NSPCC

Keeping our Children Safe

Raising awareness about child abuse

Module 2

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Session 2.1
Who abuses children?

Aim
• To enable participants to become conscious about their thoughts about child abuse in their community.

Objective
• To demonstrate greater awareness of personal thoughts about child abuse.

Duration
45 minutes

Equipment
• Copies of handout 2.1: Keeping children safe – what are my thoughts? (List of statements)

Method
• Individual reflection
• Large group feedback

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do.

You are going to use a list of statements in this session. You should prepare this in advance, including translating it into the group members’ own language if necessary.
Session notes for facilitators

1. Introduce this session by telling the group that you are going to consider together their beliefs about keeping children safe.

2. Give everyone a copy of Handout 2.1: Keeping children safe – what are my thoughts? explaining that it is a list of statements other people have made about looking after children. Ask everyone to mark each statement on the list with a “T” if they think it’s true or an “F” if they think it’s false.

Allow 10 minutes for this

3. Bring everyone together and, using Handout 2.1: Facilitator answer sheet, invite them to feedback what made them decide whether each statement was true or false.

4. When you have finished the feedback, invite them to state whether or not they have changed their beliefs as a result of the input.

Allow 35 minutes for this

5. Finish the session by considering the key learning points below.

Key learning points
- Children are abused in all communities.
- Being open to the possibility of abuse happening in our community influences our response to preventive action.
- Everyone will have different opinions and it is important not to make assumptions about what is child abuse.

Note: individuals might say they cannot decide or that it depends on the circumstances. Ask them to write down what they think. Reassure the group that it is not a test but an exercise to explore what they think.
There are two ways to run this activity depending on the constituency of the group.

1. For active/mobile participants who can move easily around the room, try the line of continuum. Place agree/disagree cards at either end of the room and ask participants to stand in the centre of the room mid-way between the cards.
   Read out one of the statements and ask the participants to place themselves somewhere on the line between agree and disagree according to how they feel about the scenario. Then, facilitate discussion and debate as to why people stood where they did. Continue this for additional statements.

2. In small groups as diverse as the group constituency allows, hand out the statements sheet, ask each group to decide how they view each statement and get them to mark each one with “A” if they agree or “D” if they disagree.
   In both ways of running this activity, the trainer should manage the debate and encourage participants to challenge stereotypes and assumptions. The trainer should also encourage participants to reflect on their previous personal and/or professional experience, and assess whether this heightens or diminishes their concern.
### Handout 2.1a
**Keeping children safe – what are my thoughts?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In my community it would only be a stranger who would hurt a child and not someone in, or known to, the family.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>If a family has a low income, the local community in which they live will usually come together to make sure the children have enough to eat.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith leaders are respected figures in the community. They would never harm a child.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Children and young people in my community are safe from sexual abuse because we make sure that the opportunity to abuse them does not exist.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical punishment is not harmful to children.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Disabled children are more likely to be harmed than non-disabled children.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers in our community would never hurt a child.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>Children can be abused in educated and rich families.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no child abuse in our community. It only happens in the white community.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>If a child is being abused, they are always taken away from their parents and put into care.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facilitator answer sheet

Keeping children safe – what are my beliefs?

In my community it would only be a stranger who would hurt a child and not someone in, or known to, the family.  

FALSE

Most children are hurt and abused by people they know and trust. Children are most vulnerable to sexual abuse in the family. Children can be sold for sexual exploitation, or be abused by close relatives and people known to the family. Some children are not given appropriate care by their parents and carers. Children can experience rejection and emotional hurt as well as physical punishment by the people who should be looking after them.

If a family has a low income, the local community in which they live will usually come together to make sure the children have enough to eat.  

This can be true as well as false. Some communities will unite and help each other. The level of support depends on what extent people look out for each other. In some communities neighbours/elders will take over the care of children to give parents a rest and will look out for the community’s children, regarding them as everybody’s responsibility. In other cases people will believe that it is a private matter and the family should be able to sort it out, so they will not offer help. Some people worry about helping or advising in case they offend the adult’s honour, but this can mean that children suffer.

Faith leaders are respected figures in the community. They would never harm a child.  

FALSE

Many people would like to believe that faith leaders never harm anyone, but they do. There have been a number of cases of child abuse by faith leaders (such as Catholic priests in Ireland and America). In the UK there have been cases of physical abuse by Imams and sexual abuse by Hindu priests.

