

# Bristol Area Quaker Meeting



## Safeguarding Summary

Bristol Area Quaker Meeting Safeguarding policy is publicly available on the BAQM website and must be consulted for more guidance should there be an allegation of abuse. Friends involved in the care of children, Overseers and Wardens must be familiar with the full document.

### **Recognising Abuse**

It is not our responsibility to diagnose abuse but it is very important that we act when we are concerned or uneasy about something. Each local meeting should make it easy for anyone to report possible abuse of others or of themselves. The safeguarding Coordinators and Overseers should be identified by name, role and ideally by a photograph on display.

### **A definition of abuse**

Abuse is the violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse might be unintentional: the important factor is whether the person is harmed or not.

### **Abuse – Children**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, financial abuse and neglect. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **Who are adults with care and support needs?**

It is acknowledged that any adult can be vulnerable depending on the context in which they find themselves. For example:

- disabled people who have physical or sensory impairments
- people who have learning difficulties (this is an important category)
- people who have experienced or are currently experiencing mental ill-health including dementia
- some older people depending on individual circumstances
- people who feel vulnerable
- in the Quaker context, employees, eg wardens can be at risk of bullying by members of the meeting

Abuse can be physical sexual, psychological/emotional, neglect, financial domestic abuse/violence, modern slavery, discriminatory, institutional or self-neglect.

### **What should we do about it?**

Care must be taken in the way we respond if we identify possible abuse. Listen without interrupting. Show acceptance of what individuals say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used. Remain calm. Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality and keeping secrets, particularly with children disclosing abuse. Use language that is age appropriate and takes into account any disabilities the person may have.

#### **Helpful Responses**

You have done the right thing in

I'm glad you've told me

I will try to help you

Its not your fault

#### **Don't say**

Why didn't you tell anyone before?

I can't believe it. Are you sure?

I'm shocked. Don't tell anyone else.

Why? How? When? Who? Where?

### **Recording of concerns and confidentiality**

If anyone has concerns about a child, young person or adult they should make a note which should be factual and include the time and date of the incident. **Under no circumstance should anyone carry out their own investigation.**

### **Wardens**

Letting agreements for regular groups that include children and or adults with care and support needs should stipulate that a copy of their current safeguarding policy be lodged with the meeting. This should be checked annually, so that the current copy is always held.

Wardens should follow this procedure, including any concern they may have about a member of a group using the meeting house.

### **Allegations or Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect from or about a child or adult**

Listen to the child or adult, encourage them to speak e.g. "You have done the right thing in telling", but don't ask leading questions. Be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality.

### **What to do in cases of an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect**

Record what the child or adult says as soon as possible. Add your date and signature. Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the Co-ordinators.

Be aware of the definitions and possible signs of abuse. Check the Safeguarding Policies for more details. If you are worried about someone in your Meeting and are not sure if it is a safeguarding matter, call the Safeguarding Co-ordinators on 0117 299 3061 or talk to an Overseer in the first instance.

The person in receipt of allegations or suspicions of abuse should report concerns as soon as possible to a Safeguarding Coordinator.

**If there is immediate danger call 999 and ask for police.**

**Report your concerns as soon as possible to a safeguarding coordinator:**

**Ray Bray, Lois Cox, Jon Fieldhouse**

**Telephone number 0117 299 3061  
or by email to [safeguarding@bristolquakers.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bristolquakers.org.uk)**

Advice and help is always available 24/7 from **Thirtyone:eight**: 0303 003 1111.  
Call them if the Safeguarding Coordinators are unavailable or if the suspicions implicate them.

### **Children's Services**

Bristol: 0117 903 6444  
South Gloucestershire: 01454 866000  
North Somerset: 01275 888 808  
Out of hours for all three local authorities: 01454 615 165  
Police 101

### **Adults' Services**

Bristol Care Direct: 0117 922 2700  
South Gloucestershire: 01454 868007  
North Somerset: 01275 888 801  
Out of hours for all three local authorities: 01454 615 165  
Police 101

**Trustees are responsible for Safeguarding:**

**AM Clerk to Employment & Wellbeing Committee:** GERALYN MEEHAN  
e: [eandw.clerk@bristolquakers.org.uk](mailto:eandw.clerk@bristolquakers.org.uk) t: 07843 472502

**Clerk of Trustees:** CATHY NILE  
e: [trustees.clerk@bristolquakers.org.uk](mailto:trustees.clerk@bristolquakers.org.uk) t: 0117 924 5503