



Safeguarding Procedures & Resources

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Signed: AM Clerk	Kate Macdonald
Signed: Clerk to the Trustees	Sally Harris
Date of last annual review by Trustees	March 2025
Date for next annual review by Trustees	March 2026
The role-holder responsible for starting the next review	Clerk to the Trustees

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Preface

This document and the Safeguarding Resources (SRs) contain frequent references to our Area Meeting, often abbreviated to *AM*. Our Local Meetings are often abbreviated as *LMS*.

The term 'worker' refers to staff, employees, role-holders, and volunteers.

The term 'Pastoral Friend' refers to those who carry out the role previously referred to as Overseer.

We use Thirtyone:eight <https://thirtyoneeight.org> as an external source of information and training about safeguarding. Safeguarding Resource SR6 *Training guide and Thirtyone:eight* explains how to book training and access the information pages. We have chosen to manage the links to specific information and guidance within its website by indicating a phrase to search for. This is because specific links to websites tend to go out of date.

This document, the Safeguarding Policy, and all of the Safeguarding Resources documents are available via an index page on our Area Meeting website at <http://www.wwesquakers.org.uk/>.

1. Who we are

West Wiltshire & East Somerset Area Meeting

Key Contacts:	See <i>Key Safeguarding Contacts</i> SR1d
Address:	Friends Meeting House, 1 Whiteheads Lane, Bradford on Avon BA15 1JU
Email:	info@wwesquakers.org.uk
Website:	wwesquakers.org.uk
Charity number:	1134534
Denomination:	This Area Meeting is a part of Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). See: www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/safeguarding
Regulators:	The Charity Commission
Insurance company:	Congregational, Currer House, Currer Street, Bradford BD1 5BA

2. Who we are - our Local Meetings

This Area Meeting is made up of these Local Meetings:

Bath	bathquakermeeting@gmail.com
Bradford on Avon	boawarden@gmail.com Friends Meeting House, 1 Whiteheads Lane, Bradford on Avon BA15 1JU
Chippenham	chippenhamquakers123@gmail.com
Devizes	clerk@devizesquakers.org.uk Friends Meeting House, Sussex Wharf, The Nursery, Devizes SN10 2AE
Frome	fromequakers@outlook.com
Trowbridge	trowbridgequakers@gmail.com

3. Our Commitment

Our procedures and processes represent our commitment to safeguarding put into practice. This Area Meeting is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Using good practice procedures and guidelines, following national legislation and regulations, and inter-agency procedures
- Safely appointing, training and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children, young people and adults at risk
- Supporting our Safeguarding Co-ordinators and Deputies in their work and in any action they take in order to protect children, young people, and adults at risk
- Practising effective risk management in response to those that may pose a present risk to others
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and others affected
- Prevention of abuse by having effective safeguarding measures in place
- Understanding abuse and neglect

Defining child abuse or abuse against an adult is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult.

In order to safeguard those in our Meetings, we adhere to the following UN Conventions in respect of children and adults as our starting point regarding definitions of abuse:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19:

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary

support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which relates to adults and children) with particular reference to Article 5:

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

4. Definitions, signs and indicators of abuse

For detailed definitions, signs and indicators for children and adults, see SR1c.

In summary, these include:

Child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, grooming, neglect, child sexual exploitation and extremism.

Adult abuse: physical abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial or material abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory abuse, organisational abuse, neglect and acts of omission and self-neglect.

5. Safer Appointments

The AM will follow established good practice in appointing volunteers and staff safely. (The term 'worker' is used in this document to refer to volunteers and staff.) This aspect of prevention is used by all organisations with reliable safeguarding arrangements to reduce risks of abuse.

We will use the good practice set out below in a way which is complementary with our Quaker spirit-led practice in nominating and making appointments. Appointments can be made 'subject to completion of the safer appointments procedure'.

Meetings and their nominations committees need to consider carefully the suitability of an individual for certain roles. Special care should be taken when considering the nomination of someone who has recently joined the Meeting; a waiting period of six months may normally be appropriate, unless there are circumstances which make this unnecessary in the judgement of the Safeguarding Coordinator. For Area Meeting roles, because the AM may not have any direct knowledge of a person nominated, the AM nominations committee is responsible for ensuring their appointment would be appropriate.