Children and young people in my community are safe from sexual abuse because we make sure that the opportunity to abuse them does not exist.  

FALSE

Many communities develop safety measures to ensure that the opportunity for sexual contact between children and adults does not arise. For example, adults always remain fully dressed or are never alone with a child. People who are determined to abuse children overcome these barriers, such as by inventing false reasons for being alone with a child. Adults will sexually abuse children because:

• Children are easier to control.

• Adults do not believe children when they disclose that they have been abused. Official statistics for sexual abuse include children from all backgrounds.
If a child is being abused, they are always taken away from their parents and put into care.

FALSE

Many different adults in the lives of children can hurt them, including their own mother.

Children can get abused in educated and rich families.

TRUE

Children from all social and educational backgrounds can be abused. Abusers may be well-liked and seen as respected members of the community.

There is no child abuse in our community. It only happens in the white community.

FALSE

Child abuse happens in all communities, cultures and backgrounds.

Mothers in our community would never hurt a child.

FALSE

In many countries physical discipline is a norm. Many adults believe that children are not harmed by physical punishment and even support their behaviour with religious sanctions like “spare the rod and spoil the child”. Several research studies show children talking about the negative impact of physical punishment. In the UK, the Children Are Unbeatable! Alliance campaigns to end physical punishment – visit www.childrenareunbeatable.org.uk (session 2.4 explores this issue).

Disabled children are more likely to be harmed than non-disabled children.

TRUE

Research shows that disabled children are up to four times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. Their disability means they are more dependent and may have communication difficulties. This makes it easier for adults to harm them.
Session 2.2
What is child abuse?

Aim
• To develop a common understanding about what is child abuse.

Objective
• To describe behaviours towards children that are abusive.

Duration
70 minutes

Equipment
• Flipchart paper and pens
• A4 paper
• Handout 2.2a: Safeguarding children (Parts A and B) – give a copy to each participant at the end of the session.

Method
• Small and large group discussion
• Input

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do.
Introduce this session by telling the group that together you are going to think about what is harmful to children and see if everyone agrees. Divide everyone into small groups. Ask them to think of as much adult behaviour that is harmful to children as possible. Ensure the groups think about physical, sexual, emotional and psychological care.

When discussing the dangers of online abuse, make sure that the message to the group is that digital technology is a very positive part of the lives of young people; it is a case of managing the risks rather than trying to prevent young people from enjoying the many benefits. In addition, remind them of the existence of harmful behaviour that is perpetrated via the internet or other aspects of digital technology, and other behaviours such as modern slavery, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Ask them to write down the behaviours on a sheet of paper.

Allow 20 minutes for this

Invite everyone to return to the large group. Ask one group to state three of the behaviours they identified and record these on the flipchart as they are called out. Repeat this process with all the groups until all the behaviours have been noted.

Next, invite participants to look at the flipchart and call out behaviours that they have seen or heard happening in their community. Circle each one that is called out. As facilitator, take note of the extent to which the groups accept that harm to children occurs in their community. Also take note of whether the behaviours include all types of abuse.

Facts and figures

Abuse happens in all communities. Tell participants that some children in their communities will be harmed. Use the facts and figures in Handout 2.2a: safeguarding children (Facts and figures) to support your input.

Allow 20 minutes for this

Types of abuse

Tell the group that it is not easy to decide whether an action or behaviour is child abuse or not. Many factors affect each situation, such as the action itself, the situation that led to it, the frequency, whether the action is culturally normal, the age of the child and the impact on the child’s development. The government has developed some definitions that provide guidance.

Using examples from Handout 2.2b: safeguarding children (Types of abuse) share the following summary of definitions of child abuse taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2015)

Advise the group that these definitions provide guidance on what is harmful to children, but assessing if a child has been abused is never easy or straightforward. Deciding whether a particular action is harmful depends on many factors, some of which are cultural. If they are concerned that a child is being harmed, tell participants that they should get advice and help. It is not their responsibility to decide if an action or behaviour is abuse. They can call the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000

Allow 30 minutes for the input

Finish the session by considering the key learning points below.

Key learning points

• It is not easy to decide whether a particular way of behaving towards a child is abuse. Cultural practices make this process more difficult.
• If you are concerned about a child’s wellbeing always get advice and help.
• It is important to recognise harmful behaviours towards children, so we can replace them with positive actions.
• Children are harmed by four types of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.
• Modern digital technology is an important part of life for most children and young people. It offers great opportunities but can also enable abusers to find new ways to reach children and harm them. We therefore need to manage the risks and help young people to keep themselves safe online.
Handout 2.2a
Safeguarding children – Part A: Facts and figures

The 2011 census enabled statisticians to estimate that almost one in six young people (under 20) in England and Wales is from a black or other minority ethnic community. On 31st March 2016, there were 70,440 children in England who were being looked after by a local authority. 25% of these children were from BME groups.

