



This toolkit was developed as part of the
London C&F Project

Training Toolkit for professionals engaging with minority ethnic culture and faith (often socially excluded) communities, groups and families to safeguard their children

**'Keeping the child in focus means seeing beyond
his or her faith and/or culture'**

**'What parents do is more important than who they
are... the right kind of parenting is a bigger
influence on a child's future than faith, culture
(wealth, class, education) or any other common
social factor'**

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Produced in partnership with



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¹ Second quote adapted from Graham Allen Review

Acknowledgements

This toolkit has been produced in conjunction with others by Aqualma Murray, Haringey Local Authority Designated Officer / Training and Community Partnership Officer and an Ordained Interfaith Minister². Special thanks are also due to Emma Aiyere, Bexley Safeguarding Children Coordinator (Education) and to the team that supports Haringey LSCB.

The London Safeguarding Children Board would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the making of this toolkit. The materials have been compiled using contributions from a wide range of different sources; all details regarding contributions are listed in the resources and references list at Appendix 1.

The material has been sourced from:

- A number of local authorities in London and the South East
- Voluntary groups
- Faith groups
- Metropolitan Police Service
- Metropolitan Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) – Haringey
- Independent Trainers and Consultants
- Universities and learning institutes.

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In this toolkit, the term 'ethnic groups and communities' describes those with a common heritage, ancestry, language, faith and/or culture³

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this toolkit and intended audience

- 1.1.1 The aim of the *London C&F Training Toolkit* is to ensure that professionals and voluntary groups working with minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families have access to a wide range of resources, materials and background information to help them develop and design appropriate and sensitive training packages in relation to child protection in its broadest sense.
- 1.1.2 This training toolkit contains a wide and varied selection of material including scenarios, summaries of Serious Case Reviews, background reading about faith and culture, a resource list and some guidance about group dynamics and basic group work.
- 1.1.3 This toolkit must be read in conjunction with the London Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Children in Minority Ethnic Culture and Faith (often socially excluded) Communities, Groups and Families (London Board, 2011) – referred to here as the *London C&F Practice Guidance*.
- 1.1.4 The guidance below should also be read before delivering training and you should use it to tailor your presentation to any given group of participants.
- 1.1.5 The material and trainers referenced in this document have all been recommended by London LSCBs or their partner agencies, and are offered as examples of work that others have made use of locally. Contact details are provided alongside each resource if trainers would like further information or a more detailed recommendation. Some organisations may also be prepared to offer in-house training or work alongside a trainer within an organisation.

1.2 Pan London Safeguarding Children Minority Ethnic Culture and Faith Project

- 1.2.1 This toolkit is part of a larger London Safeguarding Children Board project: the Pan London Safeguarding Children Minority Ethnic Culture and Faith Project 2010-2011 (referred to throughout as the *London C&F project*). The *London C&F project* was an action-research project which aimed to promote a step-change in safeguarding London's children living in minority ethnic, cultural or faith communities or groups, working together with local minority ethnic communities and faith groups and the frontline professionals who work with them.
- 1.2.2 The *London C&F project* ran for 18 months from July 2010 to December 2011, and was co-ordinated by the London Safeguarding Children Board and LB Bexley. Project activity was overseen by an operational steering group with membership from London LSCBs and specialist third sector agencies.
- 1.2.3 The project comprised three parts:
 - 1. Project work with minority ethnic culture or faith communities / groups by 11 London local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs);
 - 2. Focus groups in a number of London LSCBs to gather views on how to improve safeguarding for London's children living in minority ethnic groups and communities;
 - 3. Interviews with a number of London LSCBs, mapping activity and aspiration for stronger partnership work to safeguard children living in minority ethnic, culture or faith communities or groups.

³Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Sider 1993 *Lumbee Indian Histories*; Seidner,(1982), *Ethnicity, Language, and Power from a Psycholinguistic Perspective*, pp. 2-3; and Smith 1987 pp.21-22

1.2.4 Project outputs include:

- a. This *London C&F Training Toolkit*;
- b. A final project report, drawing together learning from each of the individual LSCB projects, focus groups and interviews;
- c. A *London C&F LSCB Strategy*, which seeks to assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards to develop sound, effective and sustainable partnership working with local groups, communities and third sector agencies to protect and promote the wellbeing of children living in circumstances which appear to be complex because their faith, culture, nationality and possibly recent history differs significantly from that of host nation children and families.
- d. The *London C&F Practice Guidance*, which has been developed to assist clear insight and effective action to protect and promote the welfare of children living in circumstances which appear to be complex because their faith, culture, nationality and possibly recent history differs significantly from that of host nation children and families.

1.2.5 All outputs from the project are available at www.londonscb.gov.uk/culture_and_faith/**Key themes**

1.2.6 Key themes from the *London C&F Project* centre on the core need to build trust between local minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families and statutory services. For trust to flourish, professionals need to better understand these communities and faith groups, reducing incidents of stereotyping and increasing professionals' confidence to challenge cultural and faith-related practices which give rise to safeguarding children concerns.

1.2.7 Local faith leaders are powerful, and it can be difficult for followers to challenge them. Individuals may also be concerned not to bring shame on their community or group by reporting safeguarding issues. These leaders need to be positively engaged, and individuals who have fears need more assurance that confidentiality issues are managed with transparency and integrity.

1.2.8 Minority ethnic culture and faith groups and communities need greater awareness and education about UK children's legislation, the role and responsibilities of local statutory services and their powers and duties (e.g. to provide support) towards children and their families.

Framework of competencies

1.2.9 The *London C&F Practice Guidance* sets out a framework of competencies for effective safeguarding children practice. These are based on professionals being competent in:

- Knowing how a healthy child or young person presents and behaves – so that the professional can recognise signs of distress and impaired development and intervene as early as possible to protect and promote wellbeing;
- Listening to children and taking what they say seriously – so that their distress can be acted on quickly and appropriately;
- Knowing how to undertake a really good holistic assessment. Depending on the circumstances the assessment can be brief or in-depth, but it must address all three Assessment Framework domains in order not to miss a key factor;
- Cultural competence – so that the professional is self-aware enough not to alienate the child or family and avoids being blinded or prejudiced by faith or cultural practices (and loses sight of harm or potential harm to the child);

- Knowing, learning about or seeking expert advice on the particular culture and/or faith by which the child and family lives their daily life;
- Knowing what services are available locally to provide relevant cultural and faith-related input to prevention, support and rehabilitation services for the child (and their family)

2. Definition of abuse linked to culture and faith

2.1 Faith and culture

- 2.1.1 The terms in this guidance conform to those set out in the London Child Protection Procedures⁴. In particular, 'child' is defined as children up to their 18th birthday, and a 'professional' as any individual working in a voluntary, employed, professional or unqualified capacity, including foster carers and approved adopters. 'Parents' refers to parents and carers.
- 2.1.2 'Ethnicity' refers to a group of people whose members identify with each other through a common heritage, such as a common language, culture (often including a shared religion) and ideology that stresses common ancestry and/or endogamy (the practice of marrying within a specific ethnic group, class, or social group)⁵.
- 2.1.3 A 'minority' is a sociological group which does not make up a dominant majority in terms of social status, education, employment, wealth and political power.
- 2.1.4 The term 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children' is defined as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
 - Preventing impairment of children's health or development
 - Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
 - Enabling children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully
- 2.1.5 **Culture** can be understood as the social heritage of a group, organised community or society. It is a pattern of responses discovered, developed or invented during the group's history of handling problems which arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment. These responses are considered the correct way to perceive, feel, think, and act, and are passed on to the new members through immersion and teaching. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It encompasses all learned and shared, explicit or tacit, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, norms and values, as well as attitudes, behaviour, dress, and language.
- 2.1.6 **Faith** is a belief system which forms attitudes and behaviours but crucially informs one's identity over a period of time. It can be understood as 'spirituality' – defined as searching for purpose, meaning and morality, which can often, but not always, be expressed as a 'religion' – which includes regular public worship such as church attendance. Although in 2006, 31%⁶ of the host country population said they belonged to a religion or attended religious services,

⁴ See the *London Child Protection Procedures* (London Safeguarding Children Board, 2010) at www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/

⁵Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Sider 1993 *Lumbee Indian Histories*; Seidner,(1982), *Ethnicity, Language, and Power from a Psycholinguistic Perspective*, pp. 2-3; and Smith 1987 pp.21-22

⁶ British Social Attitudes survey 2006 (National Centre for Social Research 2007)

church attendance has increasingly been replaced by individualised and privatised religious practices and beliefs.

2.2 Abuse linked to culture

- 2.2.1 **Abuse linked to culture** makes reference to the type of abuse that children may experience that is often justified or condoned based on traditional family practices or community expectations.
- 2.2.2 The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), for example, is often cited as a religious requirement, but it is not stated in any spiritual text that it should be performed. What is known about the practice of FGM is that within the cultures where it is practiced girls are expected to have the procedure done in order to ensure that they marry later on in life without the stigma of impurity. It is said to enhance their desirability to the future husband, hence the practice is a cultural tradition. For further information around FGM, please refer to the London FGM Resource Pack (www.londonscb.gov.uk/fgm/).
- 2.2.3 Another example of abuse linked to culture may be the view that a young girl child should start cooking and cleaning for all the family at a very young age (often nine or ten years old) on a regular basis, as a means to teach her how to provide and care for her future family later on in life. If such practices prevent the girl from focussing on education, enjoying play and socialising, this could amount to abuse based on cultural practices.
- 2.2.4 Some issues are linked to both faith and culture and are abusive in their manifestation. An example of this is the practice of not educating girls due to the religious belief that they are inferior to boys. This might be how the family roles have been adhered to through generations, so even if a family is no longer overtly religious they may still uphold traditions based on ancient spiritual teachings or behaviours.

