



Child Protection Refresher 2022

Module 3 – The Changing Face of Safeguarding

In this module we will cover:

- the effects of abuse
- current safeguarding concerns
- safe working practice
- scenarios.

The effects of abuse

Abuse affects children deeply as they grow up and the feelings of being ‘useless’, ‘worthless’, or ‘damaged goods’ are often carried over into adult life.

Children who have experienced abuse and adults who have been abused in childhood may suffer from problems relating to:

- **Behaviour**
Matilda is shouted at and smacked at home on a regular basis. She does the same to children at school.
- **Attainment**
Matilda does not like school and does very little work; she does not see the point.
- **Mental health**
Matilda suffers from anxiety.
- **Relationships**
Matilda does not have many friends at school; they all think she is a bully.
- **Substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) and self-harm**
Matilda cuts her arms every morning, she feels less stressed when she does it.
- **Physical brain development; neglect can lead to a host of serious problems as children grow.**
Matilda finds reading and writing difficult at school. She gets angry when she is offered support.

Adults must:

- Know what to look out for as potential signposts for abuse such as changes in wellbeing, peer interaction, mood, mental health, friendship groups, and academic work.
Matilda’s teacher is concerned about how she interacts with the other children. She has noticed marks on Matilda’s arm.
- Take all allegations seriously, including rumours and concerning comments.
Matilda has told a boy at school that her dad is always angry.

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- Know the procedures on how to report concerns about children and young people.
Matilda's teacher has reported her concerns to the safeguarding lead.

Schools must:

- Teach children how to keep safe.
Matilda's school teaches the children how to keep safe and how looking after their mental and physical health is important.
- Ensure children and their families know the role of school staff and understand professional boundaries.
Policies and procedures are in place and available on the school website.
- Teach children how to report concerns or worries to trusted adults at school or elsewhere in their lives.
All the children in the school know who to report concerns to.

What is adultification?

'Adultification' is the process of perceiving and then treating certain children as being more adult-like and less innocent than they are.

For example, black children or those in post-16 education settings are often assumed to have an 'adult' mentality, despite their legal status as minors.

The potential ramifications of adultification are bleak: if a child is seen as self-sufficient, aggressive, or as less vulnerable, their needs and legal right to be safeguarded may be overlooked, forgotten, and disregarded.

This puts many children at risk of exploitation and abuse.

Adultification can look like:

- The hypersexualisation of black girls and other minors who may be perceived as promiscuous, or seductive – many girls may find themselves framed by adults as 'Lolita' or 'Jezebel' characters, simply for wearing the same clothes as the other children (for example, the same PE kit).
- Less lenient treatment of certain students who commit normal, immature 'transgressions' like talking back, using explicit language, and breaking other rules.
- Excessive force used to restrain or search a minor that would not be used against other minors.

Racial bias and racism both form a central part of the conversation around adultification.

Unlike their white counterparts, black and other minority ethnic children are the primary victims of adultification. Data released by the Metropolitan Police showed that between 2019 and 2021, 5,279 children were strip searched by the force, 75% of whom were from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic background.



Jahnine Davis, one of the UK's leading safeguarding specialists says of black children that, unlike white children, they are seen through a lens of deviancy and [are] not necessarily acknowledged as deserving victims.

"Black children are excluded from vulnerability. The question is, do professionals perceive them as vulnerable? Unfortunately, because Black children are framed and depicted in a certain way, they are not afforded that vulnerability. The impact could lead to Black children seeing themselves as 'less than', and potentially normalising this form of devaluation.

Black children are more likely to be met with suspicion than care."

Have you ever witnessed the adultification of a student?

Have you witnessed it for any child?

Child Q

In December 2020, a then 15-year-old girl at a Hackney school was strip searched by police whilst on her period and without an appropriate adult present. She was suspected of having drugs on her person. To protect her identity and in respect of her minor status, she is referred to as 'Child Q'.

City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership published a safeguarding review which found racism was likely an 'influencing factor', and this prompted large protests across Hackney Central and the rest of East London in March 2022.

The review also found that the handling of Child Q was 'disproportionate and ultimately harmful', with 'adultification bias' likely another 'influencing factor'. It was found that no questions were asked with regards to her safety or whether she was being exploited.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) Code C, which states that minors must be accompanied by an appropriate adult when searched unless they explicitly ask not to be, was ignored by police in this incident. No one consulted a supervising officer beforehand, which was also a breach of the rules.