On 31 March 2016, 50,310 children were the subject of a child protection plan. Of the 48,750 children for whom ethnicity was known, 10,630 were from black and minority ethnic communities. The overall rate of children subject to a child protection plan at 31 March 2016 was 43.1 children per 10,000 children in the population.

On 31 March 2016, 4,210 looked after children and young people in England were unaccompanied asylum seekers. This represents a 54% increase on the previous year.

AFRUCA is an organisation that promotes the rights and welfare of African children and runs a range of assessment and support services to black and African children and families. It also runs training programmes for professionals.

More information is available on their website: www.afruca.org/our-work/afruca-in-the-uk

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**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Even with these guidelines, it is difficult to decide whether or not a way of behaving constitutes physical abuse. Some things are seen as abusive regardless of any explanation, such as cigarette burns, burns caused by dipping feet into hot water, strap marks on the body, twisting a child’s ear or pinching a child’s cheeks.

Smacking is permitted in the UK as long as it does not leave a mark on the skin. The law does not permit punishing children by hitting them with an implement, including a shoe, stick or cooking utensil. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer makes up the symptoms of an illness or deliberately makes a child ill in order to get attention from medical professionals.

Interestingly, it is considered a crime (common assault) when an adult slaps another adult, but not when an adult slaps a child.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

In the UK, the definition of neglect as a criminal offence is set out in the Children and Young Persons Act 1933:

Section 1(1) of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 states that:

‘(1) If any person who has attained the age of sixteen and has the custody, charge or care of any child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health... that person shall be guilty of a misdemeanour and shall be liable.”
Section 1(2) of the same Act states that:

“(2) a parent or other person legally liable to maintain a child or young person shall be deemed to have neglected him in a manner likely to cause injury to his health if he has failed to provide adequate food, clothing, medical aid or lodging for him, or, if having been unable otherwise to provide such food, clothing, medical aid or lodging, he has failed to take steps to procure it to be provided under the enactments applicable in that behalf.”

This means that if the carer is not able to provide for and protect a child, they must ensure they are provided for and protected by someone else, including the authorities where necessary.

Neglect can be difficult to define and prove.

Neglect can be defined as things that are done to the child or things that are not done. Examples of neglect would be: tying up a child; leaving a child locked up in a room; keeping a child of school age at home and away from school; not giving a child enough food; or not taking the child for health appointments.

In some situations, leaving older children to look after younger ones would also be seen as neglect. When children are neglected it impacts all aspects of their growth and development.

The law does not state the age at which a child can be left alone. Childcare professionals advise parents to think carefully before leaving their children on their own.
Talking about sexual abuse is very difficult in many black and minority ethnic communities because of the shame and embarrassment. When abuse is not acknowledged, this allows the person to continue to harm a child. The age of sexual consent in the UK is 16 years and over.

Some cultures frown upon praising children because they believe this makes children arrogant. In other cultures, parents constantly compare their child with that of their friends or family.

Forcing a child or young person to marry against their wish is also emotional abuse. Children will suffer emotionally however they are hurt, which means that they will be upset if they are physically hit. However, emotional abuse can occur on its own. Children who grow up feeling that they have been a failure in their parents’ eyes can have emotional and psychological difficulties in later life.

Taking children for spirit removal can constitute emotional abuse, psychological abuse and, if the ritual involves some kind of physical beating, physical abuse.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
Session 2.3  
Child abuse or culturally acceptable behaviour

Aim
- To achieve a common understanding about culturally harmful practices.

Objectives
- To distinguish between culturally acceptable and harmful childcare practices.
- To describe the impact of harm on children’s behaviour.
- To identify barriers to responding to concerns.
- To know the legal powers for intervention.

Duration
1 hour 45 minutes (105 minutes)

Equipment
- Scenario cards
- Flipchart paper
- Sticky tape or removable adhesive
- Copies of Handout 2.3a: Facilitator’s sheet – Scenario cards
- Copies of Handout 2.3b: Examples of behaviours that are harmful to children’s development and beliefs that keep them going.