The following roles will be appointed, trained and regularly supported in accordance with government guidance on 'safer recruitment'. Support can be provided by Safeguarding Coordinators and Deputies, Trustees or other appropriately responsible Friends of sound judgement:

- Volunteers and employees who work with children and young people
- Children and Young People's Advocate
- Trustee and Deputy Trustee
- Safeguarding Coordinator and Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator
- Any role to which a Friend is specifically appointed to visit those in a vulnerable situation

Alongside our spirit-led Quaker nominations process, for these roles we will:

- hold discussions about attitudes to safeguarding;
- provide role descriptions;
- request personal details forms, references and self-declarations;
- manage a review period of ongoing support; and
- follow a robust process of criminal record checks (DBS) where the role is eligible according to the government guidance.

Sometimes good safeguarding practice requires that we turn people down for roles; such decisions will not be taken lightly and may simply be because we do not have enough information about a person to safely nominate/appoint them.

For all the above roles, we will ensure that:

- Each role has a role description, so it is clear what is expected. For employees this would be a job description and person specification.
- Everyone will complete a personal details form (or an application form) plus a self-declaration form (see SR3c, SR3d, SR3e). If volunteers complete these forms after appointment, the forms must still be followed through with references *etc.* as below, before the role is commenced.
- Everyone who is to be appointed must have a conversation about the role during which safeguarding is discussed (see SR3b). For voluntary roles this can be a discussion about their suitability for the role, relevant experience, motivation and talking through situations which might occur. It should also touch on the Friend's willingness to learn more about safeguarding as necessary.
- Written references will be obtained and followed up where appropriate. When an individual has recently joined a Meeting, seeking a 'reference' from their previous Meeting, or equivalent, is advisable. See SR3f, SR3g, SR3h.

- A disclosure and barring service (DBS) criminal record check will be completed for those roles which require it and are eligible (see SR3a, SR7).

Where it is practicable, enough members and attenders should have DBS clearance to ensure there is a sufficient pool of potential volunteers at activities. We encourage volunteers to join the DBS Update Service and give consent for the AM to access their DBS certificate, as this reduces repeating the checks (see SR7). The AM will comply with the DBS Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants and the handling of information.

As procedures and eligibility for undertaking DBS checks change frequently, it will be necessary to refer to the government and BYM websites for up-to-date guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>

www.quaker.org.uk/dbs-checks

When a role-holder or employee has been checked by the DBS and cleared to work with children and young people or adults, a minute of the relevant local business meeting will be made to record this fact. This ensures that the Meeting, including those organising activities involving children, and nominations bodies, can keep a record of all approved volunteers. The record will also ensure that the Meeting knows when to re-check, normally every three years. The minute will be forwarded to the AM Safeguarding Coordinator.

Qualifications will be verified where relevant (normally only needed for employed staff).

If a nominee is outside the UK or has recently been living in another country, background checks (certificates of good conduct) and references from the home country/previous country of residence will be obtained.

Each worker will be given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and of *Safeguarding* (summary trifold leaflet, SR1a). Each worker will be able to access the Procedures document and will know how to report concerns.

Each worker will agree to abide by the code of conduct (see SR3i).

Each worker will have a suitable training programme.

Ongoing support for those new in a role must allow for any issues to be addressed as they arise. Meetings should be prepared to end an appointment, if necessary.

'Safer recruitment' processes should not be daunting - they complement spirit-led appointment, helping Meetings find the most suitable Friends to serve.

6. Clarification of safer nominations and appointments

The Quaker approach to appointing role-holders (*Quaker Faith & Practice* 3.23 & 3.24), General Principles:

- Role-holders are appointed by the Meeting or committee responsible for the work.
- The appointment process should be open and clearly understood by everyone.
- Often names are recommended by a nominations committee.
- The appointment process starts when the Meeting identifies the need for a task to be performed.
- Everyone (the Meeting and the appointed role-holders) should have a clear view of the tasks and the length of service so that they understand the commitment.
- Most appointments are for one or three years; usually no more than 6 years.
- Meetings should make sure role-holders are trained.

It's important to:

- Help Friends discover and use latent or unsuspected gifts and abilities
- Avoid Friends being overburdened
- Use discernment to consider when to ask a particular Friend to undertake or lay down a particular task.

