

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

General Meeting for Scotland

Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults

Safeguarding Procedures and Guidelines

These guidelines are not event specific and may need to be adapted to suit the nature of the event.

**CONTENTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section** | **Title** | **Page** |
|  | Introduction: General Meeting for Scotland | 3 |
| 1 | Definitions of ‘disclosure’ and other terms | 3 |
| 2 | Categories and possible signs of abuse   * Physical abuse p4 * Emotional abuse p5 * Sexual abuse p5 * Neglect p6 * Domestic abuse p6 * Organised abuse p7 | 4 |
| 3 | Procedures and guidance for volunteer members | 7 |
| 4 | Procedures and guidance for the Safeguarding Coordinator | 8 |
| 5 | Procedures and guidance for the responsible adult at event | 12 |
| 6 | Guidance on referrals and contacting outside agencies | 13 |
| 7 | Guidance on confidentiality | 14 |
| 8 | Guidance on supporting individuals who have made a disclosure | 15 |
| 9 | Contact details for external organisations | 16 |
| 10 | Forms to be completed   * Event information sheet p18 * Disclosure reporting form p19-20 * Disclosure reporting form for Safeguarding   Coordinator p21-22 | 17 |
| 11 | Safeguarding: A quick reference guide | 23 |
| 12 | Guidance on working with children and young people | 24 |
| 13 | Required checks and references | 24 |
| 14 | Protection of vulnerable adults | 25 |

**DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS**

**Section 1** contains definitions of disclosure and a glossary of terms used in the document.

**Section 2** gives a detailed overview of the categories of abuse and signs to be aware of.

**Section 3** is about how to react if someone makes an allegation. (See also Section 9)

**Section 4** contains guidance for the **Safeguarding Co-ordinator** who is appointed to help all volunteers working with children and young people.

**Section 5** is guidance for the **responsible adult**, e.g. an adult looking after children on a Sunday morning or an adult in charge of young people at a residential event. Their responsibilities are different from those of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

**Section 6** providesguidance for the Safeguarding Co-ordinator on which outside agencies can give advice – either about when to make a referral or how to handle the disclosure.

The guidance in **Section 7** underlines the importance of confidentiality.

**Section 8** offers guidance on supporting an individual who has made a disclosure.

**Section 9** lists external organisations (and their roles) that might be helpful for anyone involved in dealing with a disclosure and other problems connected to children and young people.

**Section 10** provides three forms to be completed in the event of a disclosure.

**Section 11** is a quick reference guide, which it is recommended should be reproduced as a stand-alone document.

**Section 12** sets outsome general principles worth bearing in mind at all times

**Section 13 (page 25):** joining the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme

**Section 14** deals with the protection of **vulnerable adults.**

**GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND**

Friends in General Meeting for Scotland and in its constituent meetings are very grateful to all who are willing to help with work for Children and Young People. We all subscribe to the **GM Safeguarding Policy**. These **Procedural Guidelines** explain what to do in the event of a disclosure being made.

Section 1: Definitions of ‘disclosure’ and other terms

A **disclosure** refers to one of the following:

* A child or young person making a statement/sharing something relating to abuse outside the event.
* A child or young person making a statement/sharing something relating to abuse at the event.
* A child or young person or volunteer reporting suspicion or evidence relating to abuse.

It is important that the child or young person is taken seriously, that procedures are followed and appropriate referrals made.

In a Quaker meeting there will be individuals who have various roles in looking after children and young people. This applies to residential and non-residential events at Local Meeting, Area Meeting and General Meeting. The following terms help to clarify these roles.

**Participant:** any child or young person (18 and under) taking part in a Quaker meeting or event.

**Volunteer:** adults over the age of 17 with some responsibility for helping with the running of a children’s meeting or young people’s event.

**Responsible adult:** the adult who is appointed to take overall responsibility for the running of a children’s and/or young people’s meeting including residential events. This role may be referred to as the clerk. (Section 5, page 10)

**Safeguarding Co-ordinator:** an adult appointed to take responsibility for safeguarding issues within a Quaker meeting or at a Quaker event. Guidance for this role is provided on page 6.

**Regulated work:** this refers to regular/planned tasks that you have been appointed to do with children, young people or vulnerable adults (page 25) by the Quaker meeting at local, area or general meeting level.

