scie social care
institute for excellence

The Role of the Safeguarding Lead in Faith-Based Organisations

Webinar and Your Questions Answered

Wednesday 14th July 2021

Session Outline

- The rationale for having a designated lead for safeguarding

- Core responsibilities and scope of the safeguarding lead role

- Creating a plan for change

- Establishing a positive culture

- Supports for managing challenges

Safeguarding Training Fund

A safeguarding initiative with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), NCVO and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Between 2020 and 2022, SCIE are working with faith-based organisations to:

- Promote and champion safeguarding and safe culture
- Enable local networking and self-support
- Distribute and promote NCVO resources

Safeguarding Training Fund

SCIE are doing this, at no cost to organisations, by:

- Bringing together experts in safeguarding in faith-based organisations, to discuss the challenges faced and help shape SCIE's work in the area;

- Offering local learning opportunities and networks through online and local events

- Disseminating and sharing the NCVO materials

- Providing training opportunities

- Publishing resources to support safeguarding practices

Quick poll:

How established is the role of safeguarding lead in your organisation?

1. **Not yet in place**
2. **A new or recent role**
3. **Well established**

Why Safeguarding in Faith-Based Organisations?

People may turn to their faith in times of personal struggle, hardship, bereavement and loneliness and when they feel most vulnerable.

This may include when things happening in their lives make them unsafe.

Faith groups play a major role in the lives of adults, children and young people; nurture, respect and caring are central values in all faiths.
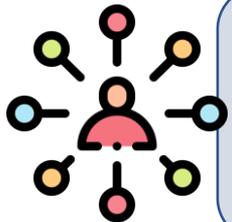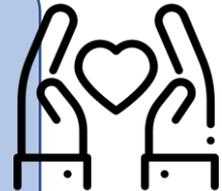
Faith organisations and their leaders have significant reach within their community, to influence change and support those in need

The rational for a designated lead for safeguarding

Expertise

Leadership and **Accountability**

A **champion** of good practice

Coordination and oversight

National Learning: IICSA

"A culture of vigilance … depends fundamentally on engaging 'hearts and minds' from the leadership down through to the grass roots…"

Key findings:

- Safeguarding leads were effective where they were well known and recognised by staff

- Clear lines of accountability

- The 'grey areas' and the importance of proportionate responses and sound judgement

- Communication with staff post-referral could often be improved and help to develop their practice

- The importance of remembering that individuals are part of a wider system, and have routes of support to draw on

Who can be the lead?

A range of different individuals may take on the role of the lead, including staff, volunteers or senior people.

Consider the risks and benefits of each option:

Volunteers may bring excellent experience and be able to commit time, but how can accountability be ensured?

Senior staff or religious leaders may have good knowledge of the organisation and be able to achieve faster change, but who is going to manage and support them?
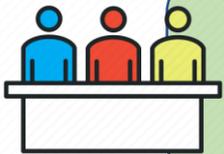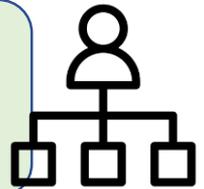
Trustees may also bring valuable experience, but will they be 'marking their own homework?

Quick poll:

As a safeguarding lead, is everyone in your organisation clear on what your role involves?

1. **Poor understanding**

2. **Mixed awareness and expectations**

3. **Clear and well understood**

What does the role involve?

Helping to develop good practices, a safe culture, and ensuring policy and procedure is followed
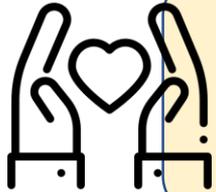
Responding to concerns and disclosures, giving advice and support to other staff or volunteers and keeping accurate records

Managing referrals and working with other agencies and organisations as needed
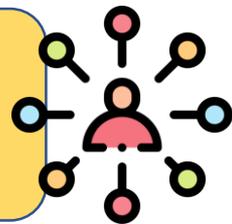
Raising awareness amongst staff and volunteers, and coordinating the delivery of appropriate training

Charity Commission expectations

Protecting people should be a priority for all charities, with people resourced and enabled to safeguard

- Good safeguarding policies and procedures that are followed, and in-line with the law

- All staff and volunteers receive regular training

- A safeguarding lead to work with your local authority safeguarding boards

- Concerns, complaints, whistleblowing and allegations managed effectively

- Clear policies when DBS checks are required and a process for handling the information.

National Learning

OXFAM

In 2018, evidence from the first Safeguarding Lead in Oxfam was submitted which shone a light on the importance of committing appropriate time, resource and support to a lead role.

