

Competency grid

This resource is extracted from the Quality framework for child protection training in voluntary and community sector organisations, which can be found in full in the toolbox for the Safer Staff and Volunteers Core Standard.

Part 1: Child protection competencies and levels of responsibility

Roles and Responsibilities

In order to assist with the identification of training and development needs, guidance on child protection training has traditionally grouped audiences together based on their degree of contact with children and/or parents/carers, and their levels of responsibility within an organisation. Although the new version of the government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children, published in 2013, does not include the same level of detail as its predecessor on how this might be done, it nonetheless reiterates the need to provide safeguarding training to staff appropriate to their role, and many still regard it as best practice to organise child protection training in the way it is set out in the 2010 version of the Working Together guidance. This resource maintains that system, transposing it to fit the types of role that exist within the voluntary and community sector, whilst acknowledging that the spread of responsibilities can vary greatly within the sector, depending on the size and nature of the organisation involved. It should be noted that the four levels of responsibility, and the competencies that correspond to each of them, apply to both the paid and volunteer workforce.

User Guide

It is an employer's responsibility to ensure that staff and volunteers are competent to carry out their child protection and safeguarding duties. This involves all members of the workforce receiving safeguarding children training which suits the individual's role and level of responsibility.

Induction

All staff should receive a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with their child protection responsibilities, the policies and procedures to be followed if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare, and the role of the named person/designated officer for safeguarding. This induction should be complete within a maximum of three months from commencement of work, and may require updating in circumstances where an individual has a change of role.

Training and Development

All staff should be provided with appropriate training opportunities to meet the needs of their role. This will include input on child development and on how to recognise and act on potential signs of child abuse and neglect. Refresher training should be provided at least every three years.

For information relating to local programmes of training including refresher training, visit your Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) website.

Release of staff

Employers should ensure that they release staff to attend the appropriate inter-agency training courses and that they provide staff with time for them to complete inter-agency training tasks and apply their learning in practice.

Employers should also facilitate opportunities for staff to participate in internal, single-agency learning opportunities to enable them to develop a shared understanding of their child protection responsibilities, to maximise the learning derived from inter-agency training, and to consider how to apply this in practice.

Levels of responsibility - User Groups

Level 1

Induction training, and training for staff in infrequent contact with children, young people and/or parents/carers who may become aware of possible abuse or neglect.

Examples: receptionists, community centre staff, recreation assistants.

Level 2

Members of the workforce who work predominantly with children, young people and/or their parents/carers including those who have a period of intense but irregular contact.

This group is focused on those who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment, including those that may arise from the use of local assessment frameworks for early help such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), or from the use of innovative referral/information sharing systems such as the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) model being used in some parts of the country. Staff/volunteers in this group may also contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and reviewing the needs of a child and parenting capacity where there are safeguarding concerns;

Examples: housing, YOT staff and staff in secure settings, sports development officers, disability specialists, faith groups, community youth groups, those working in the early years sector, residential staff, probation staff, sports club welfare officers, those working with young adults in, for example, learning disability, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse services, other health-related services, or those working in community play schemes.

Level 3

Members of the workforce who have particular operational management responsibilities in relation to front line management and ensuring implementation of policy and procedure, including professionals who may be named and designated lead professionals (please also note that Safe Network is developing a blended learning package for named/designated safeguarding officers in the voluntary and community sector – see www.safenetwork.org.uk for further details).

Level 4

Senior managers responsible for the strategic management of services. Examples: members of the senior management team, directors, and executive board members. This level includes trustees, but please note that Safe Network has also developed a specific resource to address their child protection training needs – see www.safenetwork.org.uk for more information on this

Core Competency Framework

The 4 levels of responsibility within the framework have been designed so that they reflect the different competencies that employees (paid workforce and volunteers) would be expected to meet at each level; for example, level 4 will generally reflect those working at a very strategic level in an organisation. This could mean a senior person within an organisation, or a role that is very technical or specialist. All employees and volunteers should be working at a minimum of level one across the framework. The competencies are designed to build upon each other; for example, a member of staff working at responsibility level 3 should also be able to demonstrate competence at levels 1 and 2. It is acknowledged that in many smaller voluntary organisations, some of these levels may overlap and the framework will need to be used flexibly..

