

# How to run a safeguarding awareness course for people new to England



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## Introduction

Adult newcomers to England<sup>1</sup> are sometimes considered vulnerable and so people who support them need to be properly trained in safeguarding issues. Alongside this approach, the newcomers themselves may benefit from a simplified *Introduction to Safeguarding* course. It would:

- Explain why posters are found in almost every building
- Alert them to the law that underpins how UK citizens look out for one another
- Gently explore cultural differences in care for children and vulnerable adults.

The course would be delivered in person by a trained facilitator to small groups of people. It would last no more than 90 minutes and have a script that was no more than about 500 words<sup>2</sup> long, made up of short sentences and easy words. People with limited fluency in English will be able to

understand. It would not be tied to a particular organisation or role but benefit every citizen. It would come ahead of existing formal accredited safeguarding courses and mesh in with them.

This document collates the findings from a search for such a course and offers recommendations about its content and style of delivery. Please send improvements, additions and corrections to [peter.bates96@outlook.com](mailto:peter.bates96@outlook.com). It will form the background for a working group<sup>3</sup>.

## Sources of experience and expertise

Some organisations focus on one aspect of safeguarding<sup>4</sup>, while others focus on a particular sector of the population, such as a faith group. Discussions with minoritised cultural groups sometimes focus on the distinctive issues that lie at the intersection of cultural competence and safeguarding<sup>5</sup>, rather than the basic introduction that is envisaged in this paper. Several organisations have expressed interest in this approach<sup>6</sup>, without The following paragraphs suggest some possible sources of experience and expertise in this area and identify and then dismiss others.

### Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council offer a free online Introduction to Safeguarding Course. It has more than 3,300 words on screen and the language is too complex for our purpose<sup>7</sup>.

### Church of England

The Church of England has made several attempts to address this need, as follows:

1. an accredited Basic Awareness course [here](#) that offers enhanced accessibility. The accessibility options are explained [here](#) and general inquiries may be made [here](#). The text of this course is more than 5000 words, is far too complicated for our purpose<sup>8</sup>, has no option to provide captions in community languages, and is addressed to Christians who hold an office in church rather than all citizens in all contexts.
2. A much simpler course may have been generated by the safeguarding team at Southwell diocese (see the Powerpoint slides [here](#). Inquiry sent 25/03/2025).
3. The Children and Families Worker at [St Nic's Nottingham](#) developed a yet more simplified course for adults with additional learning needs that meets the criteria set out in the introduction to this paper and was built around this [quiz](#). It was approved by the Safeguarding Department of Southwell Diocese.
4. Those attending the standard *Introduction to Safeguarding* course at St Nic's are given a copy of the Church of England's Code of Safer Working Practice, in their choice of [English](#), [Spanish](#)<sup>9</sup> or [Farsi](#).

### Easy Read and Easy English resources

A variety of organisations that support people with intellectual disabilities have produced Easy Read leaflets on safeguarding such as this [one](#) or those available [here](#). Similar resources can be found

through the [Easy Read Facebook Group](#) that has 6,400 members. These leaflets form a valuable demonstration of how lengthy messages can be shortened, complex issues presented clearly and vocabulary and grammar simplified. Meanwhile, further simplification of the message is provided by Easy English<sup>10</sup> and posters, such as [these](#) about domestic abuse.

### Lancaster CVS

Lancaster CVS have developed informal introductory courses for refugees and asylum seekers in Food Safety and Construction Site Safety, designed to enable the student to join a generic group studying for the formal qualification.

### Life in the UK test

The UK Government require applicants for British citizenship to pass a 'Life in the UK' test. While the Handbook includes a section encouraging people to get involved in local activities, such as helping at a school, there appears to be no reference to safeguarding or any warning that risk assessment and criminal record checks will be carried out before a newcomer will be allowed on the premises or in contact with children.

