



Safe Families

Volunteer Training Handbook

NO
ONE
SHOULD
FEEL
ALONE

Welcome to your Safe Families training

Thank you for becoming a volunteer with Safe Families.

I am so thrilled that you are wanting to support families in your community. I trust that you find the experience as much of a blessing as I know you will be to the families you meet.

Our hope for this training is that it leaves you confident and excited as you start your volunteering journey.

In both my role as Chief Executive and as a volunteer, I have seen the transformation that can take place in a family's life when they feel that they are not isolated and that they are connected to people who care for them.

I love hearing stories from across the country about relationships being built in communities, like Zoe and her family.

Zoe is a 2-year-old girl. She wanted her mum, Tracey, to love and look after her and give her the security she needed growing up. The problem was that Tracey was addicted to alcohol and drugs, had previously had a child taken into care and, due to the history of the family, there was a risk that Zoe might also be taken into care.

Tracey wanted it to be different with Zoe; she wanted to be able to give Zoe the love and care she needed to thrive.

Tracey had stopped using drugs and alcohol but still suffered from depression and anxiety, and she felt like she could not trust anybody.

When Safe Families visited Zoe and Tracey, we came up with a plan so that a volunteer would support them once a week, to chat and to offer support for Tracey.

Rachael visited weekly and straight away both Zoe and Tracey bonded with her. Tracey has shared that she feels so supported by Rachael; she knows that she loves and cares for her family. In fact, the bond has grown so much that Tracey recently asked Rachael to be Zoe's Godmother! Tracey knows that she has a 'forever' friend. Tracey also shared that this love and support is something she has not experienced before in her life.

Through simple, unconditional friendship, Rachael has helped Tracey to understand that she has value. She has now been connected into a support network and is in a place to support Zoe to thrive.

I really do hope that you are excited about the impact you could have, and go on to feel like you are making a real difference to families. I look forward to hearing stories of families that are thriving because of the relationships you have with them!

With love

Kat x

Kat Osborn
CEO Safe Families





MODULE 1:

Building belonging

By the end of this module we hope that you:

- Know who Safe Families are, how we work and what values influence how we act.
- Understand more about yourself & how important it is to have the right things in place to look after your own well being.
- Understand a bit more about the families that Safe Families support, what their experience is and how that has influenced how and why Safe Families works in the way it does.
- Feel confident about how to start connecting with the child, young person or adult that you will be linked with.



Who are we?

WHY DO WE EXIST?

No one should feel alone. We exist to create relationship and connection because everyone deserves to belong.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Safe Families offer hope, belonging and support to children, families and care leavers; we do this primarily, but not exclusively, with and through local churches.

WHAT ARE OUR VALUES?



LOVE

LOVING ABUNDANTLY

Supporting with hope, generosity and dignity



BELONGING

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Establishing positive relationships that bring security and connection



HUMILITY

SERVING TOGETHER

We know we can't do it alone, so we invest in strong, honest and honouring partnerships



FAITH

TRUSTING BOLDLY

Believing lives can be transformed and in a God who can do more than we can ask or imagine



EMPOWERMENT

ENABLING POTENTIAL

Confident everyone has the ability to thrive

“

“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.”

Rev. Desmond Tutu

How can you be part of this?

Here at Safe Families there are **3 ways to get involved**:



Because you've got this handbook you are in the process of becoming an amazing volunteer, but could you, your family or someone you know consider also supporting us with prayer or by becoming a monthly financial supporter? Both these roles help us to expand and reach more families across the UK!

PRAYER PARTNER:

At Safe Families one of our values is Faith. We define this as 'Trusting Boldly' – Believing for lives transformed and in a God who can do more than we can ask or imagine.

Prayer is part of our culture. We see prayer as a powerful expression of our faith and we are confident that God hears our prayers and responds.

We would like to invite you to join us in praying for our families, volunteers, churches, staff and all those with whom we work. Every month we send out a short prayer request email to a growing list of dedicated prayer supporters containing a short message, four prayer points, as well as stories of answered prayer.

FINANCIAL SUPPORTER:

As a charity we rely on the generosity of individuals to allow us to continue our work and grow into new areas. We have all sorts of people and businesses seeing the importance of Safe Families work in the lives of their community who have become financial partners with us.

Here are some of the ways you could help as a Financial Supporter:

1. **Monthly Giving:** Could you give £15 a month to help us continue to train volunteers and support families?
2. **Business Support:** Could you link us with any local/national businesses?
3. **Sponsorship:** Doing a half marathon or bike ride? Why not raise some sponsorship for Safe Families in the process?
4. **Community Fundraising:** Could you take part in one of our Jelly Welly Walks?
5. **Legacy Giving:** Could you leave a gift for Safe Families in your Will? If you don't have a Will yet we can help you to create one.

What's the process of connecting volunteers and families?

VOLUNTEER PROCESS

The process of becoming a volunteer for Safe Families can take from 2 weeks to 3 months, with our target for volunteers being around 6 weeks. We take this process seriously because we value our volunteers so highly, and because it's important you are trained and equipped to come alongside families.



You'll start by completing our volunteer application form on the website – this includes giving contact details for three references who will be contacted by the team, so you may want to have a quick chat with your referees to let them know!

