

CENTRAL ENGLAND AREA QUAKER MEETING

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS “AT RISK” SUMMARY



Central England Quakers
Area Office

Section 1 – The Aim of our Policy

From time to time our spiritual journey requires us to take risks. As adults, taking risks is easier when we know we are supported by others and have confidence in our personal experience. Our children are more vulnerable with limited experience and their protection is a paramount responsibility. Some adults in our meeting may also be at risk of abuse because they need help with daily living tasks, and may be unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation. Adults at risk of abuse includes people with a wide range of disabilities and circumstances.

This document follows the legal requirements of the 1989 & 2004 Children Acts. We have tried to write it in a spirit that allows our children and those that work with them, to grow in the spirit. In order to do this, we want to create a framework that lets our children know that they are both physically and emotionally safe and allows sufficient freedom for them to choose the paths and challenges of their own spiritual journey.

As Quakers we are committed to Safeguarding children and Adults at risk by bringing together what our faith expects of us and the law requires.

We also aim to inform and support adults in what action to take if they are concerned about a child’s welfare or that any child may be suffering harm.

Section 2 – Essential Names and Contact Information

Local Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	
Area Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinators:	
Carole Pannell:	07798 517698
Sarah Fishpool:	07980 667883
Children’s Social Care Contacts - Birmingham	
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	0121 303 1888
Out of Hours (Emergency Duty Team Adults and Children):	0121 675 4806
Churches’ Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)	
24 hour Helpline:	0845 120 4550
NSPCC 24 hour Helpline	0808 800 5000
Police	999 or 101
Safeguarding Trustee:	Gill Coffin (Selly Oak)
Area Meeting Clerks:	Cathy Kurana, Vic Grainger and Alison Ironside
Britain Yearly Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinator:	Gill Sewell

Section 3 – Guidelines for Good Practice When Working With Children

Regarding the care of children coming to Meeting for Worship or joining events organised by a meeting, it is the duty of each Local Meeting within Central England Area Meeting:

- To seek to prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse of any child or young person while engaged in any activity organised by the Meeting.
- To follow up any allegation of abuse, whether perpetrated in the course of Meeting activities or elsewhere.
- To protect adults against false allegations.
- To operate this policy with close regard to the testimonies and traditions of the Society.

We have a duty of care to minimise risk and to ensure that our policy is flexible enough to respond to varying levels of practice depending on the nature of the events being organised.

The policy aims to be in keeping with Quaker values of openness, equality and absence of hierarchy or authority figures. We recognise that the statutory checks by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) play an important role in protecting children from potential abusers but this is only one part of our child protection policy. All the procedures detailed below, many of which are already common practice, should be followed in addition to DBS checks.

1. All workers should complete an application form for Quaker Children's Work, available from the Local Meeting Clerk or Children's Committee Convenor. All new workers must have been attending meeting for an appropriate length of time and be known and accepted by the Children's Committee and references must be taken up before they work with children.
2. All workers (employed or volunteer) should hold a certificate of their DBS clearance issued within the last three years, obtained through the Quaker process or registered with the Update Service.
3. At least two adults, ideally not from the same household, should be present at any event with children and young people.
4. An adult should not be alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen, unless this is a parent with their own children. This may mean leaving doors open or two groups working in the same room.
5. On Quaker outings, overnight and residential activities, parents and/or guardians may leave their children in the care of other adults while they themselves are not on the premises or in the immediate area as long as parental/carer permission forms have been completed.
6. Where an activity involving a member of the Meeting is organised by parents and not by the Meeting, this is a private arrangement and parents take sole responsibility.
7. Area Meeting will appoint two people, both members, preferably one Trustee and one member of Area Meeting Children and Young People's Committee to take on the role of Area Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinators. These are trusted and trained people to whom children, young people or adults can take concerns regarding their own or someone else's safety. It is recommended that Local Meetings appoint at least one designated Local Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinator, preferably in membership of the Area Meeting.
8. Meetings should foster an age-appropriate understanding in children and young people of how to be active participants in their own safety and make them aware of the appointed adults.
9. All members and attenders at Local Meetings are responsible for contributing to the safety and well-being of all others and need to be knowledgeable in this, as in other aspects of health and safety. The Local Meeting and Area Meeting Safeguarding Co-ordinators should receive appropriate training organised via BYM/Area Meeting, and share this with their meetings.
10. Children's Committee have a responsibility to inform all adults working with children of their roles and responsibilities.
11. In the event of an allegation / disclosure being made, or a concern about the welfare of a child, a Safeguarding Co-ordinator should be informed or an Elder/Overseer if the Safeguarding Co-ordinator is not available. Then external agencies should be brought in, in line with Area Meeting Guidelines found in this Safeguarding Policy.