**The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme is administered by Disclosure Scotland and is designed to:**

* Help ensure that those who have regular contact with children and protected adults through paid and unpaid work do not have a known history of harmful behaviour.
* Be quick and easy to use, reducing the need for PVG scheme members to complete a detailed application form every time a disclosure check is required.
* Strike a balance between proportionate protection and robust regulation, and make it easier for organisations to determine who they should check to protect those with whom they work.

Disclosure Scotland: this is an agency of the Scottish Government. Its website gives details of all statutory procedures in the field of child protection, including details of Criminal Records Checks and what information must be disclosed, and when referrals must be made to this agency.

Section 2: Categories and possible signs of abuse

Please read this with care, if it causes any issues for you please talk with the responsible adult at the event.

If you have any concerns about a participant and think they are displaying signs of abuse please inform the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or the responsible adult straight away. This is not a comprehensive list but may indicate abuse if a child exhibits several symptoms or a pattern emerges.

**What is abuse?**

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is causing a child or young person pain or injury that harms them. Physical abuse may involve:

* Hitting
* Shaking
* Throwing
* Poisoning, burning or scalding
* Drowning or suffocating.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer pretends the child has an illness, or deliberately does something to them to cause the symptoms of an illness.

***Warning signs***

* Unexplained injuries or burns which keep happening
* Unlikely excuses or a refusal to explain how injuries have happened
* Wearing clothes to cover up injuries, even in hot weather
* Refusing to undress for gym
* Bald patches
* Chronic running away
* Fear of medical help or of being examined
* Self-destructive tendencies
* Aggression towards others
* Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
* Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
* Fear of someone contacting the suspected abuser.

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is:

* Not providing a child or young person with love and affection
* Ignoring the child or young person
* Constantly threatening and criticising them
* Making the child feel that they are worthless
* Having adult expectations of a child that they can’t hope to match because they are too young, too small or too immature
* Making a child feel frightened or, that they are constantly in danger.  
  To make a child feel that they are only worth something when they please someone else.
* Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill treatment of a child; it can also happen on its own.

***Warning signs***

* Physical, mental and emotional development lagging behind other children of the same age
* Sudden speech disorders like a stutter
* Continually running themselves down ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
* Overreaction to mistakes
* Extreme fear of any new situation
* Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
* Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
* Being extremely passive or extremely aggressive.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is anything that involves the child in any activity for the sexual pleasure of another person. Sexual abuse includes:

* Forcing or persuading a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening
* Making children look at pornography or people having sex
* Using children to make pornography
* Using sexually explicit language towards a child
* Flashing at a child or an adult exposing their private parts to a child
* Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

***Warning signs***

Children who are being sexual abused may show the following signs:

• They are overly affectionate or know more about sex than they should for their age

* They have medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals or venereal diseases
* Extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses and anorexia
* Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clingy
* They may start to behave like a much younger child than they are for example starting to suck their thumb again or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
* Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
* Being isolated or withdrawn
* Being unable to concentrate
* Lack of trust or being afraid of someone they know well
* Not wanting to be left alone with a particular babysitter, child minder or relative
* Starting to wet the bed again, day or night/nightmares
* Become worried about clothing being removed
* Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
* Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to being criticised.

**Neglect**

Neglect is where the person who is meant to look after a child or young person doesn’t do that. Instead they regularly and continuously fail to meet the child or young person’s basic physical and/or emotional needs so that their health or development is seriously harmed.

Neglect involves NOT:

* Providing enough food or drink
* Providing adequate shelter and clothing
* Protecting a child from physical harm or danger
* Providing appropriate medical care or treatment
* Respond to, a child’s basic emotional needs for example not cuddling them, never being kind to them or showing them any approval.

***Warning signs***

* Constant hunger
* Poor personal hygiene, being dirty or smelly
* Constant tiredness
* Old, worn out clothes which are dirty or don’t fit properly
* Looking thin, gaunt and drawn
* Untreated medical problems
* No friends
* Compulsive scavenging - trying to find food wherever they can
* Destructive tendencies.

**Domestic abuse**

Children and young people who live in homes where there is domestic abuse are at greater risk of being harmed - either because the person responsible for the domestic abuse hurts them or because they have seen other family members being hurt.