Next, we'll undertake the DBS checks for volunteers in England and Wales, PVG checks for those in Scotland and Access NI checks for our volunteers in Northern Ireland. As part of this process, we'll need to see your ID in person.



A really important step in this process is the volunteer assessment. This is a one-to-one conversation you'll have with one of our trained staff – we will talk about your background, experiences, motivation and explore how those things influence you now. This is about ensuring you are ready to meet a family and will help us to find a family that will be the best fit for you.



If you are going to host, your volunteer assessment will likely be done at the same time as your home safety check. This is simply a chance for our team to see that your home is a safe environment for whoever may come to stay.



We believe in empowering our volunteers to provide the best support possible to families. Our three-part training programme covers everything you need to know, from the way Safe Families works, to safeguarding and how to create belonging in families. You'll need to complete all three parts before you can volunteer.

Once training has been completed you will go through to what we call 'panel'. This is simply a conversation between the Community Volunteer Manager who completed your volunteer picture and senior staff to approve you as a volunteer and confirm that, based on all the information we have gathered, you are a safe/appropriate person to connect with a family.



Once you have been approved as a volunteer, you will be granted wider access to the Safe Families database.

Once this is done, you are ready to be connected to a family.

What's the process for families referred to Safe Families?

Safe Families work with local authorities, local healthcare trusts and schools to receive referrals for families that those bodies identify as needing additional support and who they believe will benefit from being connected to Safe Families volunteers.

The level of support they need ranges from early help to families who are on the edge of the care system.

The families referred will have varying degrees of need and urgency surrounding that need. Some might be where issues are just beginning to arise - this would be considered early help. Others might be more complex with the family more at risk of imminent breakdown.

One of our team will speak to the referrer to gather an initial family picture - this is about understanding the context for the family, what the referrer would like to see change, and to understand and assess any risks around the family.

After this a Family Support Manager will go and meet the family. They will start with a blank canvas and focus on seeing, listening and understanding.

They ask the family questions like, "if you could wake up tomorrow and one thing could be different - what would that be?" and help them set goals based on this.

Now we understand the family, we'll have a good idea about what type of volunteers we need. We'll send out an email with a summary about the family to volunteers who we think could provide this support.

If you click 'yes' or 'tell me more' on the email, one of our team will be in touch to have a chat and tell you more about the family.



If you are still happy to connect, we then move on the exciting bit – meeting the family!

Our Family Support Manager will arrange to introduce you to the family, normally at the family's home or out in the community. They will make the introductions and re-outline the goals that have been agreed before reminding you and the family of expectations around support so that everyone is on the same page. Unless agreed otherwise, they will normally leave after that so you can chat with the family and begin to build that connection.

Ideally that visit will end with you agreeing the next step with the family member, such as meeting for a coffee or a walk, or whatever is appropriate given the goals of the support.

From this point on, what that connection and relationship looks like can be really different depending on the needs of the family, how many

volunteers are involved and if you are a Family Friend or Host family.

Whatever that support looks like, you will have regular conversations with our team, who will also be speaking to the family and referrer to check in with the family's progress against the goals they originally set, and ensure that everyone is happy with how support is going.

Formal support from Safe Families will typically last between 6-12 months. As part of our regular reviews, we will be talking to you about the ending - whether you would like to maintain contact with the family member when formal support is completed and what that might look like.

Mental health & resilience

We all have mental health, which can be good or bad just as we all have physical health when we can be well or poorly.

Mental wellbeing doesn't have one set meaning. We might use it to talk about how we feel, how well we're coping with daily life or what feels possible at the moment.

Good mental wellbeing doesn't mean you're always happy or unaffected by your experiences. But poor mental wellbeing can make it more difficult to cope with daily life.

Mental health is a continuum ranging from having good mental health to poor mental health. A person will vary in their position along this continuum at different points in their life.

