

SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK

for the use and guidance of Friends and Attenders in

HERTFORD & HITCHIN

AREA AND LOCAL QUAKER MEETINGS

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

This booklet has been put together for the specific use of Hertford & Hitchin Area Meeting and its constituent Local Meetings. Our purpose throughout the process has been to make our Safeguarding requirements as simple, as straightforward and as accessible as possible. We need a realistic and flexible policy and structure that can be applied to the wide variety of local meetings within our Area Meeting.

Convicted paedophiles have been associated with meetings, sometimes as respected and trusted Friends themselves. Whilst being aware of risks to children, it is also necessary that we safeguard elderly members and attenders. We do not allow our children or vulnerable adults to be abused by Friends. We will do our best to prevent this ever happening, but we are also realistic about the very few opportunities offered in ordinary circumstances for older adults or children to be abused.

Groups renting out rooms in our Meeting Houses have responsibility for their own safeguarding policy. It is appropriate to enquire about a safeguarding policy on room-hire application forms, but we do not need to see it.

The information that forms the foundation for this booklet has come from:

- Safeguarding Office, Britain Yearly Meeting, Quakers in Britain
- Thirtyone:eight (previously known as :Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)
- Designated Friends from Local Meetings and AM Safeguarding Coordinator

Hertford and Hitchin AM subscribe to Thirtyone:eight, and our Safeguarding Coordinators have access to guidance and a helpline whenever needed.

Our revised and updated Safeguarding policy was accepted by Area Meeting in July 2022.

Although it is to be hoped that circumstances never arise when we have to take some action, we hope that this handbook provides the necessary support, particularly for those Friends who have no experience of safeguarding issues. Friends will need to think through how the information in this booklet is best disseminated to its members. If a situation needing action should arise it would need a swift response so all Friends need to know who the Designated Friend for Safeguarding is for their Meeting and the Area Coordinator for Safeguarding. Contact details for this Friend (see Section 4) will be found in the current List of Members and Attenders published by the Area Meeting and also on the Safeguarding Poster on each Local Meeting's notice board.

THE POLICY

This is the *Safeguarding Policy* for Hertford and Hitchin Quaker Area Meeting (AM). More detailed information on our organisation and practices can be found in *Safeguarding Procedures and Toolkit* (available on <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/safeguarding-procedures-and-toolkit-area-meetings>)

This policy has been written in line with legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in England and Wales. We have adopted this policy and associated procedures in accordance with statutory guidance and recommendations of the 2021 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) report into child protection in religious organisations and settings.

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 Hertford and Hitchin Quaker AM.
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 which are open to the public
- Social, learning and outreach activities and events
- Pastoral care (such as home visiting and giving lifts). 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. Occasionally, there may be special events and trips outside the meeting. We also hold All Age Meetings for Worship.
- Residential Events are occasionally organised for adults and/or children (eg Quaker Camp).
- In some meeting houses, there may be activities for adults with care and support needs, such as a Dementia café, or lunch club.
- 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 at-risk 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. 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 Coordinators and LM Designated Friends are on the poster displayed in each meeting house and at the bottom of this document.

Safer Appointments/Recruitment

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 Safer Appointments process for some roles is to prioritise the safety of our vulnerable groups. This will apply to the following:

- Safeguarding coordinators
- All volunteers and coordinators carrying out activities with children and young people;
- Those with pastoral care responsibilities

For these roles, the appointment should include

- a written description, so expectations are clear
- a personal details form and a self-declaration form
- a formal conversation or interview during which safeguarding is discussed
- written references
- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- a minute by the local or area meeting will be made to record when a role holder or employee has been checked and cleared by the DBS service. The minute should also record when the meeting needs to re-check (normally 3 years).

Those appointed will

- be given a summary of the safeguarding policy
- know how to report concerns
- agree to abide by the code of conduct
- have a suitable induction and training programme
- have a probationary period

Training and Good Practice

Each individual in a role of responsibility will have appropriate safeguarding training according to their Role Description. In addition, our Designated Friends, trustees, clerks, elders, nominations committees, and any paid staff, will have a safeguarding induction, and will be encouraged to have training.

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 Manual from specialist Christian safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight or their helpline: 0303 003 1111.