However, it isn’t necessary for a child to witness abuse or be subject to abuse for it to affect them. Children need a stable, loving environment and anything that disrupts this can seriously affect their physical, mental and emotional health.

***Warning signs***

* They may become anxious or depressed
* They may have difficulty sleeping
* They have nightmares or flashbacks
* They can be easily startled
* They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches
* They may start to wet their bed
* They may have temper tantrums
* They may behave as though they are much younger than they are
* They may have problems with school
* They may become aggressive or they may turn their distress inwards and withdraw from other people
* They may have a lowered sense of self-worth
* Older children may begin to play truant or start to use alcohol or drugs
* They may begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves
* They may have an eating disorder.
* Children may also feel angry, guilty, insecure, alone, frightened, powerless or confused.

Organised Abuse

Sexual abuse where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act in agreement to abuse children and/or where an adult uses an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

Section 3: Procedures and guidance for volunteer team members

This Procedure and guidance applies to all volunteers working on GM events including Sunday morning children and young people’s activities.

Introduction and Explanation

If a disclosure of abuse is made there are people whose responsibility it is to respond to the situation. Other team members may be asked to take on tasks to enable smooth running of activities while the appropriate response can happen.

What to do if someone makes any disclosure of abuse:

If, when talking with an individual at an event they imply or say: “Can I tell you something in confidence/private/secret?” It is vital that you remind them of the confidentiality guidelines which are:

**“Any volunteer who has reason to believe that a young person may be at risk of harm must share this with the responsible adult or Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is responsible for taking action on such information.”**

You can reassure them that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the responsible adult are the only people who will know the detail of what you have been told. You can give them the names of these people rather than the role titles. Explain that if this is the case that they will be kept informed. There may be times on a Sunday morning when the designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator is not there. In this case the Safeguarding Co-ordinator should ensure another appropriate adult could stand in. This may be an elder or a member of the children’s committee who is familiar with safeguarding procedure.

If an individual makes a disclosure about themselves or another child or young person, or you are concerned that an individual or someone else is being harmed or at risk of harm you **must** take the following action:

* **Keep calm and act normally**
* **The person disclosing will have chosen the place to talk – only move to a quiet space if really necessary**
* **Explain that you cannot keep what they have told you a secret. Tell them what will happen with the information they have given you and who you have to tell.**
* **Listen and keep listening**
* **Do not investigate, do not question**
* **Accept what you hear without passing judgement**
* **Contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator**
* **If the child asks for their parent explain that you’ll talk about this with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator when they come**
* **Make careful notes as soon as possible on the GM information sheet and include:**

1. What the child, young person or other has said, dates and times of incidents
2. What you said
3. Date and time of conversation/recording
4. Sign and store safely, give to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator as soon as possible
5. If possible use the disclosure reporting form

* **Do not talk with other participants, team members or anyone outside the event.**
* **If you have concerns about the actions of another team member you should contact the safeguarding coordinator immediately.**

Section 4: Procedures and guidance for the Safeguarding Coordinator

This Procedure and guidance applies to the person who is the designated safeguarding coordinator for the meeting or event.

**it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator to ensure that all those carrying out regulated work with children/young people/protected adults have joined the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme.**

Procedure and Required Action

If a volunteer informs you of a disclosure by a participant or reports concerns about a team member you **should**:

* Talk with the person that has received the disclosure and ensure that they have completed the disclosure reporting form.
* Talk with the individual who has made the disclosure.
* Use the suggested help-lines for advice as to the level of the risk to the individual or other person, and/or if there is a need for statutory involvement.

**You can use the following for advice and guidance:**

**NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000**

**Parent line: 0800 028 2233 (open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm and Saturday & Sunday 12.00noon – 8.00pm)**

**CCPAS helpline: 0845 120 4550**

**Also useful for help is the following Scottish Government website**

[**http://withscotland.org/public**](http://withscotland.org/public)

An NSPCC Counsellor or Duty Manager or CCPAS advisor will then help you to decide if a formal referral to Social Work or the police is necessary or what other steps you should take. This is an opportunity to check your thinking. The Scottish Government website has a postcode search facility that will link to the relevant local authority and gives the telephone of the Social Work Department (usually 24 hours).

