

Tackling racism and inequalities in safeguarding children and young people

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Session aims and objectives

01

Increase understanding of discrimination, prejudice, oppression and racism impacting children, young people and their families.

04

Enhance safeguarding practices by understanding systemic and institutional inequalities.

02

Support participants to apply anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practices in their work.

05

Explore the impact of racism in the case study Child Q and the impact on the individual, family, community and professionals.

03

Promote diversity and inclusion to support the needs of children, young people and families.

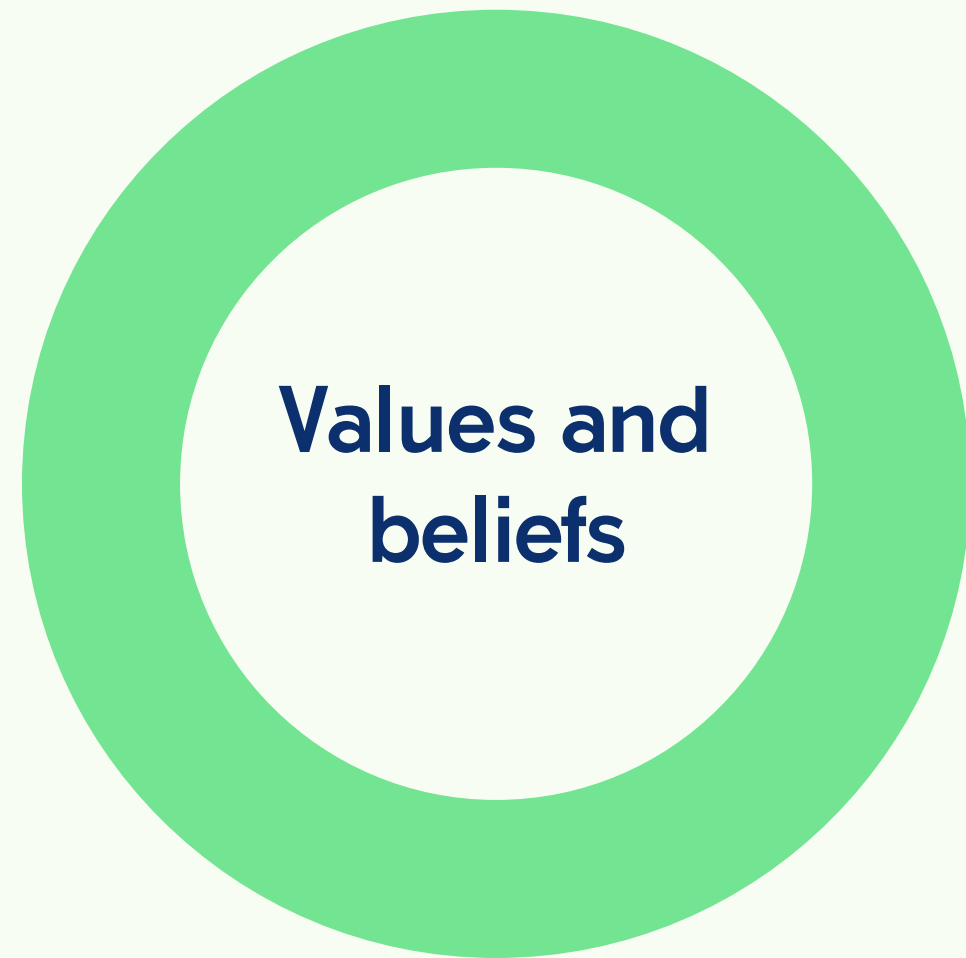
Action plan

Action plan

ACTION	TIMESCALE
Action 1	
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Values and beliefs exercise

Values and beliefs



WHAT ARE YOUR VALUES?

- What values are most important to you and why?
- How do your values influence your daily decisions and actions?

WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS?

- What are your core beliefs and where do they originate from?
- How do your beliefs influence your daily decisions and actions?

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Prejudice, discrimination, oppression and racism

Prejudice, discrimination, oppression and racism in safeguarding

Prejudice, discrimination, oppression and racism can all significantly impact safeguarding when working with children and young people and lead to inequalities in safeguarding children and young people.

Understanding how these issues present in safeguarding is crucial for practitioners to ensure all children and young people are protected, supported and treated fairly with dignity and respect.

Prejudice, discrimination, oppression, and racism can manifest in various ways, undermining this fundamental principle of child protection.

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Self reflection questions

Reflection

Reflection questions to consider the impact of racism and systemic racism and how this affects children and young people:

Understanding racism and systemic racism

- How would you define racism in your own words?
- How would you define systemic racism in your own words?
- How does systemic racism differ from individual acts of racism?
- What are some examples of systemic racism in institutions such as education, healthcare and the criminal justice system?
- What can professionals do to address racism and systemic racism?