- When appointed, the then lead was part-time, despite the significance of the role and demand
- Added weight to a view that the appointment was to 'tick-a-box'
- Role marginalised over time – lack of recognition, support or priority
- Poor information sharing
- Defensiveness around concerns being raised

Since tripled its safeguarding budget, recognising the need for 9 full-time posts.

Quick poll:

Do you currently have a plan for developing and embedding safeguarding in your organisation?

1. **Yes**

2. **In development**

3. **No**

Implementing a plan

- ☑ Policy and procedure
- ☑ Awareness and prevention
- ☑ Staff and volunteer training
- ☑ Reporting and responses
- ☑ Time and resources

As lead, you'll play a key role in developing your organisation's approach to safeguarding.

This might be a single document, but should involve other key people and be reviewed by senior staff and trustees.

Responding to concerns
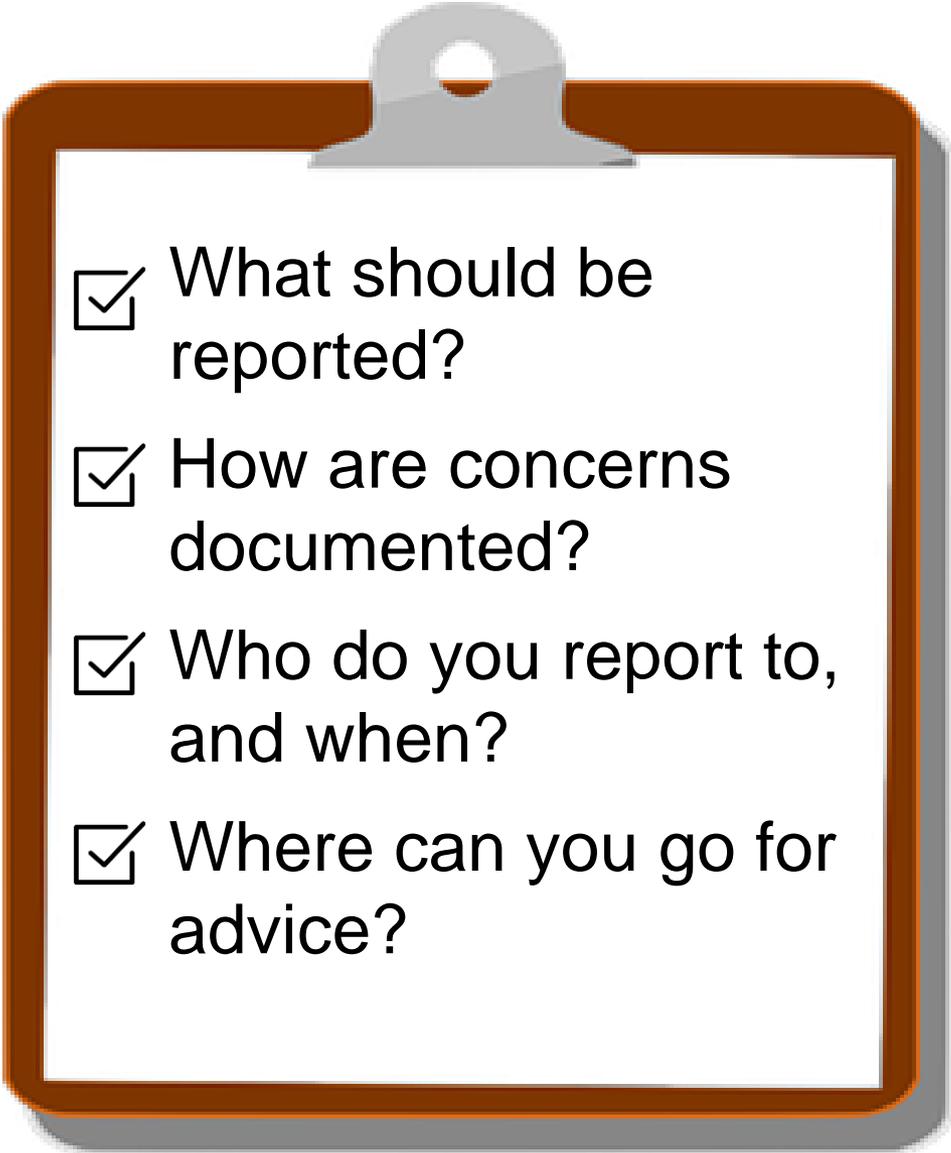
- ☑ What should be reported?

- ☑ How are concerns documented?

- ☑ Who do you report to, and when?

- ☑ Where can you go for advice?