Method
- Small and large group discussion

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do. Prepare one flipchart sheet for each group – as shown below. Allow plenty of room for people to make notes and stick their cards along the arrow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally acceptable</th>
<th>Only acceptable if…</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Using Handout 2.3a: Facilitator’s sheet – Scenario cards, cut out the cards for participants to attach onto the arrow diagram on the flipchart paper. Prepare one set of cards for each small group.

Note: This session builds on the definitions of abuse from session 2.2. If you do not plan to do session 2.2, you may want include the material in this session.
Session notes for facilitators

It is important for you to feel confident about the topics you raise with the group. You may wish to select particular scenario cards to support discussion based on the needs of the group and your knowledge of the subject.

Use the Sources of further help and information to support you.

1. You can connect this session to the previous exercise about defining abuse. Explain that assessing if a child has been abused is not straightforward. Tell the group that you are going to think about examples of cultural situations and consider whether they are abusive or just different, culturally relevant or beneficial to children’s growth.

2. Divide participants into small groups and give each group a set of scenario cards, prepared from Handout 2.3a: Facilitator’s sheet – Scenario cards. Ask participants to discuss each of the cards in their group and to agree whether the behaviour is:
   • totally acceptable
   • only acceptable if...
   • unacceptable.

3. Hand each group a flipchart sheet with the arrow diagram drawn on. Ask them to attach each card where they think it fits best along the continuum using sticky tape or removable adhesive.

4. Bring the participants back together and display the flipchart sheets so that everyone can see them. Invite everyone to view the work and comment on anything that they notice. As facilitator, do the same.

5. Ask participants to share how they reached agreement in their small groups
   • Were there lots of agreements/disagreements?
   • How did they reach agreement?
   • Were there scenarios that they found difficult to agree?

6. Next, select a number of scenarios placed under the “unacceptable” heading. Ask participants to return to their small groups and to think about:
   • why these behaviours keep happening in the community
   • why they thought the behaviours were unacceptable
   • what they could do to stop people behaving in this way.

7. Community or individual beliefs allow harmful behaviours to continue. Ask the small groups to write down a behaviour that is harmful to children and then to write down what beliefs allow this to continue. Distribute copies of Handout 2.3b Examples of behaviours that are harmful to children’s development and beliefs that keep them going. Talk through the examples to explain to participants what you want them to do. Encourage individuals to think hard about what maintains this behaviour and what could they do to influence change?

8. Invite each group to select a couple of examples for feedback, sharing their thoughts about what beliefs keep the behaviours going, what led to a change in their beliefs and what they could do to influence people in their community.

9. This session is likely to generate a lot of discussion. Use your facilitation skills to manage this effectively. Ensure that people do not feel they are being attacked or picked on. If an unacceptable practice is placed under the “acceptable” heading, invite people to think about the impact of this behaviour on a child’s development.

List the possible impact on the flipchart.

Allow 15 minutes for this

Key learning points
• There are many childcare practices in different cultures that enhance children’s development and promote their welfare.
• Equally, there are practices that harm children by impacting on their development and, in some cases, result in children being disabled or killed.
• Forced marriages, female genital mutilation/cutting, physical punishment of a child using an implement, “honour violence” and child trafficking are all against the law in the UK.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children physically punished to teach them discipline</td>
<td>Children are expected to do well at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders of the extended family force the marriage of a 15-year-old girl</td>
<td>Child aged 11 regularly looks after brothers and sisters while parents go to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents take boy or girl of any age to country of origin and force them to marry</td>
<td>Children punished with a cane at local Saturday/Sunday school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children kept off school to help in their parents’ business</td>
<td>Children brought over from overseas as domestic help or sent out to work to help support their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children taught family values</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation/cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children taught to respect their elders and teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Handout 2.3a
Facilitator’s sheet – Scenario cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys being circumcised</th>
<th>Child constantly compared with other children</th>
<th>Children enjoy the love and support of the extended family and community</th>
<th>Boys are sent to university and girls are prepared for marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children not allowed to listen to music or watch television</td>
<td>Young people not allowed to socialise with friends</td>
<td>Children disowned because of marriage to partner from different race and or religion</td>
<td>Child locked up for being naughty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child asked to stand in corner of room in chicken position</td>
<td>Hurting/killing someone to protect the family honour</td>
<td>As a sign of respect children should not look their elders straight in the face</td>
<td>Newborn baby thoroughly washed to remove all the afterbirth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Handout 2.3a
Facilitator’s sheet – Scenario cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breast feeding children over the age of two</td>
<td>Threaded beads around the waist of a girl to help mark her curves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child told he/she is evil and taken for spirit removal</td>
<td>Girls and boys not allowed to mix freely to mix once they are over 12 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people of marriageable age are introduced and allowed to decide if they wish to get married</td>
<td>Following abuse by a male relative, a girl becomes pregnant, the pregnancy is terminated and she is told not to tell anyone because no one will want to marry her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person aged 16 being paid in gifts and money to engage in sexual activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Handout 2.3b**
Behaviours and underpinning beliefs