### Lina

As a retired SEN teacher, Lina used NICE guidelines and photos rather than words to develop an introductory training for carers in a Pakistani special needs orphanage. Most of the carers are unable to read or write. The 3-hour training covered basic safeguarding, communication and disability awareness and was delivered in Urdu. In six months the 48 carers who attended all 3 sessions will be assessed on what they learned, by ticking the right photograph out of two and then will be given a certificate. Feedback from orphanage managers and carers has been positive. Crucially, Lina presents material on the dignity of the children and self-care for the carers, which builds a compassionate concern for the wellbeing of the children and hence vigilance over threats to that wellbeing.

### Regulated qualifications

The UK Government list of regulated qualifications<sup>11</sup> includes some that can only be accessed by people who have lived in the UK for three years or more<sup>12</sup>. The following courses are not restricted to a particular context, such as working or learning environments, and provide a Level 1 award, so may offer a framework or learning resources which could be adapted for our purposes.

Ofqual No.	Qualification Title	Owner	Study time (hours)	Provider
603/6937/1	<a href="#">Safeguarding Awareness</a>	Skills and Education Group Awards	11	
603/5851/8	<a href="#">Understanding Safeguarding for Work, Education and Life</a>	<a href="#">Ascentis</a>	20	
603/5487/2	<a href="#">Awareness of Safeguarding and Prevent</a>	NOCN	30	

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603/5635/2	<a href="#">Awareness of Safeguarding</a>	First Aid Awards Ltd	5	<a href="#">Unique Better Bodies</a>
610/5453/7	<a href="#">Introductory Principles of Safeguarding Individuals</a> (RQF)	Highfield Qualifications	8	
603/2332/2	<a href="#">Understanding the PREVENT and Safeguarding Strategies</a>	ProQual Awarding Body	10	
<b>No longer available to new learners</b>				
601/2076/9	Safeguarding Skills for Life and Work (QCF)	<a href="#">AIM Qualifications</a>		
610/3134/3	Safeguarding Awareness	NQual		

Beyond these level 1 opportunities, a range of more advanced courses are available, including training to ensure that safeguarding professionals utilise anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice<sup>13</sup>. Such training is obviously important, but quite different to the training sought in this paper.

### Reset Communities for Refugees

Reset has a 10 minute [video](#) describing some of the topics which could be discussed with families about the UK safeguarding system as it applies to children. They also have resources on supporting refugees in the event of [domestic abuse](#), [mental health issues](#) and [bullying](#).

### Sanctuary Foundation

Excellent free online training in refugee safeguarding is available from the [Sanctuary Foundation](#) that lasts about 1.3 hours and has modules entitled Protecting others, Protecting yourself, Crossing cultures, Trauma first aid and Our safe society. However, it is designed for supporters rather than the newcomers themselves and is too complex for our purposes.

### Voluntary Action Leeds

[VAL](#) and [Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network](#) have recognised that refugees are often obliged to live in neighbourhoods where they are at greater risk of being a victim of crime, so it is important to know what to do. Second, that it is difficult to find out what the law requires, especially if you have limited English and a poor grasp of UK legal jargon; and third, that training will have a positive impact on family and friends as well as the learner. In response, they have developed three basic training courses:

1. Since 2017, VAL has provided [Basic Safeguarding Awareness](#) training for grassroots groups in its area.

2. In 2019: [Free Safeguarding in the Community Training from Voluntary Action in Leeds | Migration Partnership](#)
3. A proposal to run training for young people was supported by the Safer Communities Fund but the Covid pandemic resulted in it being deferred<sup>14</sup>.

### Wethersfield Camp

[Wethersfield Camp](#) is a Home Office residential facility for asylum seekers run by Clearsprings Ready Homes. An *Introduction to Safeguarding* course has been provided to residents, compliant with the Home Office [Asylum Support Contracts Safeguarding Framework](#). Further details are being sought<sup>15</sup>.

## Proposed content of an introductory course

ChatGPT constructed the following outline.

### Overview:

This course is a **simple introduction to safeguarding** for newcomers to the UK. It helps them understand why safeguarding is important, what the law says, and how it might be different from what they know. The course is designed for **small groups**, with a trained facilitator leading a clear and friendly discussion.

