

# Meeting Safety 2017



**March 2017** *Contact detail updates since Meeting Safety 2014.*

All contact details are given on the back page.

## **An introduction to safeguarding for Quaker Meetings in Britain**

Safeguarding is protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults (also known as Protected Adults) from harm.

Some work by Friends and Meetings with adults may be affected by safeguarding regulations, however, the vast majority of our work in this area is with children and young people (i.e. anyone under 18 years old).

## **Volunteers & staff working with children & young people**

It is important to keep records of those who can work with children and young people in a meeting or for a Quaker organisation. Some meetings minute who can do so. It is good practice to require volunteers and staff to complete an application form to work with children and young people and to take up references.

You should not permit anyone to work *unsupervised* with children, young people or vulnerable adults without seeing either a clear disclosure form, a clear scheme record or a letter from Quaker Life or the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding stating that they may work with these groups.

There are some individuals who are legally barred from working with children or young people or vulnerable adults: the Area Meeting Trustees would be breaking the law if they permitted such people to work with those groups.

Details of how to check that people can work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are given on the next page.

## **Getting information and help about safe practice**

Safeguarding regulations and legislation are frequently changed and Quaker Life does not have the resources to keep up to date well enough to offer definitive advice to Friends and Meetings. Therefore, Quaker Life recommends that area meetings should be members of the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service.

*If your area meeting chooses not to be a member of the CCPAS, then please approach your trustees if you need safeguarding advice.*

### **Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)**

Their manual "**Safe and Secure**" is available in the members' area of their website: it contains guidelines for safe practice and child protection. The public area of their website is also informative. The CCPAS will offer general and specific advice on safeguarding matters. Their 24 hour helpline will offer guidance about reporting a particular incident to the police or other authorities.

## **What advice is available from Quaker Life?**

We can offer very general safeguarding advice as well as Quaker advice on how specific safeguarding matters may affect the pastoral needs of individuals and the meeting community. Staff in Quaker Life are not professional experts on safeguarding: hence our recommendation to area meetings to belong to the CCPAS.

Contact the BYM Safeguarding Advisor:  
Gill Sewell, [safe@quaker.org.uk](mailto:safe@quaker.org.uk) 020 7663 1017.

## Checking the suitability of staff and volunteers

Criminal records checks, or registering with the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme are just aspects of ensuring that people working with children, young people or vulnerable adults are suitable to do so. It is important for volunteers and employees to go through a meeting's recruitment procedure.

We work with the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding on obtaining these checks.

### **Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS)**

The Yearly Meeting is a member of the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS).

The CAS submits checks to the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme in Scotland and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales.

Quaker Meetings do not pay for volunteers to be checked through the CAS, however for paid employees the PVG and DBS charge a fee that needs to be paid by the Meeting that employs the applicant.

The Yearly Meeting makes an annual grant to the CAS to cover their administration.

## Scotland

### **Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme**

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Scheme) is one that volunteers and workers may need to join if they are doing regulated work with children or protected adults in Scotland.

### **How to register with the scheme**

Forms are available from the CAS. The Disclosure Scotland website gives information on how to complete these forms. Please do not keep a stock of forms in your Meeting

## England and Wales

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

The purpose of a criminal records check is to assist the organisation in identifying people who may be unsuitable to work with children or young people in any setting and with vulnerable adults in a residential setting.

### **How to obtain a criminal records check**

Apply online or by form. Details can be found in a separate document available online by a link from [www.quaker.org.uk/meetingsafety](http://www.quaker.org.uk/meetingsafety).

Current guidelines for obtaining criminal records checks can be found on the UK government website and also on the CAS website.

### **DBS Update Service**

It is only possible to join the DBS Update Service for a short period after a Disclosure certificate has been issued.

If someone already has a DBS Disclosure certificate and they are a member of the DBS Update Service, then it is possible for Quaker Life or the local meeting to access the person's records. Sometimes this may result in the person being asked to apply for a new DBS check.

People who have obtained a DBS check as a volunteer, can join the DBS Update Service for free. Belonging to this service may mean that fewer DBS applications will be required. If you have the opportunity to join the DBS Update Service for free, then it is recommended that you do so.

## Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man

These Islands have their own legislatures; laws and regulations are enacted and implemented on each island, please follow your island's legislation.

