



Safer Recruitment Forum

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January 2024

Agenda – January 2024

Time	Topic	Facilitator
13:00-13:05	Welcome & Introduction	Tara
13:05-13:30	Safer Recruitment Practices – self assessment	Tara
13:30-14:30	Review of key Safer Recruitment/Allegations processes	Tara
14:30-14:40	Learning & Development Opportunities Overview	Tara
14:40-15:00	Group Reflection & Feedback	Tara

Self-Assessment – Session 1

	Safeguarding feature	Rating (1 - 5)	Any action needed?
Session 1	1. Staff and volunteers have had briefings or training to recognise professional abuse and understand that it is an issue that they need to be aware of.		
	2. Safeguarding and protecting children is seen as core to what the organisation does by everyone, and the organisation ensures all staff and volunteers know their responsibilities for safeguarding children.		
	3. The organisation values safer recruitment as part of their responsibility to create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children		
	4. There is a code of conduct that everyone is familiar with, that tells all staff and volunteers what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour towards children and young people.		

“When a group of people work or live together, a culture evolves; it is something greater than the sum of the behaviour, attitudes and aspirations of the individual.”

Department of Health 1998



A Culture of **Vigilance**...

- Open, no secrets
- Belief that 'it could happen here'
- Clear staff behaviour / safe working practice guidelines
- Clear procedures for reporting concerns / whistleblowing
- Support in raising concerns & commitment to act
- Commitment to safeguarding & an ongoing culture of vigilance
- Policies and procedures put into practice
- Good use of induction and probationary periods





Code of Conduct

- Behavioural guidelines – Do's and Don'ts
- Dress and appearance
- Information sharing & confidentiality
- Lone working
- Personal care
- Physical Contact
- Photography/Video
- Technology & Communication
- Relationship/Position of Trust
- First aid & Medication



INDUCTION CHECK LIST – SAFEGUARDING & SAFER WORKING PRACTICES

Item	Actions	Date of Completion
Introduction to DSL/DSO		
Safeguarding, whistleblowing and related policies shared and read		
Safeguarding training completed		
DBS & Vetting checks complete on Single Central Register		
Introduction to individual responsibilities		
Overview of Allegations, Low Level Concerns and referrals to DBS, Local Authorities etc.		
Overview of how safeguarding updates are shared with staff and volunteers		
Questions or additional discussions		

Safer Recruitment

- Adverts, JDs & person spec include commitment to safeguarding, safeguarding requirements and DBS check level
- Completed application form only - CVs not accepted
- Panel 2 staff minimum, at least one has undertaken safer recruitment training
- Interview questions are consistent, relevant to the role and include value-based questions
- A minimum of two references are sought. One from most recent employer. Where an applicant has worked with children or vulnerable groups in the past, one is requested from this placement
- Open references/testimonials not taken at face value
- Shortlisted applicants to self-declare any relevant criminal or disciplinary action taken against them
- Sector specific pre-appointment checks, including DBS
- Appropriate identification (including birth certificate and proof of name change) is supplied by applicant
- Qualifications verified
- Unconditional offers of employment are not made until all checks have been completed and are satisfactory

Self-Assessment – Session 2

	Safeguarding feature	Rating (1 - 5)	Any action needed?
Session 2	5. Time is taken to plan and structure recruitment activities so that everything is in place before a candidate is interviewed, including person and role specifications and the criteria for selecting the right candidate.		
	6. Before inviting candidates to interview, detailed information has been collected from them on the application form and has been carefully scrutinised.		
	7. References are taken up at as early a stage as possible in the recruitment process and the information is carefully scrutinised. Electronic references are verified for authenticity.		
	8. Only shortlisted candidates are asked to disclose relevant criminal convictions and relevant disclosed information is discussed at interview. Panel members are confident about what criminal history can be taken into account.		

Application Form – Key Information

- Personal details – current / former names, current address, NI number
- Present employment and reason for leaving
- Full history since leaving school (education and employment or voluntary work) with explanation of any gaps
- Qualifications
- Referees
- Personal statement to meet person specification
- Information for applicants about the legal basis and process for disclosing relevant criminal record
- Clear statement that it is an offence to apply for a role in regulated activity if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity
- Signed declaration by candidate that all information is true

After Shortlisting...