### Course Aims:

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand why **safeguarding posters** are in buildings.
- Know that **UK law** protects children and vulnerable adults.
- Learn about **cultural differences** in caring for vulnerable people.
- Feel confident about **where to go for help** if they need it.

### Facilitation Tips:

- Speak **slowly and clearly**.
- Use **simple words** and **short sentences**.
- Be welcoming—some people may be nervous.
- Encourage people to ask questions.

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### Script

#### 1. What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means **keeping people safe** from harm. In the UK, everyone helps to protect children and adults who may need support. This is why you see posters in schools, hospitals, churches, and community centres.

These posters show who to talk to if someone is worried about safety. They tell people where to get help.

#### 2. Safeguarding and the Law

In the UK, there are laws to **protect children and adults**. People must act if they think someone is unsafe. This could be because of:

- **Neglect** (not giving food, warmth, or care).
- **Harm or abuse** (physical, emotional, or sexual harm).
- **Danger at home or in the community**.

Police, teachers, doctors, and community leaders must **listen and help** if there is a problem.

#### 3. Different Cultures, Same Goal

Different countries have different ways of caring for children and adults. In the UK:

- It is **normal** to ask for help if someone is unsafe.
- **Hitting children** as punishment is not accepted.
- Adults with disabilities or health problems have rights to support.
- Everyone—**not just family**—is responsible for safety.

#### 4. Where to Get Help

If you are worried about **your safety** or **someone else's**, you can:

- Talk to a **teacher, doctor, or community leader**.

- Call **999** in an emergency.
- Find the contact person on a **safeguarding poster**.

It is always **okay to ask for help**. Safeguarding is about making sure everyone is safe, respected, and cared for.

#### Conclusion & Discussion

Ask: *Does this make sense?*

- Invite **questions**.
- Give **examples** if needed.
- Remind participants: **Safeguarding helps everyone**.

Topics that might be covered include:

What might be covered	Captured in this message is...
1 Two <b>systems</b> help to keep everyone safe – the Police and Safeguarding teams.	Define safeguarding. Show why is it important. Most organisations have a Safeguarding Officer. Teachers, doctors and community groups have a duty to monitor safety. We should all help – we share responsibility. Most organisations have a safeguarding policy which everyone must read and follow. You might have to do safeguarding training before you are given responsibility. Don't put yourself at risk.
2 Men and women are equal in UK law and individuals make <b>choices</b> for themselves.	This includes choices about money, medical treatment, sex and work, even for married people. Choice regarding work means that slavery is not permitted.
3 We call children and some adults ' <b>vulnerable</b> ' and they get extra protection.	Everyone can be vulnerable sometimes. Leaving small children alone at home is not socially acceptable in the UK. There are some aspects of life in the UK as an asylum seeker that increase risk – trauma, unemployment, uncertainty, children out of school, hate <sup>16</sup> .
4 You can be sent to prison for <b>violence</b> against another person.	Abusing your husband, wife and children is punishable. Violence includes child sexual exploitation <sup>17</sup> , FGM, trafficking, forced marriage, modern slavery <sup>18</sup> , honour-based abuse and hate crime <sup>19</sup> . Corporal punishment as a way to discipline children is viewed as a cause for concern in England. You should know the UK law <sup>20</sup> .
5 We must be on the lookout for signs of abuse.	Some criminals cannot become <b>volunteers</b> so we must always check before anyone starts. The checking process is often called DBS. Safeguarding rules often prohibit things that might look suspicious (e.g. being alone with a child or showing a child pictures on your phone).

<b>What might be covered</b>	<b>Captured in this message is...</b>
6 If you are worried about your own safety or the safety of someone else, <b>tell someone.</b>	What should you do with your concerns or a disclosure? Most of the people who work in the Police and Safeguarding are friendly and kind. Listen to the disclosure, reassure the person, record the facts (not your own guesses or ideas). Make it clear that someone in charge will have to be told. Do not gossip. Call the Police if it is serious and urgent.