2.3 Abuse linked to faith

- 2.3.1 Abuse linked to faith refers to the abuse of children by those who have power due to their faith or religious affiliation and who utilise this power to have a negative influence on either the child directly or in order to impact on the child via parents/ community. The abuse that children may experience at the hands of rogue or manipulative faith leaders/guiders and others within the setting may involve sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The abuse may take place within a religious setting or other venue where the faith leader/guider is able to continue within their role.
- 2.3.2 Parents and carers of children may be influenced by faith leaders to take abusive action towards their children in order to cleanse their spirit of a bad habit or correct negative behaviour.
- 2.3.3 Children may be neglected within faith settings due to lack of understanding of the child's specific needs. For example, the faith setting may not appreciate that the child could find loud and animated praying quite scary, and seeing their parents in a vulnerable place during this process could leave children feeling insecure.
- 2.3.4 Other settings may not have a specific meeting space for children and they may be exposed to information and actions by adults which they are too immature to process or understand, i.e. 'the church members going into spirit and falling on the floor or speaking in tongues'.
- 2.3.5 Neglect can also be experienced in these settings due to very long services and/or faith gatherings at hours when children require sleep. Parents and carers may also abuse children due to misguided beliefs about what their faith or religion demands of them in relation to a child's behaviour, ability or attitude towards the child.
- 2.3.6 Some children may be required to fast beyond a capacity which is healthy for them. Others may be forced to attend a faith gathering when they are at an age where they can decide that they no longer wish to follow this belief or take part in the faith practices.

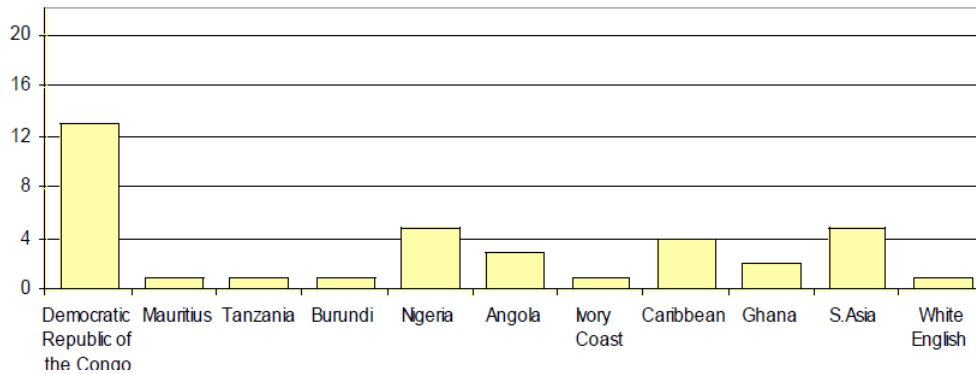
- 2.3.7 Child abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession or children branded as witches refers to the abuse of children and young people who are believed to be taken over or possessed by an evil spirit. When children are deemed to be evil by the faith group and/or the parent/carer, this can place the child in grave danger if those in the community firmly believe that children can be possessed.
- 2.3.8 The number of children deemed to be spirit possessed is still quite small in comparison to the number of children abused in other ways. However, the consequences of such an accusation is often life threatening and exposes the child to extreme physical, emotional and sexual abuse and ultimate neglect. The type of abuse the child may experience can be very disturbing, such as having pepper rubbed into orifices of the body and given non-edible things to eat, or otherwise starved. It is therefore crucial that action is taken to protect children as soon as possible.
- 2.3.9 Child abuse within religious and spiritual settings is as a direct result of the exploitation of power by adults and/or older young people within those settings.

3. Rationale for developing the *London C&F Training Toolkit*

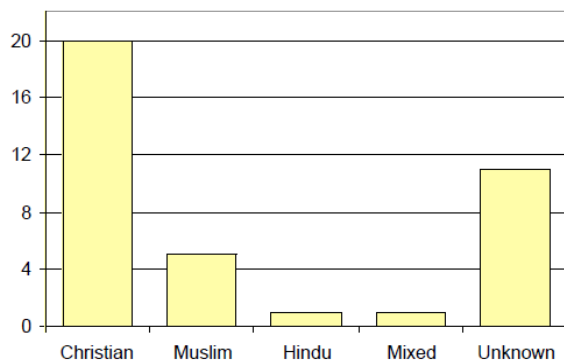
- 3.1 Faith and culture are issues that must be addressed in all child protection training.
- 3.2 The rationale for focussing specifically on abuse that occurs within the contexts of faith and culture is that serious case reviews (SCRs) have demonstrated that these are all-encompassing factors in a child's life that can sometimes blindside workers – be it because they assume they understand, such as when the culture or faith is similar to the worker's, or because they are afraid to probe out of political correctness, such as where the culture or faith is different from the worker's. Information about some relevant serious case reviews is included in this toolkit.
- 3.3 Abuse perpetrated under the guise of faith and culture can cause significant harm to children, with long-term devastating consequences for the child, family and the entire community.
- 3.4 **It is also important to note that abuse linked to faith or culture is not limited to minority ethnic groups or to any particular faith.** Any strong belief system can have a powerful influence, for good or for bad, on how we view the world and how we treat our children.

4. Context for training: the big picture

- 4.1 Abuse linked to faith or culture can be severe and shocking and has a profound effect on all involved. Unfortunately, the physical aspects of some forms of abuse linked to faith in particular are often life-threatening and may cause permanent damage to children's health and wellbeing. Hence it is important that all involved are aware of the issues and how to address them effectively.
- 4.2 High profile cases that include harm caused under the guise of faith or culture include Victoria Climbié in Haringey, Child B in Westminster, Kyra Ishaq in Birmingham, Child T in Barking & Dagenham, and the still unsolved murder of the boy known as 'Adam'.
- 4.3 The last major piece of research into witchcraft in the UK, *Child Abuse Linked to Accusations of Possession and Witchcraft*, was conducted by Eleanor Stobart in 2006 for the then Department for Education and Skills.
- 4.4 Of the 37 social work cases Stobart reviewed where there were clear indications of abuse linked to faith, she identified the following origins and backgrounds:



4.5 She also identified the main faith groups to which these children belonged, illustrating that this type of abuse is not limited to one faith:



- 4.6 The big picture highlights the fact that this is an issue for all faith groups and community groups. We can then appreciate that if this is happening to our neighbouring areas there is no reason to presume that it is not happening here.
- 4.7 When considering the big picture we need to consider the histories and current experiences of minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families, in relation to their experience of oppression, racism and ‘faith phobia’. A large number of people from minority cultures and faith groups may have negative views about those in authority due to past experiences and/or stories from elders in their communities as to how difficult things were in the past and the level of persecution and/or rejection that they may have experienced. This is very relevant to asylum seekers and/or refugees.
- 4.8 Many minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families still hold the belief that the local authority will remove their children from their care without sufficient reason or evidence of abuse, due to preconceived views about their child rearing practices or due to negative stereotypes about them as a people. Hence a great deal of work is required to build trust between minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families and those in authority who are working with them. This training toolkit offers information that will enable professionals to be confident in addressing issues of faith and culture in a way that allows a respect for diversity while ensuring that the child’s needs are paramount.
- 4.9 This toolkit specifically looks at the needs and requirements of children from minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families. However, the child’s needs and right to be safeguarded and protected from abuse and harm must come first, no matter what the over-arching issues, class structure, ethnicity, gender, physical ability or family make-up are. This toolkit can thus be utilised as a good general professional training practice guide for all social care professionals and volunteers in relation to the needs of all children.

5. Modules

- 5.1 The modules incorporated in this toolkit cover the following areas:
1. [Female genital mutilation](#)
 2. [Parenting and child discipline](#)
 3. [Use of faith / culture as resistance](#)
 4. [Children with disabilities](#)
 5. [Forced marriage](#)
 6. [Domestic violence](#)
 7. [Spirit possession and children branded as witches](#)
 8. [Sexual exploitation](#)
 9. [Trafficked children](#)
- 5.2 This training toolkit is not definitive but provides some guidance to what is ultimately an ever-changing and growing picture. Please use the information in each of the modules to guide the development of training courses along, with additional information from local sources.
- 5.3 Many of the issues pertain to other modules, so it is useful to look through each category as relevant background information and pick the salient points to elaborate on.
- 5.4 Some of the issues addressed in each module may in themselves make children more vulnerable to other types of exploitation and abuse; for example, a child who is deemed to be possessed by an evil spirit may find that, due to the lack of interest and care from the primary care givers, others in that community take advantage of the situation and expose that child to sexual exploitation. It is therefore important to remind learners that children may be suffering a range of different forms of abuse at the same time.