Child Q case study

Case study: Child Q

01

In December 2020, Child Q went to school for her mock exam.

02

The teacher said that Child Q smelt of cannabis.

03

Teachers searched Child Q's bag, scarf, jacket and shoes.

04

The school called the police.

05

The police strip searched (under Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act) Child Q while menstruating and was asked to remove her soiled sanitary towel.

06

Child Q asked to go back into her mock exam.

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Case study: Child Q

07

No evidence the Police consulted with their supervisor

No Appropriate adult present.

10

School did not refer Child Q to children's services before or after the incident.

08

No drugs were found before or after the strip search.

11

Child Q's mother took her to the GP who made a referral for psychological support.

09

School did not inform Child Q's mother about the strip search. Child Q informed her mother.

12

This led to contact with Hackney Children and Families Services (Hackney CFS).

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Reflection questions: Child Q

Reflection: Child Q

Reflection questions to consider the impact of racism and inequalities in safeguarding children and young people through the Child Q case study.

1. Initial reactions and reflections

- What were your first thoughts and feelings when you learned about the Child Q case?
- How would you describe what happened to Child Q in your own words?
- What factors do you think influenced the way Child Q was treated by school staff and the police?

Reflection: Child Q

2. Institutional responses and decision making

- What role did the school play in this case? Should the school have acted differently?
- What role did the police play in this case? Were their actions justified?
- How do school policies and policing procedures allow incidents like this to happen?
- What safeguarding measures were ignored, and why do you think that happened?
- Would the outcome have been different if Child Q were a white student? Why or why not?

Reflection: Child Q

3. The role of systemic racism

- What patterns of racial bias or discrimination do you see in this case?
- How does this case reflect the adultification of Black children?
- How does racial bias influence the way Black young people are perceived by authority figures?
- What historical or structural factors might have contributed to this incident?
- If a system consistently produces disproportionate harm to one racial group, can it be considered neutral?

Reflection: Child Q

4. Impact on Young People

- How might this experience affect Child Q's mental health, confidence and trust in professionals and institutions?
- What impact do cases like this have on Black children's sense of safety in schools?
- How do incidents like this affect young people's relationships with teachers and the police?
- What are the long term consequences of over policing and criminalising Black children and young people?
- How do such incidents shape young people's educational experiences and aspirations?

Reflection: Child Q

5. Accountability and change

- Who should be held accountable for what happened to Child Q?
- What changes should be made to school policies and police practices to prevent similar incidents?
- How can professionals (health professionals, teachers, social workers, police, probation, judiciary) challenge racial bias in their decision making?
- What does justice look like in this case?

Strip searching statistics

The Metropolitan Police showed that between **2019 and 2021, 5,279** children were strip searched by the force. **75% were from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background.** These figures only relate to the Metropolitan Police and the overall number of children strip searched by the force could be higher as this only includes searches conducted on detainees after arrest (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/child-q-and-the-law-on-strip-search/>).

2018 to 2020

The Met Police figures, analysed by the children's commissioner for England, 650 children were strip searched by police in London between 2018 and 2020. More than 95% were boys, and 58% of the boys searched were black. In 2018, 75% of the boys searched were black (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-62435630>).

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) are following up on cases of concern at 28 police forces (<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/news/child-q-and-the-use-of-strip-searching-progress-so-far/>).

Strip search statistics

2018 to 2022

Office of the Children's Commissioner (A non-departmental public body in England responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of children as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights) published findings of the use of strip searching by police forces against children. Police forces in England and Wales between 2018 and 2022 strip searched 2,847 children aged 8-17, 24% were children aged 10-15 years old:

- 52% took place without an Appropriate Adult present
- 38% were carried out on Black children
- 95% were carried out on boys
- 51% resulted in no further action
- 37% happened at a police station; 12% at a home address; and 45% at an unrecorded location
- 14 cases happened in a police vehicle or a school – the majority of these were in schools
- 1% were conducted within public view
- 6% were conducted with at least one officer of a different gender than the child being searched present

Stop and search impact

There is little evidence to suggest that stop and search provides an effective deterrent to offending. Stop and search is more effective at detection but still most searches result in officers finding nothing. However, those in policing argue that when stop and search is targeted and conducted in line with the law and guidance, they can confiscate dangerous and prohibited items and do so without undermining public trust in the police.

Black people experience the highest search rate 53 per 1,000 compared to 7.5 per 1,000 for White people.