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## Underpinning values

The most effective training is likely to be co-designed and co-delivered by people with lived experience as a refugee or asylum seeker<sup>21</sup>. Different cultures may have different parenting practices, attitudes to violence in the home and the extent to which coercion and control are accepted, so tailoring training to specific cultures will be helpful where possible. It is likely to rely heavily on scenarios<sup>22</sup>.

A strengths-based approach will celebrate the compassion, tolerance and resourcefulness of refugees – such as the peaceful co-existence that is evident in congregate accommodation for refugees from widely divergent cultures.

A ‘rights and responsibilities’ approach would assert that I have the right to be protected from harm, everyone has the right to be protected from harm, the law attempts to protect everyone from harm - so it is my responsibility not to harm others, and this includes members of my family.

An interactive learning approach in a relaxed, non-threatening environment where people can ask questions would enhance understanding. Some groups from a specific nation or culture may wish to learn together so that they can discuss specific issues in relation to that cultural heritage. The focus will be on engagement with the topic rather than rushing through a dense syllabus.

Finding an online or written course outline will help with development, but it is anticipated that the course would be face-to-face and last no more than 90 minutes. There may be a short handout summarising the headlines.

A trainer pack would support others who wished to adopt the course and deliver it themselves, perhaps as an adjunct to English language teaching or a drop-in and support service.

## Identifying and avoiding hazards

Delivering complex messages in English to people with limited fluency could lead to misunderstanding while providing an explanation of safeguarding systems could assist abusers to avoid detection. Care is needed, but a good course will surely do more good than harm.

The message about severe responses to the perpetrators of violence may clash with the duty to ‘tell someone’, so care is needed to ensure that students leave with both. Cultures that promote community over privacy will have strong social groups and the person who raises a safeguarding concern may feel the need to tell other members of their community about it, which in turn could alert others to a hazard, amplify a negative reputation or interfere with the independence of evidence.

## Accreditation

Four issues arise in terms of accreditation, as follows:

- Do learners who complete an adjusted version of a standard course receive the same award (certificate) as learners who complete the standard version? As information is stripped away from an accredited course to create a simpler package, there comes a point when making the same award is no longer appropriate. Where is that threshold? In the example of the simplified course offered to adults with learning disabilities at St Nic's, it is understood to have been a simplified version of the Church of England *Introduction to Safeguarding* course, leading to the same award. In this case, the award was for attendance and engagement, recognising the formative impact of awareness training, rather than for demonstrating a particular level of knowledge or competence which would be the case if a summative assessment is completed at the end of the training course. We might imagine that courses that are regulated and accredited by the UK Government will have a clear solution to this issue.
- How are oversight, mentoring and supervision arrangements adapted to compensate for the limitations of an introductory course? In the example from St Nic's given above, adults with learning disabilities completed an adapted course, received the standard certificate of completion but, in the event of a safeguarding issue arising, extra support was expected to be provided in comparison to other adults who held a similar certificate.
- It is not known whether the course run at St Nic's was granted approval for a single use, for repetition as need arose, either as a refresher or with a new group of learners, or for wider adoption beyond this organisation.
- Alongside these formal questions of accreditation, the local MASH team<sup>23</sup> or Safeguarding Adults Board<sup>24</sup> may endorse the development of an informal training course.

## How this paper is being written

The investigation that generated this paper is unfunded and driven by simple curiosity.

Accountability is achieved by using the *How to write in public* framework<sup>25</sup>. I am grateful to the people<sup>26</sup> who have contributed to this evolving resource and those who have expressed an interest in doing so. Please send me your suggestions for further improvements.

Inquiries have been sent out to over 650 safeguarding agencies, refugee support organisations, religious groups and Councils of Voluntary Service. By sending a few inquiries at a time, responses can be collated and the online version of this document becomes increasingly valuable, stimulating further contributions.

Some organisations have declined this request for free advice and instead offered to sell their expertise<sup>27</sup>, keep it secret so that others do not steal their intellectual property and competitive advantage, retain control to maintain quality standards and their reputation or to strictly confine their efforts to commissioned activities. This guide contains only information that was provided freely and is collated and now supplied to readers free of charge.