6. Tailoring training

- 6.1 The *London C&F Training Toolkit* is designed to be used as a resource tool, bringing together a range of information that can be used in many different ways, depending on the target training audience.
- 6.2 Most organisations will already have a training package of basic awareness in child protection, and this toolkit offers additional specific materials pertaining to minority ethnic groups, faith groups and specific cultural issues.
- 6.3 Trainers are encouraged to make use of local information in order to keep the material relevant to their context and local demographics. Within the *London C&F Training Toolkit*, there are different PowerPoint presentations, case studies, activities and reading material which can all be used as 'off the shelf' and pick and mix training material.
- 6.4 Local demographics, levels of deprivation, numbers of mobile families and asylum seekers / refugees / people without recourse to public funds and the local experience of child protection issues pertaining to faith / culture will guide trainers in which portions of the training to use.
- 6.5 It may also be beneficial to link up with a local voluntary organisation to support the training. Direct interaction with community members can provide a valuable opportunity to engage better with communities.

7. Training ground rules

- 7.1 It is always important to preface any training with ground rules to ensure that participants feel safe to explore difficult issues, and to set expectations of the session ahead. This is even more crucial when the subject matter is likely to elicit strong feelings in participants.
- **Strong feelings:** training around abuse linked faith or culture addresses sensitive issues that may arouse a range of feelings in professionals on a personal level, and participants may have very different views and experiences of the topic areas discussed. This needs to be acknowledged early in the training and it is worth spending time discussing this during the ground rules, including the fact that the training is designed to highlight how the differences may impact on the wellbeing of children within those communities and faith groups rather than necessarily as a judgement of right or wrong.
 - **Legislation:** The legislative framework in the UK does not compromise based on faith and/or culture and all legislation needs to be adhered to, whatever the original customs and practices of those residing in the UK. Some families and faith groups may mention that they have always felt it important to correct a child by using physical punishment and can quote passages in faith books such as 'spare the rod spoil the child'. Others will say that they were smacked and this did not hurt them. Others may say that it is common practice in the mosque for children to be beaten on the hand to assist them in learning the Koran. No matter what the family custom, it is important that all understand that UK law and statutory guidance relating to child protection has to be adhered to.
 - **Diversity as strength:** Diversity is to be valued and utilised in ensuring that all understand the differing situations in which the children in our communities are living. It is important to appreciate cultural difference and to promote this as a positive addition to our society. However, in the event that cultural differences place children at risk or break the law then appropriate and sensitive action needs to be taken to ensure that the child's wellbeing is paramount.
 - **Supplement:** Training participants will need to be reminded that this training is in addition to general child protection training and all learning from previous courses should be considered alongside this specific information.
 - **Assumptions:** The importance of valuing individualised differences needs to be held in mind to ensure that participants do not make assumptions about families due to stereotypes or previous knowledge around faith or culture. Workers may minimise risks in families that seem to be too similar to their own ('they're just like me, they wouldn't hurt their children') or too different from their own ('it's because of their culture that they behave this way, I don't understand it but I must respect and not challenge difference'). It is more professional for a worker to seek expert advice about a particular faith or culture than to presume that they have grasped a clear understanding from one source - namely the family.

8. Training recommendations

1. In order to manage sensitive group issues it is always best to have two trainers. One can then lead the group and holds the focus of the session while the other observes the responses of participants and can respond to enquiries. Some information that may come out in the training sessions could also be quite distressing for the trainers, as well as the participants; hence it is useful to have a co-worker to debrief. Some of the issues presented during training may affect other people adversely, so be sure to give a health warning to participants and watch out for these individuals to provide support where necessary.
2. Think about the knowledge base and experience of trainers in relation to the subject matter and if possible seek expert guidance beforehand.
3. Allow space in the training day to address emotions and feelings that may be aroused by the subject matter, and be prepared to include an exercise near the end of the session that the participants will find grounding before they leave the training forum. One such exercise could be to ask participants to share in pairs something positive they can take from the session and how they might implement this in their future work.
4. Remember to focus on the needs and protection of children throughout the training, reminding participants that the issues are not about whether certain practices are right or wrong but more about how they impact on the wellbeing of children involved.
5. Be open to challenges, and remind participants that they will also be challenged in their work when faced with these issues.
6. Working agreements or ground rules are essential to participants' feelings of safety. Try to stick to training day/time boundaries - this shows respect for participants and helps them to feel secure. In the event that you do need to go over time, do negotiate this timing with group members.
7. Do clarify language used (e.g. what is meant by 'faith leaders'). Also acknowledge that most faith leaders have good intentions but may need assistance in understanding how some practices can impact on children.
8. Find something positive to say in terms of how these issues are being addressed in your area, such as working in partnership with minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families or possible initiatives in schools.
9. Consider the ethnicity and faith backgrounds of the trainers and participants and ensure that the trainers discuss prior to training any possible responses that these factors might elicit during the delivery of this material. Try to be open and honest with your co-worker about any particular personal blocks that you may have, such as negative feelings about childhood experiences.
10. All trainers will need to consider the elements and materials that they should have in the training session (see the [training programme grid](#) and [training modules](#) for guidance). This will require some thinking about learning styles and a variety of training tools that will keep the group motivated and focussed. For example, different tools could consist of presentations, handouts, DVD clips, role plays and working in small groups. Provide ample opportunities for interactive sessions with the audience.
11. In order to set the scene, the trainer might want to give the participants some background history of the minority ethnic groups or faith organisations in their area, with some timeline of how they have come to be where they are today. For example, the trainer might outline the immediate history of those from refugee communities and their journey to England, with an appreciation of the loss and adjustments that

members of that community may have had to make and how this might impact on their trust or interaction with those in authority.

12. When discussing spirituality and faith, do point out that many beliefs have developed and changed over time. Some religions have now merged or work alongside each other in some cultures, such as Buddhism and Hinduism in some societies, and the parallel belief in Christianity and Voodoo held by some in the Caribbean, African and Brazilian communities. It is also important to note that some families may still practice aspects of original spiritual customs, which are appropriate and not harmful to children. One such custom is the practice of pouring libations at the beginning of family gatherings, where the elder will often pour water into a plant or on the ground to honour those ancestors that paved the way for the current generation. Again, the main purpose of highlighting the good and bad of spiritual practice is that we must hold on to the fact that the religious or spiritual practices should cause no harm to children and in the event that they do then action should be taken to safeguard and protect children without compromise to the wellbeing of the child.
13. During the training it may be relevant to discuss the impact of health issues, education factors and child rearing principles as relevant background to some of the factors that may impact on minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families. Some beliefs about health conditions and disabilities may influence the way children are treated. For example, a Muslim mother of a child with a nasal feeding tube had visited her home town and prayed for the child with others. She returned and decided that as Allah has heard her prayer and has healed her child she would no longer need to feed him through the tube. Other faith group members may be of the view that a child born with a disability or a child diagnosed with autism may be the product of an evil curse and either the child with the disability or another child in the family may be blamed for this evil curse. As some beliefs may have their roots in the child's health, educational ability or behaviour it useful to have some insight into any particular issues that may affect those from minority ethnic groups. This may include health conditions such as sickle cell anaemia or diabetes. It may be useful to gather health sheets pertaining to these conditions as background information if this is a condition that is prevalent in your area.
14. It is essential to recognise that change is happening within affected communities, and that many interventions will already be underway locally to reach out to communities.
15. Training content should focus equally on safeguarding and prevention strategies which engage key affected communities as agents of change. It is important to work through partnerships wherever possible.

Appendix 1 - Training programme grid (example)

Aim of session	Objective	Exercise / learning tool	Impact on learning style	How diversity is addressed	What the learning will be	Outcome and how the learning can be evidenced
To identify potential harm to children in spite of justifications based on cultural practices.	To enable participants to address the dilemma of a family or faith group upholding a practice that is causing the child harm.	Case studies with small group discussion. Asking participants to note what might be the risk to the child, what action needs to be taken in terms of safeguarding the wellbeing of the child. What would they say to the child and family?	Think about those who prefer to read and address issues from theoretical prospective, those who would like role plays and others who learn from discussion and sharing.	Open up discussion to look at issues that may differ if the child had a disability, if the parents did not have English as first language etc.	That the participants will be reminded of appropriate referral and assessment process and how to utilise a possible expert in the process. Looking at how child protection is paramount in spite of well intentioned cultural differences.	That participants have an opportunity to consider responding sensitively but clearly where a child is placed at risk by adults who are promoting their cultural practice. Staff are alerted to policy and procedure. Handout of flowchart for referral and assessment processes when addressing issues of faith and cultural issues.
An introduction to the issues of spirit possession and children branded as witches.	To help professionals to appreciate why a parent may be convinced by negative advice from a rogue faith leader, or may perceive their children as being possessed by evil.	Divide the learners into at least two groups and ask each group to discuss different questions/ statements and feed back to large group Exemplar questions / statements: Some children are born evil. Spare the rod, spoil the child.	This exercise may bring out contentious views amongst group members, and some may be more vocal than others. Offer flip chart and pen for those who wish to learn via the written word or drawings.	Consider the feedback by stating that different families will have different levels of commitment to their spiritual beliefs and remind all that it is the protection of the child and adhering to the law that is most important. Refrain from appearing judgemental about the decisions that family members may choose when posed with these dilemmas	The participant would have had an opportunity to consider the thinking of parents and how easy it might be to negate the needs of a child through prioritising the need to fulfil spiritual doctrines or traditional practices. The participants may gain insight into how easily and unconsciously one may take on the ways of past parental practices (learnt behaviour) and powerful influences such as faith groups.	The experience of the session can be revisited later on in order to remind participants of the possible thinking of some parents so that they are able to remain open to learning rather than angry or indignant, which may block learning. Participants will learn to approach families with more empathy yet absolute clarity that the child's needs are paramount. Learning could be evidenced through quizzes during the learning session and from evaluation sheets

