Responsible Individual training - Welcome back!

Session 3

Today's session will focus on safeguarding and culture

Safeguarding is the underpinning standard and core practice for the RI role, Culture ensures a safe environment

The RI standard-safeguarding (SW standards)

For the RI this is seen as the standard which underpins the practice for every child within the regulatory framework defined within the context of local safeguarding processes, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Keeping Children Safe in Education and other frameworks

It is also recognised that the RI must take a balanced approach to those roles/tasks which sit within the RM role, the RI role being to support , monitor , review and test the leadership of the RM and the running of the home in order to ensure that the standards and regulations are met.

The RI should ensure that the RM has sufficient capacity to ensure that the quality standards are met for each child in the home.

The RI should support the RM and team in ensuring that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe within a secure safeguarding culture

Cross references to: leadership and management, quality of care, education, views, wishes and feelings, enjoy and achieve, , health and well-being, care planning, positive relationships

What do children say they need from us?

- **Vigilance**: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action**: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability**: to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect**: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement**: to be informed about, and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation**: to be informed of the outcome of assessments, and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support**: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy**: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection**: to be protected against all forms of abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

WTTSC 2026

The RI Standard potential evidence base….anything else?

- Reg 44 & 45 evidence - patterns and trends
- Reg 25 independent review – family assessment centres
- Care plans and other documents including policies
- EHCPs, EP/SLT/OT reports
- Observation of relationships, positive behaviour management, safeguarding culture
- Evidence of consent from LA
- Children's views/feedback- formal and informal
- RM supervision and appraisal
- Supervision /appraisal records
- Walk throughs

Potential evidence base- anything else?

- RM meetings with RI
- Team meetings
- Ofsted & LA monitoring reports
- Staff views & training records
- Formal records related to intervention, safeguarding issues.
- Reg 40, incidents , interventions, accidents etc
- Online use and access
- Review of use of AI
- Records of meetings with professionals

What would ring alarm bells?

- Spend a few minutes identifying issues from an RI perspective which would make you investigate further in relation to safeguarding in the home or provision.
- What would you/have you done to address concerns?

Relevant reports/Inquiries

- Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse
- Scottish Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry (2015 to present day) Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry | Investigating the abuse of children in care in Scotland
- Panoramas
- Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust Inquiry
- Winterbourne View

Low level concerns

- A low-level or lower-level concern is any concern, doubt, or worry that a member of staff or volunteer may have acted in a way that conflicts with the standards and values of your organisation. It includes any behaviour which does not meet the expectations set out in your organisation's code of conduct.
- Concerns or allegations can relate to behaviour inside or outside of work and do not have to directly involve children.
- These worries might not be considered serious enough to meet the "harm threshold" whereby concerns should be referred to the police or children's services. However they still require a response.

Examples of LLC

- Low-level concerns might include:
- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.
- Examples of such behaviour could include:
- being over-friendly with children
- having favourites
- adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- humiliating children.

NSPCC 2026



The current DSL role :

- Every organisation, which works with children needs to have someone who takes the lead on safeguarding and child protection.
- We refer to them as a nominated child protection lead but they may also be known as: Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (DSL)- initially came out of education as a defined role
- What do you do ? Key aspects ?

- They will apply this knowledge to
- help implement and maintain safeguarding procedures and policies
- be alert to safeguarding issues on a day-to-day basis.
- ensuring that staff have received appropriate training
- that their own training is up to date
- safe recruitment practices are sufficient, and all actions are within the best interest of safeguarding children.
- **We are going to look at the strategic view of safeguarding which you as leaders hold …..this leads to a much wider remit for you…..**

designated officer (LADO)- criteria

- 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; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they **may not be suitable to work with** children.

The culture ?

- Can staff describe the home's culture?
- How can you test this ?
- Do you have the evidence ?
- The Regulator tests this ……..

Defining the constituent parts of a safeguarding culture- what will you see and test?

- Small group work:

What do you think constitutes a robust and secure safeguarding culture in a Children's Service?

