



Safeguarding in Faith Communities

Welcome to our April newsletter! If you have any questions or content suggestions for the next edition, please contact [Junaid Akhtar](#) (Project Co-Ordinator).

To those of you celebrating Ramadhan, Passover or the start of Easter, we wish you Ramadhan Mubarak, Happy Passover and a Happy Easter!

Project Update

Work is well underway on our journey to develop bespoke Safeguarding Guidance and training resources for faith organisations.

Having consulted faith representatives, the consensus is to develop an on-line Toolkit and Guidance which is bespoke to each faith, given that each place of worship language and service differ based on their faith.

The group has identified areas where further information would be welcomed by places of worship to help support their community, including children and vulnerable adults. If you have any thoughts on additional areas for the guidance, please email us.

For the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) network element of the project, we are progressing forward with discussions at the Birmingham Faith Covenant Partnership Group. The group has met twice and is collectively working on creating a resource that places of worship can benefit from as well as our team. In May, we will be participating in a half day workshop with faith groups from across the city to explore the priorities and development of a medium to long term action plan.

Safeguarding News

Legal age of marriage rises to 18

Since 27 February 2023, 16 and 17 year olds are no longer allowed to marry or enter a civil partnership, even if they have parental consent.

It is now illegal and a criminal offence to exploit vulnerable children by arranging for them to marry, under any circumstances whether force is used or not. The change will crack down on forced marriages which can cause lasting damage on a child. Those found guilty of arranging child marriages face sentences of up to 7 years in prison. [Learn more about the legislation.](#)

Regional Outreach Adviser appointed

The DBS has appointed Jo Wheatley as the Regional Outreach Adviser for the West Midlands. Jo can support faith organisations by answering DBS-related queries and is able to provide consultation around difficult safeguarding issues that should be referred to the DBS, including on the “power to refer”.

Jo can also arrange workshops around DBS Eligibility and Barring and Legal Duty to refer. Her advice and workshops are free to access via phone and email.

The DBS is keen to hear from faith organisations on any suggestions, comments, or feedback they have. Jo can be contacted via email at: Joanne.Wheatley1@db.gov.uk

“Really highlights how religious organisations have come a long way and beginning to take responsibility and put into place safeguarding parameters when working with children and the vulnerable! Keep it up all”

Comment from a listener to our Safeguarding in Faith Communities show on Unity FM

Events

Our Faith Project Co-Ordinator, Junaid Akhtar has been attending faith events and inviting people to get involved in the project.

Junaid attended a Best Practice conference for Mosques at Green Lane Masjid which was well attended and many attendees expressed the need for Safeguarding Training and a one-stop repository with safeguarding resources.

Our Safeguarding in Faith Communities project featured on UnityFM's Connecting Communities radio show where Junaid talked about the project with Dr Zeerak (Dawat-e-Islami) and Sarah Fullard (Archdiocese of Birmingham) who sit on our Steering Group. If you missed it, you can [listen to a recording of the show](#).

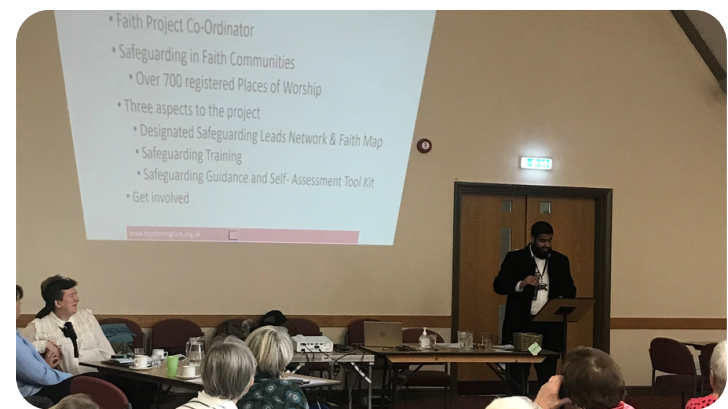
Junaid also attended the Church of England Parish Safeguarding Reps meeting where he took away a few ideas. One of them was the importance of factoring in the voice of survivors of abuse in the work we are doing.

In May, the Archdiocese of Birmingham will be hosting the LOUDfence initiative to show support to all victims and survivors of child abuse. The aim of this initiative is to give survivors a voice, create awareness and work to end child abuse. We look forward to participating and encourage you to also get involved. [Find out more about the initiative](#).

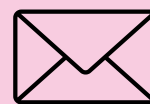
Free Training/Workshops/Events:

Click each event for the full title & further details

- [DBS Barring & Legal Duty to refer](#)
- [‘Faith &’ series of webinars by VRP](#)
- [Recognising the difference between Domestic Abuse & Parental Conflict](#)
- [Get Grants - Introduction Workshops](#)



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