Trainer tips

- Each training session can be accompanied by a programme/ timetable outlining what will be covered, i.e. presentations, discussions, role plays, with designated times for breaks. Having such a programme will allow the participants to feel contained if they have some idea about what will be covered throughout the sessions, what is expected of them and when they can expect to have a break and finish.
- Formulate your PowerPoint presentation according to the needs of your programme, taking relevant slides and information from the resource list. Some people prefer not to give a copy of their PowerPoint presentation to participants beforehand as they spend more time reading rather than listening, others may prefer to produce a reader beforehand that will contain all the information on the PowerPoint and more. Handouts can be given after the presentation or at the end of the day.
- Prepare a quiz or other method of checking out people's learning throughout the day. A simple method is to ask the group to recap salient points at the end of the session or just before breaks.
- Think about the evaluation form and what information you would like back in order to help you improve the training and check out the learning. The evaluation can also be used as a measuring tool in terms of the work you have done and what the participants require.
- Think about different learning styles and try to vary the training style to accommodate this.
- It is essential to note that as the subject is challenging for participants they may become quite exhausted more quickly and/or may fall asleep as a way of avoiding the subject matter; the level of distress when addressing these issues is often underestimated. Do consider the length of your training and whether it would be better to deliver the training in bite size chunks over a number of weeks or two half days. Think about the time of day for your session. If you decide on a full day then set the pace of the material so that participants can digest what they have learnt and consider how they might put this new learning into practice.
- Throughout your training session do keep reminding participants of the need to adhere to the *London Child Protection Procedures*. It may be useful to produce a flow chart of your organisation's referral and assessment process with additions eg. when and how you might consult an expert such as an Imam or church leader about a particular matter. It may also be useful to consider listing named professionals that deal specifically with issues such as forced marriages, domestic violence and issues such as female genital mutilation etc.
- When delivering training consider the makeup of your group. Are they already a team or have a group of unknown professionals come together for this training experience? Such knowledge about your training participants will assist in the design of warm up exercises and the development of ground rules.
- Professionals need to ensure that they are confident and supported in their efforts to engage with child abuse issues where faith and culture are a factor. Not only do we need to be prepared to question the members of these communities but we also need to openly and honestly question ourselves and colleagues as to why we are intervening (or not) in the lives of children from minority ethnic culture and faith communities, groups and families

Appendix 2 – National serious case reviews featuring faith, culture and ethnicity

Brandon et al show in *'Understanding Serious Case Reviews and their Impact: a biennial analysis of SCRs 2005-2007'* that children from minority ethnic groups are over-represented in serious case reviews, accounting for almost a quarter of all the SCRs they studied. We know this is also so for all statutory social work interventions.

Sample of SCRs reviewed

Haringey LSCB reviewed serious case reviews (SCRs) published around the country over the past three years with the aim of identifying cases and SCR recommendations that relate to issues of faith, culture and ethnicity. The purpose was to provide a resource for training and the dissemination of learning.

SCRs were selected because they addressed at least one of the following in their executive summaries:

- Abuse linked to faith
- Spirit possession
- Witchcraft / children branded as witches
- Female genital mutilation
- Child trafficking
- Force marriage
- Honour killings
- Domestic violence in minority ethnic families
- Use of discipline in minority ethnic families
- Resistance: using ethnicity / accusations of discrimination as a means to refuse services

Having reviewed a large number of SCRs, it is evident that the above themes are not frequently addressed in serious case reviews. Likewise, the ethnicity and the cultural contexts of families are frequently omitted from executive summaries and they rarely state the reason, if any, for this omission. For this reason, we have included cases that are relevant to issues that particularly affect minority ethnic families even if ethnicity, faith and culture are not explicitly stated.

It is unclear whether issues of abuse linked to faith and culture are not common in cases subject to the SCR process, or whether they are simply not specifically identified, addressed and explored.

We have included the Laming Report although it is not an SCR, due to the clear case example showing the influence of pastors and beliefs in witchcraft on children. However, even in this report, where there is such clear evidence of several pastors identifying Victoria as being possessed by evil spirits, there are no specific recommendations made in terms of responding to and challenging issues of spirit possession.

Despite prevalence in the press, we found no cases of honour-based violence in SCRs. Nor did we find any cases with mention of issues such as FGM or forced marriages. There were many cases of domestic violence but as the executive summaries did not identify issues of culture or ethnicity, they are not included in the SCRs below. This does not mean that there were no such issues.

Cultural relativism

Although we must take care to understand and assess children and young people within their wider contexts of faith, ethnicity and culture, and to respect differences, Dr Nnenna Cookey, consultant paediatrician, says in the Laming Enquiry:

“A child is a child regardless of colour. I think the social and cultural differences or backgrounds of these families is crucial and should be taken into account as part of a general assessment. But I think if we are not careful we’ll lose the whole emphasis on the child’s welfare. [...] I do not do political correctness when it comes to children.”

Cultural relativism has an essential place in assessments, but it can also become dangerous in practice, when practitioners make false assumptions about cultural norms and accepting differences, even dangerous differences, in the name of diversity, and without challenge. Cases such as Khyra Ishaq’s and Victoria Climbié’s tragically illustrate this.

Serious Case Reviews

Borough	Date	Child Name	Brief Overview	Issues Linked to Faith / Culture / minority ethnic theme	Related Document
Haringey	2003	Victoria Climbié	See 3.37-38 and 3.77-80 of Victoria's Story. Note that there are no recommendations regarding spirit possession. See Section 16 'Working with Diversity' – although there is no direct reference to addressing spirit possession or the role of pastors.	Spirit possession (Christian), trafficking	Laming Summary Report (not SCR)
Birmingham	Apr-10	Case 14 (Khyra Ishaq)	Girl, aged 7 years, was extremely malnourished and died in May 2008. Mother and her partner were convicted of manslaughter.	Using ethnicity and charges of discrimination and racism as a means of refusing services, including education, and intimidating professionals. Spirit Possession (Muslim): child accused of being possessed by a Djinn.	Full Report
Derby	Jul-10	DB 09	Two adolescent girls with histories of neglect, were sexually exploited while in local authority care until police intervention in April 2009. Seven men were found guilty of various offences. Includes issues such as the impact of childhood abuse and no early intervention on vulnerable adolescents, identity, culture and ethnicity, child sexual exploitation, organised abuse, child trafficking, rape, behaviour seen as criminal not symptomatic of abuse, absent from care.	Trafficking and sexual exploitation. Children in care confused about their identity and place in the world, in part based on ethnicity and culture.	Executive Summary Report
Barking & Dagenham	Aug-11	Child T	Child T (12) was killed by his mother by being forced to drink bleach, while his brother Child R (11) was in the house. Mother was remanded for inpatient psychiatric assessment at the time of writing.	Professionals' handling of matters relating to family's ethnicity. Using ethnicity as a means of refusing services, including education.	Executive Summary Report

Borough	Date	Child Name	Brief Overview	Issues Linked to Faith / Culture / minority ethnic theme	Related Document
Cambridge-shire	May-10	Child F	Baby girl, white, aged 6 weeks, died in June 2009. Parents were charged. Parental mental health problems, extreme religious beliefs, isolation, refusal of support.	Using belief system as a means of refusing services. Link between parent's mental health and religious beliefs and impact on child.	Executive Summary Report
Hackney	Jul-08	Children A&B	Two children (10 & 3) were found murdered by their mother. Mother sentenced to indefinite detention under the Mental Health Act 1983 following an earlier admission of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility due to mental ill health.	Spirit possession (linked to maternal mental health issues)	Executive Summary Report
Hackney	Jun-10	Child S	Death of a young child who suffered from severe rickets, although deliberate neglect was not identified at the time of her death. The family educated their children at home and did not engage with education, health or social work services in respect of their youngest children, in marked contrast to their engagement with their older children. They gave their children a restricted diet that was low in calcium and protein, it is understood that this was based on a belief system.	Abuse linked to faith & neglect	Executive Summary Report
Enfield	Dec-08	Child SP	Young boy died of terminal AIDS-related illness. Parents (both healthcare professionals) refused to have their child diagnosed even though they were both HIV positive. Health professionals unaware that this is a CP concern and can be challenged. As boy looked well and healthy, none of the professionals viewed this with any matter of urgency. The ethnicity and faith of the family are not indicated.	Although this SCR does not give the reasons for the parents refusal to have their son tested for HIV, and neither does it identify their ethnicity or cultural origin, we have included this SCR as there were several similar in other parts of London, and they are particularly relevant to newly arriving families, especially from Africa	Executive Summary Report