Examples of behaviours that are harmful to children’s development and underpinning beliefs that keep them going

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Underpinning belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporal punishment</td>
<td>I was punished in the same way; it didn’t do me any harm!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Female genital mutilation/cutting      | Maintains cleanliness
                                       | Increases fertility
                                       | Increases marriage prospects                                                      |
| Forced marriage                        | Parents know best
                                       | Fear of children marrying outside community                                        |
| ‘Honour-based’ violence                 | Protecting the honour of the family                                                |
Session 2.4
Alternatives to physical punishment

Aim
• To identify alternatives to the use of physical punishment to discipline children.

Objectives
• To state arguments for and against physical punishment.
• To describe alternative methods of disciplining children.

Duration
1 hour 5 minutes (65 minutes)

Equipment
• Flipchart paper

Method
• Debate
• Small group work

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do.
Session notes for facilitators

1. Introduce the session by using the following text as a guide.

Explain that, although physical punishment remains a common method of disciplining children, its use has declined significantly since the 1950s. It has been banned outright in 23 countries around the world and in many others its use is not allowed in public services.

Physical punishment includes smacking, hitting children with a cane, pinching, and twisting of body parts, including ears. There is a strong movement worldwide for the total abolition of all forms of physical punishment of children.

In the UK the debate for its total abolition continues. Currently, UK legislation does not allow punishment with the use of an implement. Parents are allowed to smack their children but not hard enough to leave a mark on their skin.

Physical punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing pain but not injury to correct or control a child’s behaviour.

It is illegal for teachers, nursery workers and child care workers to smack another person’s child.

If a person is employed privately by a parent, such as a babysitter or nanny, the parent may give permission for that person to smack their child as long as it is reasonable and does not amount to an offence.

Whenever the issue of physical punishment of children is raised, people always have strong views about its use. Some people agree, others disagree and some people are not sure.

2. Divide participants into two groups. Ask one group to identify all the reasons for continuing to use physical punishment to discipline children and ask the other group to identify all the reasons against its use. Get each group to write down their reasons and agree how to present them in only five minutes to the other group. While one group is presenting, get the other group to note any points to which they wish to respond.

Allow groups 10 minutes for preparing their presentation

3. Once both groups are ready, invite the group that is supporting the use of physical punishment to begin their presentation.

Allow 5 minutes for the presentation

4. Next, invite the group opposing to do the same.

Again, allow 5 minutes for the presentation

5. As facilitator, make notes of the points raised by each group, focusing on factual information. Next, ask each group to consider the reasons presented by the other group and think about any points to which they wish to respond.

Allow 5 minutes for this

6. Invite both groups back together to present their responses.

Allow 10 minutes for this

7. Choose and announce the winning team, which hopefully is the group against physical punishment!

Allow 10 minutes for this

8. Next, mix the groups and invite them to identify alternatives to physical punishment.

Allow 10 minutes for this

9. Invite each group to feed back and note their comments on alternatives to physical punishment on flipchart paper.

Allow 15 minutes for this

Key learning points

- Because many people experienced physical punishment as children and think it did not do them any harm, they genuinely believe that it is acceptable to use it with their children. It is important to remember that no two children are the same, and the context in which the physical punishment was experienced by these people is not the same as their child.

- Today there is much greater awareness of the human rights of children and young people. Many countries have recognised this and have given children the same rights as adults.

- It is difficult to say exactly at what point physical punishment becomes physical abuse because there are so many variables – the child’s age, the situation, the strength of the adult, whether or not a mark is left, use of an implement and so on. The best way to prevent physical abuse is not to use physical punishment at all. In the UK adults cannot use reasonable punishment as a legal defence when charged with injuring or marking a child. Parents and carers are likely to be prosecuted for physical assault.

- Children who are physically punished are more likely to be aggressive during childhood and as an adult.

- There are alternative, effective ways of disciplining children.

