselves or there may be other communication barriers. One real life story to illustrate this and the power of recording and safeguarding was shared with us on a recent staff retreat. Nursery staff noticed details that could have been dismissed as small or insignificant, such as a boy wearing the same unclean socks that they'd seen him in previously. They creatively engaged with this concern, for example, by putting a dot in marker pen on the inside of the nappy to see if it had been changed the next day. This process of being curious, recording small concerns, noticing the pattern and referring this on to social services meant the child was removed from a harmful environment much sooner than he otherwise might have been. It's important to remember that children and young people might not understand that they've been groomed. They might



have complicated feelings like loyalty, admiration, love, as well as fear, distress and confusion. Whenever a child or young person does talk to us about abuse or harm they are experiencing, we need to remember the huge barriers they have had to overcome, and the courage that is taken to tell us remember the principles of responding well that we spoke about in the previous module.

Each of us has a unique role. Even if there are other people on your children's or youth team, the way you fulfill the role will be unique to you. The relationships that you build with children and young people will be different to other people on the team. At times, we can downplay the role that we have in people's lives. You have a position of trust. A child might talk to you because of your role - because you work for your church, charity or organisation they feel that you're a trustworthy person. It's good to acknowledge here that 'position of trust' is also a legal term that refers to certain roles and settings where an adult has regular and direct contact with children. It's against the law for someone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a

child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent.

Examples of positions of trust include teachers, care workers, youth justice workers, social workers and doctors. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland changes to the law in 2020 extended the definition to include faith group leaders and sports coaches.

Your role might mean that you're in the right place at the right time to witness something that is of concern. This might be a concern regarding the safety and wellbeing of a child and young person, like those indicators of harm that we discussed in module one. It might be a concern regarding the practice of another volunteer or worker, or about the safeguarding culture in your own church or organisation. We also need to recognise that due to the relationship you have with a child or young person, they might choose you to talk to about something that is worrying them or that they're experiencing. This is a privilege, and it also carries a responsibility. We need to listen to the voices of children and young people in our care and act to keep them safe. It is important that we are clear about the expectations in this

regard for the role that we hold. If you are unsure, seek clarity from those with safeguarding responsibilities and leadership.

We're going to watch a short film now and I just want you to be aware as we start that this is a young person disclosing sexual abuse. So, if this isn't a safe thing for you to experience, please take five minutes away from your screen, then join back in when you feel able. Your wellbeing as we said, is priority. If you are able to watch, please consider these questions: What will Emily need to record after her conversation with Jess? How would you respond (including how would you be feeling) if you were in Emily's position? And what good practice can you see in the film?

[Video Transcript]

Jess: Hey, Emily, have you got a minute?

Emily: Hey, Jess? Yeah, sure. How are you doing?

Jess: I'm not in a good place at the moment. And I don't know what to do.

Emily: Not in a good place. What do you mean?

Jess: It's about mum. She's started to work late in the evenings now.

Emily: Right? Yeah, they've started opening late at the supermarket now.

Jess: Yeah. And mum's new boyfriend has started to come round in the evenings. Technically he's supposed to be looking after my younger sister and me. I mean, I can look after myself. But when he's looking after us, he just acts differently to when mum's around. He wants to do different things.

Emily: Different things? Okay, Jess, I can see that you're worried about something. And I'm really pleased that you've come to speak to me. But just so you know, we do have clear procedures. And if you do share something with me that makes me feel concerned for your safety or for the safety of others, like your sister, depending on what you share, I may have to pass this information on.

Jess: I know. I tried to tell someone before, but I was too scared. But now I think it's the right thing to do. When Mum's gone to work, and my sister has gone to bed, he wants to have sex with me. We have had sex. He said it will be good for me to get into practice for when I got a real boyfriend. It's only been the last couple of weeks. But I want it to stop. I'm scared. I'm scared that if I don't do it, then he might try it on with my sister. She's beautiful. And I know she's only 13 but she's quite mature for her age. I've seen him looking at her.

Emily: Jess, thank you for sharing that with me. You're really brave, and your sister's lucky to have you looking out for her. But, just to make sure that I've understood this correctly, let me tell you what I think you've told me. So, over the last couple of weeks, your mum's new boyfriend has been having sex with you when she's gone to work. Is that right? And you don't want to have sex with him. But you do it because you want to protect your little sister. Does that sound right?