Appendix 3 – Training modules

1. Female genital mutilation

Key training points

- Give a clear definition of Female Genital Mutilation, the different types of FGM and its implications (see useful resources) - this can also be found on the World Health Organisation website.
- Discuss the changing terminology and what to use when working directly with community members – children may also be unfamiliar with the terms.
- Discuss the social context of FGM and cultural norms that enforce the practice. There are often powerful cultural pressures on girls and young women to be mutilated. Refusing to do so may result in social exclusion, persecution and bullying, and may mean that she cannot marry within her community.
- FGM can occur at any age, from birth, although it is frequently perpetrated as a right of passage around puberty.
- Women and girls do not talk about FGM; often, the first time we become aware that FGM has occurred is when a woman becomes pregnant and is examined by a midwife.
- The summer holidays are key times when FGM is practised – schools and other professionals must be especially alert to any indicators around this period. It is also important to note that there may not be any obvious indicators if the issue has not been discussed. There is the reality that children may be forced to undergo FGM without the consent or knowledge of parents while girls are on holiday. Any professional who becomes aware that FGM has been practised must alert social care so that they are aware of the heightened risks posed to the woman's younger female relatives.
- The act of mutilation may be carried out by female elders in the community or medical professionals.
- The act of FGM has both short term and long term affects, including greatly increased risks to unborn children during childbirth. However, this is more so for the severe forms of FGM.
- The laws in this country and several other countries prohibit the act of FGM and also guard against girls being taken out of the country for the purpose of having this done.
- The act of FGM is not confined to African communities and takes place in a number of other countries in the Middle East and Asia.
- Professionals should be familiar with their own procedures for referral and reporting, and follow these procedures where a girl is found to be at risk.

Things to watch out for...

- It is a common belief amongst some who promote the idea of FGM that it is done in accordance with faith and religious practices, but it is not stated in any of the faith scriptures that it is a religious requirement. This is unlike male circumcision, which is referenced in the Bible / Torah (Genesis 17:10-14) and practised by Jewish and Muslim believers.
- Some learners may find the subject matter very distressing. The topic needs to be handled very sensitively and conducted at a pace that allows participants to explore what they are being taught and ask questions.
- Be aware that some members of your audience may have undergone FGM procedures or have

others in their families who have gone through this process. It is important to highlight that, no matter what personal views are held about FGM, it is illegal and deemed to be damaging to girls and women who go through this experience. The resources will assist in demonstrating that this is a child protection issue as the threat of the act of FGM places girls at risk of significant physical and psychological harm.

- Remind male members of staff that they also need to remain alert to the issues as girls may choose to disclose a threat of FGM or the fact that it has happened to them.

Useful resources

- **[London FGM Resource Pack \(London SCB\)](#)**
For more information, please contact ian.dean@londoncouncils.gov.uk
Contains detailed information about FGM, as well as guidelines on how to spot victims of abuse or girls at risk. These include a set of questions for midwives to ask women attending their clinics. There is also advice on how community groups can help to prevent FGM, and information to help professionals discuss the issue with parents and children.
- **[Multi-agency practice guidelines: FGM \(Foreign and Commonwealth Office\)](#)**
For more information, please see <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/fgm/>
This national practice guidance, published in 2011, seeks to provide advice and support to frontline professionals who have responsibilities to safeguard children and protect adults from the abuses associated with female genital mutilation (FGM).
- **[Project Azure PowerPoint presentation \(Met Police\)](#)**
For more information, please contact vicky.washington@met.police.uk
PowerPoint presentation re FGM and the law. Clear and concise information about the act of FGM and what needs to be done if noted with added resources.
- **[Met Police Standard Operating Procedures \(Met Police\)](#)**
For more information, please contact vicky.washington@met.police.uk
This document provides instructions for police officers with regard to dealing with all incidents of Female Genital Mutilation.
- **[FGM fact sheet \(Met Police\)](#)**
For more information, please contact vicky.washington@met.police.uk
This outlines key issues around FGM on one side of A4.
- **[BME and health \(LB Bexley\)](#)**
For more information, please contact emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk
Gives details of how the community may view the act of FGM, the health implications, relevant background information and the responsibilities of professionals.

Additional contacts

- **Hospitals and Clinics in the UK offering specialist FGM health services**
A full list is available online at www.forwarduk.org.uk/resources/support/well-woman-clinics
- **Metropolitan Police Project Azure**
Project Azure is the MPS response to the practice of FGM
www.met.police.uk/fgm/ / 020 7230 8324
- **Foundation for Women's Health Research & Development (FORWARD)**
FORWARD is an African Diaspora women led UK-registered campaign and support charity dedicated to advancing and safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of African girls and women
www.forwarduk.org.uk / 020 8960 4000

- **Agency for Culture and Change Management**
ACCM Sheffield is an international non-governmental organisation dedicated to improving the health and well-being of African women and girls wherever they reside
www.accmsheffield.org
 01234 356910
 01234 349049
smcculloch@accmsheffield.org
- **28TooMany**
28 Too Many is a values based FGM charity funded by supporters and donations, created to help eradicate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the twenty-eight countries within Africa where it is still practised. Founded in 2010, it is based on Christian values and takes a stand against FGM
www.28toomany.org
annmarie@28toomany.org

2. Parenting and child discipline

Key training points

- It is important to acknowledge that this is a very emotive subject and many participants will have memories of being physically abused or physically abusing their own children. They may see no harm in physical abuse. Remind participants of the law and the right that parents have to chastise their children as long as reasonable force is used and the child is not hit in a way that constitutes physical abuse, such as breaking the skin, slapping around fragile and tender parts of the body i.e. head, stomach etc.
- Insecure and disorganised attachment in a child may result in challenging behaviour. Frightening and cold parenting will contribute to the development of insecure and disorganised attachment styles in children. These children will have fewer resources and less resilience when they face life's difficulties. However, it is possible for a child who has a secure attachment style to have been physically chastised (but not abused) at some point in their lives.
- Research has shown that even mild physical chastisement or smacking can have a significantly negative impact on children – parents may not realise this link. Children who are even mildly physically chastised tend to have lower educational attainment, are more likely to cheat, steal and bully, and are more likely to be aggressive and become involved in crime.
- The milestones of basic child development are useful in reminding participants of what children need at each stage of their lives.
- Emphasise that children are individuals and therefore a mixture of different methods are required for each child and this may change through the stages of their upbringing.
- Do link child discipline to future parenting skills. Appropriate discipline is vital for creating appropriate boundaries.
- Please emphasise that parents have the right to choose to raise their children as they think appropriate as long as this is done within the scope of UK law.
- An understanding of children's mental health will assist participants in grasping the points addressed in appropriately disciplining children.
- The need to understand what may motivate children and encourage positive behaviour is required. Parents should practice thinking about the prevention of negative behaviour rather than the correction of negative behaviours.

- Ask participants to consider what might precipitate negative behaviour. Then to consider what may escalate such behaviour and what would help to diffuse the situation. This could be done as a group exercise followed by discussion.

Things to watch out for...

- You may be challenged as to what is good enough parenting and again the rule of thumb is that good enough parenting is a course of actions and attitudes that puts the child's needs and wellbeing first. The five Every Child Matters outcomes are useful to quote at this time.
- Participants may react strongly, even aggressively, during these discussions. This may have more to do with their own life experiences and it is important for trainers to be sensitive to the triggers that training can provoke.
- Participants may suggest that it is the legacy of their own culture to physically abuse their children, and ought to be respected. We must gently remind people of the law and one could also argue that it is probably most people's cultural legacies (albeit with perhaps a longer time-lapse) – and views change as we learn more about the impact of some of our behaviour.
- Research suggests that using physical discipline is detrimental in the long term when it comes to children and young people's behaviour – participants may become outraged at this, saying that what is lacking is parental disciplining of children and young people. The idea is to promote discipline that is more effective, but perhaps more time-consuming. Not using physical punishment actually requires the disciplining parent to do more actual parenting.
- Remember that in some cultures the parenting role is shared between actual parents, grandparents and/or aunts and uncles. What is important to children is that they have consistent parenting whoever the care givers are.
- Remind participants that only the natural parents or those with parental rights are legally allowed to appropriately physically chastise a child, and that parents do not have the right to pass this on to another person without a legally binding document that gives someone else parental rights. However, all adults have a duty to safeguard and protect children in their care.
- Some participants may fear that their views could be deemed racist or stereotypical. Remind participants that this is a learning forum and as long as views are expressed in a respectable way with a view to learning and changing then this should be acceptable. Always refer back to learning ground rules.