**OR**

If there is a clear and immediate emergency then contact either the Police on 999 or the Social Work Department for the area in which the event is taking place (if the disclosure relates to the event) or the Social Work Department local to the person whom the disclosure relates to.

Need for statutory involvement

* If, after consultation with the relevant help-lines/authorities, you do decide that there is an existing risk of abuse or harm tell the individual making the disclosure what you have decided.
* Make a referral call to the Social Work or the Police. If a referral is necessary then they will ask you for the name, age, date of birth and address of the individual about whom the referral is being made.

For information about how to do this, go to the Scottish Government website on child protection: [www.withscotland.org/public](http://www.withscotland.org/public)

* Inform other responsible adults that a referral has been made following the Safeguarding Policy. E.g. this may mean referring the matter to an elder in the meeting or to the adult in charge at a young people’s residential event.
* If the abuse disclosed has occurred at the event you are at, you, together with the responsible person, will need to decide how to contain the person about whom the disclosure has been made while you make a decision about possible referral to outside agencies.

You will need to remove this person from any possible contact with the individual who has made the disclosure or other young people, at least temporarily.

You may need the responsible adult or another staff member to sit with them to ensure they are kept separate. It is vital that the situation is not discussed with the person about whom the disclosure has been made. Any investigation must be left to outside agencies.

* If the abuse disclosed is within the person’s family, school or neighbourhood there will be a question of where the child or young person goes to after meeting or the event. This decision will be taken by Social Work. You may need to advocate on behalf of the person to ensure that their consent is sought as far as possible. The options for the return home may include parents, foster carers, other family members, another parent or friends.

The key thing is to help the child or young person feel as secure as possible. She or he may want to go home but may not be able to immediately – she or he may also want to stay at the Meeting House or event but be too distressed to do so.

* Ensure that the person who has made the disclosure is not left alone but is kept company by a volunteer who they trust. Ask them who they would like this to be.
* If responsibility for what happens has now passed to an outside agency your primary role is to:

1. Support the participant and be an advocate for them
2. Keep others informed (where appropriate) - liaising closely with the responsible adult
3. Manage the information that is shared with the rest of the participants (where appropriate)

* Keep other responsible adults briefed on the situation and any referral that is made. (see paragraph 6)
* Be responsible for the visit of Social Services, Police or NSPCC to the event if required.
* Remember you may want to make time to talk over how you are feeling about your part in this incident with someone you can trust. This may be the children and young people’s advocate or your overseer or someone else in the meeting
* De-brief the volunteers following a disclosure.
* Discuss with the responsible adult how you will make an assessment of risks, deciding what information should be shared and with whom, and how the parents should be informed. You should not disclose any details of the incident with any other person.
* Consult carefully with the responsible adult on *how* to talk with the children and young people in the group affected by a disclosure and how to communicate with the responsible adults of other children and young people.
* Your role as Safeguarding Co-ordinator may involve various other tasks. You may decide to delegate some of these tasks to the responsible adult at the event.
* Once the safety of those involved is assured you will need to balance their needs with the needs of other participants and volunteers.
* There is a legal responsibility for an organisation to make a referral to Disclosure Scotland when the relevant criteria have been met (namely that roles undertaken are defined as “regulated work”).

No need for statutory involvement

* If, after consultation with the relevant help-lines/authorities, you are advised not to make an outside referral, the following guidelines should be followed
* You need to explain this very carefully to the person who made the disclosure and to the person who brought the disclosure to you.
* You need to decide on immediate support for the participant who has made the disclosure. You should give them information about what longer term help is available.
* You may want to discuss with the participant whether they want to stay at the event (see 5 below). If she or he decides to go home you will need to ensure two team members accompany them on their journey. Ask the participant who they would like to accompany them.
* You may need to inform their parents or carers about the incident, the action you have taken and reasons for your decision. You may want to talk to the participant about how this is done.
* If the disclosure concerns another participant or a team member at the event and you have decided not to make a referral you will need to talk to the person about whom the disclosure was made. You will need to decide, along with the responsible person and other staff if appropriate, whether they should remain at the event. In making this decision you should be sensitive to the person making the disclosure and the person about who the disclosure has been made and take account of any advice from any outside agency. You should inform the person who has made the disclosure and the person who the disclosure was made about of your decision. Depending on your decision the participant may wish to reconsider whether they want to stay at the event or not. If either person decides to leave the event then it is important that the reasons for their leaving are kept confidential from other team members and participants.
* It is important that there is discussion about the possibility of the person making the disclosure coming into contact with the person whom it was about and an agreement reached about how this should be dealt with.
* Once the safety of those involved is assured you will need to balance their needs with the needs of the event, other participants and the team.