<sup>1</sup> The legislative framework for safeguarding in Wales is different. Wales uses the broader term ‘adult at risk’ rather than ‘vulnerable adult’. See [National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#) and the training framework here [National safeguarding training, learning and... | Social Care Wales](#).

<sup>2</sup> This word limit is entirely arbitrary but illustrates the brevity of this course. The number of words should be determined by the need to explain the message clearly.

<sup>3</sup> Potential members include Peter Bates (NDTi), Jim Greenan (Lancaster CVS), Karen Hall (HVOSS), Sophia Nasreisfahany (Migrant Help), Justine Seligson (Afghanistan and Central Asian Association) and Linda Walz (Bath Welcomes Refugees).

<sup>4</sup> [FACES](#) works with survivors of sexual abuse, [EQUATION](#) works with perpetrators of domestic abuse who want to change, [Karma Nirvana](#) challenges honour-based abuse, [Safer Foundations](#) specialises in safeguarding within the refugee sector and [Tahila Zambia](#) has an interest in safeguarding in cross-cultural contexts.

<sup>5</sup> For example, Me Learning sell a 6-hour online course for professionals titled ‘Cultural awareness in safeguarding’ which addresses honour-based violence and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and abuse related to a belief in witchcraft. See [Cultural Awareness in Safeguarding E-learning Course - Me Learning](#). These are important topics but are far more detailed than the brief introduction sought here.

<sup>6</sup> [Thirtyone:eight](#) may develop a course to meet this specification in 2026 (Personal communication from Tori Bromley and Andrea Davenport in the Training Department 24/03/2025).

<sup>7</sup> See [Community & Voluntary Services: Safeguarding Adults](#). The course outline indicates that it requires 25 minutes study time. It is over 3,300 words and has a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of 8.2, which is the level required for reading the *Harry Potter* stories. The Flesch Reading Ease score was 59.7, much too complex for our needs.

<sup>8</sup> Checking the first 800 words of this course gave a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level of 7.6, required for reading the *Harry Potter* stories. The Flesch Reading Ease score was 65, which is only reached by American schoolchildren by age 14-17 and is required for reading *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton. Details [here](#).

<sup>9</sup> The Amor Y Esperanza congregation at St Nic’s Nottingham translated the Code of Safer Working Practices document into Spanish. Has the Code been translated into other languages?

<sup>10</sup> For a comparison of Easy Read and Easy English, see [Basterfield-2019-Plain-Language-Easy-English-What-does-it-all-mean-IDA-Vol-40-Issue-2.pdf](#).

<sup>11</sup> <https://downloads.find-a-qualification.services.ofqual.gov.uk/extracts/Qualifications.csv>

<sup>12</sup> [Free Online Courses UK - Free Courses in England](#) is a commercial organisation that offers free, accredited safeguarding training funded by the UK government via the Education & Skills Funding Agency and the Adult Educational Budget. However, they offer nothing below level 2 and eligibility requirements restrict access to people who have been living in the UK for at least three years.

<sup>13</sup> See for example, [Anti-racism training course - safeguarding and child protection | NSPCC Learning](#).

<sup>14</sup> Ali at the Leeds Refugee Forum is hoping to obtain support to deliver this course in 2025.

<sup>15</sup> The Home Office declined to provide any information (personal communication 22/04/2025). Migrant Help are unable to provide contact details for Wethersfield Camp or Clearsprings Ready Homes. However, Migrant Help are considering developing a project on safeguarding in hotels and providing information to women and LGBTQI+ clients on harassment and how to report it. They arrange ‘Connect the Sector’ good practice events.

<sup>16</sup> Some of the factors that raise risk levels in refugees and asylum seekers were discussed in the safeguarding training for staff designed by FACES – see [FACES Courses & Workshop 2023](#).

<sup>17</sup> Radford L, Corral S, Bradley C, Fisher H, Bassett C, Howat N & Collishaw S (2011) *Child abuse and neglect in the UK today*. NSPCC found that more than 90% of children experiencing contact sexual abuse knew the perpetrator.