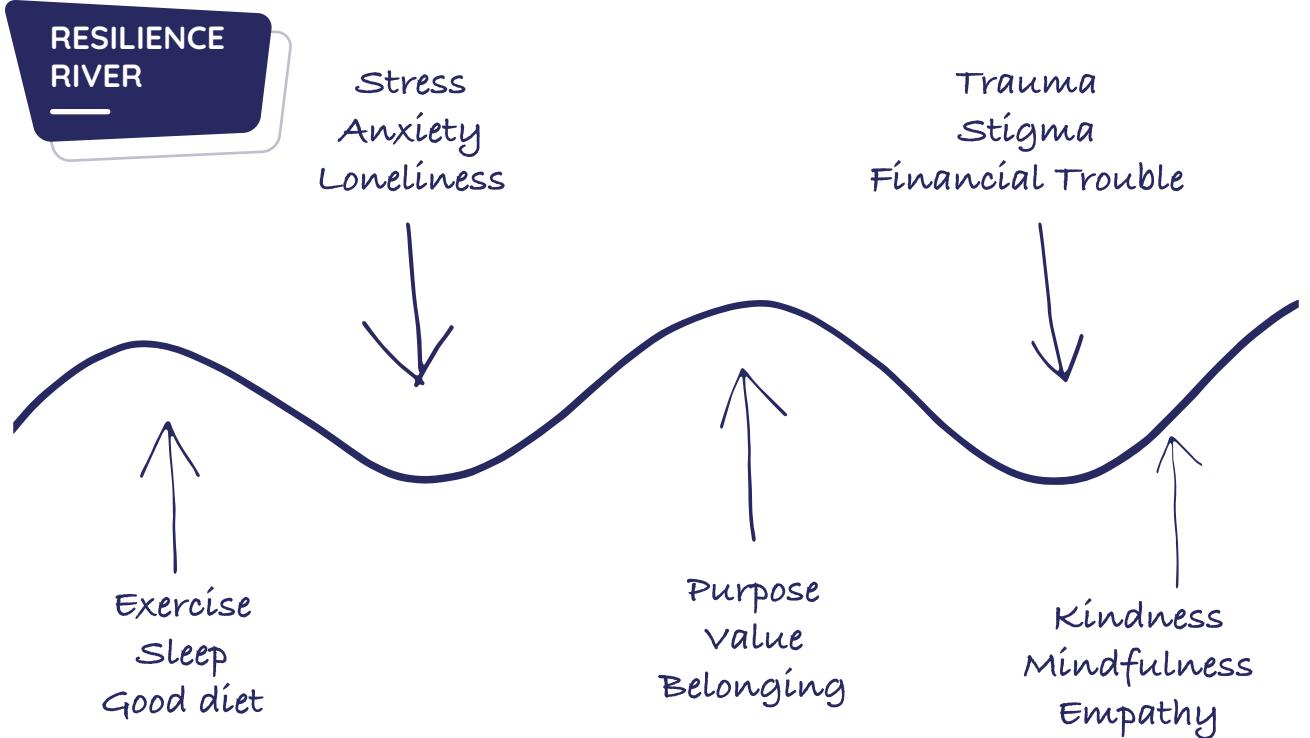
Our resilience underpins our mental health and wellbeing - It determines how we cope with stress or adversity and our ability to bounce back and recover when bad things happen.

Resilience is a dynamic quality - it's key to our emotional wellbeing, life balance and quality of life.

We can think of resilience a bit like a river - its levels can go up and down.

On good days, when the river is high and water is flowing, we feel loved, encouraged, supported. Our resilience is high and we are able to float over the rocks underneath - the challenges in day to day life don't stop us.

But there are bad days too when our levels are lowered and we perhaps feel more stress, shame, anxiety, and the need to fit in. It becomes harder or impossible to float over the challenges in the day. They can stop us in our tracks.



Understanding the families we support & our role



OVERWHELMED

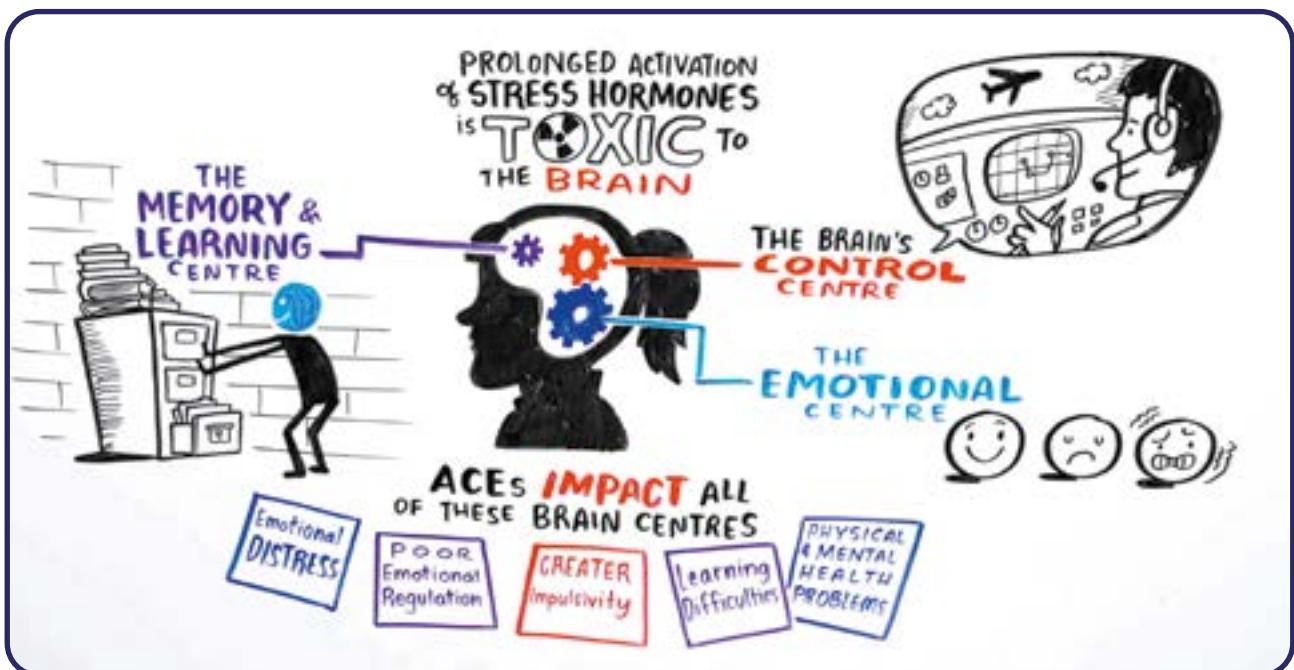


HOPE

Understanding trauma

We know that trauma experiences or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) can have lasting effects on children's brain development.