Useful resources

- **[Safe Children Safe Learning: Guidance for Madrassahs \(Kirklees Metropolitan Council\)](#)**
This is a booklet produced by the Council which offers child protection guidance for Mosques and Madrassahs, outlining the law, good practice and guidance and procedures.
- **[Disciplining the Black African Child \(Ola Okeowo, developed for LB Bexley\)](#)**
For more information, please contact empowerBME@yahoo.com
Powerpoint presenting a very clear programme of issues to consider when working with parents around discipline of black children, including good practice guidelines and advice on how to impact on negative behaviour.
- **[Safeguarding children and inappropriate chastisement \(Met Police\)](#)**
For more information, please contact vicky.washington@met.police.uk
This presentation outlines the legal framework around physical chastisement and offers advice for faith groups and statutory services
- **[Safe and secure training DVD \(CCPAS\)](#)**
For more information, please contact www.ccpas.co.uk/Training.html
This is a 50 minute docu-drama style presentation. It contrasts two cases of abuse, one of

which was handled badly and the other well. It has been translated into 16 languages, British Sign Language and English subtitles, and It presents CCPAS's 10 principles of safeguarding in clear, logical steps. It is particularly relevant to church trustees, leaders and those adults for whom full safeguarding training is not needed. It would also provide a useful introduction to new youth workers before they experience a live FTU seminar or the distance learning programme.

- **BME and discipline (LB Bexley)**

- **BME and discipline scenarios (LB Bexley)**

For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)

This presentation helps professionals understand how and why some BME parents discipline their children, and outlines what professionals can do to help safeguard these children.

- **KOFI wanted to be a Bad Bwoy by Mushirah Wilson** (not available online)

BIS Publications - www.bispublications.com ISBN: 978 -1-903289-04-4

Bad Bwoy is a colloquial term for a boy or young man who is respected and feared by his peers because he rebels against his parents, teachers and other figures of authority in the community. The term originated in the Caribbean but is used in popular culture. The Bad Bwoy series of books are aimed at Key Stage 1 children. Parents, carers and teachers are urged to read them with children. It should explain to the child that although the Bad Bwoy or street image may seem attractive, it is not always a positive way of communicating or trying to get your message across effectively.

3. Use of faith / culture as resistance

Key training points

- The main point to be established throughout all of the training is that the child's needs are paramount, and that these needs include emotional wellbeing, physical health, the ability to express their wishes, have a sense of security and appropriate care and attention.
- Families can resist intervention by accusing workers of discrimination or by hiding abuse and neglect behind religious beliefs.
- Workers are often reluctant to question issues of faith and culture in families because they are keen to respect differences and embrace diversity. This is dangerous. Practitioners must be encouraged to question any individual's practice or interpretation of their faith or belief system if it may impact on the wellbeing of children.
- We must challenge parenting and the treatment of children, even if it represents an important part of another's faith or culture.
- Some cultural practices are against the law within the UK, such as the scarring of children's faces as practiced by some African cultures or the practice of female genital mutilation.
- It is important for trainers to model a respect for faith and cultural issues while highlighting the fact that the child's needs override such considerations. A respect for faith and culture does not mean condoning or accepting behaviours and practices that may place children at risk of harm or neglect.
- Being too close to clients culturally can also be dangerous; workers can make assumptions of safety and miss danger points when they over-identify with clients, such as when they share the same faith or culture as a client.
- Encourage professionals to be flexible in their working practices in order to assist families with engagement; for example, the need to plan meetings outside of prayer times according to the family's faith. To consider the impact of fasting and observing religious practices and how this

might impact on the practical and emotional ability of the family members. To ask ourselves the question: is this the best time to ask the service user to engage in a meeting or group according to the requirements of their faith, or could this be rescheduled for a more appropriate date?

- Remember to encourage professionals to gain some insight into how the specific families they are working with observe their religious practices.
- Be specific about what the law allows, backed up by legislation.
- Talk about diversity and the value of respecting difference.
- Highlight the issues of micro cultures within cultures: for example, a child of Seventh Day Adventist parents may not be able to engage in activities on a Saturday and may have some restrictions around TV shows and books (Harry Potter). How might the family and the worker assist with ensuring that the child does not feel excluded or isolated amongst their peers?

Things to watch out for...

- Some may argue that the training is based on westernised views of raising children and that children from other cultures and faith groups appear to be doing well, in spite of possible restrictions and/or being smacked. Talk about the emotional well being of children and the affects of trauma.
- Be aware that those within your audience are also attached to a particular faith or culture, so be careful to not to talk in a 'them and us' fashion.
- Be mindful that some professionals may have had negative experiences with particular groups of people, depending on where they have worked and what resistance they have experienced from service users and some may have closed views. The task of the trainer is to acknowledge this and make efforts to impact on previously held views, attitudes and prejudices.
- For trainers and participants there may be a fear that they will be perceived as racist or negative towards a particular faith or culture. It is important that this is acknowledged early and that all are reminded of the grounds and the need to respect diversity.
- Other trainers might think it ok to say negative things about British culture or faith groups as a way of addressing the possible negative things that might be expressed about other cultures. It is not ok to be negative about the Catholic Church for example as a means of addressing the balance of views around the Muslim faith. It is acceptable to make mention that all faith groups have their issues and every child for all settings deserves to be safeguarded and protected.

Useful resources

- **[Engaging reluctant and resistant families \(ReConstruct\)](#)**
For more information, please contact Cathy Bostock (Tel: 01895 204861, www.reconstruct.co.uk)
This presentation gives a clear outline of what needs to be included in this training and methods of delivery the programme.
- **[Safeguarding children in minority culture and faith \(often socially excluded\) families, communities and groups \(London SCB\)](#)**
For more information, please contact ian.dean@londoncouncils.gov.uk
The London SCB Cultural Competence document offers guidance on understanding diversity and working within a framework of valuing difference.
- **[Diversity and Practice Youth Offenders course outline \(East London University\)](#)**
For more information, please contact lenford@anbessa.co.uk
Shares methods of presenting your programme and highlights issues that could be addressed.

- **[Working with black and ethnic minority families](#) (ReConstruct)**
For more information, please contact Cathy Bostock (Tel: 01895 204861, www.reconstruct.co.uk)
 This presentation gives an overview of best practice in working with black and ethnic minority families.
- **[Equalities and diversity practice in working with children and young people](#) (Perdeep Gill for LB Barnet)**
For more information, please contact Helen Elliott (helen.elliott@barnet.gov.uk)
 This flyer gives an outline of a course run in Barnet by Perdeep Gill, which includes consideration of various issues such as FGM, spirit possession, honour based violence.
- **[Introduction to safeguarding and child protection](#) (LB Barnet)**
[Introduction to safeguarding and child protection scenario setting](#) (LB Barnet)
For more information, please contact Helen Elliott (helen.elliott@barnet.gov.uk)
 This presentation and scenario setting exercise is delivered in Barnet as part of a child protection awareness course with a local mosque in Barnet.
- **[BME and culture](#) (LB Bexley)**
For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)
 This presentation helps professionals understand the culture of BME children and their families, and explore the necessary tools that professionals need to work with BME children and their families while being mindful of their culture.
- **[BME and education](#) (LB Bexley)**
[BME and education scenarios](#) (LB Bexley)
For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)
 This presentation helps professional understand the views of some BME parents regarding education, explores some strategies of working with BME parents and aims to bring to light the impact of these strategies on the achievement of pupils.
- **[BME and faith](#) (LB Bexley)**
For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)
 This presentation helps professionals understand the impact of faith, from a safeguarding viewpoint.
- **[BME and support](#) (LB Bexley)**
For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)
 This presentation helps professionals understand BME parents and the support available, and considers what strategies can be explored for change.
- **[BME and their history](#) (LB Bexley)**
For more information, please contact Emma Aiyere (emma.aiyere@bexley.gov.uk)
 This presentation helps professionals understand why BME children and families are in this country in the first place, explores the impact of that history on their lives and explore the barriers, encounters and challenges faced when working with BME children and their families.

4. Children with disabilities

Key training points:

- Research suggests that disabled children's vulnerability to abuse is approximately 3.4 times higher than their non-disabled peers (Largest recent study by Sullivan and Knutson (2000) – analysis of over 40,000 children in a US city).
- The interface between disability, religion, faith and cultural beliefs systems is complex, and within any group a variety of belief systems will be present and embedded. Most religions offer

conflicting messages, for example that a child with a disability may be 'the sins of the father affecting the lives of his children' alongside the idea that we are all equal in God's eye.

- For some people, disability is seen as something which needs to be cured, while for others it may be seen as a blessing that the child is born different from other children and that the parents have been chosen to care for this child because they have the skills to do so. Such beliefs will impact on the parental and professional response to the child.
- Being sensitive to people's religious beliefs is important, but professionals need to be prepared to challenge families if their views and actions expose the child to harm.
- Some parents may believe in healing, and professionals must be prepared to consider when this might become an abusive act. For example, the child's disability is an intrinsic part of their identity, so to have faith leaders or other adults putting them through a spiritual or religious process to change that is abusive and impacts negatively on the child's sense of identity.
- Children with disabilities can also become scapegoats in families that have belief systems which perceive disabilities as a curse or an outcome of some type of negative spiritual consequence. For example, the child with disabilities may be perceived as possessed by an evil spirit or may be perceived as the victim of another person within the family or community who is possessed by an evil spirit, often an older sibling (please see module 7, Spirit Possession).
- Children with communication difficulties may be unable to report any abuse that they may be experiencing; some may be able to communicate practical needs but may have difficulty expressing their wishes and feelings. Children with disabilities may also be dependent upon the person perpetrating the abuse, or their parent may be dependent upon this person, both of which increase the child's vulnerability. Professionals may be anxious about how to facilitate this communication and will need time to consider how best to do so.
- Some religious settings may deliberately target vulnerable people, including families with disabled children. For example, rogue pastors may set out to manipulate such families.
- Other religious settings are overtly inclusive of children and families with disabilities, where they are treated with respect and dignity. An exploration of how faith groups can be part of the network of support for children and their families and offer appropriate participation in religious forums is important, as is working with faith leaders to protect the children in their congregations.
- Where there is a cultural stigma associated with disability, families may conceal a child or deny them access to services. As supportive resources may be difficult to identify and provide, professionals may deliberately or unconsciously collude with families who express a wish to keep their children indoors and away from public support services.
- Children with disabilities and their siblings may experience lack of support and/or less access to resources where there are particular cultural requirements that impact on gender interaction. For example, a Hindu girl may not be allowed to attend a disabled children's group if boys are also present; this could be the same for Orthodox Jewish families.

