



Model Safeguarding Policy & Procedures for Area Quaker Meetings in England

Frequently-asked questions - why, what and how

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1 Introducing model safeguarding documents for AMs

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) has created a set of model safeguarding documents for Quaker area meetings, to help keep children, young people and adults safe. They follow modern good practice, adapted to the Quaker context.

The documents contain:

- **Policy and procedures**, including a 3-page summary
- **Toolkit** with additional resources including some practice guidance, forms for different situations, and a place to record local arrangements.

The new documents are designed to help us improve standards and to be more consistent; they are designed to be clearer and more flexible.

Area meeting trustees hold responsibility for safeguarding (on behalf of the AM). They decide what policies and procedures are needed, and ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Area meeting trustees are strongly encouraged to adopt these model documents, alongside additional resources depending on local need.

Meetings which have recently developed new documents may choose to postpone until the next time they review safeguarding arrangements. We hope all area meetings will be using the new policy and procedures by the end of 2022.

2 Brief summary - what's likely to be different for your current practice?

Roles

- Changes to the way you appoint some role holders - *section 3.3 of the policy and section C in the toolkit*
- Changes to Safeguarding Co-ordinator roles (being a trustee, with deputies as needed) - *section 2.5 of the policy and A1 of the toolkit*
- The need for some role-holders to have training - *section 3.4 of the policy*

Reporting

- The local meeting (through the LM Clerk with other role-holders) will need to review the arrangements every year, and report to the AM - *section 7 of the policy and A5 in the toolkit*
- The Area Meeting will need to review the arrangements every year, and report to BYM - *section and A6 in the toolkit*

3 About the documents

The model documents have been prepared by BYM staff working closely with Thirtyone:eight, a specialist safeguarding agency (previously CCPAS) which is also used by many area meetings.

We have adapted versions of Thirtyone:eight's standard policies to fit Quaker structures, roles and processes, including in relation to safer recruitment which

incorporates the Quaker process for discernment of appointments. We've also drawn on policies and practice from area meetings across Britain.

The model documents will be reviewed annually, to keep them up to date as legislation or regulations change.

The model policy comes with a toolkit - a set of forms adapted to fit Quaker roles, to help put the process into practice.

Please note: this version of the documents is currently for Quaker meetings *in England*.

4 Benefits

Higher standard

- The policy is in line with legislation and current good practice
- It's more comprehensive – not only relying on DBS checks
- It aims to prevent abuse (by including safer recruitment of volunteers and staff, induction and training, and good practice)

Clearer

- It helps area meetings know which practices are important
- The policy sets out roles and responsibilities

Flexible

- The resources in the toolkit can be adapted to local circumstances

Consistent

- Having less variation between area meetings will help work with people from more than one area meeting, or when Friends move.

Reassuring

- The policy includes provision for local meetings to report to area meeting trustees

5 Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you adding to the bureaucratic burden?

The policy itself matters, because it is a clear statement of how Quakers in your area keep people safe. That said, the key to implementing good safeguarding practice doesn't lie in the documents, but in a shared process. Introducing new documents and processes is an opportunity to work and improve things together.

Isn't safeguarding only relevant where there is a children's meeting?

Safeguarding is needed for everyone who's part of the Quaker community or families, whether there is a children's meeting or not – including children and young

people and adults. Having preparations in place will also help when new children arrive.

Surely we can just trust people, as Quakers?

Quakers place great emphasis on integrity, but both Quakers and the people we welcome are also human. So we can expect the same behaviours and influences as happen in other groups.

Aren't DBS checks the most important thing, plus responding well to disclosures?

It can be unhelpful to rely on DBS checks. Other important ways of reducing the risk of abuse include raising awareness, recruiting volunteers and staff more safely, induction and training, using good practice, communicating well, and having a process of review.

Do we really need to use all these Safer Recruitment processes?

Yes: the processes are designed to protect people. They're well-established good practice and can be used alongside Quaker nomination and appointment processes.

Won't having all these forms and checks put people off?

Some of them are supposed to put a few people off. Others are practical ways to keep people safe, or avoid situations arising. With some explanation, most people will see the reason for them. And some people may be more confident to offer service, knowing it is within a clear framework.

Do the policy and procedures have to be quite so long?

The three-page summary covers all the main points. The main policy provides essential information, which can't always be written briefly. Sometimes, technical language and detailed sections need to be included.

Where extra detail is needed, it's included in the toolkit. Having these prepared resources should save time and energy.

Keeping the structure and much of the text the same as Thirtyone:eight's model version will make it possible to update as expectations change nationally.

