

Section 1: Our Vision for Safeguarding Learning

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Transformative learning

Learning should be transformative and impactful but, in many sectors (local authority, police, health), has historically had a strong focus on the explanation of facts and processes. Organisational safeguarding failures have historically been responded to by national government and local statutory bodies by the creation of new processes and procedures – ‘training’ is then delivered to explain them. These organisations are often then surprised when, despite high levels of training, the same quality of practice continues. In other words, the training has not led to a change in behaviour.

Over the last five years in secular practice, there has been a major shift in the approach to training. There has been a realisation that learning opportunities should focus on people’s beliefs and values and not just ensure that processes are understood. People’s behaviours flow from their beliefs and values – if the aim is to achieve “good” safeguarding behaviours, it is necessary to engage people at this deeper level. This is called “Second Order” change; this happens when people do things not because they will get into trouble if they do not, but because there is an inner drive and motivation to behave in a particular way.

People should leave a learning experience in some way different from the way they entered. The safeguarding learning and development pathways for the Church have been developed with this intention.

In terms of methodology, this principle will mean a greater focus on:

- “Self-reflexivity” – whereby participants spend time in personal reflection on a safeguarding issue, connecting it to their beliefs, values and their own life experiences and characteristics which shape them and how they make sense of the world; then working this through to the implications for their behaviours.
- “Dialogue” – whereby the participants are facilitated to engage in a depth of sharing of experience and perspectives through which they create wisdom and meaning.
- The voice(s) of victims and of survivors – see below.
- The theological underpinnings of good safeguarding behaviours.

Survivors have a key role to play in the development and delivery of transformative learning

The impact of survivor and victim involvement - as “experts by experience” - is transformative and significant in contributing to the second order change detailed above. It is also fundamental to the development of healthy and safe cultures within Church communities that the voices of victims and survivors are heard and considered at every step of our learning and development journey. Best practice would be for safeguarding learning to be co-designed and co-delivered with survivors.

Learning is a journey with an outcome, not an event

1. Preparation: what participants need to do at the outset of the learning journey so that they maximise the gain they get from direct inputs.
2. Learning: the methodologies and techniques used to achieve learning outcomes.
3. Application: embedding the learning: how participants are supported to apply the learning.
4. Evaluation: evidencing that the learning is making a difference to beliefs and behaviours.

Safeguarding trainers are crucial

The impact of safeguarding learning will, to a large extent, be determined by the investment of Church bodies in their local resource by ensuring they have the people with the right level of skills, experience and expertise to deliver transformative learning experiences. Those with learning responsibilities need to be properly supported, developed, and supervised.

Promoting positive cultures: a message from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

Promoting healthy Christian cultures in all Church bodies needs to be an essential aim of our safeguarding learning. The 2020 IICSA Investigation Report [1](#) and other research evidence highlights the importance of organisational culture in getting safeguarding right. The kinds of unhealthy cultural attributes identified by IICSA (e.g., tribalism, clericalism, deference, naivety, focus on reputation, fear, and secrecy about sexuality) were part of our Church culture's DNA. These unhealthy attributes identified by IICSA increase the likelihood of abuse taking place, are barriers to positive prevention of abuse and perpetuate poor responses to victims and survivors. Healthy organisational cultural attributes, on the other hand, are a protective shield against those who would abuse or cover up abuse. They promote the proactive and loving behaviours which prevent abuse and help survivors to heal.

Promoting healthy Christian cultures will therefore be a golden thread running through all safeguarding pathways.

- [1<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/anglican-church>](https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/anglican-church)

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