Things to watch out for...

- It is important to be sensitive to the views of training participants. However, trainers must be prepared to challenge any views that may place children at risk, such as healing methods or attempts to rid a child of a disability that might become abusive. Remember that disability is a part of the child's identity, as stated above.
- Disabled children may not have the cognitive ability to process some of the events that may occur in places of worship, for example parents and other faith members 'going into spirit' and dropping to the floor in a manner that appears to be out of control and in distress. Other children may experience loud praying, singing and wailing as auditory overload, and this could be very distressing for the child. If the child is exposed to such distress on a regular basis, this

could amount to abuse.

- Some participants may argue that parents have the right to expose their children to their own faith and religion, and it is true that trainers should not be advocating that the parent's belief system should be policed. However, the protection of the child must be paramount, even when they may appear to be a willing participant.

Useful resources

- **[Two way street \(NSPCC\)](#)**
For more information, please contact NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk)
This DVD pack and handbook aims to improve skills in communicating directly with children and young people with different communication impairments, in a way which is respectful of disabled children and young people.
- **[Mental health and BME children and families \(Young Minds\)](#)**
For more information, please contact roger.catchpole@youngminds.org.uk
Powerpoint presentation, including an introduction to attachment theory and understanding children's mental health, with specific reference to black children.

5. Forced marriage

Key training points:

- Forced marriage is a form of child/domestic abuse and should be treated as such
- Forced marriage affects people from many communities and cultures and should be tackled using existing structures (safeguarding adults/children, including those with disabilities/LGBT).
- Forced marriage is a marriage which one or both spouses do not consent to. Duress is involved and can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressures. If families resolve to such measures to pressure someone to marry, that person's consent has not been freely given and is forced marriage
- There is a clear distinction between forced marriage and arranged marriage
- The UK government regard forced marriage as an abuse of human rights and a form of domestic abuse
- Forced marriage can happen to both men and women, although most cases involve young women and girls between 13 and 30yrs
- The majority of forced marriage cases in the UK involve South Asian families - however, it is NOT solely a South Asian problem – there have been cases involving families from East Asia, Middle East, Europe and Africa
- Forced marriage cannot be justified on religious grounds – every major faith condemns it (freely given consent is a prerequisite of all religions).
- Honour based violence may be a feature of forced marriage cases

Things to watch out for...

- This issue affects many different communities, not just South Asian
- There is a clear difference between forced and arranged marriage.

Useful resources

- **[Forced Marriage Unit training powerpoint \(FMU\)](#)**
For more information, please contact Lesley Perry (Lesley.Perry@redbridge.gov.uk)
This is a training powerpoint, developed by the UK Forced Marriage Unit
- **[Prosecuting honour based violence \(CPS\)](#)**
For more information, please contact Lesley Perry (Lesley.Perry@redbridge.gov.uk)
This is a training powerpoint, developed by the Crown Prosecution Service
- **[Foreign and Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit](#)**
Wealth of resource material available online, including booklets / guidance on forced marriage

6. Domestic violence

Key training points:

- In relation to families with no recourse to public funds, the issues of immigration status plays a crucial role as women may feel trapped in their domestic situation if they are in the UK unlawfully. Immigration and lack of housing and money would be pull factors for women to decide to stay in abusive relationships. It is important to get across to families that there is help at hand and they are not dependant on their partners.
- Some mothers in this situation have a lack of awareness about being victims of DV, as their understanding is that they need to be 'hit really hard' for it to count as DV. In our experience they are quite surprised when we explain what it really is and for them to find themselves in that situation.
- Some mothers in DV situations have grown up in an environment of DV themselves and therefore it is normalised behaviour to experience abuse in their partners. In their view, because they provide money or "don't hit them hard enough", they would not consider themselves to be in an abusive relationship or they would diminish their situation of abuse.
- Most adults in this situation lack awareness of the impact of DV on children. There is also parental denial of what is going on for the children. Some mothers grew up without a father and they do not want the same for their children but cannot see that they may be putting themselves at risk.
- In some cases, mothers feel that the fathers are abusing them but they detach their experience with the father with the experience the children are having of the father, and describe the relationship between father and children as a positive one. Mums need more awareness of the full impact of DV in children.
- Some mothers are fearful to disclose DV for fear of being ostracised by their own community. There is also fear of isolation if they have to leave the area where they have their support networks.
- Some mothers fear that if social services are involved their children will be taken away, which is not normally the case.
- It is important to provide culturally specific counselling and support, as therapy for mothers may be an alien concept and when they have experienced this. A high percentage had stated that a white middle-class professional would not be able to understand their experiences and where they are coming from.

Things to watch out for...

- When mothers are unable to leave the house or make an appointment with a professional;
- If they are very evasive with information or need the consent of their partners to make appointments
- When they change appointments all the time
- Unwillingness to take the child/ren to agencies, child centres, and other relevant agencies
- Neglect of house / children
- Mother seeking reassurance and acceptance
- Mothers not wanting to talk to professionals and displaying low self-esteem
- Children being hyperactive and displaying disruptive behaviour
- Children being overprotective of mothers
- In some cases children have been high achievers at class, which appears to be a defence mechanism. We have experienced the extremes of children doing very badly at school and also doing very well, therefore 'extreme' school performance may be an indicator for concern.

Useful resources

- **Ending domestic abuse: a pack for churches (Restored)**

For more information, please see <http://www.restoredrelationships.org/>

Restored works within the international Christian community to help men improve their relationships and has a specific focus is on the prevention of domestic violence and sexual violence against women and girls. Restored seeks to signpost victims and those causing harm to the support they need, gives presentations and has a range of online resources

The aim of this pack is to help churches to address domestic abuse both within their own community and wider society. Also to work through how to deal with domestic abuse issues in today's world. It is intended to raise awareness and to highlight some of the areas that need to be considered in making churches safe places.

- **Silent no more (Restored)**

For more information, please see <http://www.restoredrelationships.org/>

This report provides insights into how churches can respond constructively to the crisis of sexual violence to transform the lives of women, girls, boys and men.

Additional contacts

- **Ashiana**

Ashiana aim to empower South Asian, Turkish and Iranian women who are experiencing domestic violence with culturally sensitive advice, support and safe housing - enabling them to make positive and appropriate choices for themselves.

www.ashiana.org.uk/ / 020 8539 0427

- **Refuge UK**

Refuge's network of safe houses provides emergency accommodation for women and children when they are most in need.

www.refuge.org.uk / 0808 2000 247

- **Eaves**
Eaves is a London-based charity that provides high quality housing and support to vulnerable women. Eaves also carries out research, advocacy and campaigning to prevent all forms of violence against women.
www.eaves4women.co.uk / 020 7735 2062

7. Spirit possession and children branded as witches

Key training points

- A main point to get across early in the training is that, although the numbers of children abused in this way is quite small in comparison to the general categories of abuse, the effect is so significant it needs to be taken very seriously.
- That the abuse suffered by children under the heading of spirit possession and witchcraft fits into all the four main categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- That spirit possession and witchcraft is found in many different faiths and communities.
- That this type of abuse is everybody's business and often happens behind closed doors within our communities and areas of work.
- Children and young people particularly vulnerable to spirit possession and witchcraft related abuse are disabled children, children with learning difficulties, physical illnesses, left-handed children, children with conditions such as autism or epilepsy, and stepchildren or children in private fostering situations.
- Some signs of children branded as witches include marks, incision marks, a parent or community member saying a child is evil or bad, school absences, stealing food, an isolated or withdrawn child.
- Common names for spirit possession differ according to families' origins. They include 'abazimu' (Rwanda), 'emandwa' (Uganda), 'ndoki' (Congo), 'Ogbanje' or 'Amozu' (Igboland), 'djinn' or 'evil eye' (Islamic faiths & Tanzania), 'Aje' (Noruba, Nigeria).

Things to watch out for...

- Do be alerted to those who might think that this would never happen within their faith group or culture and bring to their attention that some abusers will deliberately target such groups, precisely because the congregation or community would never believe that someone would treat children like that in their environment.
- Be careful to note that the bad practice of deeming children to be evil is perpetrated by some rogue church/faith leaders, but not all.
- Some of the material in this programme of spirit possession can be quite graphic and distressing to those learning the subject, so be sensitive to the reactions of your learning group and do forewarn them of this.
- Remember you can never be sure of what faith groups you have within your audience so remain respectful and balanced in your delivery of material about faith groups.