Suggestions for good practice

- Use a nominations procedure for most appointments (receiving nominations from the body of the Meeting is not generally a good method).
- Nominations committees have great responsibility and:
 - should be large enough to be representative
 - should have a balance of experience and age-groups
 - need to have knowledge of the Meeting
 - should understand the qualifications for each appointment
 - need to be clear about the requirements of the office
 - need to be discerning in judgment and tactful in manner
 - must meet in a spirit of worship
 - could survey the gifts of their members in a systematic way
- Nominations committees can receive suggestions from other members of the Meeting.

- The duration and scope of an appointment should be explained to all who are asked to accept nomination; the approach should not be made casually or acceptance taken for granted.
- Where two Friends would be expected to work together this should be discussed informally with them before making any firm approach [e.g. Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Deputy]
- When it is decided not to re-nominate any Friend holding an appointment, this should be conveyed sensitively in person or by letter before nominations are submitted.
- Nominations committees should report from time to time on their thinking and their way of working.

7. Safeguarding Training

The Area Meeting is committed to providing learning and training opportunities for all workers and developing a culture of awareness of safeguarding, to help protect everyone. It is good practice to develop a consistent approach to induction and training for all volunteers and staff.

Budgets will be set aside at Area and Local Meeting to cover these costs.

Levels of Training

For a summary of training requirements for different roles see SR6.

Safeguarding Induction is entry-level safeguarding training with a particular focus on how things are done locally; the purpose is to prepare a Friend for a new role.

A Safeguarding Induction (see SR3b) will be given to all role-holders listed below in this section, although discretion should be used if they are already suitably experienced and trained. Induction training can be organised and delivered at LM or AM level by an appropriate person. Safeguarding Induction includes:

- understanding what abuse is and how to recognise the signs
- the overall framework of responsibility, communication and support in the Local and Area Meeting
- who is leading and organising any activities relevant to the role
- the safeguarding practice set out in this document (Section 9)
- any local arrangements in place
- how to respond to a disclosure (Section 12)
- how to raise an alert about a concern (Sections 12 and 13)
- receiving a copy of the Safeguarding Policy and of *Safeguarding* (summary trifold leaflet, SR1a)

- being asked to read the Safeguarding Procedures
- signing the code of conduct (see SR3i)
- receiving instructions for accessing the Thirtyone:eight website members' area, for training and additional guidance when required (see SR6)

Basic Safeguarding Training is safeguarding awareness training. It is more advanced than the Safeguarding Induction and will be delivered formally. This training may need to cover the safeguarding of both children/young people and adults, depending on the role undertaken. The format will be one of:

- an online course provided by NSPCC, Thirtyone:eight or another suitable provider
- a session at the Local Meeting conducted by someone with professional knowledge and experience
- a session for the AM or jointly with a neighbouring AM
- a session run by Thirtyone:eight or another training provider
- a joint session with another church
- inter-agency training by a Local Safeguarding Children's Board or Local Adult Protection Board (some offer this free for volunteers)
- suitable training undertaken in other settings, such as at work or volunteering elsewhere

The following roles will have *Safeguarding Induction* and *Basic Safeguarding Training*, refreshed at least every three years:

- Staff who interact directly with Quakers or users of meeting houses (such as Wardens, Resident Friends and Caretakers)
- Elders
- All volunteers and staff whose role brings them into contact with children, young people and adults at risk
- Those with pastoral care responsibility

The following roles will have *Safeguarding Induction* training, *Basic Safeguarding Training* plus further training with elements tailored to their role, refreshed at least every 3 years:

- Safeguarding Coordinator
- Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator
- Clerk of Trustees
- All Trustees
- DBS Verifier

For the following roles *Safeguarding Induction* and refresher courses will be undertaken; *Basic Safeguarding Training* is advisable rather than essential, but if undertaken may help in creating an effective safeguarding culture across the Area Meeting

- Local Meeting Clerk
- Area Meeting Clerk
- Nominations committee member
- Staff who do not interact directly with many Quakers, or users of meeting houses (like gardeners, cleaners and bookkeepers)

8. Safeguarding awareness and accessibility of information

Each Local Meeting will display the Safeguarding poster (see SR1b) so it can be easily seen by children, young people and adults. If necessary, there will be two posters at different heights or in different rooms. This gives everyone a clear message that safeguarding is a priority in the Meeting and who to contact.