One of the main responsibilities of the lead is receiving, assessing and managing concerns.

You need to consider local processes and ensure that yours are in-line with them.

Recording
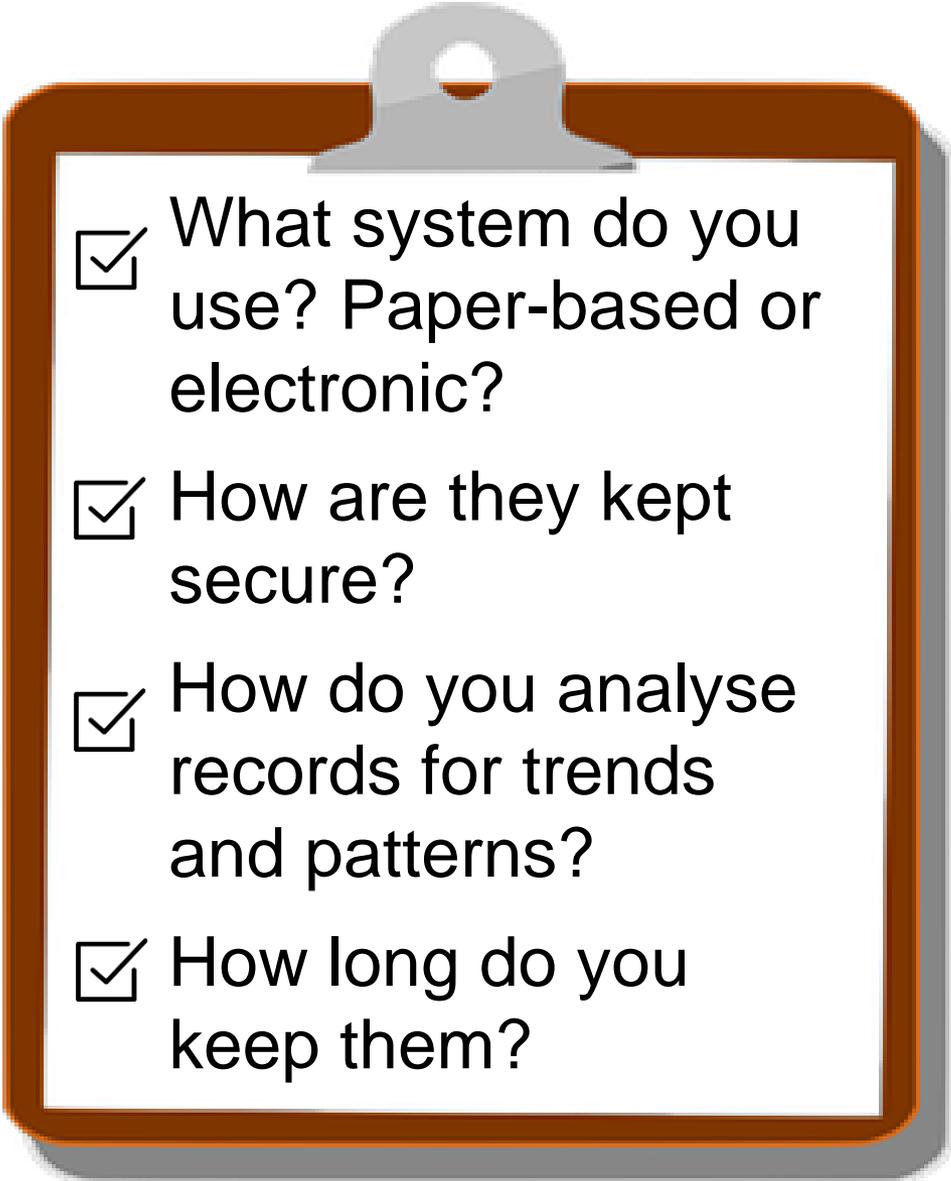
- ☑ What system do you use? Paper-based or electronic?

- ☑ How are they kept secure?

- ☑ How do you analyse records for trends and patterns?

- ☑ How long do you keep them?

Safeguarding records might include concern forms, safeguarding case files and concern logs.

Records should be kept securely and regularly reviewed to identify any patterns and actions needed.

What Does a Safeguarding Culture Look Like?

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. But, safe cultures don't simply evolve, they need constant attention.