Useful resources

- [Spirit possession and Witchcraft PowerPoint](#) (Aqualma Murray, D.S Vicky Washington and DC Ben Voss for LB Haringey)

[Spirit possession and Witchcraft additional information](#) (Aqualma Murray, D.S Vicky Washington and DC Ben Voss for LB Haringey)

For more information, please contact aqualma.murray@haringey.gov.uk

Looks at legislation and case examples where beliefs in spirit possession have been a factor, talks about how this abuse is perpetrated, and suggests methods for professionals to act effectively in these cases.

- **[Child abuse linked to a belief in witchcraft and spirit possession](#) (Met Police)**

For more information, please contact vicky.washington@met.police.uk

Examines case examples where beliefs in spirit possession have been a factor and outlines the role of the Met Police Project Violet team, with notes to aid delivery.

- **[Keeping the children in mind](#) (Newham)**

For more information, please contact kellie.annfitzgerald@newham.gov.uk

Builds on the Met Police presentation with specific notes for use in LSCB training

- **[Child abuse linked to accusations of “possession” and “witchcraft”](#) (DfE)**

This report by Eleanor Stobart concerns the frequency and severity of child abuse linked to accusations of “possession” and “witchcraft”. It identifies key features common to these cases, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

- **[Safeguarding children from abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession - government guidance](#) (DfE)**

- **[Safeguarding Children’s Rights: exploring issues of witchcraft and spirit possession in London’s African communities](#) (Trust for London)**

Trust for London created the Safeguarding Children’s Rights initiative in 2007, in response to concerns raised by African community groups about faith-based child abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession in London communities.

8. Sexual exploitation

Key training points

- That the victims of sexual exploitation may not be welcoming of assistance from those in authority as they may fear consequences from the abuser (for themselves and their families in their home countries if trafficked) and may need financial and other support from the abuser.
- It is important to consider the impact of victim-abuser dynamics and the effects of ‘grooming’.
- That the abuser may not be easily identified as they may be young men just a few years older than the victim, or the same age.
- Victims may not be known to authorities, often due to trafficking or being held in captivity.
- The emotional and physical impact on these children may well be severe due to extreme violence and exposure to drugs, along with regular sexual assault.

Things to watch out for...

- Do remind learners that boys are also at risk of sexual exploitation, even though the numbers are often higher for girls.
- This may be a subject that some workers think is not their concern due to the young age of the children they are working with. We must remember that often young parents are also sexually exploited.

- Sexual exploitation can take many forms including the practice of gang initiation processes.

Useful resources

- **Sexual exploitation (ReConstruct)**

For more information, please contact Cathy Bostock (Tel: 01895 204861, www.reconstruct.co.uk)

This presentation examines the reality of sexual exploitation of children, including case studies and advice for professionals.

- **Out of mind, out of sight: breaking down the barriers to child sexual exploitation (CEOP)**

This report summarises the findings, conclusions and recommendations of CEOP's thematic assessment of 'localised grooming', providing an outline of trends, themes and patterns based on an intensive six month period of research into child sexual exploitation.

- **Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE)**

- **Puppet on a string: The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation (Barnardo's)**

This report outlines what is known about the scale and nature of sexual exploitation across the UK and points to some worrying new trends identified by Barnardo's 22 specialist services.

- **Identifying and preventing sexual exploitation (Barnardo's)**

For more information, please contact katherine.barnes@barnardos.org.uk

This presentation provides a detailed look at child sexual exploitation in the UK, including information of definitions, risk factors and prevention work

- **Barnardo's Young Women's Project**

Gloria Stott - Children's Services Manager

020 7700 2253 / glora.stott@barnardos.org.uk

9. Trafficked children

Key training points:

- Trafficked children are at increased risk of significant harm because they are largely invisible to the professionals and volunteers who would be in a position to assist them. The adults who traffic them take trouble to ensure that the children do not come to the attention of the authorities, or disappear from contact with statutory services soon after arrival in the UK, or in a new area within the UK
- There is increasing evidence that children (both of UK and other citizenship) are being trafficked internally within the UK. Where children have been violently controlled by criminal gangs for sexual exploitation, the children may in some cases have been moved between several locations to retain control of their victims. The majority of these types of victims are girls although a number may include boys.
- A child may be trafficked between several countries in the EU or globally, prior to being trafficked into / within the UK. The child may have entered the UK illegally or legally (i.e. with immigration documents), but the intention of exploitation underpins the entire process. Child victims may be indigenous UK nationals, European Union [EU] nationals or from any country outside the EU.
- Most children are trafficked for financial gain. This can include payment from or to the child's parents, and can involve the child in debt-bondage to the traffickers. In most cases, the trafficker also receives payment from those wanting to exploit the child once in the UK.

- All children who have been exploited will suffer some form of physical or mental harm. Usually, the longer the exploitation, the more health problems that will be experienced. Although in some cases, such as contracting AIDS or the extreme abuse suffered by Victoria Climbié, fatal injuries happen very quickly.
- All professionals who come into contact with children in their everyday work need to be able to identify children who may have been trafficked, and be competent to act to support and protect these children from harm.
- Children are unlikely to disclose they have been trafficked, as most do not have an awareness of what trafficking is or may believe they are coming to the UK for a better life, accepting that they have entered the country illegally. It is likely that the child will have been coached with a story to tell the authorities in the UK and warned not to disclose any detail beyond the story, as this would lead them to being deported.
- Disclosure from a child can take time, especially where the child is within the control of a trafficker or facilitator and relies on a relationship of trust and safety being established. If a child is in the care of a local authority, measures will need to be taken to make the placement safe for child victims of trafficking.
- For children trafficked from abroad, an additional level of anxiety may exist because of fear of reprisals against their family in their home country. They may also fear being deported, having entered the UK illegally. Trafficked children may also have been forced to commit criminal offences while they are in a coerced situation.

Things to watch out for...

- It is important to note that trafficked children might not show obvious signs of distress or abuse and this makes identifying children who may have been trafficked difficult. Some children are unaware that they have been trafficked, while others may actively participate in hiding that they have been trafficked.
- Children may be trafficked into the UK from abroad, but may also be trafficked between cities within the UK.
- Children are trafficked for a number of purposes, including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, benefit fraud etc.

Useful resources

- [London Safeguarding Trafficked Children Guidance, Toolkit and Monitoring Report \(London SCB\)](#)

For more information, please contact ian.dean@londoncouncils.gov.uk

The guidelines aim to support social workers, teachers, police, health workers and other professionals who may come into contact with suspected victims of trafficking, and have been piloted extensively in a number of local authorities across London and the UK over the past 18 months. This guidance is linked to the London Safeguarding Trafficked Children Toolkit 2011, which includes a number of additional tools to assist professionals in both assessing the needs of the child and the continuing risks that they may face, and referring their case to the competent authority.

10. Additional contacts for general advice	
<p>AFRUCA Africans Unite Against Child Abuse <i>An organisation concerned about cruelty against the African child, set up as a platform for advocating for the welfare of African children</i> 020 7704 2261 info@afruca.org www.afruca.org</p>	<p>African Women's Welfare Group – (AWWG) <i>The African Women's Welfare Group (AWWG) is a Pan-African, London-wide grassroots women's organisation established to work with all African communities and stakeholders with particular remit for women and families</i> 020 8885 5822 079 8374 4430 awwgghsaid@aol.com www.awwg.org.uk/</p>
<p>Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) <i>CCPAS is consulted and used by places of worship and groups across the church spectrum. They also assist other faith groups and a wide variety of statutory agencies and non-faith organisations</i> 0845 120 45 50 info@ccpas.co.uk www.ccpas.co.uk</p>	<p>Congolese Family Centre <i>Congolese Family Centre (CFC) is the First Family Centre set up to respond to the emotional and other urgent needs of the Congolese and other French/Lingala speaking African families living in the UK</i> 020 8245 7026 contact@congolesfamilycentre.org www.congolesfamilycentre.org</p>
<p>Coram Children's Legal Centre <i>Coram Children's Legal Centre, part of the Coram group of charities, specialises in law and policy affecting children and young people. CCLC provides free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people, their families, carers and professionals, as well as international consultancy on child law and children's rights.</i> 020 7580 1664 020 7580 1341 www.childrenslegalcentre.com/ clclondon@essex.ac.uk</p>	<p>National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) <i>The NSPCC protects children across the UK. We run a wide range of services for both children and adults, including national helplines and local projects.</i> 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk</p> <p>Childline <i>24 hr free helpline for children</i> www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111</p>
<p>Victoria Climbié Foundation (VCF) <i>The Victoria Climbié Foundation was established by Mr and Mrs Climbié (Victoria's parents) to campaign for improvements in child protection policies and practices and to ensure effective links & coordination between statutory agencies, care services and BME communities.</i> 020 8571 4121 enquiries@vcf-uk.org www.vcf-uk.org</p>	<p>Vietnamese family support service Phuong Tang – Family support co-ordinator Helen Nguyen – Family support worker</p> <p>020 7249 8109 (Monday – Thursday) 07960 956 933 (Monday – Thursday) 020 3119 0077 (fax) hackney.vietnamese@family-action.org.uk</p>