**PARTICIPANTS’ WORKBOOK FOR
LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

**SESSION 1**

**Theology and Safeguarding –**

**What does this mean for us as leaders?**

**Introduction**

Often in the church, when we think about safeguarding, we might think about training days, process, paperwork, and safeguarding officers. The word can create discomfort about being out of our depth and a fear of not responding well. A whole host of emotions are loaded onto the word, and by the time these emotions combine with the sense that safeguarding is about process and getting things right, safeguarding becomes this thing that we do, a requirement, a duty. But what if there were a completely different way to look at it? What if safeguarding is not being reactive, but being the church? What if we first ask ourselves, “What does it mean for us to be human and to be church together?” “What kind of community, filled with what kind of people, is God calling us to be?” and “How does safeguarding fit with the ministry of the Gospel?”

**Safeguarding: A theological matter?**

Jesus had a very clear message about the most vulnerable people. It is a theme which is replicated throughout the whole Bible, with God portrayed in the 121st psalm as the keeper of Israel. This Hebrew word can be translated as Safeguard, which is God’s need and wish for the Church, not only that we are safe, but we all work for the safety of all people. That is affirmed in the theological idea of Salvation.

In both the Greek and the Latin version of the word, the root of the word is safekeeping. The theological imperative of God is the safety of his children. Jesus continues this theme in St Matthew 18, when he places a child in the midst of the disciples when they ask him: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” His reply is revolutionary when he says: “Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven”. (Matthew 18: 3-5). The power of the Jesus’ imagery shows us the strength of his teaching about the most vulnerable in our midst. Yet again, Jesus gives us the example that worldly power is not the most important thing in his world, and that Christians are called to replicate that radical hospitality and celebrate Christ’s Incarnation, by the love we have for the most vulnerable in our midst.

There are other examples in the Gospels of Jesus holding up the poor and vulnerable elderly as examples of great faith, as in the story of the widow, who brings her gift to the Temple. He holds her up as an example of humility and generosity. Jesus teaches that, in the Kingdom, people are judged by what is in their hearts and how they put their faith into action, rather than the learned, like the Pharisees who know the Law, but fail to put it into practice. Theologically, the Church of Scotland has committed to trying to ensure that everyone is free from the risk harm and abuse. This stems from the Gospel imperative that Jesus loves everyone, particularly those who are the least, the last and the lost in society, and wishes everyone to be safe and cared for, particularly those who are vulnerable.

The other side of this coin is that we know there are some people who worship in our congregations, or who might wish to work for the Church, who present a risk of harm and abuse to vulnerable people. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven Report 2009, is the Church of Scotland’s understanding of our theological attitude to Forgiveness, and how we support and manage people who pose a risk to vulnerable people. At its heart is an understanding that people who survive abuse should be cared for and not be placed in a situation, where the hurt they have experienced can be perpetuated, even inadvertently, by our actions. This means that in discipleship terms, someone who has abused, can no longer be allowed to be in a place of leadership within the Church and they must be accountable for their continued discipleship journey. Forgiveness can only be given by the survivor. The Institution of the Church does not have the right to forgive an individual on behalf of anyone who has been abused. It may be that someone who has been abused may not be able to forgive the person who has abused them, and the Church should never make anyone feel obliged to forgive the kind of abuse they may have suffered. The Church should rightly leave that great responsibility and right to God. It is also important to remember that forgiveness is not about forgetting. Jesus still had the scars on his body after the resurrection and everyone lives with their own scars. People who survive abuse have hidden scars, and the Church should ensure that, as an institution, we do not add to their scars.

The person who poses a risk of harm and abuse and wishes to continue to worship within the Church of Scotland is required, as part of their discipleship journey, to recognise they are under the authority of God. They, like everyone who seeks to live out their discipleship, must try to acknowledge what they have done and how they have done it, and seek to find ways to amend their behaviour and to repent of their sin. This acknowledgement may only be to God, but it is hoped that with the support of the local congregation, and by bible study, prayer and reflection with the Minister and others, they might find a way to live with what they have done and to live safely. Safeguarding is at the heart of God’s will for everyone and while it is sometimes challenging to incorporate its requirements into the life of the congregation, its foundations assure us that God’s love requires us to place the most vulnerable at the heart of what we do and who we are. This ensures that in the Body of Christ, we encourage everyone to live fully, radically and in God’s love and safekeeping

**Questions:**

1. How does Scripture speak to you of safeguarding and why? Please write your answer below.

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1. Which key texts would you turn to when enabling others to explore a theology of safeguarding?