Respect modelled

A clear commitment

Open-learning environment

Adults and children at the heart

Values-led
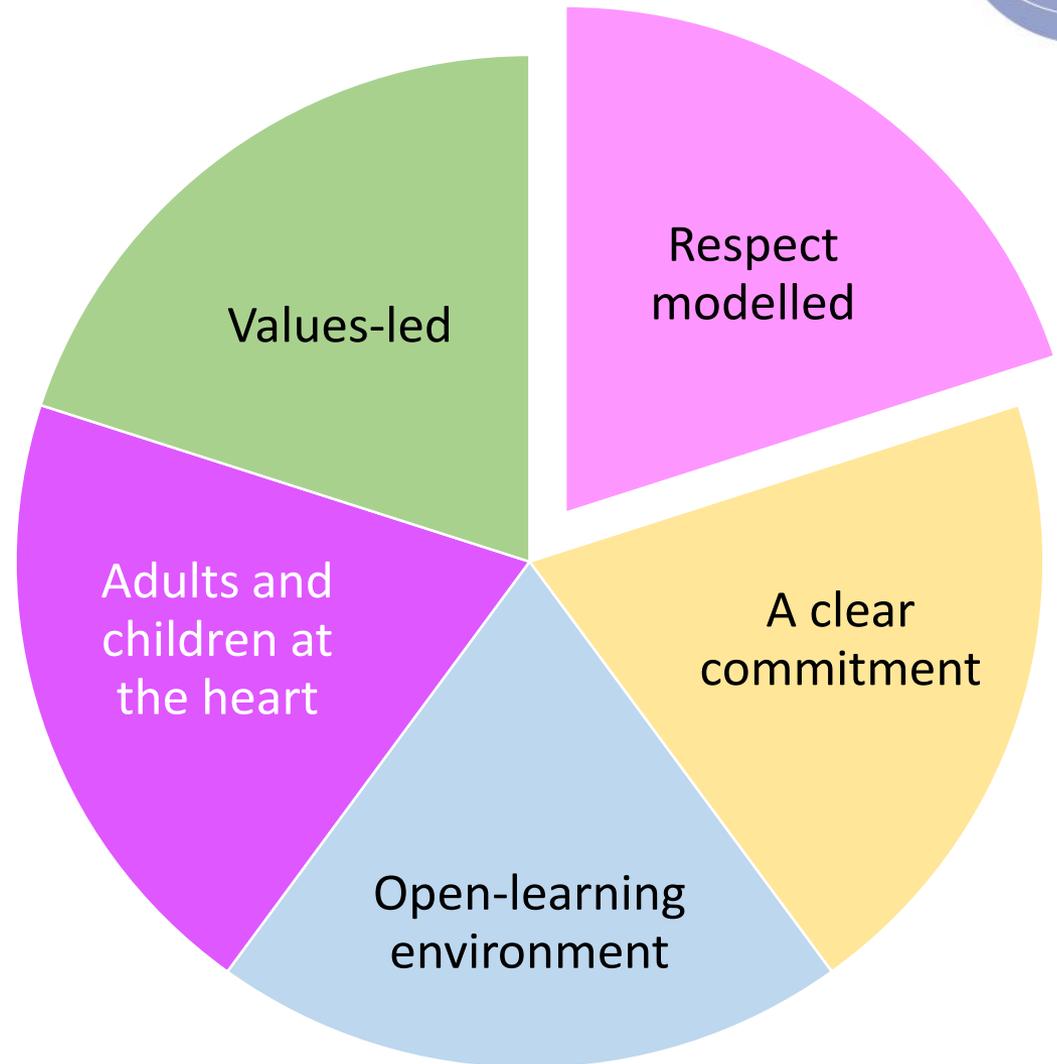
Resistance to change?

Achieving good safeguarding and a safe culture is complex, and resistance is not uncommon. Consider:

Bringing people along with you on the journey and rationale for change?
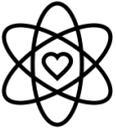
Giving clarity about how safeguarding sits with wider values?

Addressing feelings of mistrust and judgement?

Tackling practical barriers (e.g. understanding, IT access)?

Giving a clear imperative and directive for change?

Quick for reflection:

What are the barriers to change that you face in your role, if any?

What might help to overcome and address them, and who is needed to support this change?

Monitoring Your Culture

Continuing to check that your culture is safe is vital and should be part of your ongoing work. Look out for:

- Language: does this always reflect a safe and respectful attitude to others?

- Awareness: do people talk about safeguarding, or demonstrate any misunderstandings?

- Behaviours: do we receive reports, or have conversations about concerns?

- Partnership: do we have links with key professionals, or groups, to help us to safeguard?