Process for the DBS Check (See Appendix A below for full details)

Local meeting clerks (or other appointed verifiers) may initiate an on-line DBS check for each prospective worker (employed or volunteer) - the applicant. The applicant can then complete the form on-line. The applicant must then meet the verifier to view the required ID documentation. Once the process has been successfully completed, the name of the approved worker and date of DBS check should be recorded in the minutes of the local business meeting. On-line application is preferred but paper copies of the application form are available if necessary.

Applicants are encouraged to subscribe to the DBS Update Service, which is free of charge to volunteers. You must subscribe within 30 days of the date of issue of your DBS certificate.

(Note: If there are any issues arising from this process, this is confidential information and is managed by the Safeguarding team at Friends House.)

Section 4 – What To Do If A Disclosure or Allegation of Abuse Is Made At an Event or Meeting

Protecting the child, young person or vulnerable adult is paramount. All actions, decisions and the reasoning behind them must follow from this. Record all actions, decisions and reasoning - if in doubt ask. An adult “at risk” should be involved the decision to take action, unless there is immediate danger.

Responsibilities and Actions

If an allegation or disclosure is made to a worker:

- Listen to the child/young person or adult, allowing time and space for them to speak, using -open ended questions.
- Listen but do not investigate, challenge or make judgments
- Be honest, tell them you will have to inform someone else in order to keep them safe
- Ensure the child/young person or adult is not at immediate risk risk – if they are, contact the police or relevant social care services immediately.
- Write it all down as soon as possible, using an incident report form if available and the child’s / adult’s own language.
- Reassure the child /adult ‘at risk’.
- Inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Action required by the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Designated Person)

- Ensure all details are recorded, within 24 hours, including name, age and address of the child/adult and the date and time of the disclosure/ allegation / concern about harm.
- Take advice regarding the allegation / concern from a Statutory Agency e.g. Children’s or Adult Social Care, or the Police, and follow this up with a written referral if appropriate.
- The Statutory Agency will advise about informing the parents/family of the child or adult.

If you are unsure about what to do (and in the case of an adult ‘at risk’) advice can be found in the Area Meeting Safeguarding Policy or from the CCPAS Helpline 0845 120 4550

Appendix A – Disclosure and Barring Service registration and check

Before a worker (employed or volunteer) starts work with children and young people they should have an **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check**. Britain Yearly Meeting and Central England Area Quaker Meeting use Due Diligence Checks (<https://www.ddc.uk.net/>) for processing new checks and the process should be straightforward as long as care is taken to make sure that the forms are completed accurately. The steps to follow are listed below:

1. A new applicant should provide their meeting's verifier (usually the Clerk) with their full name, their date of birth, contact phone numbers (preferably mobile) and their email address. If the person has no email address, they should inform the verifier, and the application can be processed using the verifier's email. It is also possible to request a hard copy form.
2. DDC has a Guide for Applicants that can be found on this page: <https://www.ddc.uk.net/help-advice/guidance-for-applicants/>
3. The applicant will receive an email with a link to their online application, which they will complete. Note that NI number is not a compulsory field.
4. The applicant needs to meet with the Local Meeting verifier so that they can check the THREE identity documents and complete the relevant section, which they can do on-line (or on the hard copy if required).
5. The verifier will then complete the process via DDC who will process it with the Disclosure and Barring Service.
6. Notification that the check has been returned will be sent to the Local Meeting verifier, but the certificate will be sent to the applicant only. Workers who already have a certificate through Quakers should show this to the local meeting verifier before they commence working with children in the Meeting.
7. When a person has been vetted for working with children, the local business meeting will make a record of this fact in its minutes, recording the name, certificate number and date of issue of the certificate.
8. If the DBS check is not clear the Verifier will not be notified of this. Quaker Life have a process to make a risk assessment of any offences and will contact the applicant direct regarding this. Once the risk assessment is complete, the Verifier will be informed only whether or not the applicant is suitable for the role for which they have applied. (For further information contact ☎020 7663 1023, safe@quaker.org.uk).
9. Once a certificate has been received, the applicant should subscribe to the Update Service online at www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service . Subscribing is quick and simple, and must be done within 28 days of the issue date of the certificate. The certificate number will be needed on the Update Service application.

There is no charge for volunteers to subscribe. Membership of the Update Service will enable the organisation to check the status of the person's DBS check quickly and simply every three years (or more often if necessary) and, as long as the information contained on the certificate has not changed, that person will never have to repeat the DBS check process described above.