Policy statement

The organisation supports the right of all to be protected from harm, and recognises that safety and welfare are paramount. We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people engaged in services provided by our organisation are kept safe from harm. We have adopted this competency framework to help us ensure that our workforce is able to respond to concerns regarding the safeguarding and protection of children and young people aged under 18 years, with special consideration being given to those within vulnerable groups.

Competencies	Level of responsibility			
	Level 1 Examples: receptionists, community centre staff, recreation assistants	Level 2 (+ Level 1) Examples: face to face practitioners and volunteers in community and residential settings	Level 3 (+ Levels 1/2) Examples: frontline managers, policy development officers, named /designated leads for child protection	Level 4 (+ Levels 1/2/3) Examples: senior managers and board members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to describe what is meant by safeguarding, protecting and promoting the welfare of children. • Alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect • Alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers may pose to children • Ability to report concerns in line with organisation's procedures • Demonstrates knowledge of organisational policies and procedures and how to apply these in practice • Demonstrates a basic knowledge of child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to describe the different ways in which children and young people can be harmed • Able to communicate effectively and develop working relationships with other staff, volunteers, children and parents to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of children • Able to describe the roles of other practitioners and agencies in supporting and advising families and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. • Demonstrates knowledge of national legislation and guidance relevant to role • Demonstrates understanding and ability to contribute to multi agency processes to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to advise others working with children on implementation of organisational child protection policies and procedures • Able to support others working with children to respond appropriately to concerns about children's welfare or safety • Able to maintain and develop child protection policies and procedures • Able to implement child protection procedures • Able to contribute to the development of organisational plans to protect children • Able to create and/or maintain relevant records in line with organisational procedures • Able to effectively communicate internally and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Able to help organisation to develop child protection policies and procedures for children and young people • Able to implement child protection policies and procedures for children and young people • Able to evaluate and improve child protection policies and procedures • Able to ensure and be strategically accountable for the development and implementation of child protection policies • Able to ensure strategic accountability for effective implementation of organisational child protection and safe recruitment policies and procedures • Able to represent the organisation's approach to child protection at internal

	development	<p>promote the welfare of children, assess their needs and to protect children from abuse (<i>for those working with children in multi agency settings/projects e.g. social inclusion projects, working in schools, on health programmes, children centres</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a detailed knowledge of child development • Demonstrates commitment and ability to work in a child or young person centred way 	<p>with other organisations regarding specific concerns about a child or children and regarding the organisation's approach to protecting children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to maintain a focus on the child or young person in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection • Able to research and identify best child protection practice for children and young people 	<p>meetings and discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to communicate the approach of the organisation to protecting children and young people to other organisations including government departments and other public bodies. • Able to ensure that the organisation works collaboratively with external agencies on strategic child protection plans • Demonstrates influencing skills • Able to ensure that the organisation's strategic plans integrate a culture of listening to children and putting their needs first • Able to challenge constructively the information presented by those in a less senior role to ensure that practice is safe and appropriate • Demonstrates awareness of a trustee's legal safeguarding role in the context of charity law (note: this competency is for trustees only)
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Ref: London Boards guidance - Competence Still Matters: Safeguarding training for all employees and volunteers
 Ref: Children's Links Core Competency Framework 2012

Part 2: Content of child protection training for staff at each level of responsibility

User guide

Employers can use the table below to ensure that all relevant employees and volunteers receive timely, appropriate training whether provided in-house, by their LSCB or by other training providers.