Procedure for responding to concerns or allegations of abuse

Our Procedures document contains 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 at risk, the LM 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 of our local meeting room's hire agreements 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: **Clare Cooper: 07538 454 696**

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: **Chris Kell: 07816 935396**

Date: 20 July 2022 Next Review Date: July 2023

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE in QUAKER MEETINGS

Guidelines for Parents

There are people of all ages in Meetings, including many children and young people. The following information is designed to help those meetings run as constructively, enjoyably and safely as possible for all who are involved: children, parents/carers and volunteers.

Children normally meet in a designated separate area to hold their own Meeting, with activities and supervision arranged that is appropriate to a wide range of children from babies to early teens. There are always two volunteers running children's meetings, though one of these may be a child's parent. Please inform the Clerk or Children's Meeting Convenor if your child has any special learning needs or health issues such as allergies. Where the child is pre-school it may be necessary for parents to share the care. When the children join the adult meeting, parents/carers are again responsible for the children.

The children normally share in the Meeting with the adults from an agreed time, either at the start or the end of the adults' Meeting, for about 10 to 15 minutes. Please don't worry if they are restless during that time. Meeting for Worship will normally have a period for notices and reports. If your child wishes to leave before these that is fine, but please remember that they are no longer the responsibility of the volunteers.

Normally, our Meeting Houses are safe to wander in but there may be a gallery or staircase where falling is a risk, or there may be a garden with routes onto the road. Although we try to keep our gardens well-maintained and litter-free, sometimes rubbish – including bottles and cans of alcohol, condoms and even syringes - are tossed into gardens and haven't been noticed. (Please let someone know if you discover such objects in the grounds.) Very young children should be accompanied to the toilet by a parent. Kitchens are dangerous places and children should not enter unsupervised.

It is very important that you know where your children are at all times. Under exceptional circumstances parents may not be in the Meeting for Worship next door, but if they are not in the Meeting House they must be contactable in an emergency. After Meeting for Worship there is no one especially assigned to supervise the children and there may be equipment, for example gardening tools, which may be dangerous.

Unless your child is unhappy about being left in other people's care we expect that you will be able to experience the Meeting for Worship without having to worry about them. We hope that at some point you will be able to join the rota of volunteers. We do all that we can to ensure that those working with the children are responsible and trustworthy by requiring that all volunteers are appointed to this role through the Safer Recruitment Process, and are cleared by the Disclosure & Barring Service. If you have any questions or concerns about the care of your children, please ask the Clerk.

CONTACTS LOCAL, AREA & NATIONAL:

Thirtyone:Eight Helpline 0303 003 1111 Advice and support Monday-Friday 9am - 5 pm. Email: info@thirtyoneeight.org for non-urgent enquiries and training.

Due Diligence Checking (DDC) 0845 644 3298. To arrange DBS checks: www.ddc.uk.net

Hertfordshire Children's Services 0300 123 4043 (24 hr) if suspected child abuse

Hertfordshire Adult Care Services 0300 123 4042 (24 hr) if suspected abuse of a vulnerable adult.

Online: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/report-a-concern-about-an-adult-form.aspx>

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 (will have discussion anonymously); email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit Calling 101 should automatically route you to the police in your area. Emergencies: 999.

Quaker Enquiries about Safeguarding:

Mark Mitchell (Safeguarding Officer)

Quakers in Britain

Friends House

173 Euston Road

London NW1 2BJ

MarkM@quaker.org.uk or Safe@quaker.org.uk

Enquiries about Safeguarding in Hertford & Hitchin Area Meeting

Area Safeguarding Coordinator: Clare Cooper email: clarecooper@btinternet.com

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: Chris Kell email: chriskell37@gmail.com

Designated Friend for Safeguarding in each local Meeting to be found in the book of Members or through the Clerk.

Disclosure and Barring Service register of offenders

Everyone who takes responsibility for children and young people in our Meetings, or who is performing a pastoral role with older people on behalf of the Meeting, must be DBS checked. Even if a local Meeting has no regular Children's Meeting, there should be two Friends checked and registered in case visiting Friends turn up with children.

The process of DBS checking is very straightforward. The Local Meeting Designated Friend for Safeguarding can guide you through the process with *Due Diligence Checking* and arrange for identity documents to be seen and approved. Your online form is sent off for police checks. Once an Enhanced Disclosure application has come back clear, you can register with the Online Update Service so that those you authorise can easily check your DBS status. This reduces the need for DBS checks to be applied for with different organizations.