Session 3.1
Safeguarding children in our community – protective factors

**Aim**
- To identify protective factors in the family and community.

**Objective**
- To describe all the ways by which children can be protected in the family and community.

**Duration**
1 hour/60 minutes

**Equipment**
- Long piece of string
- Pens
- Blank cards

**Method**
- Small and 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.
Session notes for facilitators

1. Introduce this session using the following text as a guide.
   In general, people from different cultures try to protect their children and young people and don’t intentionally allow them to come to harm. However, child abuse is far more likely to be carried out by someone known to the child or family. Only a small minority of cases of child abuse involves a stranger. Many cultures have developed “natural” safeguards to ensure that this does not happen. Say we are going to identify these safeguards and consider how effective they are and whether they need to be made stronger.

2. Divide everyone into two or four groups depending on the number of participants.
   - Invite half the groups to identify all the things a family can do to protect children from harm.
   - Ask the other half to identify safeguards in their community.

   Give each group some blank cards on which to write their examples.

   Also give the groups different colour pens, so that it is easy to separate family safeguards from community safeguards.

   Allow 20 minutes for this.

3. While the groups are identifying protective safeguards and writing these onto cards, draw two concentric circles on the floor using the string as shown below.

   While they are ready, invite one member of each small group to remove the weaker factors from their respective circle and then to return to their small group.

   Invite the small groups to consider how the weaker factors can be strengthened. Ask each group to share their strategies with everyone.

   Allow 20 minutes for this.

4. Finish the session by reviewing the key learning points below.

   Key learning points
   - Children depend on the adults around them to safeguard them.
   - Families need to make it clear to children which adult behaviours constitute harm and who to tell if this happens to them.
   - The community must intervene if they see a child being harmed.
   - The community needs to support families where there are concerns about children’s care and not reject the child or their family.

   Here are some examples:

   **Family** – seeing children as having rights; setting clear boundaries for relationships; taking time out when children misbehave; when feeling angry, getting other adult family members to look after the child; clearly defining good and bad touch; getting children to tell someone if anyone harms them in any way; complaining if community teachers physically punish children.

   **Community** – talking about the abuse of children; having safeguarding policies and procedures for voluntary groups; working together with statutory agencies; organising and leading awareness-raising days; taking protective action if information about child abuse comes to light.
Session 3.2
Roles and responsibilities in safeguarding

Aim
To develop participants’ understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key people involved in safeguarding children.

Objectives
To clarify the role and responsibilities of:
• those working within the statutory services
• voluntary agency workers and volunteers
• community and faith leaders.

Duration
50 minutes

Equipment
• Flipchart paper
• Pens
• Copies of Handout 3.2: The role of professionals in safeguarding children (for your use and/or to distribute to participants as you think is appropriate)

Methods
• Large group work
• Input

Preparation
Read through the session notes on the following page so that you know what you are going to do.
Prepare some flipchart sheets, each with one of the following job titles written on it:
• Children’s social worker
• Teacher
• Health visitor
• Police officer
• Voluntary project worker
• Faith leader
• Community leader
Place these around the room and leave a pen nearby. The participants will be writing on them during the session.
**Session notes for facilitators**

1. **Introduce this session** by saying that, whereas safeguarding children and young people is everybody’s business, people who are directly involved in working with them have responsibilities stated by law.

2. **Draw participants’ attention** to the pieces of flipchart paper with job titles on them around the room. Ask participants to stand up and walk around the room and note the first word that comes to mind when they think about what the person does in their job.

   *Allow 20 minutes for this*

3. Once everyone has recorded their response, invite participants to comment on what they notice about the lists that have emerged on each sheet of flipchart paper. Check whether the list includes stereotypes. If this is the case, say that this is not uncommon.

4. **Facilitate a brief discussion** with group members about how they came to know this information. People might tell you that they have had direct experience of working with some or all of the people on the list or that they have heard friends, relatives, neighbours or other people in their social network talk about them. Use information in Handout 3.2: The role of professionals in safeguarding children to inform the discussion.

   *Allow 30 minutes for this input*

5. **Finish the session by reviewing** the key learning points below.

**Key learning points**

- All workers within the statutory services (education, health, social care and the police) have a legal responsibility to refer child protection concerns to children’s social care.

- Organisations have a responsibility to recruit staff and volunteers safely, and to have policies and procedures in place to keep children safe.

- Community leaders have a responsibility not to suppress child protection concerns.

- Faith leaders have a responsibility not to allow religion to legitimise harmful practices.
Handout 3.2
The role of professionals in safeguarding children

• All professionals working with children and young people have a responsibility to ensure that they are safe from harm.
• All education workers (including teachers), all health personnel (including health visitors), and all social care workers have a legal responsibility to refer concerns to children’s social care.
• Only qualified children’s social workers, police and the NSPCC have the legal power to conduct an inquiry if they receive a report about child protection concerns.
• Children’s social workers have to follow strict guidelines when carrying out their responsibilities. Primarily, they have to ensure that all decisions are in the best interests of children.
• Children’s social workers also have to ensure that parents and carers of children who are the subject of inquiries are aware of their rights and have access to appropriate legal advice.
• All other agencies are required to co-operate and work in partnership with them and help them with their inquiries.
• There are clear rules and timescales for responding to reported concerns. The responsibility for collecting more information and what happens next rests with the social care department.
• In most cases a short assessment might reveal a few unmet needs, which can be addressed by providing family support services.
Session notes for facilitators

- In other more serious cases, the information provided will set the full inquiry process into motion. This involves gathering information from all professionals who have contact with the child and his or her family.
- Where concerns are confirmed, a child protection case conference will be held. All professionals with knowledge about the family, the parents and children (if they are old enough) can attend.
- A discussion will take place about the concerns and a decision will be made whether a child protection plan needs to be put together for the child. All professionals and parents are expected to work together to ensure that the child is protected from further harm. The social worker makes sure that the agreed work for protection is carried out and the case is reviewed regularly.
- Social services will only remain involved for as long as it is necessary.
- Community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that members of their community are aware of children’s right to safety and parents have a responsibility to ensure this.
- Faith leaders have to ensure that religion is not used inappropriately to maintain harmful practices towards children.
- Voluntary project workers have a responsibility to follow their organisation’s safeguarding policy and procedures. They may also have a role in supporting parents and carers who may be going through the child protection process.
Session 3.3
Sources of support

Aim
• To provide local and national support resources.

Objective
• To describe a range of support services for children and families.

Duration
45 minutes

Equipment
• List of local and national resources

Method
• 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.

You are going to summarise what the course has covered in this session, so it is a good idea to look back over any notes you have made and the material you have covered in the sessions you have chosen to facilitate.
Session notes for facilitators

1. Start by telling everyone that this is the last session.
2. You will need to identify local resources that can be shared with participants.
3. Invite participants to think about people and places they would go to if they needed help with childcare concerns. List these on the flipchart as they are called out.
4. Give out information on local and national organisations (details of national organisations are included in Sources of further help and information).
5. Close the session by acknowledging everyone’s participation in all the sessions. Invite people to share something they found useful about the sessions and something that they liked about their group.

Allow 25 minutes for this

Allow 20 minutes for this
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.

nspcc.org.uk