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Resources & Services

[Social GGRRAACCEESSS](#)

[Safeguarding children from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Culture and faith: learning from case reviews | NSPCC Learning](#)

[Guidance for Culturally Appropriate Practice](#)

[Culturally appropriate care - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)

[Slide 1 \(inspiringsocialwork.org\)](#)

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups/communities/>

[Safeguarding Adults and Culturally Competent Practice](#)

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What to do

Cultural competence can be improved through training, education and experience. When working with children, adults and families it is imperative to take into consideration language (for example consistent use of translation services, provided by professional providers), cultural variations, and different approaches when developing effective and engaging relationships. All agencies must therefore use professional curiosity to be able to understand, respect, and work effectively with individuals from various cultural backgrounds.

If you feel that a child/ren are at risk of significant harm, then contact [Bury Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) or the Police via 999.

If you are concerned about an adult, contact [Bury Adult Social Care](#) or the Police on 999.

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Practice & Engagement Tips

- Value identity, experience, expertise, and self-determination, ensuring these factors are explored & recorded appropriately – the individual is the expert!
- Be aware of national and local ethnic, social, and religious demographics and how these are changing
- Spend some time getting to know the child, vulnerable adult or family, do not rush meetings and interventions
 - Adopt a position of 'not knowing and be ready to learn'
 - Resist tokenism or simple 'box ticking' as a means of evidencing your cultural competence
- Be self-aware – think about the impact of your own personal cultural values and beliefs
 - Be flexible, particularly when using existing frameworks and tools

Cultural Competency: Impact of Ethnicity, Culture, Language & Faith

[Bury Safeguarding Partnership](#)



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Information

- Parents may try to deflect child protection concerns with assurances that their childcare practices are endorsed by their culture or faith; they may accuse professionals of discrimination when they pursue their concerns
- Some people who have mental health difficulties become obsessed by religious belief; they can present their belief as a rationale for obsessive or harmful behaviours

Practitioners must remain focused on the safety, wellbeing and interests of the child or vulnerable adult and challenge (and if necessary, act to protect the child / vulnerable adult against) any attempts to justify harm on cultural grounds.

1

Background

Cultural competence involves providing safeguarding services in a way that is fair, equitable, and free from discrimination. It encompasses a range of cognitive, behavioural, and linguistic skills that enable effective communication across cultural boundaries. Practitioners, organisations, and systems must be able to understand, engage with, and respond to individuals from diverse backgrounds in ways that affirm their value and uphold their dignity, especially when working with children, young people, vulnerable adults, and families. Culture refers to the shared beliefs, customs, ideologies, world views, and values that shape the behaviours of a group and evolve over time. It is distinct from ethnicity. While culture is unique to each individual, ethnicity relates to a person's origin and their connection to a group, often defined by common language, nationality, or heritage.

2

Why it matters

Cultural competence improves communication by bridging language barriers, interpreting non-verbal cues, and adapting communication styles. It fosters trust, challenges biases, and enables personalised care, which can lead to better outcomes. Practice should be unbiased and legally compliant. While respecting cultural diversity, it does not excuse harmful or unlawful practices. Practitioners should remain professionally curious, ask families about their views, practices and beliefs and talk with colleagues and specialists to understand beliefs and avoid assumptions. Understanding strong faith systems and gaining insight into how these may impact thoughts and beliefs is an essential part of safeguarding. Embracing cultural differences strengthens relationships and promotes better outcomes.

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Information

Cultural competence does not mean ignoring or excusing practices that are against UK law, or that cause or risk causing significant harm to children, young people or vulnerable adults. The NSPCC briefing Culture and Faith: learning from case reviews makes clear that cultural factors may be the source of risk in some cases. Some examples include:

- Where someone marries outside of their birth culture or faith, they may face isolation or ostracism. In extreme cases, they may be subject to honour-based violence
- Beliefs about honour or shame may stop people from seeking help when they are being mistreated or abused