Governance
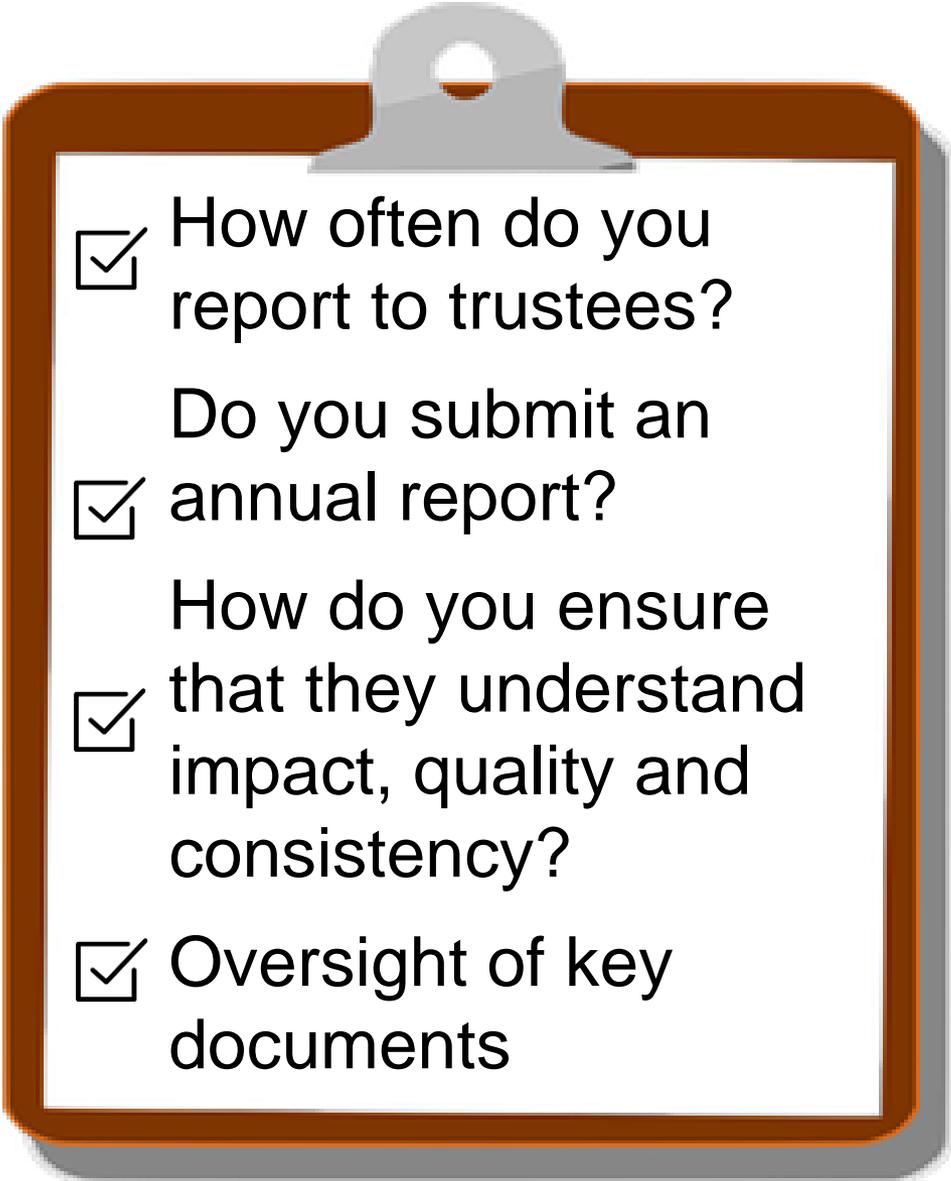
How often do you report to trustees?

Do you submit an annual report?

How do you ensure that they understand impact, quality and consistency?

Oversight of key documents

Governance is another key aspect of developing a safe culture.

Trustees are central to safeguarding and they hold the responsibility for safe organisations.

They should provide you with support and challenge, and be kept informed.

Professional supports

Safeguarding is a demanding role and we must be aware of the toll it can take.

Having appropriate support in place around you is a big step to safeguarding you, so that you can safeguarding others:

- Regular supervision (reflective practice)
- Open-door policy of your manager
- Regular checks on welfare and any needs
- Debriefing after an incident
- Access to counselling

Thank you!

To find out more about SCIE's work with faith-based organisations or to get in touch, please follow the links below.

SCIE and the Safeguarding Training Fund:
scie.org.uk/safeguarding/charities/resources

Safeguarding for faith groups:
scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups

Sign-up to SCIE's e-bulletin to find out about future events and resources:
scie.org.uk/myscie/register

Thank you

Any questions?