Jess: [Nods]

Emily: Okay, Jess, I'm going to have to pass this information on to our safeguarding coordinator, okay, because it's important to make sure that you and your sister are safe. And the coordinator will be the best person to help us ensure that this happens. Okay, but thank you, again, for sharing that with me.

Jess: I don't want to get into trouble.

Emily: It's not about getting anyone into trouble. It's about making sure that everyone's safe. That's why we have a safeguarding coordinator because they know what to do.

[End of video transcript]

Okay, so maybe we could share some thoughts about what we saw in that video...

We need to be careful when we're recording disclosures and concerns that we do this well. We need to be cautious with our questions and only ask a few clarifying questions - those tell, explain, describe questions, reflecting back what we have heard to give the child or

young person an opportunity to clarify anything that we've misunderstood or to add any additional information they would like to. We mustn't ask leading questions, and it is never our role to investigate what we've been told. We need to write factual and accurate notes of any disclosures or concerns we have, and don't include our opinions or any personal judgments of a situation. This can be misleading and prevent someone getting the help they need. We use the child or young person's own words, and we do this as soon as possible. Good practice would be within an hour, we can call this a 'golden hour' of the conversation or concern arising. We need to date, time and sign the notes and put them into the hands of our safeguarding lead, so that they can have an accurate record and securely store them. Make sure you familiarise yourself with any specific guidance on recording from your safeguarding policy. For example, do you use an online template or form? Have you got a skin map that you can use (that body outline) to show size and placement of injuries? The likely information you'll need to include in any report is who is this concern about? Where did it happen? When did it happen? What is the concern? (If you can identify

a type of abuse, it can be helpful for clarity.) Who else is involved? If a child or young person stops the conversation when confidentiality is explained, then we will record what was said up to that point in the person's own words and make it clear in our notes that, at the point of explaining confidentiality, they chose not to continue the conversation. It's important that we empower children and young people to know what we will do when we're concerned about them. And we should never trick them into sharing more than they want to, as this breaks the relationship of trust that we've built with them. We also just need to think, "Is this an emergency?" And if so, we contact the police, the ambulance, the duty social worker or other relevant agency and inform the safeguarding lead of what has happened. If you're not sure, contact your safeguarding lead or the Thirtyone:eight helpline while the child is still with you to get advice. If there's no immediate risk of harm, then pass the record on to your safeguarding lead within 24 hours.



## [Module 4: Report]

We are coming into module four now, and this is about reporting. We will explore reporting concerns. We'll look at the policies, procedures and codes of conduct that make up our practice and also the legislation that underpins it.

The fundamental message here is that if you're worried that a child or young person might not be safe, then please pass on your concern. The most likely person you'll need to speak to is your safeguarding lead. Go to them with any concern, however big or small, about children or young people in your organisation. The children and young people in your organisation should also know who they can talk to if they don't feel safe. Your safeguarding lead doesn't take the place of emergency services. If there's an immediate risk of significant harm, call the police or the ambulance as you would in any other situation outside your church or charity. You can call your safeguarding lead afterwards to keep them informed and get further advice. If you can't get hold of your safeguarding lead, our helpline advisors are here for

you. Report every concern. Multiple concerns about the same person can help build a bigger picture. Please don't be worried about repeating yourself. If you are worried that a concern that you've reported hasn't been acted upon, and a child remains at risk of harm, follow your escalation process. For example, you might contact a central safeguarding person for your umbrella organisation or go back to the statutory agencies. If you're not sure what the process should be, or how to do it, then call our helpline for some advice.

We are going to have a true or false poll about the safeguarding lead's role now. For each of the eight statements, decide if you think they are true or false. We'll go through our answers together. Our first statement is false. Sometimes the safeguarding lead has a different title; you might have a safeguarding coordinator or a designated safeguarding person. Whatever their title, there should be a named person with a particular responsibility for safeguarding within your organisation. Number two is true. Your safeguarding lead is your first port of call for concerns within an organisation. They will be the first person you

contact, however big or small your concern is, it's important that the information you hold is passed on to this lead in a timely manner.