The impact of this includes slower development of the essential daily living skills, such as being able to manage impulses, solve problems, and develop executive functioning. This means they are more easily triggered into fight, flight or freeze which manifests in distressed and dysregulated behaviour. The changes to their brain development mean that these behaviours don't respond to traditional parenting and disciplining approaches. For some children, their heightened state means they are unable to process simple commands or manage their behaviour in response to their environment; children may shout, appear aggressive, withdraw or become very distressed. Others may exhibit extreme behaviours which may include stealing, soiling, sexualised behaviour, fire-starting, violence, absconding, meltdowns and lying.



We also see the ongoing impact of these same issues for many of the parents we support who are far more easily tipped into their fight, flight or freeze response. This may be because of their own past experiences of trauma as well as the result of managing challenging and distressed behaviour on a day-to-day basis.

Parents then suffer from compassion fatigue and become exhausted and overwhelmed. They may then lose the ability to acknowledge and meet their child's needs and become emotionally unavailable. In desperation, they may request for the young person to be taken into care.

WHEN WE MEET FAMILIES, THE PARENTS ARE SAYING TO US THINGS LIKE:

"I feel exhausted and just want to give up"

"I don't feel like anyone understands me"

AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE TELLING US:

"I sometimes feel angry, but I don't know why"

"I feel frustrated no one listens to me"

"I don't feel anything about anything. I only feel anger"

BUT THERE IS HOPE

The brain always continues to learn and develop, and resilience can be built which can buffer and repair the impact of early stress or trauma. Resilience can overcome ACES.

Here are some key things that can help heal trauma:

1. Positive relationships.
2. Moving towards goals.
3. Being listened to without judgement.
4. Self-Care or having a break.

“Therapeutic parenting really does have the power to heal traumatised brains and those with a very sensitive Fight, Flight or Freeze response. It empowers parents and increases their parental efficacy. It uses strategies that help children to heal and thrive.”

Therapeutic Coach

“

“Since learning about how trauma impacts the brain I feel like I have a much better understanding of what is happening when the mum I’m supporting has a meltdown; I feel confident to just listen and empathise rather than fix it. Only afterwards do I begin to help her reflect on what was going on for her.”

Volunteer who has been on our trauma informed training

If you want to know more about the impact of trauma, compassion fatigue and therapeutic parenting techniques, we run a specific training on this – ask your Community Volunteer Manager for more information.

Understanding belonging

Belonging for us is the opposite of Loneliness.

At its heart it starts with the feeling of being seen, heard, understood & valued.

If the scale from “lonely to belonging” is zero – 100 then our part may be to take someone from zero – 10 or from 50 – 80.

When understanding and talking about loneliness it is helpful to think of the cycle it causes.

The shame and fear of loneliness make it self-perpetuating, discouraging us from joining clubs and meeting others. Many then turn to self-destructive behaviours to cope.

The most beneficial relationships for our health are reciprocal and mutually beneficial friendships. These relationships mirror each other's values and create a positive feedback loop, teaching us to love ourselves as we love our friends.

There is a paradoxical nature to this – as loneliness can impede our ability to do this:

“... when we’re lonely, the urgency of our social need can make it difficult to honour and respond to the concerns of others – even if they are our friends.”

“Once we lose our internal compass, our emotional sense of grounding and identity can begin to slip. On a rational level, we may know we have worth, that we have light to bring to the lives of others, yet it’s hard to ignore the messaging that insists we ought to be someone we’re not.”



IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN THINKING ABOUT BELONGING:

The journey to belonging therefore starts with knowing we are love-able. This is why we start with loving, listening, and accepting so that families, children and young people begin to love themselves and then the feedback loop shown on page 12 slowly becomes possible. Volunteers play a key role in helping people understand and like themselves. Belonging isn't just a great friendship – it is the inside stuff that happens because of friendship and acts of kindness.

Your support, care and encouragement are vital to children, young people and families who may be feeling overwhelmed. Being there, being reliable and being someone they can count on, is crucial to supporting well. Developing friendships (mutually beneficial relationships) creates a positive feedback loop, where there is space to learn to both love and to be loved.

By offering consistent, loving and non-judgemental support, you can help them move from being overwhelmed, to being able to cope with the challenges life throws at them.

Helping families build their resilience

There are some key things worth having in our mind as we consider the role we can play as volunteers.

Connection – Movement – Purpose – Self-care

Connection - helping them feel seen, heard and understood

Movement - getting out - even just quick walk can make a big difference to someone's mood

Purpose - encouragement and affirmation that they are doing a good job

Self-care - suggesting the small ways they can be kind to themselves

Sometimes either the families we support or even you as a volunteer could require some additional support or advice around mental health. Go to page 30 for a list of organisations you can call or check out online.

Communicating well

TOP TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH ADULTS:

1. All about listening
2. Use silence
3. Open-ended question eg. 'How has your week been? Or "What's gone well/been hard this week?" not 'Have you had a good week?'
4. Activities side by side
5. Follow their lead
6. Avoid starting sentences with "At least....."

TOP TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

1. Share in their play
2. Ask open-ended questions
3. Give them options

ONGOING COMMUNICATION WITH ADULTS:

1. Validate their emotions
2. Follow up texts/whatsapp
3. Our job is to listen
4. Be a consistent figure

MODULE 2:

Supporting safely

By the end of this module we hope that you:

- Feel confident about the part you play in safeguarding children and adults.
- Know that we are ALWAYS here for you to talk to and would ALWAYS want you to talk to us if there was anything (however small) concerning you.
- Know how to put notes on the database and how important this is.
- Recognise that practical and emotional boundaries are important and positive for you and the child/young person/parent/care leaver you are supporting.