## Completing forms correctly

Information on completing and submitting the forms is sent out with them as well as internet links being given on the CAS website. Please follow the instructions carefully.

As well as the official PVG/DBS forms, additional forms are sent out which seek extra information required by the CAS. These additional forms can also be downloaded from <http://www.churchsafe.org.uk/resources.html> on the CAS website.

## Verifying Forms

**People completing forms need to prove their identity. This is done locally by a verifier.** All area and local meeting clerks, co-clerks and assistant clerks are listed as verifiers (for the period of their appointment), additional verifiers can be appointed by meetings; details of the minute of appointment should be sent to [updates@quaker.org.uk](mailto:updates@quaker.org.uk). Do note that you may not verify a form of a close relative. Information on how to verify forms and online applications can be found on the CAS website.

## What happens if a conviction or a caution is revealed?

A conviction or caution is not an automatic bar to working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

If a disclosure gives details of any convictions or cautions, then you should get in touch with Gill Sewell, the BYM Safeguarding Advisor, in Quaker Life as a matter of urgency. The applicant should not undertake any work with children or young people without formal permission from Quaker Life or the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding.

Gill Sewell will arrange for a risk assessment to be undertaken. The applicant will be approached to put any information received into the context of their life story. The meeting and other people may also provide information to assist the risk assessment process. The information is kept as confidential and anonymous as possible.

The decision (as to whether the applicant should be allowed to work with children and young people, or not) is communicated to the applicant and the meeting.

## Common questions:

**What happens if I work with Children in Scotland as well as England or Wales?** You will need to follow the correct procedures for both the Scottish system and the English and Welsh system.

**Are DBS checks portable?** No, but see the section on the DBS Update Service on the previous page.

**How often should a new criminal records check be obtained?** This is a matter for the Trustees of the Area Meeting or other Quaker body. Generally organisations require a new check to be obtained every three to five years. At a BYM level, we require relevant staff and volunteers to have a criminal records check that is less than three years old. However, if the person is part of the new Update Service, then it will be possible to go online and confirm the status of the disclosure certificate more often. If there is new information, then you must inform Gill Sewell urgently and not permit the person to resume their work with children and young people until you have received authorisation that they may do so.

## Changes to the DBS or PVG scheme.

Frequent proposals are made for changes to safeguarding legislation. Please remember to follow current procedures until a proposed change is actually brought into effect. We will include information in the monthly mailing to AM and LM clerks wherever possible.

## Legal Responsibilities

The legal responsibilities are similar throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Trustees of a charity, such as an Area Meeting, carry the formal legal responsibility for safeguarding within the whole of the charity.

Each Area Meeting should appoint one or more people as a Safeguarding Co-ordinator, and a deputy. Their main functions are to act as an advocate for children and for vulnerable adults, to reporting concerns of abuse to the statutory authorities and to oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policies for children and vulnerable adults and ensuring that the policies are regularly reviewed.

All Local Meetings should understand how this role is being carried out within the Area Meeting.

Safeguarding Co-ordinators do not need to be Members of the Society of Friends, nor do they need to be a trustee, but trustees retain the responsibility for safeguarding.

## Meeting Safety August 2014

### Contacts

Who to contact for what

**For Quaker specific queries:** Gill Sewell, BYM Safeguarding Advisor,  
Quaker Life, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ  
[safe@quaker.org.uk](mailto:safe@quaker.org.uk) 020 7663 1017  
[www.quaker.org.uk/meetingsafety](http://www.quaker.org.uk/meetingsafety)

For DBS forms, contact Thaís de Oliveira in Quaker Life  
[cypadmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:cypadmin@quaker.org.uk) 020 7663 1013

### Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)

PO Box 133 Swanley Kent BR8 7UQ 0845 120 4550  
[info@ccpas.co.uk](mailto:info@ccpas.co.uk) [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)

*If your Area Meeting is not a member of the CCPAS, contact your Area Meeting trustees.*

### Churches' Agency for Safeguarding (CAS)

25 Marylebone Road London NW1 5JR 020 7467 5216  
[cas@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:cas@methodistchurch.org.uk) [www.churchsafe.org.uk](http://www.churchsafe.org.uk)

### New verifiers and Safeguarding Co-ordinators

Please inform [updates@quaker.org.uk](mailto:updates@quaker.org.uk) of the appointment of additional verifiers and new Safeguarding Co-ordinators.

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