The Metropolitan Police are now trialling a new policy in Hackney and Tower Hamlets where any strip search of a child will need approval from an inspector, in the hope that this will prevent future safeguarding errors.

What can we learn from this?

All children should be safeguarded and protected by all members of the community.

It is vital that all school staff are aware of PACE Code C and make sure that minors are accompanied during strip searches.

It is also clear that staff should be conscious of their own biases, assumptions, and stereotypes, and should treat all students under the age of 18 as children.

'The repercussions on Child Q's emotional health were obvious and ongoing. Given the context of where and how the search took place, it was impossible not to view these circumstances as anything other than the most serious and significant.'

Does your school's policies and procedures cover searching a child? Do they cover PACE Code C?

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Current safeguarding concerns

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)

CSAM images can be found on the internet platforms we use every day. These images are commonplace and can be found on mainstream social media and online gaming platforms.

In 2021 there were 85 million pictures and videos depicting child sexual abuse reported worldwide, many more will have gone unreported. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, children are spending more time in the digital world than ever before.

A recent report from the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) found a 64% increase in reported webpages containing confirmed child sexual abuse images in 2021 compared to 2020. Almost seven in 10 instances involved children aged 11 - 13 years. The same report showed that 97% of the images removed were of girls.

Legislation

CSAM has different legal definitions depending on the country. Types of content that are illegal in some countries may not be in others and so will have an impact on how reporting sites can deal with them.

Content that does not depict nudity or explicit sexual activity may still be illegal if it sexualises a child. The definition of 'sexualise' differs from country to country. 'Sexualised' may refer to wearing age-inappropriate clothing, children using age-inappropriate objects, or it may portray a child in a sexually explicit setting aimed at stimulating other people's sexual arousal.

In the UK it is an offence to make, distribute, possess or show any indecent images of anyone aged under 18, even if the content was created with the consent of that young person.

Examples include a child (under 18):

- sharing a sexual image with their peer (also under 18)
- sharing a sexual image created by another child with a peer or an adult
- in possession of a sexual image created by a child (under 18).

The detection and reporting of child sexual abuse material is key to help prevent abuse in real life and help reassure victims that the images will not reappear.

Self-generated images

There continues to be an increase of self-generated child sexual abuse images. Self-generated content includes images or videos featuring children under the age of 18 that are subsequently shared online. Some images will be produced to share with a sexual or romantic partner, but many are obtained through coercive measures or grooming. Online child sex offenders can manipulate children to involve siblings and friends to provide more images.

Self-generated images by category

An analysis of the webpages containing confirmed child sexual abuse images reported to the IWF during 2021 concluded that 72% contained self-generated imagery.



The IWF report used the UK's Sentencing Council Guidelines to categorise this self-generated imagery by severity.

- **Category A**
Images involving penetrative sexual activity; images involving activity with an animal or sadism.
26,030 (14%)
- **Category B**
Images involving non-penetrative sexual activity.
37,599 (21%)
- **Category C**
Other indecent images not falling within categories A or B.
118,652 (65%)

The IWF report found that images and videos were produced in children's bedrooms or another room within their home. The images were produced using live stream services, then captured and distributed. Once captured these images can be recirculated for years after they were generated.

The report also found that of the children appearing in self-generated imagery, 99% were female.

Useful resources and reporting tools

- **SWGfL**
Whisper - Anonymous reporting tool
So You Got Naked Online - Advice and strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting
- **Childnet International**
Step up, speak out – A toolkit to address issues of online sexual harassment amongst young people
- **Internet Watch Foundation**
- **International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children**
- **inhope**

Good practice

All children and young people have a right to be safe and feel safe in your setting or organisation and their parents or carers also have a right to expect that their child will be safe in your organisation's care.

To ensure that these rights are fulfilled, your organisation must operate within a culture of safety where safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is embedded into everything you do.

Underpinning principles of safeguarding

As a person who has chosen to work with children, you have both legal and moral responsibilities towards them. There is a great deal that you can do to safeguard them and to promote their wellbeing.

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Here are some underpinning principles to help you.