- Direct people to local and national resources listing alternatives to physical punishment at the end of this resource pack.
Session 2.5
Safeguarding children – the law

**Aim**
- To raise awareness of laws that support safeguarding children.

**Objectives**
- To state the rights of the child as identified by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- To describe safeguarding law in England.

**Duration**
1 hour 45 minutes (105 minutes)

**Equipment**
- Copies of Handout 2.5a: Children’s rights
- Copies of Handout 2.5b: Children’s rights – the law (optional, depending on group)

**Method**
- Pairs
- Large group discussion
- Input

**Preparation**
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do.
Prepare as many copies as you need of Handout 2.5a: Children’s rights, and Handout 2.5b: Children’s rights – the law.
Safeguarding legislation in England

Use Handout 2.5b: Children’s rights – the law to present information on legislation in England. Assess the needs of your group and decide how much input you wish to provide. If you feel it is useful or appropriate, distribute copies to participants. You can make the session interactive if you wish, but this will depend on how much your group knows about UK childcare law and how confident you feel. Keep this session short and simple.

Allow around 20 minutes for this, depending on the size of your group

Ask everyone to return to their partner and give each pair a copy of Handout 2.5a: Children’s rights. Invite them to discuss what each right means in practice, to consider whether they had this right when they were growing up, and whether children today should have that right. Get each pair to start from a different point in the table on the handout, so you can cover as many rights as possible.

Allow 25 minutes for this

Bring the whole group back together. Ask pairs to give an example of a right that they found easy to agree for today’s children and one that they were unsure about.

Facilitate discussion on whether a person’s own experience of not having their rights recognised and valued affects the way they consider children’s rights today.

Allow 30 minutes for this

Finish this session by reviewing the key learning points below.

Key learning points

- All children have the right to be protected from harm. This right is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The United Kingdom has accepted this right and has developed legislation that allows professionals to intervene if they are concerned about the kind of care a child is receiving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right</th>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
<th>Did I have it as a child?</th>
<th>Should children have it today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right to live with your family unless it is harmful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The right to a name and nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to an identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and respected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to be with friends and join and set up clubs unless it breaks the rights of others</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to be protected from hurt and being badly treated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to health and an education</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to be protected from sexual abuse</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Handout 2.5a
### Children’s rights

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): some examples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right</th>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
<th>Did I have it as a child?</th>
<th>Should children have it today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The right not be punished in a cruel or hurtful way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to be protected from dangerous drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to play and relax by doing things like sports, music and drama</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to special protection if you are a refugee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to help if you have been badly treated, hurt or neglected</td>
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<tr>
<td>The right to collect information from the media – radio, newspaper, TV and protected from information that could harm you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The responsibility to respect the rights of their parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The United Kingdom has some of the most comprehensive legislation in the world to safeguard children's safety. The legislation has been evolving over a number of years. Here are some examples:

**Module 2: Raising awareness about child abuse**

**Criminal Justice Act 1988**
This Act deals with common assault (s39), stating that it is an offence to cause even a basic injury to another person, such as by slapping. However, this only applies to an adult hitting another adult. A child is not protected from common assault by this Act.

**Children Act 1989**
This is a comprehensive piece of legislation applying to both private and public law cases in England and Wales that:
- provides the legal powers for intervening in children's lives where there are concerns
- gives powers to the local authority, the NSPCC and police to make enquiries when they receive a report about child protection concerns and requires other agencies (schools, health and voluntary organisations) to help in the inquiry process.

The Act states that:
- the local authority should support families where there is a child in need – usually children with a disability, children whose health and development is likely to be impaired without the provision of services
- local authorities shall take reasonable steps to prevent harm to children
- service providers must give due consideration to the child's racial, religious and cultural needs in service delivery
- the local authority will work in partnership with parents and carers
- the family is the best place for children to grow up in. Children should only be removed if their caregivers are unable to provide their care needs which include the need for safety
- where children are removed from their parents, they should have contact as long as it promotes their welfare.

**Children and Young Persons Act 1933**
This Act describes and defines 'wilful neglect' of a child as an offence. The police are still working to this definition today.

**Handout 2.5b**
**Children’s rights: the law in England**

**Offences Against the Person Act 1861**
This Act is relevant today because it deals with, describes and defines the following as crimes:
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm – a strike that leaves a mark.
- Grievous bodily harm or wounding (s20) – a strike that causes a broken skin/bone.
- Grievous bodily harm or wounding with intent (s18) – a strike or attack that causes deliberate, serious harm.