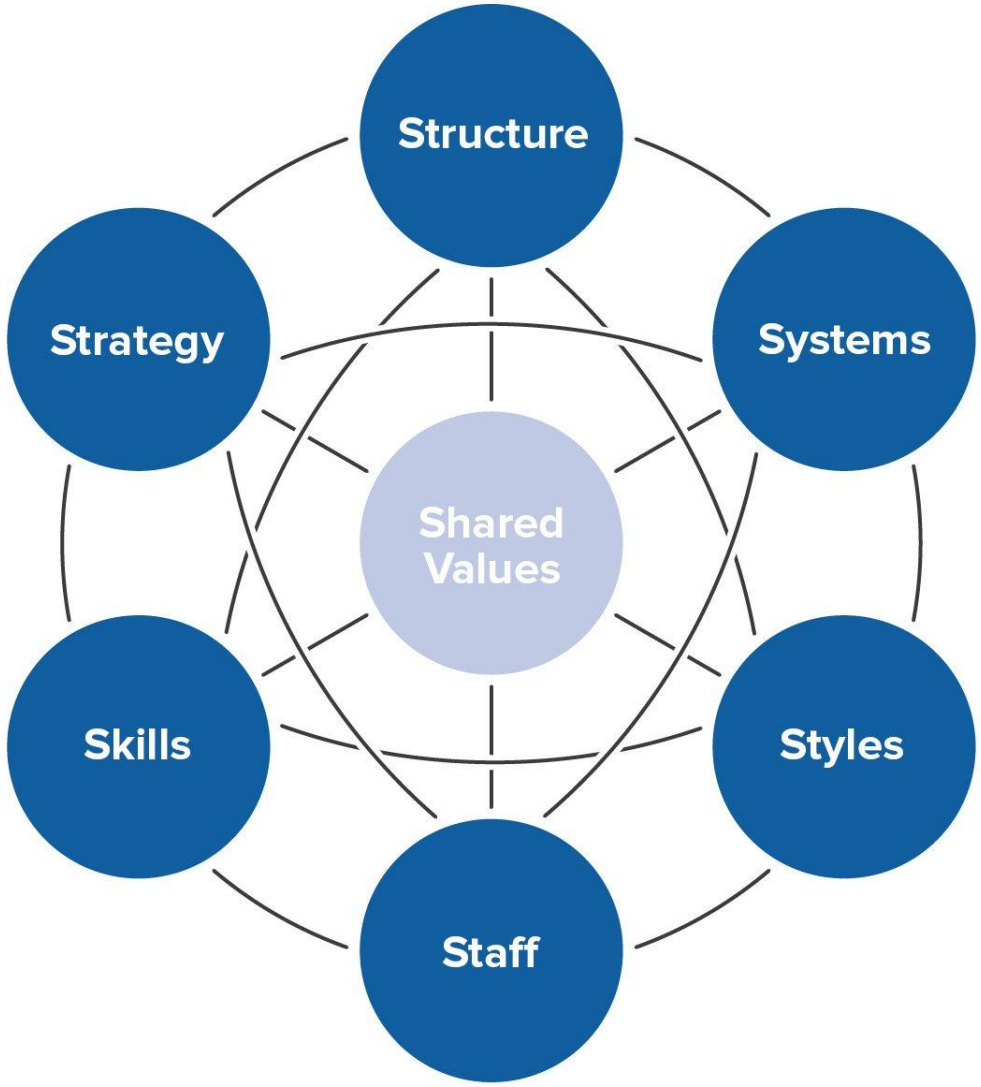
Testing this and evidencing it, is important and identified within Working Together, CH Regs and Standards and KCSIE 2025 (2026 due September)

You will have 10 minutes to complete this . Please nominate one person from your group to feedback 3-4 key items.

What is workplace culture

- *Research evidence highlights that the attitudes and behaviours of leaders, managers and staff in a residential setting are essential for creating an organisational culture in which good quality care and effective safeguarding flourish. A range of studies characterise that culture as reflective and progressive, with opportunities for staff to develop and learn. Managers lead by example and treat staff and the children with warmth, respect and value. Staff take opportunities to share good practice with colleagues. They are open in their interactions with children and young people and responsive to their needs.* ***Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings October 2022***

Culture structure- McKinsey 2016- do you have a clear culture model in place ?



Culture - constituents and protective features:

- Leadership
- Safer recruitment
- Training / knowledge base
- Accountability
- Environment
- Covid / coronavirus response?
- Performance management. Appraisal, supervision
- Observation
- Quality assurance/ monitoring
- Safeguarding as a key and embedded thread
- Code of conduct/HR
- Policies/processes/procedures
- Record keeping
- Focus on vulnerable children
- SEND
- Looked after children
- Healthy challenge
- Whistleblowing

Culture- constituents and protective features

- positive staff culture
- close, inclusive relationships with young people
- effective monitoring and placement review
- good interagency communication
- child centred, rights-based approach
- calm, authoritative staff, with strategies to respond
- open , transparent culture with confidence to challenge
- *How would you know if the culture in the home was becoming "closed "?*

Culture and leadership



The SCIFF looks for leaders to be:



Leaders and managers are **inspirational, confident and ambitious** for children and **influential** in changing the lives of those in their care.



