

Safeguarding Policy

This is the Safeguarding Policy for West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting. More detailed information on our organisation and practices can be found in the Safeguarding Procedures and Resources.

This policy has been written in line with legislation, policy and guidance that seek to protect children and adults at risk in England and Wales. We have adopted this Policy and associated Procedures in accordance with statutory guidance.

We use the term “children and young people” to mean anyone aged under 18; this is interchangeable with “child” throughout the policy and procedures. We use the term “adults at risk” as used in government guidance; this includes “adults with care and support needs”, the term used in the Care Act 2014, and “vulnerable adults” used previously.

Purpose and scope of this Policy

1. This document displays our commitment to keep people safe, especially children, young people and adults at risk who are engaged with Meetings or activities within West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting.
2. This document provides members and attenders, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk in our Quaker communities.

What we do (a summary of our activities with children, young people and adults)

- Meetings for Worship open to the public.
- Social, learning and outreach activities and events.
- Pastoral care
(The Meeting does not expect those who provide pastoral care or other volunteers acting on behalf of the Meeting, to provide regulated activities for adults such as personal care or regular support with activities such as financial affairs.)
- Children and Young People’s Meetings are held weekly in some Meetings. They are run by adult volunteers from the Meeting. Special events and trips out are occasionally held for children, young people and adults. These may include sleeping overnight.
- Residential events are occasionally organised for adults and children.
- Hiring out rooms in our buildings.

Our commitment

Abuse in any form is unacceptable and we are committed to keeping everyone safe. Everyone, including children, young people and adults, has a right to participate in Quaker communities without suffering harm, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Quakers recognise ‘that of God’ in everyone. All

people deserve respect, value and appropriate care. Our care extends to people who are potentially vulnerable to abuse and even to those who may be perpetrators. We recognise abuse can include, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. We know that Quakers may be open to risks because we foster a culture of welcome and trust for all. We accept that often an abuser is known to or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult and that sometimes abusers can be covert manipulators.

Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our Trustees hold specific responsibility on behalf of the Area Meeting (AM). One trustee is appointed as AM Safeguarding Coordinator and one or more Deputy AM Safeguarding Coordinators (not necessarily Trustees) may be appointed with safeguarding work delegated as agreed between the parties. **Contact details** for our AM Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator(s) are on the poster displayed in each meeting house and at the bottom of this document.

Safer Appointments

We recognise the need to follow safeguarding legislation and accepted good practice to reduce risk, both to vulnerable groups and to Quakers as an organisation. We also have an established and complementary spirit-led Quaker nominations process. The primary focus of our processes to place individuals in roles is to prioritise the safety of our vulnerable groups.

Training and Good Practice

Each individual in a role of responsibility will be appropriately trained according to their Role Description. Everyone involved in our Quaker activities will be familiar with our Code of Conduct, our Processes and Procedures and any specific safeguarding arrangements held locally. When we need safeguarding advice we use the online safeguarding guidance from specialist Christian safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight or their helpline: 0303 003 1111.

Procedure for responding to concerns or allegations of abuse

Our Safeguarding Procedures and Resources contain detailed information about how to respond to a safeguarding concern. If someone is in immediate danger we will contact the police as soon as possible. Our safeguarding contact details can be found at the bottom of this document.

Pastoral care

We will help those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the AM to access pastoral care and support, working with or referring to outside agencies as appropriate.

Working with those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the Local or Area Meeting is known to have abused others or is under investigation or known to be a risk to children or adults, professional safeguarding advice will be sought. The Local Meeting and AM will be prepared to supervise the person and offer pastoral care. Robust arrangements will be put in place to protect children, young people and adults at risk. This may include supervision and boundary-setting, set out in a written contract to which they will be expected to adhere. Such a person will not be allowed to work with children, young people or adults at risk or have unsupervised contact with those groups.

Room Hire

Each Local Meeting's room hire agreement will require that organisations and individuals hiring rooms on our premises take responsibility for safeguarding for all their activities. It will require that any organisation using our premises has their own safeguarding policy which follows national good practice, and has their own insurance in place.

Regular Reviews

This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of any new guidance, information or legislation. A more comprehensive review will take place every three years.

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Trustee Safeguarding Coordinator: **Sally Harris, 01225 833470 / 07853 032872**

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: **Alex Hart, 01373 229968 / 07547 708288**

Date: 28 April 2025

Next Review Date: March 2026