**You should now fill out the disclosure reporting form.**

Section 5: Procedures and guidance for the responsible adult at the event

This Procedure and guidance applies to the GM staff member responsible for the event.

Procedure and Required Action

If an individual makes a disclosure about himself or herself or someone else or a team member makes a disclosure to you about another team member you **must** follow the Procedure and required action in Section 3.

1. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator is in charge of the disclosure Procedure. They may or may not inform you.
2. The team member who took the disclosure will need time to complete a disclosure reporting form and to talk to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator about what has happened. You should make sure that the team member concerned has the time needed. You should ensure that any responsibilities they have to the event are covered.
3. If a disclosure is made about another team member, the Safeguarding Co-ordinator may speak to you about whether they remain at the event. If they are required to leave it is important that you do not give reasons for this to other team members, participants or other individuals.

Guidance on briefing the team and sharing information with the team and participants

It is important to brief the team about the incident in an appropriate way:

1. Tell them that there has been an incident and you are acting within the event guidelines, the GM disclosure Procedure and within confidentiality guidelines.
2. Emphasise the privacy of what is happening - this is crucial for the safety and wellbeing of the person who has made the disclosure. The role of the team is to keep the event working. If there is any rumour or gossip this will need to be stopped by team members saying that something has happened and decisions are being made in line with procedures and this is confidential to the people directly involved.
3. Talk with the Team about what information to share with the rest of the participants and how to do this in a way that respects privacy and avoid what has happened dominating the event.
4. You will need to think about the right time to give team members the opportunity to talk briefly about any impact the disclosure has had on them. Tell them when this will be. Be prepared to offer links to other services after the event (See list in Section 6)
5. Consider what support the team member who received the disclosure needs at this point.
6. lf outside agencies become involved they will advise you whether and how information is shared with team members and/or participants.

Section 6: Guidance on referrals and contacting outside agencies

This guidance is intended for the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, it is their responsibility alone to make decisions about referrals and contacting outside organisations.

If it is an emergency call the police immediately on 999 or 112 (the latter enables them to trace where you are calling from).

Scottish Government information website: <http://withscotland.org/public>

Contacting the NSPCC or CCPAS

The NSPCC and CCPAS both provide child protection help-lines designed to offer advice and guidance on further action and whether a referral is necessary as do Parentline Scotland

**Parentline – Scotland 0800 028 2233**

Before you call think about whether you are calling for **advice** – to check your thinking on an issue or to discuss making a **referral to Social Work or the Police**

**NSPCC HELPLINE:** **0808 800 5000**

**TEXTPHONE:** 0800 056 0566.

You can email the helpline at: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

The NSPCC will attempt to reply within 24 hours. The help-line website **https://www.nspcc.org.uk/nspcc/helpline** contains information about how you can get help by phone including pre-booked appointments, details of the NSPCC’s Cymru/Wales helpline and how to access help in 15 other languages and advice on Child abuse – what it is and what to do if you're worried a child is being abused.

**Parent line: 0800 028 2233 (open Monday to Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm and Saturday & Sunday 12.00noon – 8.00pm)**

**CCPAS HELPLINE:** **0845 120 4550**

Remember to give your name, the organisation: Religious Society of Friends(Quakers) Scotland, and the event that you are calling from.

Making a referral

This will be discussed when you phone the NSPCC/CCPAS/Parentline. Once it has been agreed that a referral needs to be made, this will be done either through the **Social Work or the Police. The Scottish Government website provides details of who to contact via a postcode search to the relevant child protection guidance for each Local Authority area.**

Section 7: Guidance on confidentiality

Many volunteers working with young people at Quaker events find themselves in an environment in which the young people feel safe, and trust. It may mean that at some point during the time together, issues or personal situations come to light which the young person wants to share with a team member that they trust.