Understanding safeguarding

Everyone comes to safeguarding with their own perceptions.

FROM THE BLISSFULLY IGNORANT:

“This isn’t my responsibility, it doesn’t really happen and if it does someone else would be more appropriate to deal with it than me”



TO THOSE WHO CATASTROPHE:

“Everyone is a suspect, the worst is happening right now and its all on me to deal with”



TWO PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING:

1. Safeguarding is everybody’s business

2. The welfare and wellbeing of the child is paramount

A government survey in 2015 found that 42% of the public were put off from reporting potential child abuse because they thought they may be wrong.

Over a third would find reporting child abuse and neglect more challenging than delivering news about the death of a friend or family member.

So we understand that It can feel hard or a bit scary.

Most people find the decision to report child abuse or neglect a difficult one. They worry about overreacting or being wrong, and may question whether they have strong enough evidence, or if they have misread the signs of abuse or misunderstood a situation. These fears are understandable, but should not stop us if we have a concern for a child.

You don’t have to be absolutely certain about your concerns; just let us know if you are worried and we will discuss with our LA and see if additional support is needed.

There are 3 key things we would want you to remember:

1. We are in this together.
2. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.
3. Know what your role is.



Types of abuse

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child maltreatment as “all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity.”

There are 4 main types of abuse:

1. Physical
2. Emotional/Psychological
3. Sexual
4. Neglect



Abuse is defined as an act of commission and neglect is defined as an act of omission of providing care leading to potential or actual harm.

Statutory guidance outlines 10 types of abuse. These are:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Abuse may be a single incident or an accumulation of incidents, particularly when we think about neglect.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Many of the signs of abuse are the same regardless of the type of abuse being experienced.

Signs or symptoms that abuse may be taking place can be spotted predominantly in 3 ways:

1. Presentation
2. Behaviour
3. What is said

Lists of signs and symptoms are not fail-safe mechanisms, but they are often helpful indicators

in certain combinations of the likelihood or reality of abuse. No list of signs and symptoms is ever going to be definitive, and it may be that some signs in themselves seem unimportant, but if there are concerns about a child displaying any of the indicators below, you must discuss these with a Safe Families staff member.

Bear in mind that what you observe is being filtered through your own personal circumstances, the society you live in, and your culturally and socially determined attitudes.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed.
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty.
- Children with consistently poor hygiene.
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason.
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry.
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers.
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason.
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education.
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school.
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up.
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns.
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs.
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age.
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why.
- Children who talk about running away.
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

Signs and symptoms are particularly important in clusters but isolated instances should not be ignored.

ADULT SAFEGUARDING

Ultimately we want to ensure all the parents/carers we interact with are safeguarded from harm, as well as their children. Therefore, staff and volunteers should:

- be alert to the vulnerability of the adults we support; they are in a stressful situation and as such, their ability to protect themselves from assault, abuse or exploitation may be diminished.
- discuss any concerns a vulnerable adult has been or is being abused as soon as possible with your Family Support Manager.

For more information on types of abuse and safeguarding see the full Safe Families volunteer handbook and the Safe Families safeguarding policy.



What is your role in safeguarding?

The 4 Rs:

RECOGNISE:

Recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.



RECORD:

Record everything you have seen and heard immediately on the database.



RESPOND:

Do something. Appropriate response is vital. This could be listening sensitively when a child or adult wants to tell you that abuse is going on and then moving quickly to the 3rd R (Record). The bottom line here is don't delay. Whatever your response is you should do it immediately.



REFER:

At this point we will then deal with the concern and escalate appropriately.



“

I am convinced that the answer lies in doing relatively straightforward things well.”

Lord Laming. (Victoria Climbié Serious Case Review)



CONTACTING THE TEAM

During office hours (9am - 5pm)

Please call the office and speak to your Family Support Manager. If they are unavailable, another member of the team will take the details. If your query relates to safeguarding please also record this on the database and flag as a safeguarding concern as soon as possible.

Outside of office hours (7am - 9am and 5pm - 10pm)

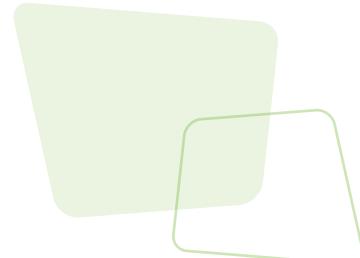
Call the Safe Families out-of-hours number which you will receive when you start to volunteer. If there is no answer, please leave a voicemail and a Safe Families staff member will respond to your call. It is for phone calls only. Our out-of-office phones are operational between 7-9 am and 5-10 pm on weekdays and 7am-10pm on weekends.

Between 10 pm and 7 am

If you require immediate support and are unable to reach Safe Families, please contact the local emergency duty team (number on the database) and provide the details of the children you are calling in relation to, such as their full name, date of birth and address.