The Safeguarding Policy will also be displayed along with copies of *Safeguarding* (summary trifold leaflet, SR1a).

The *Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Procedures and Safeguarding Resources* will be available from the Area Meeting website.

If a Local Meeting does not have premises where the poster, policy and leaflets can be displayed, we will ensure the information is regularly communicated to adults, children and young people via other means.

The Area Meeting and Local Meetings will take opportunities in our programmes of events to raise awareness of safeguarding and details of who to contact.

The Area Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator will support our Local Meetings to ensure that children, young people and adults at risk are provided with information on where to get help and advice in relation to abuse, discrimination, bullying or any other matter where they have a concern. Examples include by displaying posters, raising awareness in group discussions, and making information available in email bulletins/notice sheets.

9. Practice Guidelines

We undertake to follow the principles found within the 'Abuse of Trust' guidance issued by the Home Office. It is therefore unacceptable for those in a position of trust to abuse that trust by engaging in any behaviour which might allow a sexual

relationship to develop for as long as the relationship of trust continues. This is included in our code of conduct. All adults in roles which involve contact with children, young people and adults at risk are considered to be in positions of trust.

We seek to operate and promote good working practices so we can run activities safely and develop good relationships. This helps to minimise the risk to vulnerable groups and also the risk to those in positions of responsibility by reducing the likelihood of unfounded or malicious allegations against them. We take advice from Safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight about good practice. Our practice guidelines are made up of:

- a) A general code of conduct for workers (see SR3i)
- b) Good practice guidelines for the activities we undertake with children and young people (see SR4a)

Our Local Meetings do not routinely undertake activities for adults at risk. Should the need arise, good practice guidance is available:
<https://thirtyoneeight.org> (search for “safeguarding adults”) (see SR6)
<https://www.quaker.org.uk/pastoralcare>

- c) Specific safeguarding arrangements for Local Meetings: SR4b records any agreed variations to the general good practice guidelines and gives local arrangements.

The members’ area of Thirtyone:eight includes comprehensive practice guidelines: <https://thirtyoneeight.org> (search for “working safely”) (see SR6).

10. Working in partnership

Partners we work with

Within the range of organisations we work with, there can be great variation in practice when it comes to safeguarding children, young people and adults. This can be because of cultural tradition, belief and religious practice or understanding of what constitutes abuse. Where we work in partnership with other organisations, we will therefore have clear guidelines regarding our expectations of those organisations, whether in the UK or abroad. We will discuss with all partners our safeguarding expectations and where appropriate have a partnership safeguarding agreement.

Britain Yearly Meeting

The AM will report annually to Britain Yearly Meeting via its Governance Annual Return.

Thirtyone:eight

The AM is a member of Thirtyone:eight and will seek specialist advice from it whenever necessary (see SR6).

Room hirers

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

11. Communication

We believe good communication is essential in promoting safeguarding to those we wish to protect, to everyone involved in working with children, young people and adults, and to all those with whom we work in partnership. This safeguarding document is just one means of promoting safeguarding. Our expectations around communication between role-holders/workers and children, young people and adults are set out in our Code of Conduct (see SR3i).

This accords with the guidance from Thirtyone:eight on communicating safely.

12. Responding to concerns or allegations of abuse

The 5Rs of Responding

The 5Rs are a useful way to remember the steps of the process when handling a disclosure. They are:

Receive

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said without judgement.
- Take it seriously.
- Let the person tell their story and don't push for information.
- Do not ask leading questions.

Reassure

- Reassure them that they are right to disclose.
- Explain that you will have to pass their information to the Safeguarding Coordinator, who will make sure the matter is dealt with appropriately.

Recognise

- Be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse.

Respond

- Emphasise to the individual that they have done the right thing in sharing this information and they are not to blame.
- Be honest; never make promises to keep what you are being told confidential. If abuse is involved, or someone might be at risk, you will need to tell someone.
- Use open questions (e.g. use phrases like 'tell me about..', or 'explain to me...')
- Avoid closed questions (i.e. those that can be answered 'yes' or 'no'.)
- Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if they are telling the truth.
- Tell them what you will do with the information they have shared and that they will be kept informed.