Before a young people’s event, all participants (including the event team) are informed of the guidance on confidentiality in the “Participant Boundaries and Consent Form”. Parents/Guardians of participants under 18 are informed of the guidance on confidentiality in the “Consent and Information Form” (see appendix)

These guidelines are intended to provide advice on the correct procedures to follow if a young person discloses information of a confidential nature.

General Guidance on Pastoral Care and Confidentiality

All volunteers must remember that their first responsibility is to the young people and that they are accountable for their actions to General Meeting.

1. Everyone who might be involved in the pastoral care of a particular participant needs to be aware of conversations that are happening with the participant.
2. Anyone involved in supporting the pastoral care needs of a participant – even in small ways should communicate this to the adult with responsibility for pastoral care.
3. The adult should then make sure that all appropriate team members working closely with the participant are aware of the situation
4. Volunteers and staff are **not** in a position to offer, or provide any long-term support for young people. The responsible adults should consider referring to appropriate support agencies for young people.
5. It is important to remember that the child or young person has a right to expect that their privacy will be respected and that the principles of confidentiality should still be maintained within the remit of legislation. For example, in most situations it would be inappropriate for volunteers to approach those likely to be providing such support or to seek to discuss the matter with them.
6. It is important for everyone involved to remember that it is the well being of the child or young person that is our first priority and if volunteers have continuing cause for concern about them, then they should feel able to discuss this further with the designated staff member.

If you believe that a young person may be at risk of harm:

If, when talking with an individual at an event they imply or say: “Can I tell you something in confidence/private/secret?” and you think it might be about a possible disclosure it is vital that you remind them of the confidentiality guidelines which are:

***“..that any volunteer who has reason to believe that a young person may be at risk of harm must share this with the designated member of staff who is responsible for taking action on such information.” CYPC Policy Papers 2006/7 – Policy Paper 4* (Britain Yearly Meeting)**

You can reassure them that the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and possibly the responsible adult at the event are the only people who will know the detail of what you have been told. You can give them the name of the Safeguarding Co-ordinator rather than the role title. Explain that they will be kept carefully informed.

It is CYPC policy that any volunteer who has reason to believe that a young person may be at risk of harm must share this with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is responsible for taking action on such information.

They have a primary responsibility to protect young people from harm and that this could outweigh the obligation to respect the privacy of others or any ground rules on confidentiality in circumstances

If an individual makes a disclosure about themselves or another child or young person, or you are concerned that an individual or someone else is being harmed or at risk of harm you must follow the Procedure in Section 3 and on the Quick Reference Card.

**Section 8: Guidance on supporting individuals who have made a disclosure**

When someone makes a disclosure to you, it is important that you are aware that they may feel upset, vulnerable or worried. It is essential to do everything possible to make the child or young person feel safe.

Ask someone else to sit with them while you contact the Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Depending on the situation and the age of the child or young person making the disclosure you will need to think carefully about how to comfort or reassure them appropriately. Remember that what is appropriate for you may not be appropriate for them.

It is particularly important not to touch the child or young person - unless they specifically ask you to - however you should only do this if you consider it appropriate given the context, and that you are comfortable with the request.

It is very important to remember that a person in this situation may need reassurance about what is happening and will happen. Try to give this, but only give assurances if you are certain that you are correct.

**Please make sure you read your Quick Reference Card.**

Section 9: Contact details for external organisations

**Scottish Government website:** <http://withscotland.org/public>

**Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 0845 120 45 50**

The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service is an independent Christian based charity that provides professional training, resources, advice and support in all areas of child protection and good working practice. Their services are used not only by churches across the denominational spectrum, but increasingly by other faith groups and secular organizations who wish to utilize the resources and expertise CCPAS is able to offer.

###### Childline 0800 1111

ChildLine is the free helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can call us to talk about any problem – counsellors are available.

**Parentline – Scotland 0800 028 2233**

Parentline Scotland is the free telephone helpline and email service for anyone caring for a child to call about any problem. Opening times 9.00am – 10.00am Monday – Friday and 12 noon – 8.00pm Saturday & Sunday

Email: [parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk](mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk)

Web: www.parentlinescotland.org.uk

**NSPCC 0808 800 5000**

The NSPCC's purpose is to end cruelty to children. Its vision is of a society where all children are loved, valued and able to fulfil their potential. The NSPCC [Child Protection Helpline](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/helpandadvice/whoturnto/nspcchelpline/helpline_wda33161.html) offers advice and support to anyone concerned about the welfare of a child. The Helpline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Youth Access 020 8772 9900**

**Youth Access** is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services – and should be able to refer you to a support worker in the participants area.