In an emergency

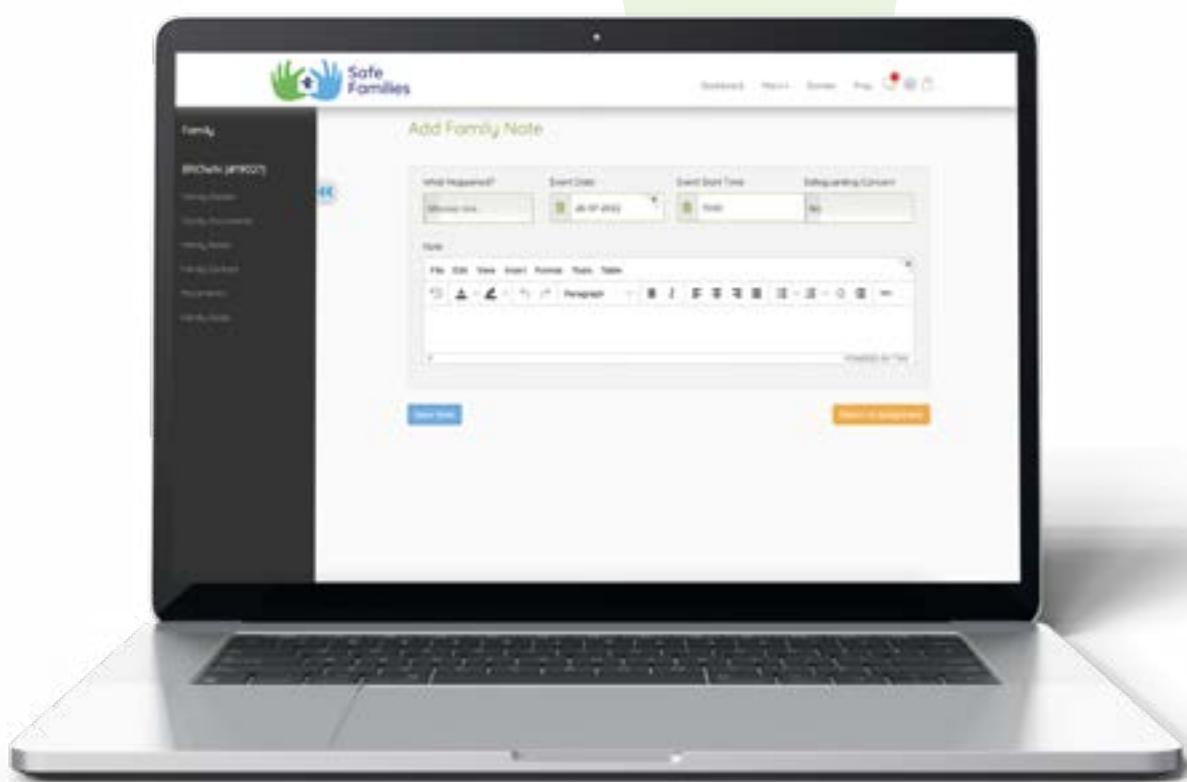
If you or the people you are supporting are in immediate danger you should contact the police directly.



Dealing with disclosures

- You may be upset by what you hear but try to keep outwardly calm as this will be reassuring.
- Accept what is said and let them know they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Never promise to keep things secret, but let them know you are taking what is said seriously and will only share with someone who must know.
- Don't ask any specific questions about what they are saying but you can ask if they want to tell you anything else.
- Remember this may be very difficult for them to articulate so try to give them space to do it in their own time – this may mean being comfortable with some silence as they find the words or process what they are saying. Encouraging them to take their time and that you are listening will help.

Using the Safe Families database



HOW TO PUT NOTES ON THE DATABASE?

To add a note scroll down the dashboard until you get to the list of families.

Then click the **'Add Note'** link that is underneath the family details.

You also have the option to read notes already in the system and then add a note from that page.

Once you have the note page loaded, you pick the type, date and start time of interaction and then add the note details.

If you have a safeguarding concern then you can highlight this by switching the drop down to Yes. Once done, press the blue **'Save Note'** button and your note will be added. You'll be taken to the full list of notes and should see your note there. Bear in mind that if you've backdated a note to the previous day, it might not be the top of the list.

Once you have written a note, a Safe Families member of staff will acknowledge the note and you will receive a notification of this via email. The staff member can also use this acknowledgement to reflect back on the note if needs be so it is worth opening and reading.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR DATABASE NOTES:



Database notes should always:

- Be written up after a visit or contact, as they are an important part of our safeguarding, as well as a vital communication tool between you and our team.
- Be written up within 24 hours of the event.
- Be clear, honest, non-judgmental, non-emotive, avoiding jargon and obscure abbreviations.
- Be in line with the code of conduct, demonstrating respect for all others.
- Be written even in the event of a visit not happening/family not replying to text, so we can monitor for disengagement.

Notes should include:

- Basic narrative i.e., what happened, when; what information was received, from whom etc.
- Relevant, accurate and up to date facts, as distinct from opinion.
- Personal perspective and opinions, always labelled as such, with justification e.g. when noting a 'gut feeling' regarding a potentially emerging risk.
- Additional information gained. If this is not first-hand then the source of the information must be noted.



Confidentiality

We are dealing with vulnerable families and difficult situations, so it is important that we are careful about confidentiality and respect the information that we have.

Key principles of confidentiality are:

- Personal information should only be shared when it is necessary to do so.
- Accept and respect that individual's personal information is theirs.
- Develop trust and positive relationships with parents.

