

National Launch Event - The Amber Project

Enhancing the response to child abuse linked to faith & belief

Tuesday 23rd November – 2pm till 4pm on MS Teams



[Book a place here](#)

What is The Amber Project? The Amber Project is a multi-agency partnership that seeks to enhance the response to child abuse linked to faith and belief at a Local Authority level. Partners include specialists who work in the field of 'abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession' from the Metropolitan Police Service, University of Chester, University of Cambridge, Barnardos National FGM Centre and Redbridge Local Authority.

A two-hour free training webinar has been developed that clearly explains: (a) what abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession is, (b) the factors and indicators professionals need to look out for and (c) what safeguarding actions need to be taken by those identifying cases. There is an explicit focus on those within the education sector, policing, social care and health. It is also of benefit to those who are from faith communities and communities working with families and children.

The overarching aim is to increase awareness and reporting of this complex form of abuse and improve the multi-agency response when cases are identified.

This is a free resource and can be delivered anywhere in the country. Material has been pre-recorded with a resource pack available for those attending sessions delivered locally.

Why is the Amber Project needed?

Belief in witchcraft and spirit possession is common and exists across the world. Knowledge and awareness need to be enhanced, and a wide range of professionals need to be supported to recognise the potential for abuse in certain situations.

The Amber Project team acknowledge the positive role of many faith communities and people of faith in safeguarding. The project does not seek to isolate certain religious belief and practices as harmful, or try to change them. Nevertheless, abuse can sometimes follow when a person is accused of being a witch or possessed by an evil spirit. Efforts to 'exorcise' or 'deliver' the person from witchcraft or an evil spirit can sometimes inadvertently lead to significant harm to the person accused. Preliminary evidence suggests that the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic has increased the risk of this form of abuse, both nationally and internationally. In 2021, the UN passed an historic resolution on harmful practices related to accusations of witchcraft that result in human rights violations. The Amber Project seeks to partner with practitioners and enhance and knowledge to enable more effective safeguarding of children, young people and families from this form of harm.

Speakers include:

Dr Lisa Oakley: Associate Professor in Psychology, University of Chester & Chair NWG on Abuse Linked to Witchcraft & Spirit Possession

Dr Naomi Richman: Fellow in Anthropology, University of Cambridge

Inspector Allen Davis / DS Kate Bridger / DC Sharon Tracey: Honour, Belief and Sex (crime and vulnerability) Partnership Team – Continuous Policing Improvement Command – MPS

Leethen Bartholomew: Head of Barnardo's National FGM Centre

Sue Bendon: Education Welfare Service Operational Manager, London Borough of Redbridge

Clare Walters: Out Of School Settings (OOSS) Team, London Borough of Redbridge

Link to speaker profiles can be found [here](#)