HMICFRS says no force “fully understands the impact of the use of [stop and search] powers” and “no force can satisfactorily explain why” ethnic disproportionality persists. It is widely acknowledged that this damages police community relations and there is growing recognition of the “damaging impact” and potentially traumatic impact that it can have on individuals and collectively for communities.

Stop and search statistics (adults)

2023

- In the year ending 31 March 2023, there were 529,474 stop and searches in England and Wales (not including vehicle searches).
- There were 8.9 stop and searches for every 1,000 people – down from 24.8 per 1,000 people in the year ending March 2010.
- **There were 24.5 stop and searches for every 1,000 black people, and 5.9 for every 1,000 white people.**
- Around 33% of all stop and searches were in the Metropolitan Police force area in London.
- Out of all police force areas, Merseyside had the highest stop and search rate (36.4 for every 1,000 people) – it also had the highest rates for the white, black, mixed and 'other' ethnic groups.
- Cumbria had the highest stop and search rate for the Asian ethnic group.
- Ethnicity was not known or recorded for 108,285 (20.5%) of all stop and searches.

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What is the law on strip search?

Stop and search legislation

Home Office guidance : The use of powers relating to stop and search **'must be used fairly, responsibly, with respect for people being searched and without unlawful discrimination'**.

The Equality Act 2010, section 149 : **Officers have 'a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 : **Requires chief police officers 'to ensure that in the discharge of their functions they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of all persons under the age of 18.'**

The law on strip search



What powers do police have to strip search children?

The police have a range of legislative powers to search people, with statutory codes of practice – known as PACE codes – outlining the procedures police should follow when exercising these.

PACE Code A deals with stop and search, including searches where the police require a person to remove their clothing. Given the intrusive nature of this type of search and the requirement to expose intimate body parts, **PACE Code A sets out rules intended to protect people's dignity, minimise embarrassment and prevent misuse of this power.**

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Group reflection

Group reflection exercise

- **Impact on Child Q:** Reflect on the emotional and psychological effects this incident may have had on Child Q. Consider how such experiences can affect a young person's trust in authorities and their sense of safety.
- **Impact:** Consider the impact on other students in the school, friends, family and the community?
- **Role of racism:** The safeguarding review found that racism was likely an influencing factor in Child Q's treatment. How did systemic racism present in this situation?
- **Police procedures:** How can the police protect children's rights and dignity?
- **School's responsibility:** Consider the role of the school in this incident. What measures can schools take to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their students, and how should they handle situations involving law enforcement?
- **Future prevention:** What steps can be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future (policy changes, training for police and school staff, increased awareness and education about children's rights).
- **Reflection and learning:** How can professionals recognise and counteract their own values and beliefs, biases and stereotypes about Black children and young people?
- **Organisations:** How can organisations ensure their policies and procedures do not perpetuate racial biases against Black children and young people?

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Summary

01

Values and beliefs.

02

Developed an understanding of discrimination, prejudice, oppression and racism impacting children, young people and their families.

03

Developed an understanding of the impact of anti racist and anti discriminatory practice.

04

Enhanced safeguarding practices by understanding systemic inequalities.

05

Action plan

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Training

Cultural competence: Effectively working with children and families / adults with an understanding of cultural humility, leading to better outcomes.

Tackling racism and inequalities in safeguarding children and young people: The 'Tackling racism and inequalities in safeguarding children and young people course' will explore how discrimination, prejudice, oppression and racism create inequalities that impact children and young people.

Bespoke training: I provide bespoke training courses to meet the needs of your organisation. Contact me to discuss your training needs.



Individual coaching

01

One off session

60 minute session for support, clarity and actionable solutions to a specific challenge or decision. Ideal for quick problem solving.

02

3 coaching sessions

Three one to one sessions focused on achieving targeted goals.

03

6 coaching sessions

Six in depth sessions for sustained support and development.



Group coaching

Connect social work education to practice and gain a deeper understanding of how your racial identity influences your approach to social work and develop the tools to support your practice and professional development.

Course fee: £625 (Includes course materials, worksheets, templates and resources to guide learning and professional development).

Course duration: Sessions are 90 minutes from 7pm to 8.30pm for 5 weeks:

- **Module 1:** The professional identity of Black social workers (Thursday 20th March 2025)
- **Module 2:** Imposter syndrome and building confidence (Thursday 27th March 2025)
- **Module 3:** Navigating the challenges of supervisory relationships (Thursday 3rd April 2025)
- **Module 4:** Managing workload and preventing burnout (Thursday 10th April 2025)
- **Module 5:** Reflection, integration and future planning (Thursday 17th April 2025)



Thank you for listening.



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