Other guidance:

- Do not discuss families with anyone outside of Safe Families (or a relevant authority)
- You can talk in general terms for prayer but don't use names. Never disclose family addresses.
- Protect family and database info by logging out when not using the database. Don't save the password on your computers bookmark.

Taking photos: Please only take photos of the children you are supporting with the express permission of their parent/carer. All photos must be deleted from your devices once shared with the family.

CONNECTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an ever-present part of the lives of many children and families, and as such it's important that we recognise both its benefits and its potential dangers and act accordingly.

We want to help you build strong connections and relationships with families and we understand that social media may be one way of doing this. We ask that you always speak with your Family Support Manager before connecting with a family you are supporting on social media. This is to make sure that all parties are comfortable with the arrangement, that the right privacy controls are in place and that where children or young people want to connect, they have parental consent and that the legal parameters for the platform are being observed.

For more information on the use of social media see the full Safe Families volunteer handbook and the Safe Families Social Media policy.



Boundaries

PRACTICAL BOUNDARIES:

Practical boundaries are about staying clear about your role in volunteering. Here are 3 things we can do for this:

1. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
2. Know your role as a volunteer: what are the goals and expectations?
3. If things change/as the relationship grows, talk to us so we can support you in this.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARIES:

Emotional boundaries are about protecting your own emotional well-being by separating your feelings from another's feelings. They are recognising a clear line of what is and is not yours to deal with. It's about how to manage the emotional impact of coming alongside someone else's pain and seeing the unfairness of their situations.

There are key things we can do to look after ourselves in this:

1. Acknowledge what you are feeling. Our feelings are real and matter and we need to recognise them, be kind to ourselves in them, validate them.
2. Have 1 or 2 people you can talk to – your Family Support Manager is one, the other could be a close friend or someone from your church (always observing the principles of confidentiality).
3. Have a clear sense of where your responsibilities end. You can't take on everything from the family you support and you don't have to. You are there to help them be seen, heard and understood, not to fix them or their situation.





MODULE 3:

Caring consistently

By the end of this module we hope that you:

- Feel excited about approaching support from a place being equal rather than having a responsibility to “fix”.
- Understand our To, For, With model for support.
- Have a really good practical sense of how the volunteering process works and how you will get linked to a family and help them work towards their goals.
- Understand what would be involved in having a child stay in your home and feel confident about this.



Empowerment

We are a relationship-based charity. We exist to create relationship and connection because everyone deserves to belong, BUT when relationships are built on need (which often the ones we are involved in are), it can easily allow us to think of ourselves as the “helper” and the recipient as the person “being helped” - and this can result in something really unhealthy.



“Relationships built on need seldom reduce need, rather they require more and more need to continue. The way that the victim and rescuer relate become familiar communication paths - the victim brings the dilemma and the rescuer finds the solution.....”.

Toxic Charity, How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help

The kind of relationships that we want to see through Safe Families are ones built on equal value; Where we see the people we are supporting as equal in dignity and worth. As our core value of empowerment says “confident everyone has the ability to thrive”, we avoid the temptation to think of ourselves as the ‘helper’ or ‘rescuer’.

One model we use to think about our actions in this context is **To:For:With**.



TO

The things we do ‘to’ someone. They aren’t consulted, their voice is not heard, we have assumed their need and taken action.

FOR

The things we do ‘for’ someone. They may have asked us to do it or they may not, but they could probably do it themselves.

WITH

The things we do which create parity between ourselves and the other person. Working in a ‘with’ way gives power back to the person.



“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’”

C.S. Lewis

WHAT WE DO:

- We listen, respect and encourage.
- We let them be the author of their support plan.
- We verbally recognise a families' strengths – which gives them hope for what they can achieve.
- We build their responsibility and confidence.

WHAT WE DON'T DO:

- We are not here to take responsibility that belongs to the parent.
- We are not here to 'fix' the parent or 'blame' the parent.
- We don't do things that they can do for themselves.



Understanding family goals



Our Family Support Managers work with families to establish what is important to them and what they hope to achieve with the help of their volunteer. Together, meaningful goals are set that help to focus your support. For families, the act of choosing their own direction can contribute greatly to their sense of ownership and motivation for reaching their goals.

We always seek to identify achievable goals with families. For some, this may mean a series of smaller goals on the way to achieving what they truly aspire to. Your Family Support Manager will be there to help you journey this with the family.

As a reminder, and to keep support on track, goals are outlined at the top of the page when you log into the database. Goals may change during support to take account of changes in family circumstances, progress or new things the family want to focus on. Your Family Support Manager will keep you in the loop and help the family build on their successes.

The relationships you build with families, and the support you provide, enable and empower families to invest in their own success, achieve their potential and reach their desired goals for themselves and their children.

How hosting works



You control the age and gender of children you feel able to host.