Having a central point of contact ensures concerns from all members of an organisation are collated, responded to, and monitored. This limits the number of people having sensitive and highly personal information and makes sure patterns aren't missed. Number three is false. A safeguarding lead doesn't need to be a qualified social worker. People from many backgrounds take on this role. Many leads do have a professional knowledge of safeguarding, but this is not essential. They will have had additional training and know the policies to fulfil this role within your organisation. Statement four is also false.

Safeguarding leads don't need to make themselves available 24/7 – they are allowed sleep and holidays, there must be boundaries to this role. Organisations need to think through and communicate procedures for reporting concerns when the lead is unavailable. You also have emergency services, statutory agencies and organisations like Thirtyone:eight with that helpline available for support outside that person's availability. Statement five is true. Your safeguarding lead will

keep accurate records and store information in a safe way, being mindful of laws and principles around data collection and confidential information, such as the Caldicott principles of data storage and collection. They will have contact details of local and national organisations and helplines for signposting and support around particular areas of need. They will also ensure a coordinated and robust safeguarding response to concerns for your church or organisation to go alongside any pastoral support you are offering. Safeguarding leads have policy given permission to respond on behalf of the church or organisation. Statement six is true. When necessary (sometimes it is and sometimes it isn't), your lead will liaise with statutory authorities for advice or support – details of statutory agencies in each nation are in the handbook. Your lead will have a role the agencies will recognise and they might also have expertise around what to say and write in those referrals and contacts within local agencies. They have not got the sole responsibility for safeguarding in an organization, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Statement seven is false. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; your lead

cannot do it alone. Your safeguarding lead can't be every interaction, in every activity, we all need to play our part. Finally, statement eight is true. Part of the lead's role is to ensure your church or organisation is fully compliant with safeguarding responsibilities, for example, that you have appropriate policies and procedures. However, perhaps even more importantly, they will help facilitate a healthy safeguarding culture spreads through the who organisation and impacts the way in which all activities are done safely. They will ensure the views of children and young people are taken into account and help shape the way in which things are done. Learning from those with lived experience of abuse is also essential to challenge potential unconscious biases and blind spots, and your safeguarding lead will communicate these important lessons to the wider organisation.

Now we'll think about policy, procedures and codes of conduct.

Legislation, and the key principles within it, form the basis of our local safeguarding policies and procedures. Some of the things that your organisation requires of you are based on legislative requirements,

criminal record checks, information sharing, safer recruitment, for example. You may or may not know a lot of information about the legislation but the people who create your policies will, and you need to be clear about the requirements of your own organisation's policies and procedures. They will not only safeguard vulnerable people but will safeguard us as we serve too. Your safeguarding policy is an essential document which should be reviewed regularly. Let's just have a think now, when was the last time that you read your policy? Do you know where you'd find it? Does it tell you how to report and escalate concerns? Your policies and procedures should reflect the nature of the work specific to your church organisation. Are you clear about the expectations on you in the role that you hold? If you're not, please speak to your safeguarding lead. Are there other related policies you need to be aware of, for example, is there a whistleblowing policy? Whistleblowing refers to workers reporting certain types of wrongdoing in the public interest and there are legal protections around this, which your policy should make clear. Codes of conduct are practical and helpful because they give us clear expectations. They set out the way

that everyone should work and behave in their role and so help create a safer environment for children and young people. They should be specific – ‘dress appropriately’, for example, is unhelpful as people’s interpretation of that will vary. Do the children and young people in your organisation know what to expect from you and the other adults who care for them? Do we explain the procedures in place to keep them safe? Do you know the boundaries of your role, what is expected from you and what isn’t? If you don’t, this is a good prompt to ask your safeguarding lead for some clarity.

Across all four UK nations, our safeguarding practices and processes are underpinned by law. Each piece of legislation represents a child or children who were not previously safeguarded, and changes made to close those gaps. More detailed information is given in the accompanying handbook. The laws are on page nine, and then more detailed information can be found in the nation specific sections. The final section of the handbook starts on page 25 and includes UK and nation specific safeguarding timelines. These mention some of the

children and situations on which the laws are based. The developments illustrated by the timelines also emphasise the fact that safeguarding is an evolving field, and this is a key reason why we need to keep renewing our training and knowledge.