**Children and Young Persons Act 1933**
This Act describes and defines 'wilful neglect' of a child as an offence. The police are still working to this definition today.
Handout 2.5b
Children’s rights: the law in England

Human Rights Act 1998
• Citizens have a right to privacy and family life. There are limits to state intervention, which must be “…in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others” (Article 8). This ensures that a child’s right to protection overrides a family’s right to privacy.
• Every individual has the right to be free from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. The Act effectively obliges the authorities to take preventive measures to protect a child at risk of harm. (Article 3)

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
• Disallows unsuitable people from being employed by public bodies to work with children.
• Sets out a review process for those who are disqualified from working with children.
• Employers who knowingly employ someone who has a disqualification order imposed on them will face criminal sanctions.

Education Act 2002
• Includes a provision requiring school governing bodies, local education authorities and further education institutions to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Adoption and Children Act 2002
• Extends the definition of significant harm so that actually witnessing violence can also constitute harm (this largely applies to children who witness domestic violence).

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003
• Extends the existing legislation criminalising FGM in the UK by making it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take a girl abroad, or to help others to take a girl abroad, to carry out FGM, even in countries where the practice is legal.
Handout 2.5b
Children’s rights: the law in England

**Children Act 2004**
Following the death of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié in 2000, the Government asked Lord Laming to conduct an inquiry (Laming, 2003) to help decide whether to introduce new legislation and guidance to improve the child protection system in England. The Government’s response was the *Keeping children safe* report and the *Every Child Matters* green paper, which led to the Children Act 2004.

- Does not replace or even amend much of the Children Act 1989.
- Creates the post of Children’s Commissioner for England.
- Places a duty on local authorities to appoint a director of children’s services and an elected lead member for children’s services, who is ultimately accountable for the delivery of services.
- Places a duty on local authorities and their partners (including the police, health service providers and the youth justice system) to co-operate in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people and to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

**Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- Puts the new Local Safeguarding Children Boards on a statutory footing and gives them functions of investigation and review, which they use to review all child deaths in their area.
- Updates the legislation on physical punishment by limiting the use of the defence of reasonable punishment, so that it can no longer be used when people are charged with the offences against a child of wounding, actual or grievous bodily harm or cruelty. Therefore any injury sustained by a child which is serious enough to warrant a charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm cannot be considered to be as the result of reasonable punishment.

**Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008**
- Allows people who commit sex offences against children abroad to face prosecution in the UK, even if that offence is not illegal in the country in which it was committed.

**Children and Young Persons Act 2008**
- Legislates for the recommendations in the *Care Matters* white paper (DFES, 2007) to provide high-quality care and services for children in care.
- Places a duty on registrars to notify the local safeguarding children board of all child deaths.

Forced Marriage Act (Civil Protection) 2007
- Gives courts the power to make orders to protect the victim or potential victim of a forced marriage and help remove them from that situation.
- Although not making forcing someone into marriage a crime, anyone found to be contravening a Forced Marriage Protection Order can be charged with a criminal offence.
Handout 2.5b
Children’s rights: the law in England

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009
- Legislates for there to be two lay members from the local community sitting on each local safeguarding children board.

Education Act 2011
- Makes changes to provisions on school discipline and places restrictions on the public reporting of allegations made against teachers.

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sets up the Disclosure and Barring Service in place of Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority
- Introduces a new definition of Regulated Activity (work you are not allowed to do if you are barred from work with children and young people or adults at risk)
- Makes other changes to criminal record and barring arrangements

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• Makes other changes to criminal record and barring arrangements
Session 2.6
What stops us taking action to keep children safe?

Aim
• To become aware of barriers that get in the way of people taking action to keep children safe.

Objective
• To describe barriers that stop adults from taking action.

Duration
1 hour 5 minutes (65 minutes)

Equipment
• Flipchart paper
• Pens

Method
• Pairs
• Word storm
• Large group work

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page prior to the training, so that you know what you are going to do.

Prepare a flipchart sheet with the following questions to help you to facilitate the feedback:

• Did you think that the matter was too trivial or that it might be perceived as trivial by others (explore who)?
• Did you feel that you didn’t have the right to complain?
• Did you feel that you might not be believed?
• Did you feel that you didn’t know how or to whom to complain?
• Did you think the particular person, such as a shop assistant or waiter, wasn’t personally to blame for the situation?