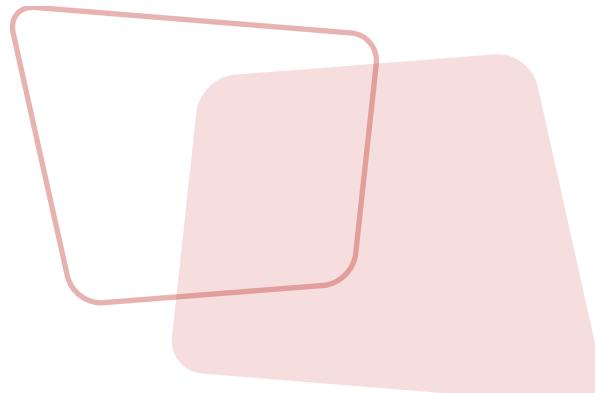
You will receive an email or phone call concerning a child needing a stay. If the child is a match, the information provided to you will include:

- Age and special needs the child may have
- The reason the family needs hosting
- How long hosting will be for
- Consent form from parent to say they give you permission to care for their child as a Host family
- Medical information and consent, including permission to seek emergency care
- Child information form – providing you with information about the child. (Safe Families may have additional information that accompanies individual children)
- Parent information form – providing you with information about the parent and how to contact them

Please note: Sometimes if it is an emergency hosting, the more detailed information on likes/dislikes/routines isn't as available as we would always like. Also, parents and carers will be given your contact information and address

THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH YOUR FAMILY BEFORE HOSTING:

- Discussion with own children (How are they feeling? What are their hopes/fears?).
- Routines – such as bedtimes, mealtimes (Where do you have flexibility on this?).
- Use of telephone to contact family (How much contact do the parent(s) want? What is most helpful?).
- Computer and video game usage.
- Choice of language.
- Visitors and friends in the home.
- Smoking - if you smoke.
- Respecting privacy and personal space.
- Respecting personal possessions.
- Sharing household tasks.
- Homework.
- Unacceptable conduct - what would you do?
- Rewards and consequences.
- Being mindful of the child's own cultural or religious heritage where that differs from your own.



Completing well and continuing well

Ending well starts at the very beginning of support when the family identifies their goals and what they want to achieve as a result of support.

Support is generally not time-limited, but we are always mindful that we want to empower families and not create dependence. When support goes well, completing formal support is a natural organic process; goals have been met, and the family feel empowered and able to manage the challenges of life and no longer feel overwhelmed by their circumstances. We will then support you and the family to celebrate the journey you have taken together.

Many families, will have established a true friendship with you and, following completion of formal support with Safe Families, it is a natural and welcome progression for you to keep in touch with them and remain part of their lives. This could simply be occasional texts and calls or meeting regularly as friends. Whichever you choose, we will talk to you about this and support you and the family to continue your ongoing friendship, celebrating with you the sense of belonging you have now built in the community.

In some situations where support has been completed, there will be no ongoing contact. In these situations we will support both you and the family to say goodbye well, acknowledging how far the family has come and the progress you have made together. We recognise that even though this is the right choice for you and the family, you may feel saddened when the relationship ends. Don't be afraid to acknowledge this sadness alongside the happiness for the family in recognition of the goals they have reached. Remember the team are here to listen and support you whatever the end of support looks like.



Guiding principles of care

The key things to consider in a scenario with a child or young person are:

1. Is it needed/is it important for the child to enhance their experience? (ie. bath, cuddle)
2. If it is, how could it be interpreted and is there anything I can do about that?
3. Ensure it is child led
4. It is important you do not feel fearful about normal responsive support to children.

The use of touch can be very reassuring and comforting for a child or young person, but it is important that it is also appropriate during a child's stay.

- Touch should be age appropriate and generally initiated by the child
- Children are entitled to determine the degree of physical contact with others
- Avoid any physical activity which is, or could be, construed as sexually stimulating to the adult or child
- Wherever possible keep everything open or in public

You've finished training - so what now?

Congratulations! You've completed 3 modules of Safe Families training and are ready to move on to the next stage of the process.

AMONGST OTHER THINGS YOU WILL NOW:



Be taken to panel to be formally approved as a volunteer.



Receive your access to the database. Please log in, add a photo, check your preferences and get accustomed with the system.



Assuming panel approval, you will start to be contacted about families you can connect with.

We can't wait to see you thriving in your new role!
Remember, we are always here for you to talk with.

Useful organisations

The Samaritans

Samaritans are a charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom.

Phone: 116123

www.samaritans.org

ChildLine

ChildLine is a free, 24-hour confidential helpline for children and young people who need to talk.

Phone: 0800 1111

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

Mind

Mind provides advice and support on a range of topics including types of mental health problems, self-harm, legislation and details of local help and support in England and Wales.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (weekdays 9am - 6pm)

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines>

YoungMinds

YoungMinds offers information, support and advice for children and young people on mental health, wellbeing, racism and self-harm.

Help for concerned parents of those under 25 is offered by phone.

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger: text YM to 85258.

Phone: 0808 802 5544 (Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm)

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Inspire (Northern Ireland)

Inspire (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health) provides local services to support the mental health and wellbeing of people across Northern Ireland.

Phone: 028 9032 8474

<http://www.inspirewellbeing.org>

SAMH (Scotland)

SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) can provide general mental health information and signpost you to your local services.

Phone: 0344 800 0550 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)

<https://www.samh.org.uk>

Community Advice & Listening Line (Wales)

Community Advice & Listening Line offers emotional support and information on mental health and related matters to people in Wales.

Phone: 0800 132 737 (24/7) or text "help" to 81066

<https://www.callhelpline.org.uk>

Notes

Notes



Safe Families



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<https://safefamilies.uk>

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