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**Safeguarding: the mandate**

**“Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.”**

**Proverbs 31:8 (CEB)**

Proverbs 31:8 forms part of the advice given by a mother to her royal son at the end of the book of Proverbs. There is symmetry here, as the book of Proverbs begins with advice from a royal father to his son. This beautiful book-ending depicts both the family and the workplace as the classroom for the passing on of wisdom, shows that both men and women are to take the lead, and identifies wisdom’s mandate, motivation, and mission relating to safeguarding and the creation of safer places.

Speaking out on behalf of the voiceless, is an important consideration for a theology of safeguarding. Those who are vulnerable are not to be seen just as victims but as those with a voice that deserve to be heard. Victims and survivors have their own decision-making opportunities and indeed with their unique and personal experience can be effective advocates for others and pursuers of justice in their own right if empowered to do so. Safeguarding with this intergenerational understanding from Proverbs is a partnership: not something done to the vulnerable, or about them, but with them. Speaking up for them and alongside them is therefore a deeply Biblical principle.

**Question:**

How can you speak out on behalf of the voiceless?

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Looking at **Proverbs 31: 1-9,** King Lemuel’s mother takes responsibility for instilling a concern for those who are vulnerable, oppressed and poor into her child’s conscience and imagination. She offers a critique of negative behaviours but also offers positive pursuits to aspire to as a solution-focused approach to their needs.

Safeguarding policies and procedures can often be seen as negative documents listing all the things that shouldn’t be done and seeking to minimise risk. This can be one of the reasons that safeguarding has negative associations in many people’s minds. Proverbs, by balancing out the prohibitive and the aspirational, offers a helpful model for framing safeguarding conversations. Safeguarding is not just about ensuring people are not mistreated, but should inspire the church to engage in constructive action on their behalf to reduce vulnerability and any risks to them. We need protective factors against harm and against the negative treatment of all people, but we also need positive factors that seek to find ways to pursue justice and wellbeing for all concerned. Both aspects can have a formative influence and should be key factors in intergenerational ministry. In this we see both the need for preventative and responsive efforts towards creating safer places for all.

**Question:**

What positive factors can you think of, that seek to find ways to pursue justice and wellbeing for all concerned?

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**Safeguarding: the nature, priority, and focus of leadership**

King Lemuel is reminded by his mother that leadership brings with it the temptation to forget or take advantage of the vulnerable. Instead he is to use that position of power to speak up and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable. This is a common theme in the Bible’s teaching on leadership: it is often explained in terms of servanthood. For example, Jesus after criticizing the way that many leaders use their power for self-aggrandisement argues that for his followers, leadership is about serving others, even to the point of laying down their lives for the sake of those they care for (Mark 10:45).

The expression of authenticity in leadership also requires that leaders have a desire to search for and achieve a deep understanding of themselves; their personal faults and challenges as well as their skills, gifts and motivations (Psalm 139:23-24). Any areas of one’s character that may become negative or harmful towards others must be dealt with such that their interactions with others encourage selflessness and human flourishing for all.

King Lemuel, like the other Kings of the Old Testament were supposed to represent and emulate God. In Psalm 68, God is described in terms of his power and majesty, but this description doesn’t stop there. It goes on to include his concern for the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people: he is a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, and he sets the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:4-6). This is the model for all in positions of power: nobody is too important to care for the vulnerable.

Godly leadership will follow God’s priorities and demonstrate a commitment to pursue a duty of care for the lonely, destitute and vulnerable. Because biblical leadership calls for power to be used on behalf of those most in need, safeguarding must be a fundamental motivational factor for all Christian leaders, reflected in the way they use their time, develop their policies, treat those around them, and build their churches, organisations, businesses or communities.

King Lemuel’s mother makes some stringent demands on her son. He cannot live like others around him. The temptations for a powerful man in a patriarchal society, here indulging in women and alcohol, are not appropriate for his kingly station. They would be distractions from his primary focus and calling to care for those who are vulnerable. While safeguarding is often seen as merely a necessary administrative function, Proverbs 31:8 challenges leaders to give greater significance to its role in their lives and ministries. Placing the needs and interests of vulnerable people at the heart of our ministry and mission ensure that safeguarding becomes an integral and essential element of our wider activities rather than an add-on that can be met with a wide variation in commitment.

Keeping the focus on good safeguarding practice in ministry can enable leaders to withstand temptation, pursue God’s priorities and get stuck into the business of caring for all people, especially those who are vulnerable.

**Question:**

Thinking of the nature, priority, and focus of leadership, how can you as a leader actively pursue God’s purpose and priorities for vulnerable people?

