



Spiritual Direction Forum UK

www.sdforum.uk

A simple framework to enable Spiritual Directors to reflect on safeguarding within their practice

Disclaimer: This is a document for reflection, not a definitive set of guidelines. The Spiritual Direction Forum UK, offers this in support of good practice. It does not take responsibility for the practice from individuals or groups/networks of spiritual directors, and cannot guarantee that using this document will ensure that individuals or groups will satisfy legal safeguarding obligations.

Establishing and maintaining safe space in spiritual direction:

- Am I clear as to how I understand the role and scope of spiritual direction?
- How do I establish and maintain clear boundaries within my practice - both in face to face and on-line meetings? For example: time, duration of meetings, cancellation arrangements; communication in-between sessions etc
- Do I have a clear understanding of confidentiality and how I apply that?
- Do I have a sufficient awareness of safeguarding practice in spiritual direction and of the issues of spiritual abuse and domestic abuse?
- If I keep any written records of meetings, are they stored securely and anonymously (either digitally or handwritten)?
- *Do I communicate all of these clearly to a directee and gain their agreement?*

On-going development of practice

- Do I attend my own spiritual direction sessions regularly?
- Do I engage with regular supervision?
- Do I attend regular training to stay updated with best practice in spiritual direction?
- Is my safeguarding training up to date and have I completed all the relevant training required by the organisations I work within?
- *Date of last safeguarding training:*

Relating to organisations

- Am I familiar with the safeguarding policies of any network or organisation I work within?
- Do I know who the appropriate safeguarding officer is and how to contact them?

- If I am working independently, do I know to whom I should report any concerns?
- *Safeguarding contact details:*

Do I know the 4 R's:

- **Recognise → Respond → Record — Refer**

Recognise

- Accept and take seriously what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Let the person tell their story and don't push for information or ask leading questions.
- Do not interrogate or decide if they are telling the truth.
- Be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse.

Respond

- Reassure the individual they have taken the right step in sharing this information and they are not to blame.
- Be honest; never make promises to keep what you are being told confidential. If abuse is involved, you will need to tell someone
- Tell them what you will do with the information they have shared and that they will be kept informed.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experience or that of others
- Do not investigate the matter any further for yourself, or approach the person about whom allegations may have been made.

Record

- Write down, concisely, exactly what is seen, said or heard and make clear where you have added your views or interpretation.
- WHO was involved? Name the key people
- WHAT happened? Facts not opinions
- WHEN did it happen? Date and time
- WHO have you referred the issue or to?

Refer

- Pass the information to the appropriate Safeguarding Lead within your setting within 24 hours
- In case of an emergency call the Police or dial 999.
- Take the situation into your own supervision.
- Seek your own support as appropriate, particularly where your involvement is ongoing.

Published by the Spiritual Direction Forum UK, September 2026. Due for review March 2028.