We can see there are some differences within the four nations' legislation but there are safeguarding principles common to them all. One is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our duty of care to children and young people is outlined in legislation, whatever our role in a child or young person's life. Faith communities are named in this legislation as having safeguarding responsibilities and a duty of care to children and young people, and to uphold their right to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. Secondly, sharing of information is paramount. Wherever there are concerns regarding a child or young person, it's important that these are shared with appropriate people (for example, the safeguarding lead or statutory agencies) as soon as possible. Serious case reviews highlight how not passing information on in a timely manner has led to children and young people dying as a



result of the abuse they're experiencing. For example, Lord Lamming's Inquiry following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Organisations must comply with legislative guidance. At this level of training, you probably don't need to know a lot of detail about which pieces of legislation inform which procedures, what the charity regulators' requirements are, etc. It's more about understanding that your charity or church is required by law to do certain things. This might explain why your safeguarding leader has asked you to do an AccessNI check for example, or a Disclosure Scotland check or DBS check, and why reporting procedures are vital. It's also important for us to recognise here that safeguarding, and the laws that underpin it, is always evolving. The Online Safety Bill is currently going through the UK Parliament and will apply to all UK nations. Its aim is to make the UK a safer online environment and allow Ofcom to hold technology companies and platforms to account about what appears on their sites.

## [Module 5: Reflect]

Our final module today is about reflection. We will consider in this module why we reflect, we will also look at accountability and will consider the value of a safer culture.

We reflect because 'every day's a school day', we are continually learning. When things go well, reflection helps us to recognise the formula so we can repeat it. When we have near misses or things go wrong, we can be tempted to avoid thinking or talking about it and just move on. If we do this though, we miss important learning opportunities and risk the same things happening again. Reflection is particularly important when it comes to safeguarding. The world is moving quickly. New things have an impact on the lives of our children and young people and we need to reflect on what this might mean in terms of safeguarding. For example, many of us experienced making adaptations to ways of working during lockdown. We also need to think through how any changes in legislation and guidance might make a difference to our procedures or activities. And reflection really can help

make people safer. Many of the pieces of legislation discussed in the previous module came out of those serious case reviews, reviews which are a form of painful reflection on how and why mistakes were made, and safeguards were insufficient, and the child was harmed as a result. The lessons learned during those reviews inform policies designed to stop the same thing happening again. On a much smaller scale, we can close gaps in our own procedures through reflection and risk-minimisation. If we have a positive, safe, proactive culture, where staff and volunteers are able to reflect together and learn from experience, we can create an environment where children and young people are well supported and able to thrive. The following video shows a situation where a youth worker finds himself in a difficult situation and his policy doesn't give him the best answer. We will see two versions of how the situation plays out. In part two, just consider, how does he reflect and keep himself accountable in the moment? And what further reflection and learning should take place within his team and church?

[Video Transcript]

Tom: Hi Beth, I'm surprised you're still here, youth group finished half an hour ago.

Beth: Yeah, I'm still waiting for my parents to pick me up.

Tom: You've not managed to get hold of them?

Beth: Nope. Tried many times but I can't get through.

Tom: Oh, well, you know I'd love to stay and help but probably should be getting home. It's not good for me to be seen out late at night with a young girl is it, ha ha!

Beth: Er, Tom, could you give me a lift back? I don't think my parents are picking me up.

Tom: Sorry Beth, safeguarding rules say I'm not allowed to be in the car with you without another adult. But I guess if your parents don't arrive soon you could get the bus?

Beth: I don't know which one to get.

Tom: I'm pretty sure if you head on down that road then you get to the bus stop that takes you into town. Then when you get to town you jump off where all those pubs are, carry on til you get to the bus station and then you can catch the bus that takes you near to yours. I think they come every hour and a half, that would be alright, wouldn't it?

Beth: Yeah, I guess.

Tom: Great, well, I'll see you next week. Alright, bye.

[On screen text: Although safeguarding rules were followed, it doesn't seem right to leave the young girl by herself. How would you have responded in that situation? Let's see a better example of how to respond in a situation like that.]

Tom: Hi Beth, I'm surprised you're still here, youth group finished half an hour ago.