I thought we were supposed to be making things simpler?!

The priority is to raise the standard of some aspects of safeguarding. We know this is going to be difficult for some meetings, so the model documents are intended to be as simple as possible, in this context.

In the past, each area meeting had to write and adopt their own policy and procedures. The new documents are designed to be simpler to adopt and keep up-to-date, saving time in future.

Most important of all, using good practice to avoid abuse happening is much simpler than dealing with the consequences of abuse of children or adults.

Do we need to adopt these model documents, or can we continue with our existing ones?

We hope all area meetings will be using this policy and procedures (or ones of a very similar standard) by the end of 2022.

You will need to judge the right time to move to using the new model. If you've recently adopted new documents, or had training, it may be more sensible to wait for a while before introducing this new model version. In the meantime, consider introducing aspects which are missing from your current documents. Regular reviews will help.

What about our existing safeguarding documents? We worked so hard on them.

If you've been working on new documents, the process of developing good practice and getting used to safer ways will not be lost. Many existing documents will continue to be useful and you might wish to incorporate them into the new framework, perhaps as appendices.

Why doesn't this policy use more Quakerly language, and Quaker quotes?

It is clearer to use language that is standard, and consistent with regulations and national guidance. Whatever the language, there's a clear connection between the spiritual life and reducing abuse in our faith community.

What if we cannot gain agreement to one part of the policy or procedures, or we want to make a significant change?

Please discuss this with BYM's Safeguarding Officer. Thirtyone:eight can also give you advice. Safeguarding co-ordinators and lead trustees in other area meetings may also be able to help.

Where can we get the training the policy outlines?

There are many organisations offering training, including local authorities and faith bodies. Thirtyone:eight can provide training, either tailored to Quakers or running sessions open to people from many groups. We are also working on providing online training, specifically for Quaker groups.

6 Practical steps

The following steps may help – they are suggestions, rather than requirements.

At any stage you can contact the Safeguarding Officer for Britain Yearly Meeting www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/safeguarding You can also get advice from Thirtyone:eight <https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/helpline/>

It may also be helpful to share ideas and experience across area meeting boundaries, between safeguarding co-ordinators and trustees.

Be ready

- Be clear about why you are doing this: to enable Quakers to keep people safe (not to tick a compliance box).
- Read through the policy and look briefly at the toolkit. Take a brief look at the Thirtyone:eight online Safeguarding Manual, available through your subscription.
- Compare the model policy with your current documents and practice, to consider how much change will be involved. It may be helpful to speak with people in different local meetings to understand current arrangements.

- Consider initial training. It can be helpful for several Friends in the AM to share a similar level of knowledge. You could share training with another area meeting, or find out what trainers they have used.

Share

- Gather a 'core group' of Friends - which might include the lead trustee for safeguarding, AM Safeguarding Coordinator, Deputy Coordinator, and one or two people involved with children or oversight in local meetings.
- Consider involving Friends from more than one local meeting.
- Consider working with a neighbouring AM.

Plan

- Do you have some leaders? What are the likely obstacles?
- How long might you need to put some of the processes in place? Are you going to implement in stages, or start in some local meetings before moving on to others? You don't need to a full set of documents before the policy is agreed. It may be helpful to set dates by when some parts of the policy should be implemented.
- Discuss your plan with AM trustees.
- Keep key people (in local meetings and area meeting) informed.
- Consider the amount of budget that might be needed for training.

Draft

- Create a first draft version of the documents for your area meeting.
- Gather Friends from different local meetings to consider the draft, and whether any adaptations are needed.

Adopt

- Once you have a draft policy and procedures, ask AM trustees to agree and adopt them. It may help to introduce and discuss the documents at one meeting and plan to adopt them later.
- Trustees and the AM clerk may consider that the policy needs the agreement of the area meeting in session – this would also help increase awareness.

Implement

- Once agreed, publish the policy and procedures – including on the website(s).
- Circulate the policy to people who need copies.
- Display posters and the summary.
- It may be helpful to organise a gathering for Friends (in local meetings or across the area) who will be implementing, to answer questions, keep building relationships, and work on common issues, and look at timescales.
- Encourage local meetings. Local meetings could arrange discussions, notices or newsletter items. Your core group can help.
- Review how implementation is going, and use the annual review process.

7 Technical notes on adapting the document

Insert your Area Meeting's name - in five places (twice in the policy and three times in the toolkit) you will see "XXX Area Meeting" - replace XXX with the name of your AM in these places.

Add or amend specific details - in the documents, **text in green** shows you where you need to add details which are specific to your AM. Once you've made the changes, any green text can be deleted.