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**Safeguarding: the mission**

King Lemuel is commanded to speak up for the voiceless. This theme of advocacy for the vulnerable is repeated throughout the book of Proverbs. (Proverbs 29:7. Proverbs 22:22-23. Proverbs 21:13). The destitute, vulnerable and oppressed must not be forgotten or ignored. Their cause is our cause.

Throughout the Bible, God is attentive to the cries of the poor. He heard the blood of Abel that cried out from the earth, and the cries of his people when they were in captivity or exile. God commands that his people are similarly attentive to the cries of the poor. But this must lead to action. Advocacy is about giving voice to others and their concerns. One way we do this is by making good use of our opportunities and using our own voice to speak up on behalf of others. Another way is to give a platform to others, enabling and empowering their voice to be heard.

King Lemuel is instructed to make sure due legal processes are applied to the marginalised, oppressed, and vulnerable. His position as King at the time meant he was uniquely placed to expedite this, but engagement with judicial and legal processes is available to all in a democratic society. Proverbs, like the rest of the Bible, refuses to allow for a sacred-secular divide between a leader’s responsibility before God to care for the needy and to engage in civic legal processes. Therefore, engagement with legal or political processes are no less spiritual or important than other ministries. Indeed, it is imperative they go hand in hand. Where there are safeguarding policies in place in a nation there is

good reason to engage with them and where these systems are not adequately protecting vulnerable people we must seek to reform them through active and purposeful engagement with policy-makers.

King Lemuel is to speak up for and defend all who are vulnerable. The goal must surely be that all in our communities receive fair treatment and protection. We cannot pick and choose between people or groups of people based on our own preferences or prejudices. The Bible teaches we are to treat all with equal dignity regardless of age, gender, or race. We are not to distinguish between the so-called deserving and undeserving. All children, all widows, all homeless people, all those in poverty, all those without status in our country, all those with disabilities, all those who are victim to systemic and societal discrimination, all those who cannot feed or speak for themselves – whatever the reasons and situations for their vulnerabilities - must be safeguarded and the basis for their vulnerability understood and where necessary, actively challenged.

**Questions:**

1. How can you ensure that you advocate for vulnerable people?

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1. How can you encourage others to do so?

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1. What can you do to defend the rights of vulnerable people?

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1. How can you dignify the destitute?

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**Safeguarding: Trauma**

Not only is Scripture shaped by trauma, understanding trauma is essential to comprehend the impact of abuse. So, we cannot speak of theology and safeguarding without thinking about trauma and allowing trauma theory to shape our thinking and responses. Trauma (from the Greek word for ‘wound’) arises when we experience an overwhelming force that threatens our continued existence. The terror and distress from abuse lead to rupture, shattering, fragmentation, and loss. The psychological and spiritual wounds from trauma shatter individual lives and communities. Relationships are ruptured, identities are fragmented, the sense of self is lost, and victims are left feeling broken and overwhelmed.

Trauma wounds run deep and are embodied in our neurological and nervous systems. The wounds of trauma are carried not just in our emotions, but in our very nervous system. Traumatised reactions trigger our body into fight, flight, freeze, or appease responses. These are the automatic responses of a dysregulated system, adapted to survival. Understanding trauma is essential to engaging with survivors and supporting recovery.

The good news of trauma recovery mirrors the transformative Good News of our gospel, the redemption born of suffering. Through the lens of trauma, we can meet survivors in the messiness of the aftermath of abuse, with compassion and understanding, rather than judgement and fear. The journey of recovery is the journey of caring and nurture at the heart of our theological narrative, the God who loves us and calls us to love. But is love enough?

**Questions:**

1. Where do you see the stories of trauma, rupture, repair, and growth in Scripture?

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1. How could we set about accompanying survivors on the journey of recovery?

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**Safeguarding: Problem with Forgiveness**

Often the church does not seem very concerned with justice, and mistakenly promotes a view of forgiveness that cheapens or eradicates justice. “If you could just forgive him, all these bad feelings would go away.” This is the response that many survivors have reported receiving when they disclose abuse. Even more devastating is: 'If you don't forgive, God won't forgive you'.

Forgiveness is a central Christian doctrine with a range of meanings including liberate, release, let go, lift away, carry. In Scripture a primary emphasis is on the action of God who heals, lifts burdens, cancels a debt and restores a relationship. Healing from trauma can take decades and trivialising forgiveness - implying it is something that is easy and you ‘just do it’ - can itself be abusive because it re-traumatises a vulnerable and hurting person. Trivialising forgiveness fails to understand the nature of trauma: the impact of past abuse keeps coming back in multiple ways; even as survivors engage with help and gain healing, they will often be surprised at renewed feelings and hurt prompted by changes in life and circumstances. Forgiveness therefore is not a one-off, an event. It is something that is continual because one cannot forgive what has not affected you in a certain way yet.