Refer

Report concerns as soon as possible and within 24 hours directly to the:

- AM Safeguarding Coordinator:
Sally Harris 01225 833470
sally.harris@btinternet.com
- AM Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator:
Alex Hart 01373 229968 / 07547 708288
alex@myphone.coop

Immediate next steps

Make sure the child or adult involved is safe right now. If you think someone is in immediate danger, do not delay – call the police on 999 straight away.

Make a written record of what you have been told, and who told you, as soon after the event as possible, ideally on form SR5c. Sign it, with your name, date and time. Keep it safely, along with your original notes.

13. Reporting a concern or allegation

See Flowcharts in SR5a and/or SR5b.

- If you think someone is in immediate danger, do not delay – call the police on 999 straight away.
- If you (the person raising the concern) are clear that the matter needs to be reported to Children's/Adults' Services or the Police, then you should raise the

concern directly if it will avoid delay, and then inform the AM Safeguarding Coordinator.

- Otherwise, you should report concerns directly to the AM Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours.
- Do not investigate

Under no circumstances should a volunteer role-holder or employee carry out their own investigation into an allegation or suspicion of abuse. This could increase the potential harm to the person at risk and contaminate evidence. Instead, follow the procedures below.

The *Safeguarding Coordinator* is appointed by the AM to:

- act on its behalf in dealing with the allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- collate and clarify the precise details of the allegation or suspicion.
- record them on the Safeguarding Coordinator's form SR5d.
- refer the matter to the statutory agencies who have the legal duty to investigate where appropriate.
- Request advice from Thirtyone:eight if necessary.

If you first contact another Quaker (such as one with responsibility for pastoral care or an Elder) with a concern then either you or that other Quaker must contact the AM Safeguarding Coordinator as soon as possible to make the report. This avoids losing details, reduces the number of people involved initially and can save time.

If the Safeguarding Coordinator is not available, or if the suspicions in any way involve the Safeguarding Coordinator, then report to a AM Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator, or to an AM Trustee. If they are unavailable, or involved, contact Thirtyone:eight's helpline, and subsequently inform the AM Safeguarding Coordinator (unless involved). All contact details are in SR1d.

Supporting those affected by abuse

Friends are aware that there may be people involved with the Meeting who are survivors or victims of past abuse. We are committed to offering pastoral care and support to all those affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the AM and its Local Meetings, working with statutory agencies as appropriate.

If the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy becomes aware of a safeguarding incident, they will make sure that arrangements are made to support everyone affected and to liaise with any outside organisations as appropriate.

Raising concerns directly with the Statutory Authorities

While allegations or suspicions of abuse will normally be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator, the absence of the Safeguarding Coordinator or Deputy should not delay referral to Social Services, the Police or taking advice from Thirtyone:eight.

It is the right of any individual as a citizen to make a direct referral to the safeguarding agencies or seek advice from Thirtyone:eight. However, the AM hopes that Quakers will use our internal procedure in non-urgent cases. If, however, the individual with the concern feels that the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy has not responded appropriately, or where they have a disagreement with the Safeguarding Coordinator(s) as to the appropriateness of a referral they are free to contact an outside agency direct. We hope by making this statement, we demonstrate our commitment to effective safeguarding and the protection of all those who are vulnerable.

The Safeguarding Coordinator should be notified in all cases, even if they were not available initially, unless they are implicated (then use the process above).

14. Sharing information

It is not a breach of confidentiality to seek advice and guidance from the Safeguarding Coordinator. The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 are not barriers to justified information-sharing, particularly where a child's welfare is concerned.

The Safeguarding Coordinator may need to inform others depending on the circumstances and/or nature of the concern, such as the Local Authority Children's or Adult Services and a referral may need to be made. Advice may also be sought in confidence from Thirtyone:eight.

If it is suspected that a criminal offence has been committed, the police must be informed.

If any reference has been made to statutory authorities, the Clerk of Trustees should be informed. They will then determine whether and what information should be passed to:

- the Charity Commission (as a serious incident),
- the Area Meeting's insurers (because of possible legal action),
- other Trustees (because of wider implications).

If allegations have been made about a person who holds any **position of trust** in relation to children and young people under the age of 18, irrespective of whether

they hold that role within a Quaker setting, then the Designated Officer of the Local Authority (formerly LADO) must be informed.

If allegations have been made about a person who holds a position of trust in relation to an adult, the Local Adult Safeguarding Board should be informed.