<sup>18</sup> The [National Referral Mechanism](#) supports the local Police response to trafficking and modern slavery.

<sup>19</sup> Seventy percent of reported hate crime is racially motivated. See [Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2024 - GOV.UK](#).

<sup>20</sup> This may move into a discussion of the age at which young people can lawfully drink alcohol, have sex, drive a car or motorbike and register to vote; activities which are banned for all ages, such as using illicit drugs and carrying knives; and how to avoid sexual exploitation, extremism, gangs and violent crime.

<sup>21</sup> In 2023, a course was delivered over a full day, aimed at staff and co-designed with [PAFRAS](#) clients, [“Safeguarding children and young people who migrate in a Hostile Environment” – free training on 12th & 20th September 2023 | Migration Partnership](#). This was for a different target group than the focus of this paper, but it provides an example of coproduced training.

<sup>22</sup> One trainer created three fictional scenarios created for their course: (i) a disclosure of sexual abuse, (ii) a neglected child who is home alone and (iii) a mother subjected to violence perpetrated by the father.

<sup>23</sup> See [Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub | Information on the MASH](#).

<sup>24</sup> For a list of Safeguarding Adults Boards in England, see [Safeguarding Adults Boards England](#).

<sup>25</sup> Bates P (2024) [How-to-write-in-public.pdf \(peterbates.org.uk\)](#).

<sup>26</sup> Comments have been gratefully received from Sammy Antell (North Devon Voluntary Services), Peter Askew (Antioch Network Manchester), Liz Atkinson (Salford CVS), David Brewer ([CVS Bedfordshire](#)), [Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum](#), Cathy Basterfield ([Access Easy English](#)), the [British Red Cross](#), Courtney Cuffy (City of Sanctuary), Jim Greenan (Lancaster CVS), Claire Griffiths ([Better Bodies UK](#)), Jane Hardy, Angela Haylock ([The Safeguarding Toolbox](#)), [IRMO](#), Angela Jones ([HADCA](#)), Geoff Knott ([FutureNHS](#) forum), Ann-Marie Lawrenson ([Halton & St Helens Voluntary and Community Action](#)), Danielle Lock ([Swansea Council for Voluntary Service](#)), Philippa Thapa Magar ([Asylum Link](#)), Louis Massingham Rowell (Hackney Agency for Volunteering), Ollie McAllister (Nottingham City Council), Holly Miller ([The C3 church](#)), Sophia Nasreisfahany ([Migrant Help](#)), [NSPCC](#), Sally Page ([Cambridge CVS](#)), Ian Paul, [Safeguarding Network](#), [SCIE](#), Meg Pechonis ([Refugee Action York](#)), Evelyn Rodrigues ([Volunteer Centre Tower Hamlets](#)), Laura Shambrook (Cheshire East CVS), Katie Smith (NAVCA), Kersty Smith (Hull CVS), Liz Tilly ([Building Bridges](#)), Christine Trevorrow (Cambridge CVS), Sue Tucker ([Stronger Kent Communities](#)), Maria Whilby ([RAMA](#)), Rich Wood ([St Nic's Nottingham](#)), [Unseen](#), and Ian Young (Salvation Army). All remaining errors and omissions are the sole responsibility of the author. The information is provided in good faith and so readers engage with the contents at their own risk and undertake not to hold the author liable for any injury, loss, or damage arising through reading or acting on its contents.

<sup>27</sup> Cheshire East CVS offer an online ‘Introduction to Safeguarding’ course which aims to give community and voluntary organisations and their trustees/ volunteers and staff an understanding of safeguarding, and know how recognise and respond to allegations of abuse. They charge £5 for access to the course, which includes 30 minutes of video. See [Introduction to Safeguarding](#). North Devon CVS offer a course lasting 3.5 hours and costing £22.38 – see [Group 2 Awareness in Safeguarding Training Tickets, Mon, May 12, 2025 at 1:00 PM | Eventbrite](#).