Leaders and managers create a **culture of high aspiration and positivity.** They have **high expectations** of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for.



Leaders and managers lead by **example, innovate and generate creative ideas** to sustain the **highest quality care for children.**



How does this translate into your practice? How do you know if this is-or isn't-you?



Don’t forget the environmental influence…

- The location of your workplace
- structure of the building , grounds and amenities
- accessibility
- atmosphere, such as lighting, noise levels, personal space and temperature
- décor, such as displaying photographs, shared experiences, achievements and values
- Appropriate office space, sleep in facilities.

Staff spend lots of time at work so it’s important to have a pleasant environment that’s energetic and fun – this can improve people’s moods and make them happier. Where organisations are also people’s homes, physical settings are important to their health, wellbeing and happiness.

Signs of a closed culture

- Cliques
- Limited transparency
- Absent/poor oversight
- Suppression of concerns
- Lack of user (children and family) involvement
- Poor staff development
- High turnover
- Neglect-poor child services
- Fear of reprisal
- Blame mindset

Cliques

- Why do they form?
- What are the characteristics?
- Impact on the workplace?



Why do they form?

- Poor management oversight
- Management and leadership styles may not take staff with them
- Favouritism
- The human need to belong
- Being part of the in group makes people feel good



Characteristics

- Exclusivity
- Conformity
- Ostracization
- Gossiping
- Bullying

IMPACT

- Low productivity
- High turnover
- Poor morale
- Poor outcomes for children as staff are focused on what's going on between them



Dealing with cliques

- Communication
- Be alert for cliques
- Be involved
- Be available
- Mix staff up regularly
- Challenge workplace bullying-not acceptable
- Respect
- Inclusion



Good children's homes

- Put children and young people at the heart of everything they do
- Respect other's views, experiences and opinions but has parameters for practice and acceptable norms
- Are open and transparent so staff and young people are not afraid to challenge or bring concerns to management.
- Have accessible and approachable managers who listen and respond.
- Have Managers who are confident, inspiring, inclusive and pro-active.
- Have owners who are involved, interested and supportive
- Have a knowledgeable workforce who know what is expected of them (policies and procedures)
- Are outward looking
- Welcome outside scrutiny and challenge.
- Accept that mistakes may happen but learns from them and does not repeat them.
- Are reflective and take action
- Have high expectations but support staff and young people to meet them.
- Create good places to live and work-reduce stress and sickness and improve outcomes across the board
- Are solution focused

CQC and Ofsted

Outstanding children's homes 2011 Ofsted

- leaders who are hands-on, who unite their staff behind a shared purpose, and who are transparent and open in their expectations and pursuit of excellence
- clarity of vision, which is absolutely focused on the experience of children and young people and uncompromising in its ambition
- a commitment to continual improvement, always being willing to learn and ask 'what could we do better?
- the passion and energy of staff who are deeply committed to their work, and the recruitment, training and management systems which identify these staff and support them to grow and develop
- understanding which young people will benefit from living in the home and creating the conditions, from their first contact with the young person, which are most likely to make the placement a success
- working with each child or young person to build their emotional resilience and self-confidence, to prepare them for independence and enable them to withstand difficulties and set-backs in the future.
- meticulous planning that engages young people and responds in detail to their individual needs so that their experience of care is highly personalised, combined with a commitment to never 'give up' on a child or young person and to do everything possible to maintain the placement
- time spent with the children and young people individually and in groups so that they are able to develop meaningful secure relationships with the adults in the home, and with each other
- absolute consistency in the management of behaviour so that young people understand and respect the boundaries that are set and respond positively to encouragement, rewards and meaningful sanctions
- an unwavering commitment to support children and young people to succeed, and a belief in their ability to do so, translated into active support for their education both in the homes and in their partnerships with schools and other professionals



What next?

- Review your role and how you monitor , review and comment on safeguarding in the home or service.
- Does this form a key element of your supervision and meetings with the Manager?
- Do you hold a **strategic** view and are secure in how safeguarding is managed and will be managed in all elements in the service?
- Anything else…?