If, after a statutory investigation/enquiry is complete, a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service needs to be considered, the statutory authorities will provide guidance.

An information-sharing agreement is in place between Thirtyone:eight and Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) which allows for the BYM Safeguarding Officer to receive a copy of any advice offered by Thirtyone:eight to Area Meetings, based on the consent of the caller. The BYM Safeguarding Officer will support the AM Safeguarding Coordinator if required.

Limitations to sharing information

Suspicions or incidents must not be discussed with anyone other than those named above. A written record of the concerns should be made in accordance with these procedures and kept in a secure place.

The Trustees will support the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need-to-know basis.

15. Storing and Retaining Records

Good record keeping is an important part of safeguarding. Our requirements in respect of children's activities, safer appointments, and allegations are set out in SR8.

16. Detailed procedures in respect of children and adults

Allegations of physical injury, neglect or emotional abuse of a child:

If a child has a physical injury without a satisfactory explanation, a symptom of neglect or there are concerns about emotional abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Seek medical help if needed urgently, informing the medic of any suspicions.
- Contact the Local Authority Safeguarding Children team for advice on what further action should be taken.

- Avoid telling parents or carers unless advised to do so by the Local Authority Safeguarding Children team. This is to avoid evidence being destroyed, perpetrators being alerted or people being silenced with threats or other coercion.

In the event of any concerns about a child's welfare, the Safeguarding Coordinator should seek advice from Children's Social Care or Thirtyone:eight.

Allegations of sexual abuse of children, young people or adults at risk

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- Contact the Local Authority team responsible for Safeguarding Children, or the police, directly. They will NOT speak to the parent/carer or anyone else to avoid evidence being destroyed, perpetrators being alerted or people being kept silent with threats or other coercion.
- If in doubt about any action to be taken, they will obtain and follow advice from Thirtyone:eight.

Concerns about abuse of adults

If there is concern, suspicion or an allegation of abuse or harm of an adult, including: physical, sexual, organisational, financial, discriminatory, neglect, self-neglect, forced marriage, modern slavery or domestic abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will:

- If the adult is in immediate danger or has sustained a serious injury, contact the emergency services, informing them of any suspicions.
- Contact the Local Authority team who have responsibility for Safeguarding Adults. Alternatively, contact Thirtyone:eight for advice.

Scope of safeguarding responsibility with regard to adults

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance states that the safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) ... and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect ... and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

If an adult does not have care and support needs (and is not a carer for an adult with care and support needs) then there is no duty to refer concerns of abuse to the Local Authority, but of course cases should be referred to appropriate agencies according to the circumstances. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Local Authority or Thirtyone:eight.

The Care Act places the duty upon Adult Services to investigate situations of harm or risk of harm to adults with care and support needs (or carers of adults with care and support needs). This may result in a range of options including: action against the person or organisation causing the harm, increasing the support for the carers, or no further action if the person at risk of harm does not want further action to be taken and they have the mental capacity to make this decision. This is a decision for Adult Services to decide following assessment, not the Local or Area Meeting.

Adults without care and support needs can still experience abuse and may need support and pastoral care. The AM takes any form of abuse seriously. Therefore, concerns about an adult who does not have care and support needs should still be reported to the Safeguarding Coordinator unless the adult objects and there is no one else at risk.

17. Spiritual abuse

If there is a concern about spiritual abuse, the Safeguarding Coordinator will:

- Contact Thirtyone:eight and follow the advice given.
- Identify support services for the victim e.g. counselling or other pastoral support if they want these.

18. Allegations against people in a position of trust

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with children/young people

If an accusation is made against a children/young people's worker (whether a volunteer or paid member of staff) whilst following the procedure outlined above, the Safeguarding Coordinator, in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures will:

- Make a referral to a designated officer, formerly called a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose function is to handle all allegations against adults who work with children and young people whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

- Liaise with the Designated Officer with regard to what immediate action must be taken to remove the risk to the child and others; this may include immediate suspension of the alleged perpetrator.
- Following full investigation by the statutory authorities, undertake an assessment with regards to making a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults at risk. Advice should be sought from Thirtyone:eight regarding this matter and the decision should be informed by the Designated Officer if they are involved.