Once shortlisted candidates have been identified:

- Seek reference(s)
- Ask candidates to complete and return a criminal history / suitability self-disclosure prior to interview
- Undertake an online search for each candidate
- Panel should be advised of any relevant information, issues or concerns provided by the candidate, referees or found online so that the information can be discussed with the candidate at interview

References

Important part of process of gathering information before interview:

- Must have a reference from current or most recent employer
- If not working with children but has done so in the past, a reference should be sought from most recent employer where the role involved working with children
- Referee should be a senior person with relevant authority – in a school, the HT / principal should confirm the reference is accurate
- Ask whether aware of any behaviour that might give rise to concern, including any disciplinary action
- Ask specifically about allegations about their behaviour towards children
- Specific confirmation of the details and responsibilities of previous post given by applicant

References

- Always verify information with the person who provided the reference
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- Contact referees to clarify where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- Establish reason for leaving their current or most recent post



Self-Assessment – Session 3

	Safeguarding feature	Rating (1 - 5)	Any action needed?
Session 3	9. Interviews are well planned and questions and criteria probe into candidates' motives for working with children and their suitability as well as their skills and experiences		
	10. Wherever possible other selection tools are used, and an interview is the minimum selection process that candidates go through for positions involving work with children.		
	11 Steps are taken to check whether the successful candidate has ever changed their name; the birth certificate is seen, and evidence is provided for any name change (e.g. marriage license, divorce papers) and given names (and spellings) are cross-referenced with references, educational qualifications, and the DBS application form		

Sullivan et al 2001

“

Value drives all behaviour.

”



Interviews

- A selection of tools
- Interview panel – trained/briefed
- Pre-agreed questions/criteria based on JD & Person Spec
- Not “one size fits all”
- Value-based interviews/questions
- Screening, technical interviews, VBI interviews, Practical Interviews
- Involvement of children where possible



What is VBI?

VBI sends a clear message to the candidate that

- the safeguarding of children is the top priority, and,
- It is unlikely that devious or offending behaviours will go undetected
- Based on Job Description, Person Spec & ethos



NSPCC Common Values & Behaviours Framework

Organisational values

- Protect
- Respect
- Trust
- courage

Staff values

- Working together
- Accountability
- Motivation & resilience
- Striving for improvement
- Planning & prioritisation
- Stakeholder focus
- Commitment to vision & purpose



Self-Assessment – Session 4

	Safeguarding feature	Rating (1 - 5)	Any action needed?
Session 4	12. Policies and procedures are in place for people to raise concerns about someone's behaviour towards a child or young person; the culture of the organisation is open and encourages people to raise concerns.		
	13. Allegations or concerns about behaviour towards children are taken seriously and are dealt with in an appropriate, fair, and timely manner.		
	14. There is a low-level concerns procedure in place, or school leaders have started discussions about how to introduce this.		
	15. Staff (including agency / supply) and volunteers are given a thorough induction that includes setting out the boundaries and expectations of their roles and their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children.		
	16. The organisation has a culture of vigilance and does not rely on criminal records checks or recruitment as the only method of ensuring that people who work with children are safe.		
	17. Supply agencies are advised of the organisation's policy on managing allegations against staff		
	18. Teaching staff are aware of the requirement to inform the TRA of any name change; this is verified by the school		

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern that **an adult has acted in a way that:**

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for referral to the local authority

