

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults: information for celebrants

What is 'safeguarding'?

Safeguarding is helping someone to stay safe and to be free from abuse or harm. Safeguarding is not just the responsibility of people who have direct contact with children and vulnerable adults, or hold positions of authority. It is also the responsibility of those who interact indirectly with people in the community, either paid or as volunteers.

People working within Humanists UK's community services sector as celebrants come into regular contact with children and vulnerable adults. We interact with members of the community in their homes, schools and other institutions. This means we are well-placed to recognise and respond to abuse in children and adults. **Remember:** Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. [Gov.uk, 2018]

Is training in safeguarding obligatory?

It is not obligatory for celebrants to undertake formal training in safeguarding. However, an e-learning or face-to-face course will provide you with the necessary information to feel confident in safeguarding and protecting adults and children.

There are several national providers of online and face-to-face courses. An introductory online course in safeguarding children and young people is offered by the NSPCC and takes around 3 hours to complete. 'High Speed Training' is another provider and offers online courses in safeguarding for adults and children, at introductory and higher levels.

Do I have a responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults?

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children and vulnerable adults and passing on concerns. Celebrants of all ceremony types go into people's homes and interact with people in the community, including children and vulnerable adults. You might see signs of a person suffering abuse and neglect at any of these times. Any of the people you see could also be *at risk* of abuse and neglect.

What is the extent of my responsibility?

You have a responsibility to

- **recognise** and look out for signs and indicators of abuse
- **respond** reassuringly to the child or adult when and if they tell you about abuse
- **report** it immediately to the correct authority so that the right people can help
- **record**, in writing, everything you know to have happened

It is not your job to:

- diagnose if there is abuse.
- investigate or gather evidence.
- decide if further action is required.

I have a concern about abuse or potential abuse. Who do I report it to?

In an emergency call the police on 999.

If the person is not in immediate danger call the police on 101.

Contact social care services in the local authority in which the person lives. There will be a social care service for children and one for adults. See the local authority's web page or look it up in the phone book.

You can also report your concern to Humanists UK's designated safeguarding lead or 'named person'. This is the Chief Executive **Andrew Copson**.

Email: chiefexec@humanism.org.uk. Tel: 020 7324 306

Remember: Don't wait until you are sure. Don't rely on somebody else to report it.

Safeguarding children and young people under 18

What is abuse and neglect of children?

- It is a form of harm – either inflicted harm or failure to prevent harm
- It happens in families, institutions or communities
- It can be caused by someone the child knows or trusts
- It can happen directly or via the internet
- The abuser may be one or more adults, a child or children, male or female

There are four 'universal' categories of child abuse

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse
3. Neglect
4. Sexual abuse

Signs and indicators of abuse to look for

Physical abuse

- a child being hit, punched or physically harmed
- the result of harm, eg bruises and swellings
- flinching from another person

Emotional abuse

- being pressurised or bullied
- being told they are worthless and unloved

Sexual abuse

- not wanting to be alone with certain people
- sexual behaviour or language inappropriate for their age
- physical symptoms

Neglect

- not adequately clothed or washed
- appearing hungry
- recurring, untreated or persistent health and development problems
- an environment that is cold or dirty

Remember: Signs of abuse can be physical or behavioural, or about the way in which the parent or carer responds to the child

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse

Disabled children are more vulnerable to abuse. This is because they may have difficulties communicating and being understood; they may be physically dependent on another person; they may be unable to ask for help or run away; abuse can actually cause a disability, or make it worse.

Black and minority ethnic children are more vulnerable to abuse. This is because fear of being accused of racism may prevent people from reporting abuse; concerns may be explained away – “these are cultural practices”; there may be lack of trust around white people in authority.

Safeguarding adults (18 or over)

What is meant by safeguarding adults?

Safeguarding means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. [The Care Act 2014]. It is about providing help and support to adults who cannot protect themselves from harm. Safeguarding includes prevention - protecting adults before abuse or neglect occurs.

Which adults are at most risk of abuse?

At most risk are adults who have care and support needs which make them unable to protect themselves from abuse and neglect. These needs might relate to age, illness, bereavement, disability or learning difficulties.

Adults in these situations may be reliant on other people for help with:

- Clothing or feeding themselves, or providing company
- managing an illness, administering medication or managing their physical needs
- organising their finances, their possessions or their property

Remember: If someone is reliant on another person, it makes them vulnerable to abuse.

Types of abuse and neglect in adults

Recognising the 10 types of abuse and neglect is the first step in safeguarding adults.

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Psychological abuse

- Financial abuse
- Modern Slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational Abuse
- Neglect
- Self- Neglect

Who might abuse adults?

- Family, friends or neighbours
- Carers or volunteers
- Doctors, nurses, support workers or other professional people
- Strangers (eg trades- people, callers on the telephone or at the door)
- institutional failings within an organisation's structure, processes, policies, practises

Remember: Abuse doesn't have to deliberate.

Things that are done with the best of intentions can put someone at risk of harm.

Abuse and neglect can occur as a one- off incident, or it can be on- going ill treatment.

Should I be DBS- checked if I interact with children and vulnerable adults?

Yes - all members of the Humanists UK celebrant network are required to go through a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. Humanists UK will email all new and existing celebrants instructing them what to do.

7/11/19

Bibliography

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