Allegations of abuse against a person who works with adults at risk

The Safeguarding Coordinator will:

- Liaise with Adult Services in regard to considering the suspension of the worker.
- Make a referral to the Local Authority. There is no Designated Officer role in Adult Services but the Local Authority still has a duty to consider concerns about people working in positions of trust with adults in a paid or voluntary capacity.
- Following full investigation by the statutory authorities, undertake an assessment with regards to making a referral to Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of the person being placed on the barred list for working with children or adults at risk. Advice should be sought from Thirtyone:eight regarding this matter and the decision should be informed by the Designated Officer if they are involved.

19. Working with those who may pose a risk to others

When someone attending the Local or Area Meeting is known to have abused children or adults at risk, is under investigation or is known to be a risk to others, the Local and Area Meeting will supervise the person and offer pastoral care. Arrangements will be put in place to protect children, young people and adults at risk. This will usually involve setting boundaries for the person, based on an appropriate risk assessment and thorough consultation with appropriate parties (eg Probation officers, Safeguarding Coordinators at other Meetings, the BYM Safeguarding Officer). Options for appropriate action will include supervision at meetings and events, and setting and agreeing boundaries for that person in the form of a written contract which they must agree and adhere to. Such a person will not be allowed to work with children, young people or adults at risk or be allowed unsupervised contact. There may be events where such a person's attendance will be deemed to be inappropriate and they will be informed that they may not attend.

Where such a risk exists or is reasonably suspected, it is important that the risk is managed robustly, with the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults given priority over subjective opinions or concerns about upsetting the person posing the risk. We will contact Thirtyone:eight or the BYM Safeguarding Officer if in any doubt about the action to be taken.

Caution should be taken to avoid the potential for any abuse of positions of trust held by such individuals. Specifically, Area and Local Meeting nominations committees need to consider seriously what roles such a person could be appointed to that might pose a risk.

There may be circumstances where a person who is vulnerable, i.e. an adult at risk or perhaps a child, are themselves a risk to others because of their behaviour. In these circumstances a balanced approach is needed, but the safety and welfare of all concerned must be considered.

Those who have been mistakenly or falsely accused will also have support needs, and Elders and Pastoral Friends will help with this.

The AM Safeguarding Coordinator/Deputy will take the lead in these matters and may seek advice from Thirtyone:eight or BYM's Safeguarding Officer. They will work with other role-holders as appropriate and keep other Trustees informed.

Further guidance can be found in the members' area of Thirtyone:eight <https://thirtyoneeight.org> (search for "Those who may pose a risk").

Quaker Life guidance on accepting into our Meetings people who may pose a risk can be found at:

<https://groups.quaker.org.uk/resources/uploads/gills/2018/01/12-Quaker-meetings-and-ex-offenders.pdf>

Quaker Life guidance on offenders potentially coming to Meeting can be found at:

<https://groups.quaker.org.uk/resources/uploads/gills/2018/01/13-Advice-to-welcoming-sex-offenders-July-2016.docx>

20. Annual Review

Our LM safeguarding practices will be reviewed annually by:

- the LM Clerk/s;
- the local Convenor of Children's Committee;
- the local Convenor of Pastoral Friends or their equivalents;

- the DBS Verifier;
- the Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

They will report in the LM's Annual Safeguarding Report to AM Trustees using the template in SR9a which asks key questions about practice in the LM and can provide assurances to Trustees. Trustees will consider and review the policy, procedures and actual practice, assisted by a report from the AM Safeguarding Coordinator and any additional information from Britain Yearly Meeting and Thirtyone:eight. There will be a more comprehensive review every three years.

Britain Yearly Meeting will publish any updates to the model *Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedures and Toolkit* for AMs; this will normally be in January (from 2022 onwards) and will be based on new legislation, best practice and/or advice from Thirtyone:eight.

The AM Safeguarding Coordinator (with Deputies, if appointed) will review:

- the Local Meeting annual safeguarding reports
- practice that they are aware of
- the AM's safeguarding training needs and opportunities
- incidents and intelligence during the year
- the updates from Britain Yearly Meeting
- whether any amendments are needed to the AM safeguarding documents.

The AM Safeguarding Coordinator will report on these matters (normally by the end of March) to AM Trustees who will consider and review the Policy and Procedures documents and actual practice.

At least once every three years, Trustees will initiate a more comprehensive review, including discussions with each Local Meeting and a review of the policy and procedures aided by the model policy documents published by BYM.