



**CONVERT  
CARE**



## **Safeguarding in Convert Care: A Call to Action for Mosques and Muslim Institutions**

The heartbreaking murder of 22-year-old Aboubakar Cissé inside a mosque in southern France has been the cause of great sadness and grief to the Muslim communities in France and beyond. Aboubakar was attacked while offering guidance to a man who it is thought expressed an interest in Islam – but turned out to be a violent assailant.

The doors of Islam always remain open to all who seek it sincerely but we must be vigilant when considering the safety of our staff members, volunteers and congregation. In this regard safeguarding is not only a necessity for children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is in fact, the cornerstone of all our religious, educational, and outreach work, including our vital support for those exploring Islam and who go on to choose Islam as their spiritual path.

In response to concerns expressed and recognising the risks inherent in all manner of community engagement, the **Convert Muslim Foundation (CMF)** encourages all mosques, Islamic centres, and Muslim organisations to carefully and thoughtfully consider adopting safeguarding frameworks that provides a broader framework of safety around **Convert Care** services and da'wah activities.

### **Key Safeguarding Recommendations**

#### **Public First Contact**

When arranging initial meetings with individuals interested in Islam it is always best to choose public spaces such as the mosque, an Islamic centre, a café or other appropriate public venue. It is also preferably to be accompanied by at least one other trusted volunteer present – in other words – bring a friend!

#### **Protect Personal Information**

It would be prudent for volunteers, staff, and mosque representatives to avoid giving out private phone numbers, home addresses and family details until a bond of trust is established through an agreed 'Getting to Know You' processes which should be available to all staff.

#### **Conduct Basic Screening and Risk Awareness**

Mosque training should include risk awareness for da'wah teams and **Convert Care** volunteers. The training, delivered by experienced professionals, should address early signs of unusual behaviour e.g., manipulation, aggression, invasive questioning, and how such behaviours can be handled with wisdom and diplomacy where conflict is minimalised and safety, for the greater benefit of all concerned, is ensured.

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### Implement Reporting Channels

Clear, confidential channels for volunteers or staff to report any incidents, unusual behaviour, or safety concerns should be available so that incidents are dealt with promptly and are not ignored.

### Supervise and Support Volunteers

Convert Care providers and outreach teams should be made aware of who the safeguarding lead is in every Mosque and Islamic organisation they work with and receive induction briefings on safety procedures as a matter of routine before engaging with the public.

### Protect the Congregation

Being attentive to the safety of your congregation during prayer times, events, and open days, especially when hosting public events, is key to overall community care.

### Balance Openness with Wisdom

Islam teaches us to be generous of spirit while also taking precautionary measures to safeguard those under our care with wisdom and well-tuned awareness. Welcoming individuals or groups into community safe spaces must be accompanied by the necessary safeguards that protect everyone involved.

### Risk Awareness

- Be vigilant to warning signs:
- Inconsistent stories about personal background
- Attempts to isolate or overly focus on one volunteer
- Aggressive, manipulative, or overly intrusive behaviour
- Volunteers must never ignore "gut feelings" — if something feels wrong, take the necessary steps the safeguarding guidelines your organisation advise

### Decision-Making Guide

- "If This, Then That," response should be applied

Situation	What You Should Do
Someone immediately asks for, or insists on, a private home visit	Politely decline and offer to meet at a public location – the Mosque when it is open and busy or another such venue. As a volunteer you are advised to let your supervisor know so that your concerns, if you have any, are logged on file.

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Someone refuses to meet in a public arena	If, having offered a variety of options the meeting is declined, ensure the details of the individual and your concerns, if you have any, are logged
You notice concerning behaviour (aggression, inappropriate questioning, evasiveness)	Conclude such a meeting politely and report your concerns immediately to the Safeguarding Lead.
You feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any point	Remove yourself politely if needed, and report the concern. Your safety is the priority
Someone requests your personal phone number or address early on	Politely refuse. Offer communication via official channels only.
A serious safeguarding concern (threats, violence, extremist language) arises	Call emergency services if in immediate danger; otherwise report urgently to the Safeguarding Lead and complete an Incident Report Form.

## Reporting Concerns

**Safeguarding Lead Contact:** All **Convert Care** organisations, Mosques and Islamic organisations should have a **Safeguarding Policy** in place as well as ensuring there is a qualified **Safeguarding Lead** named on the policy who is known to all staff and volunteers.

All safeguarding concerns should be reported verbally and followed by a written report within 24 hours.

The written record should be made using your organisations **Incident Reporting Form**.

## A Final Word

Our **Convert Care** volunteers, outreach workers, mosque leaders, and community members offer selfless service for the sake of Allah. Their safety - physical, emotional, and spiritual - must be an absolute priority.

The tragic loss of Aboubakar Cissé is a sobering call for us all. We owe it to him, and to every sincere seeker who walks through our doors, to build structures of safety and trust.

May Allah protect our communities, guide our intentions, and help us act with both compassion and vigilance.

**Convert Muslim Foundation**

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