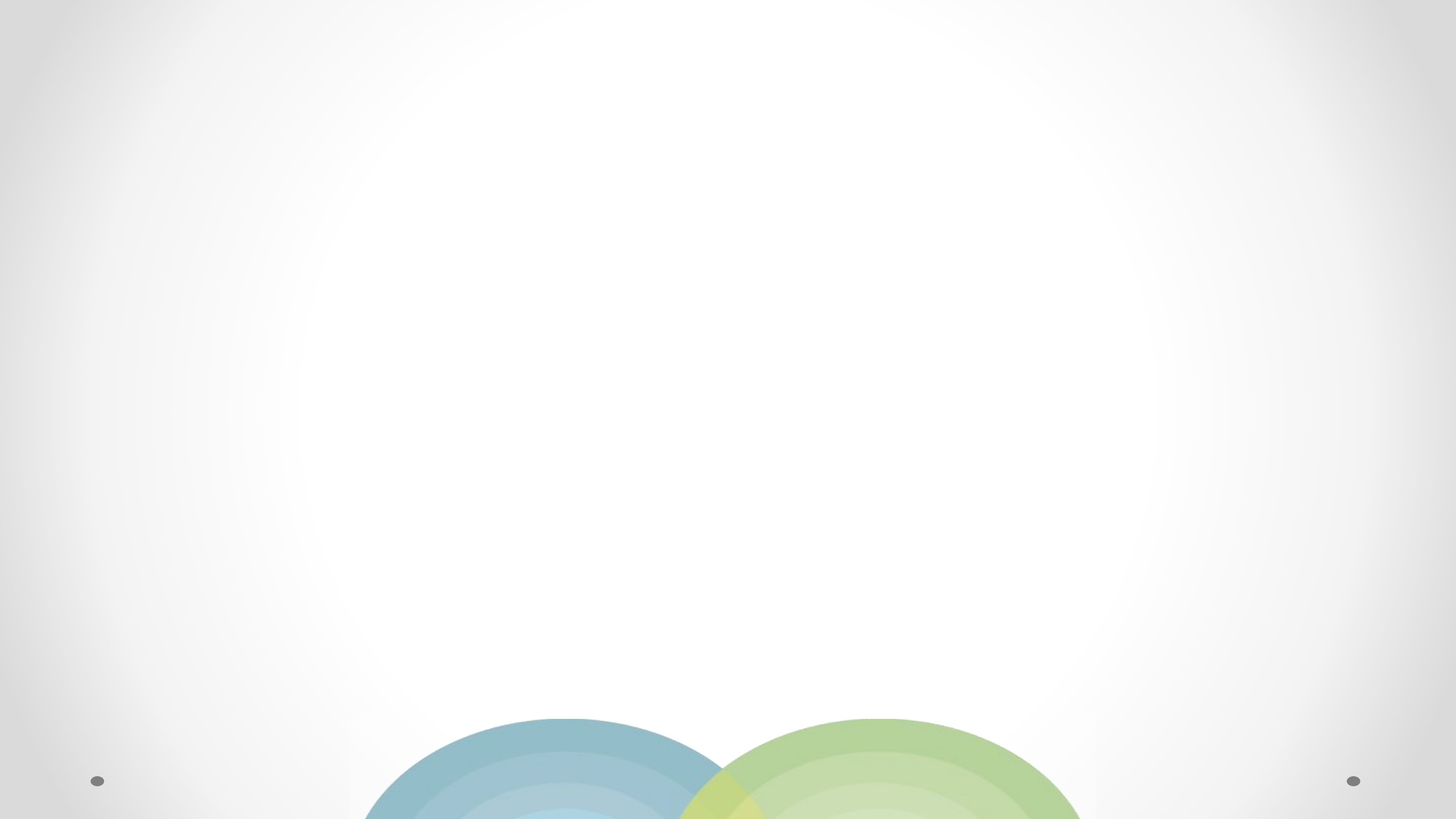
This could include:

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse

Managing Allegations

If you are concerned that a staff member/volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children



L&D Opportunities

Course Title	Content Overview	Delivery
1 Day Accredited Safer Recruitment (SRC)	Aimed at staff responsible for recruiting staff and managing Disclosure & Barring Service checks and managing issues relating to staff conduct. The session will cover national guidance and best practice for recruiting an appropriate workforce and placing safeguarding at the forefront of the recruitment process.	Face-to-Face/Online 1 x Full day or 2 x Half day
Half Day Accredited Safer Recruitment Refresher (SCR)	Aimed at recruiting staff who have already completed a full Safer Recruitment course previously. Updates to practice and refresher of key themes and processes.	Face-to-Face/Online 1 x Half day
Value-Based Interviewing	Aims to develop professional curiosity in exploring applicants' motivations to work with vulnerable groups through confidently developing and implementing "Value Based Questions" into interviews.	Face-to-Face/Online Half Day
Responding to "Low-Level Concerns)	Develop understanding of the background & current legislation, Clarify organisation's responsibilities and identify best practice for imbedding with staff/volunteers	Face-to-Face/Online Half Day
Building a Safer Culture	Explore ways to create and maintain a "safer culture" within an organisation, ensuring all staff and programme attendees are benefiting from an open and transparent environment where any concerns are heard and appropriately addressed.	Face-to-Face/Online Half Day

In your groups...

Reflect on today's forum & identify:

- One thing you have learned
- One thing you will take back to your organisation
- One thing you would like further information on