• After thinking more about the situation, were you surprised that you hadn’t complained?
• Was there something particular about the situation that affected your capacity or will to complain?
• Were there circumstances that meant you didn’t have the energy or will to complain?
Session notes for facilitators

1. **Introduce this session using the following text as a guide:**
   
   Begin by saying that many people in all communities find it very difficult to take action when they become aware that a child might be experiencing abuse. Many reasons are common to all communities, but some are specific to black and minority ethnic communities. This session is going to help everyone to become aware of these reasons and then to think of ways of overcoming them.

   Tell everyone that you are going to do this exercise in two parts. Point out that they may question the relevance of the personal reflection exercise to what may stop them from taking action if they become concerned about protecting a child. Invite everyone to take part and explain that you will help them to make the connections later.

2. **Part A: Personal Reflection**
   
   Invite participants to think back to a time when they wanted to complain but chose not to. This could be taking goods back to a shop or complaining about a service in a hospital or restaurant. Ask them to think of an example that they are happy to share with a partner.

3. **Once they are ready, ask them to get into pairs and share brief details of their example and what stopped them from making the complaint.**

   Allow 15 minutes for this pair work

4. **Get everyone back together and take feedback from each pair.** Explain that you only want to know the barriers that stopped them from making a complaint and not the other details of the example. Some participants may want to put the issue into context, which is OK but aim to keep the feedback brief.

5. **Begin with one pair and write up two of their reasons on the flipchart.** Ask for clarification where necessary. Continue in the same way with the remaining pairs in the group.

6. **Once everyone has shared their reasons, ask why they think these barriers exist.** Facilitate a brief discussion and draw out the main points using the following questions:
   
   - After thinking more about the situation, were you surprised that you hadn’t complained?
   - Was there something particular about the situation that affected your capacity or will to complain?
   - Were there circumstances that meant you didn’t have the energy or will to complain?
   - Did you think that the matter was too trivial or that it might be perceived as trivial by others (explore who)?

7. **Display the flipchart sheet that you prepared with the questions before the session, making sure everyone can see it.**

- Did you feel that you didn’t have the right to complain?
- Did you feel that you might not be believed?
- Did you feel that you didn’t know how or to whom to complain?
- Did you think the particular person, such as a shop assistant or waiter, wasn’t personally to blame for the situation?

**Allow 15 minutes for this**
Module 2: Raising awareness about child abuse

Referring to the bricks drawn on the flipchart, explain that the barriers to child protection together form a solid wall against safeguarding children.

Next, ask everyone to return to their pairs and ask each pair to discuss one or two of the barriers (bricks). Ask them to think about all the things that they can do to overcome these barriers, so that children can be safeguarded.

Allow 10 minutes for this.

Invite each pair to feed back to the group. Note their strategies in the respective bricks of the wall, using a different colour pen.

Allow 10 minutes for this.

Finish the session by reviewing the key learning points below.

Key learning points

- Justifying inaction is easier than taking action.
- Children depend on adults to protect them from harm.
- If action is not taken now, the harmful practice will continue and affect many more children.

Next, draw a wall of bricks onto the flipchart. Invite participants to look at the list of questions and identify barriers that might stop them from taking protective action if they were to learn a child might be experiencing harm.

As each barrier is called out, write it into one of the bricks drawn onto the flipchart. Ask if there are any other barriers that are not already on the list, such as:

- It’s always been like this – traditional harmful practice is normalised.
- Don’t like to interfere.
- The parents are doing it out of love for the child.
- Parents/carers are very powerful in the community.
- Other community members will reject me for interfering.
- It will make things worse for the child.
- It will affect the opportunities for other children in the family.
- It is people’s own private business.

Display the flipchart sheets listing barriers to complaining (from the personal reflection exercise) and responding to child protection concerns side by side. Explain that the process of making decisions is very similar in both situations. By understanding how they personally make decisions, everyone will gain an insight into what might stop them and what might move them towards taking action. This exercise requires people to apply principles from one concept to another. Some people may not be able to do this, so you may need to be much more directive in helping people to make the connections between the two processes.

Allow 15 minutes for this.

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Together we can help children who’ve been abused to rebuild their lives. Together we can protect children at risk. And, together, we can find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening.

We change the law. We visit schools across the country, helping children understand what abuse is. And, through our Childline service, we give young people a voice when no one else will listen.

But all this is only possible with your support. Every pound you raise, every petition you sign, every minute of your time, will help make sure we can fight for every childhood.

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