Like other experiences of loss, trauma recovery often goes through stages; there is denial, depression, and righteous anger, especially when the survivor is denied justice. A survivor denied justice and left with boiling righteous anger is not likely to be able to forgive. Not least because no one has apologised to them or asked for their forgiveness.

Despite not receiving a heart-felt apology, some survivors are eventually able to ‘let go’ of the harm done to them. However, this needs compassionate help and may take many years of therapy just to make a start on this painful journey. Forgiveness should never be confused with reconciliation. These are very different elements of a survivor’s journey and ones that only they can decide to enter into over time, with support. Nor should forgiveness be used as an impediment to justice; justice is the way in which entire communities regulate themselves and ensure safety. To hold perpetrators to account is to act on behalf of the community as a whole; they can be forgiven by a victim, but communities still need to be shaped as safe and healthy places, and this cannot happen without justice.

**Questions:**

1. What might be the effect on a survivor of abuse to hear a simplistic ‘just forgive’ sermon?

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1. When a survivor is denied an apology and they are faced with denial, how do they start on the journey of forgiveness?

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1. What does a meaningful apology look like?

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**Safeguarding: Wholeness**

Remembering trauma as violence and disruption, where do we find peace and wholeness?

As the New Testament says: "Christ is our peace... and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us." (Eph. 2.14). Peace is not just the absence of conflict, but the ‘shalom’ of wholeness and well-being, the end of suffering, as well as justice; Jesus' words of peace to replace trouble and fear; accountability (repayment) of wrongs (debts) paving the way for restoration of right relationships with each other and with God. How can our church congregations be enablers of 'shalom'? After abuse, how can well-being and flourishing, for individuals and for whole congregations, be nurtured?

The quest for 'shalom', 'flourishing', 'life in its fullness' must be the foundation for restoration after abuse. It may never be safe for a survivor to be reconciled with their abuser. The primary task is to ensure well-being through creating physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial safety, and offering support to victims and survivors for their physical and mental health. Can our churches be safe spaces for survivors and others damaged by abuse, places without fear? Christian faith is rooted in loving relationships with our Creator. Can the church help survivors and families to restore relationships when their trust has been betrayed? Even if they are (understandably) angry or distant, how does the church reach out with love and compassion?

Abuse does not only shatter the life of the person being abused. Shortcomings in safeguarding children and in the care of survivors can also shatter a congregation. To consider the trauma of abuse well, we need to help the radiating circle of trauma that abusers leave in their trail: direct victims first, but also families, friends, churches, and communities, who suffer from secondary trauma. It is the recovery from shattered lives that enables individuals and families to flourish again: life in all its fullness.

**Questions:**

1. What might we see in a flourishing congregation?

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1. What is the church’s role in supporting healing and enabling ‘shalom’?

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**SESSION 2**

**Reflecting on a healthy / positive Safeguarding culture**

1. What does it mean practically for leaders to ‘model appropriate behaviours when it comes to safeguarding? Think about the approach to safeguarding, training, responses, etc. and let that guide your answer:

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1. How can we clearly articulate our commitment to safeguarding? Think about specific examples:

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1. How can you follow a person-centred approach that models respect to everyone within your congregation / areas of responsibility?

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1. How can you promote openness around the topic of safeguarding?

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1. What does an open learning environment mean to you?

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1. What does having a zero-tolerance of abuse mean to you?

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1. Why is safeguarding the responsibility of everyone?

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**Reflect on a culture that is protective, preventative, healing, and restorative**

**Tangible Evidence:**

1. Publicly displayed notices – think of your own congregation / areas of responsibility: what do you see?

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1. Safeguarding messages in sermons/newsletters – think of examples of what you’ve seen/read?

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1. Safeguarding as a regular topic – think of management meetings, leadership groups, etc. What is being discussed?

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1. Effective operation of key processes – think about recruitment / responding to allegations / risk assessments to identify possible safeguarding risk areas. How does this point to an understanding of ‘good safeguarding culture and arrangements’?

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1. People being passionate about safeguarding – how do you involve and empower others?

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**Relational Evidence:**

1. What is the culture of your congregation / areas of responsibility? How do people behave, talk to each other, and treat each other? Do people reflect on their organisational culture?

