

## Kingston & Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting

### SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW

The safeguarding agency to which we subscribe, 31:8, gives us eight commitments we should make as a worshipping community:

1. We share responsibility for creating an environment that is safe for all.
2. We hold our safeguarding team and those working with children and adults in the light.
3. We respect boundaries that are in place to protect others.
4. We support others in our meetings who have been harmed or abused.
5. We provide on-going safeguarding training for all our workers.
6. We allow time and sufficient resources to make our recruitment of workers safe.
7. We maintain an open culture where people are encouraged to share concerns.
8. We do not take offence when challenged about our presence or behaviour.

Quakers add another important principal: We practise effective risk management in response to those who may pose a risk to others.

#### **Safeguarding children - a good definition by the Methodist Church:**

- Protecting children from abuse and harm
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

#### **Safeguarding adults:**

The concept of prevention, empowerment and protection to enable adults, who are in circumstances that make them vulnerable, to retain independence, well-being and choice, and to access their right to a life free from abuse and neglect.

#### **Types of Abuse to Children and Adults**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Neglect (including self-neglect in adults)
- Sexual/sexual exploitation
- Financial/ Material (more likely to affect vulnerable adults than children)

#### **Those 5 are the common ones but the following are now all officially classed as 'abuse':**

- Discriminatory
- Institutional
- Spiritual
- Domestic
- Social media
- Grooming for sexual or financial exploitation
- Trafficking
- Modern Slavery
- Radicalisation

#### **Signs that should raise concern – children and adults**

- Bruising in unusual sites or looking like, eg bite marks, hand marks, bilateral squeezing of face or arms.
- Injuries that do not match the alleged story of how they occurred.
- Change in appearance, eg unkempt, visibly losing weight.
- Withdrawn behaviour and poor opinion of self – *'I'm horrible', 'They all hate me'*.
- Children who run away repeatedly.
- Change of behaviour – eg to being either withdrawn or aggressive or fearful or tearful.

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- Sexual knowledge to an inappropriate degree in a child; showing pictures on phone of nakedness or private body parts.
- Healed scars on upper arms, especially in teenagers or young adults.
- Apparent lack of money in an adult who would be expected to not be in financial difficulty.
- Overhearing exasperated belittling of a vulnerable adult by a family member or carer. Sometimes it could be the carer who is at risk of harm from the vulnerable adult.
- Overhearing inappropriate help being offered to care for a child or a person of limited ability or significant vulnerability.

Even without signs, if a person (child or adult) complains that they are being ill-treated in any way, that must be taken seriously and advice sought.

### Responding to a concern

- Always make sure that the person speaking up feels they are being listened to and supported.
- Use open questions rather than interrogation to obtain some details – eg ‘Tell me about’, ‘explain to me’.
- Don’t promise to keep information confidential between you and them. Refer to and follow our policy and procedures to make sure information is only shared with people who need and have the right to know.
- Ask for their consent to share the information – if they refuse and you are still worried that they or someone else is at risk of harm, you should still share this information with the person responsible for safeguarding in your organisation. Be aware that, in the case of an adult there may be no further action that can be taken without their consent.
- Tell one of the the AM safeguarding team - the safeguarding coordinator, deputy safeguarding coordinator or AM trustee with responsibility for safeguarding about any concerns so that they can decide what the next steps are.
- Write a clear statement of what you have been told, seen or heard.
- When you have been told something is wrong, **do not** go straight to the person who has been reported. Instead, go to one of the AM safeguarding team.
- Consider if the child or adult is in immediate danger - **if you think a child is in immediate danger call 999**

If there is a delay in trying to seek advice from the AM safeguarding team, talk to an Elder, Pastoral Care Friend or Trustee so they can take the appropriate action and get advice on how to proceed. Everyone has a right to inform the statutory agencies. We can also use the professional advice line at 31:8 so we ensure that we are doing everything we need to be.

### Risk Management for special events

Any special event being arranged that involves children, young people or adults at risk must have a full risk assessment done during the planning process and appropriate plans in place to ensure that risks are managed.

### Risk Management when someone is known to pose a risk to others

This is not a common situation but we should work to include those who have offended against the law and/or are known to be on the sexual harm register. Each such individual must be made aware that the risk they pose is being actively managed and their presence in the organisation is dependent on their full cooperation with this. Boundaries must be set in consultation with relevant professionals and a written contract drawn up to which the person must adhere. There may be certain events or occasions which it is not appropriate for them to attend.

### Data Protection

Whilst we are all aware of how careful we should be not to breach confidentiality; the Data Protection Acts permit justified information sharing **where a child’s welfare is concerned**. It is therefore good practice to seek advice from the Safeguarding Coordinator or 31:8’s advice line or to refer directly to the Police in an emergency situation.

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In the case of an adult at risk, the situation is more complex. It is justified to seek advice, as above, but referral to, for example, the Local Authority (Social Services) should only be made if the adult consents to this, unless the adult at risk:

- has need for care and support
- is experiencing (or is at severe risk of) abuse or neglect
- as a result is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

There may be another factor to be considered – if another person, eg a less able spouse, is at risk of abuse or neglect if no action is taken.

### Safer Appointments

The good practice outlined in the new policy must be followed in a way which is compatible with our Quaker nominations practice. Appointments can be minuted as ‘subject to our safer appointments procedure’ and then a subsequent confirmation of this also minuted.

All forms referred to can be found on the Quaker website under safeguarding policy and toolkit, or obtained from the Safeguarding Coordinator

The procedure applies to (to be finalised):

- **those who work with children or young people or adults at risk**
- **pastoral carers**
- **trustees**
- **safeguarding coordinator**

Each role, whether voluntary or paid will have a job description.

If this is the first role that the person has held in their LM (which is probably unlikely), they should complete a personal details form and a self-declaration form and be made aware of the Code of Conduct.

References will be obtained where appropriate – in many cases where the role holder has already held many responsible roles in that same Meeting this is not appropriate but does apply to paid employees and to anyone who has been in that Meeting for less than six months or to anyone who has not previously held a role there.

**Some roles that deal with children will need a DBS check.** DBS checks are not required for our interactions with older people. Each person who has a DBS check is encouraged to join the automatic update service so that future checks are faster and easier.

### Reviews of Safeguarding Practice

Annually the LM clerk, pastoral carers, young people’s advocates (if any) and the DBS verifier should review their safeguarding practice throughout the past year and consider if any changes are needed, then report this review to the safeguarding coordinator.

The safeguarding coordinator reports to the AM trustees and submits an annual return to Quaker Life.

### Safeguarding Awareness training

Any friends in appointed roles, whatever the role, should receive some training in safeguarding awareness and this is currently by a short talk given by the Safeguarding Coordinator, or the Wiltshire video made by Dr Margaret Barker, coupled with this handout.

In addition, the following link takes you to a short online course from the London Borough of Lambeth, made of up of five excellent five minute videos. It will broaden your awareness and is well worth viewing. The link is:

<https://www.lambethsab.org.uk/training>

For some roles it may be appropriate to have additional training, which will be funded by the Area meeting if necessary. For the range of current courses and the 31:8 log in information, contact the safeguarding coordinator.