- Be aware that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- Respect all individuals regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, developmental stage, sexual orientation, religion, belief, or whether the individual is disabled.
- Be responsible for your own actions and behaviour. Develop your own personal code of conduct that you always abide by; this includes dress code, use of language, and general behaviour. Avoid any conduct which could lead to questions about your motives or intentions.
- Ensure that your safeguarding training is current and that you understand your organisation's policies and procedures. Be clear that you know what to do if you have concerns about a child or a colleague's behaviour.
- If someone makes an allegation about you, you must immediately report it to your designated safeguarding lead.
- In your work with children, be open, accessible, always prepared to listen, and supportive of children's needs.
- Consider the child as a whole, including their mental health.
- All staff working with children and young people are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Think the unthinkable

Safer working practice

- Do not engage in personal email, text, or telephone conversations with children.
- Do not accept personal or 'friend' requests on social networking sites.
- Do not accept gifts unless they are small tokens of appreciation.
- Do not offer lifts to children outside the agreements of your position.
- You should follow your organisation's policy and procedures regarding physical intervention or contact.
- There should be no unauthorised photography or filming of children.
- You should alert your safeguarding lead if a child or young person has become infatuated with you.
- You should report to a senior member of staff if a child or parent has become dependent on you.
- You should always be open and honest when dealing with children and young people, so that nothing can be misinterpreted.

Scenarios

Scenario 1

Trudi is 16 years old. She has been bullied throughout school, and now students harass her because of her sexuality. She has never told anyone about being bullied before but decides to tell a friend. What could the school do to help support a culture where this type of behaviour is not accepted?

Help provide a culture where children, young people, staff, and parents:

- have the confidence to report any concerns that they have and feel that those concerns are listened to and acted upon
- feel comfortable to speak out and challenge other people's behaviour
- call out derogatory or offensive comments.

Felix is 13 years old. Recently, his dad passed away after a long period of illness. Felix misses spending time with his dad, especially when they went wild rock climbing, but his mum and older sister aren't interested in joining him. What can his school or those around Felix do to support him at this difficult time?

Help build his resilience by:

- encouraging him to express his emotions, ask for support, and talk about his dad
- engaging with his interests and nurturing new hobbies; for example, by connecting him with a climbing centre or climbing club
- encouraging him to connect with a trusted adult and consolidate his peer relationships.

Scenario 3

Jason is 11 years old. At school, he is quiet, reserved, and does not interact with his peers. When it is home time, his older brother almost always comes to collect him from the gates. Teachers rarely see his parents, but during a recent parent's evening, his dad was highly confrontational. What should the school do?

Help identify and address risks:

- make all staff aware of potential signposts for abuse, including limited peer interaction and parental issues
- have clear policies and procedures for reporting concerns in place that all staff understand
- teach children and young people to report concerns or worries to trusted staff members.

Scenario 4

Maria works as a helper at her local school. Throughout the pandemic she had very little time to herself as she went into school most days. She has two children herself. She has recently found it difficult to cope and has been struggling with anxiety. She has not told her line manager as she feels they already have enough to cope with.

What could the school do to help Maria and other staff members?

- Have policies, procedures, and additional resources in place to help create an environment where staff wellbeing is taken seriously, and support is offered.
- Offer training to staff on mental wellbeing.
- Provide space and time for staff to help them recover from difficult situations.

Summary

This concludes your Child Protection Refresher course. You have learnt about what abuse is, the different types of abuse, and the signs abuse may be taking place. You know what to do if a child discloses harm to you or if you suspect abuse.

In module three, we looked at the effects of abuse, the concerns around adultification and the increasing volume of CSAM.

Finally, we looked at safer working practices and concluded with a checklist to help you to evaluate your own practice.

Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.



You are now ready to complete the corresponding questionnaire. Click **Questionnaire 3** to begin the questions.

Finally, there is the opportunity for you to leave feedback on the course and we would be very grateful if you would take a minute to do so.

England – Education

There are optional extra questionnaires to test your knowledge of the statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education, Part One'. Search tes Develop for '*keeping children safe*'.

If you work in a nursery, school or college, your organisation may direct you to complete this because reading Part One of the statutory guidance is mandatory for all those working in an education setting.

You will find a link to 'Keeping children safe in education' in the Resources section of this course. You should read it before answering the extra questionnaires.