Beth: Yeah, I'm still waiting for my parents to pick me up.

Tom: You've not managed to get hold of them?

Beth: Nope. Tried calling but it's engaged, I can't get through.

Tom: Do you mind if I try?

Beth: Yeah (hands Tom her phone)

Tom: (tries phone, no answer) Well, look, I can't leave you here by yourself. Safeguarding rules say I can't give you a lift without another adult but, you know, common sense tells me I need to do something. So, I tell you what, I'll ring our safeguarding co-ordinator, let him know the situation that you haven't been picked up by your parents. I just need to let him know what I'm planning to do because it goes against our usual safer practice.

Beth: OK

Tom: (on phone) Hey, it's Tom. Yeah, I'm fine thanks. Quick question. I'm with Beth outside the church. We've just finished youth group, but she hasn't been picked up by her parents. Now, she's on her own and I don't want to leave her here, but I know we've got strict guidelines to follow in situations like this, but I just want to know what I should do. Yeah, I've tried phoning her parents but I can't get through...OK, thanks, yeah, I was going to do that anyway I just wanted to check with

you first. Yep, I'll let you know when she's home safe. OK, speak soon, bye.

Tom: (to Beth) OK, so I've checked it through with our safeguarding co-ordinator and he's fine for me to give you a lift home, is that alright?

Beth: Yeah, that's good, thanks.

Tom: OK, let's go.

[End of video transcript]

I am sure we would all agree it wasn't safe to leave Beth alone to resolve the situation of her parents not coming to collect her. By speaking to the safeguarding lead, Tom was accountable, someone was aware of the situation and, moving forward, practice could be changed to ensure it didn't happen again. What procedures do you think Tom and his team should put in place in light of their reflections on this event?

In moments like this it is essential we are accountable for the safety of the young person and ourselves. Accountability is a personal

responsibility, so it is important you know who you are accountable to - do you know? We need to be transparent, open and honest, not hide things or pretend they never happened. Tom might have realised he shouldn't have let Beth leave the church building before she was collected and have been tempted to just take her home without telling anyone to avoid embarrassment, but what issues could that raise? We need to be communicating those 'near miss moments' to those we are accountable to.

Keeping team members informed about our whereabouts and actions is an important part of safeguarding ourselves and others. We should take time to debrief difficult situations or moments where we were unsure what we should have done so that we can reflect and, where necessary, change practice in the light of 'live and learn' moments.

It is important that we receive ongoing support for whatever our role is. This might involve training, such as the safeguarding training you are participating in today. There also might be other types of training that you would value, for example, on behaviour management, mentoring,



or first aid. We want to feel as confident and competent as we can in the roles that have been entrusted to us. When we undertake training it often prompts us to reflect on our role, how the training applies to our day-to-day tasks and how we can incorporate good ideas.

Teamwork is an important part of a healthy safeguarding culture.

Reflecting together is a valuable exercise as we have more perspectives to learn from. It is important we take time to talk and debrief as teams, particularly after a big event or a crisis moment, but also as part of our regular practice. This gives an opportunity to reflect on practicalities, atmosphere, relationships, and any practice that needs challenging or changing moving forward.

As a final discussion now, and something to take away to think about, how does your charity, church or organisation create a safer culture for everyone? Please unmute and give some ideas or type them into the chat. I would encourage you to bring this question to your next team meeting too. A key message to end on is that creating a healthy

safeguarding culture involves everyone – get your whole church or organisation on board.

So, to review the learning journey we have been on together: Firstly, we looked at our first 'r' – recognise. We hope you are now able to recognise types of abuse and the scope of the safeguarding task. That you have a sound understanding of the signs, indicators and the effects of abuse in children and feel equipped to fulfil that second 'r' – to respond well. Our third 'r' was record and we explored how and when to record concerns and why this is so important. Our fourth 'r' was report. We have identified to whom we need to report our concerns and recognised the framework in which we practice. And finally, that fifth 'r' – reflect. Be encouraged to reflect and work with others to build a healthy safeguarding culture.

Thank you for your participation in the safeguarding children and young people training. We would really value your honest feedback, please complete the form and help us equip, empower and encourage more delegates in the future. Thank you.