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1. What are the power dynamics? Is there evidence of coercive/controlling behaviour? Is power distributed, rather than vested in one/two people? Is there any evidence of powerful elite/cliques?

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1. What is the leadership-style? Is there an absence / evidence of a ‘command and control’ style of leadership?

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1. Is ‘poor behaviour’ (for example bullying / controlling, etc.) challenged?

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1. Are people afraid to express different views? Do they feel they are taking a risk by expressing ‘different’ views? Is there a positive encouragement / welcoming of different perspectives and views?

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1. Is there clarity about physical and relational boundaries? Are safe boundaries between people understood and observed?

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1. Do people feel safe? What evidence can you think of in your own congregation / areas of responsibility, that points to people feeling safe?

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1. Are people aware of the impact they can have on others? Do people spend time reflecting on their behaviours and relationships, and do they turn these reflections into actions for change?

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**Analysing leadership behaviours needed to promote a healthy safeguarding culture**

**Accountability**

1. Who are you formally accountable to, or have you made yourself accountable to?

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1. How do you ensure that at-risk or marginalised groups or those in junior positions are heard in your congregation / areas of responsibility?

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1. How do you know how at-risk or marginalised groups feel about being part of, or engaging with your congregation / areas of responsibility?

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1. Who do you think wields power over you and what relevance or impact does that have on your demonstration of power over others and decision-making?

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1. Does the power that leaders hold within the congregation / areas of responsibility make them credible enough that they are viewed as incapable of wrong-doing amongst their peers and others?

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1. Is the tendency towards and dangers of deference acknowledged and guarded against?

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**Policies and Processes**

1. What examples do you know of in your congregation / areas of responsibility where the principle of [best interests](https://safeguarding-tool.bond.org.uk/large-ngo/sections/policies-processes/step1) of children or other [at-risk or marginalised groups](https://safeguarding-tool.bond.org.uk/large-ngo/sections/policies-processes/step1) has been applied?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you ensure that other congregational (or areas of responsibility) priorities, for example, financial or reputational, do not take precedent over children’s and other at-risk individuals’ best interests?

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1. Thinking of your congregation / areas of responsibility, who has been appointed to make decisions on safeguarding and how do you ensure that there is a safeguarding-focused voice in decision-making processes?
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Survivor-centred approach**

1. In the event of an incident/report, what steps do you take to understand the best interest of the victims and survivors?

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1. What can you do that goes beyond ‘just sending an email or letter back’?

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1. Can you give an example of where you have followed a survivor-centred approach?

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**Awareness-raising and training**

1. What [safeguarding](https://safeguarding-tool.bond.org.uk/large-ngo/sections/awareness-raising/step1) training have you personally completed and how does this compare with the training other workers are expected to complete?

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1. How are you ensuring that learning from safeguarding cases, mistakes or “near misses” is incorporated into training?

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1. How are you championing meaningful safeguarding learning and development and leading by example in your congregation / areas of responsibility?

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1. How are you ensuring that learning about safeguarding is embedded into your own and others’ behaviour and congregational (or areas of responsibility) processes, and that safeguarding training leads to improved attitudes and behaviours?

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**Safer recruitment and HR processes**

1. How do you know that you are following good [safeguarding](https://safeguarding-tool.bond.org.uk/large-ngo/sections/safe-recruitment/step1) practice in your recruitment processes?

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1. How do you know that all recruitment processes are transparent and that the same safer recruitment process is followed regardless of the role?

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1. How do you monitor and evaluate the extent to which safeguarding processes are applied consistently and effectively to recruitment?

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**Reflect on the impact that abuse and trauma have on individuals’ lives, relationships, and interaction within a community**

**Examples of the Impact of Abuse**

1. Why do you think there may be a fear or anxiety about disclosing abuse?

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1. How can a poor response lead to re-traumatisation?

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What does this mean for you in the context of your congregation / areas of responsibility and your role?

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Can you give an example of a poor response from the church to trauma?

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How can you create a trauma-informed response instead?

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1. Young Minds, 2018 defines Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as ‘highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during childhood and/or adolescence. They can be a single event, or prolonged threats to, and breaches of, the young person’s safety, security, trust or bodily integrity.’ Can you give examples of ACEs?

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1. How do you think ACEs may impact on a person’s life?

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1. What may be the lifelong nature of the impact?

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1. What impact may abuse/trauma have on how people see/feel about themselves?

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1. How may abuse/trauma impact on trusting people or developing relationships?

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1. How may abuse/trauma impact on someone’s faith/relationship with the Church?

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