LSCBs can use the table to inform the development of any local, multi-agency training programme for the voluntary and community sector, with the focus on the outcomes indicated against the content for each level of training.

When designing training programmes, employers and LSCBs should ensure that, in addition to the topics suggested in the table below, specific or specialist topics relevant to their service or to roles within the workforce are covered.

Training programmes should be regularly reviewed to ensure the inclusion of legislative and policy change, learning and development from Serious Case Reviews and government inquiry reports.

Whilst the content element may be similar at different levels, the focus of the content needs to reflect the specific role of the participants. For example, those in a practitioner role will need a more detailed and different emphasis on the 'listening to children' element from those whose role does not normally bring them into direct contact with children.

Content of training programmes at Level 1, 2, 3 & 4

Content element	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Definitions of abuse.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child development.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signs and symptoms of possible abuse and neglect.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organisation's basic child protection children procedures.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whom within the organisation should be contacted regarding any concern about a child's safety or welfare.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Organisation's procedures for reporting concerns about a colleague's behaviour.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expected standards of behaviour by staff towards children.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organisation's processes and documentation for recording concerns about children and action taken.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Principles of a child centred focus	✓	✓	✓	✓
How discrimination can impact on children and families in the child protection process and to develop anti oppressive practice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Listening to children and young people and taking account of their wishes and feelings in a safeguarding context		✓	✓	✓
Role of the named/designated officer for child protection			✓ (named/ designated officer only)	
Impact of issues such as domestic abuse, alcohol/substance misuse and parental mental health on parenting and child safety		✓	✓	✓
Documentation to be used when making referrals to the local authority.		✓	✓	✓
Threshold criteria for the levels of intervention		✓	✓	✓
Current legislation and government guidance regarding the responsibility to co-operate with the local authority and other agencies where there are child protection concerns		✓	✓	✓
Factors that impact on the vulnerability of children		✓	✓	✓
Importance of family history and functioning.		✓	✓	✓
Worker and agency factors that may impact on family cooperation.		✓	✓	✓
Purpose of the initial assessment and workers' role in sharing relevant information and opinion.		✓	✓	✓
Definition of complex (organised or multiple) abuse.		✓	✓	✓
Developing, implementing and reviewing child protection arrangements			✓	✓
Developing, implementing and reviewing safe recruitment policy and procedures			✓	✓
Supervising staff involved in child protection issues			✓	✓
Identifying circumstances when swift action is needed to secure the immediate safety of a child;			✓	✓
Advising others working with children and young people on the implementation of organisation's policy			✓	✓
Managing allegations against staff and volunteers			✓	✓
Offering constructive challenge to safeguarding practice				✓

Legal context of safeguarding for trustees				✓ (trustees only)
Role of senior/board level lead for child protection				✓(senior lead only)

Part 3: Is your child protection training plan for your staff group working well?

Positive indicators of a workforce that is competent in child protection, and an organisational culture that promotes safe practice

- Children and young people feel safe
- Staff and service users are alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect
- Staff and service users know what to do if they are concerned that a child may be being abused or that someone may pose a risk to a child or children generally.
- Staff and service users know the importance of sharing information and the dangers of not sharing information
- Staff and service users know what to do if they experience barriers to reporting concerns
- Staff have appropriate knowledge of national legislation and guidance relevant to role
- Staff know and understand the boundaries of their own competence, their role and responsibilities, and when to involve others
- Staff and service users know how to respond to a child or other person disclosing abuse or concerns about abuse

Warning signs that competence in child protection may be an issue in the workforce, and/or that the organisational culture does not support safe practice

- Children and young people are at risk
- Children at risk are not responded to
- Children and parents don't know who to talk to if they are worried
- Policies and procedures are not followed and/or there is a lack of awareness of what they are
- Staff are unaware of their duties of care
- Incidents are not reported
- Policies and procedures for child protection do not exist or are never reviewed
- There is a view prevalent in the organisation that 'it could never happen here'.