Section 10: forms to be completed

See forms on next page:

Event Information Sheet p 18

Disclosure Reporting Form p 19-20

Disclosure Reporting Form for Safeguarding Coordinator p 21-22

General Meeting for Scotland Disclosure Protocol

Event Information Sheet

Event:

Date:

Venue:

Safeguarding Coordinator

Name:

Contact Number:

Responsible Person at Event

Name:

Job Title:

Contact Number:

Location of designated private space:

Disclosure Reporting Form

**This form is for use by volunteer team members and the responsible person at the event.**

**This form is confidential within the terms of Guidance on Confidentiality detailed in Section 8 of the Disclosure Procedures and Guidance**

**Note:** Disclosures of abuse should be recorded as close to the time of the incident as possible. Please include as much detail as possible and record all information concisely. Record the disclosure verbatim. Do not try to interpret.

**Completed by (name):**

**Event:**

**Role at event:**

**Contact details:**

1. Date and time of disclosure/incident causing suspicion:

2. Name and age of the young people or adults involved

3. Details of adult or young person (if any) named as perpetrator:

4. Name, age and contact details of any witnesses:

5. If person named in section 3 or 4 is a child or young person please give the names of their parents or legal guardians:

6. Please record details of the disclosure or the incident causing suspicion. In relation to disclosure, please do not interpret the information given to you. It is important that you use the same language as the child or young person or adult involved. Do not paraphrase or summarise.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Passed to Safeguarding Coordinator (give name):**

**Signed by Safeguarding Coordinator :**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**This form should be stored in a secure place and considered in relation to the guidelines on confidentiality**

Disclosure Reporting Form for the Safeguarding Coordinator

**This form is for use by the Safeguarding Coordinator.**

**This form is confidential within the terms of Guidance on Confidentiality detailed in Section 8 of the Disclosure Procedures and Guidance**

**Note:** Disclosures of abuse should be recorded as close to the time of the incident as possible. Please include as much detail as possible and record all information concisely. Record the disclosure verbatim. Do not try to interpret.

**Event:**

**Role at event:**

**Contact details:**

1. Details of incident:
2. Action taken (if no action was taken state reasons)
3. Who did you report the incident to (give names and contact details):

a) Outside agencies

b) Parents/guardians

c) Other – state within or outside the organisation

1. Any other relevant information:
2. Outstanding tasks, who responsible and timescale:

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**This form should be stored in a secure place and considered in relation to the guidelines on confidentiality**

**Section 11: Safeguarding – a quick reference guide**

You should make sure you are familiar with the location of the full policy and procedures.

General Meeting for Scotland is committed to providing an environment where children, young people and vulnerable adults feel safe and free from harm.

**Disclosure:** someone saying something that gives you reason to believe that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed.

**Confidentiality guidelines**: If, when talking with an individual they imply or say: “Can I tell you something in confidence/private/secret?” You must remind them that if what they say indicates that they or a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of being harm then you have a duty to pass this information on.

You can reassure them that the Safeguarding Coordinator and the responsible person are the only people in the meeting or at the event who will know the details of what they tell you and that they will be kept informed of what is happening.

If an individual makes a disclosure about him/herself or a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or you are concerned that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult is being harmed or at risk of harm, you must take the following action:

1. Remember the person will have to repeat their account many times -you are just the first to hear it.
2. Keep calm and act normally
3. Ensure that the person is in an appropriate place for the situation, not alone behind a closed door but in a place quiet enough so that you are not interrupted.
4. If possible let another person know that you are having a potentially difficult conversation.
5. Explain that you cannot keep anything they tell you a secret. Tell them what will happen with the information that they have given you and who you have to tell. Tell them that if what they said indicates that they or a child, young person or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm, you have a duty to pass this information on.
6. Listen carefully and keep listening until they have told you as much as they feel they need to.
7. Accept what you hear without passing judgement.
8. Ask open questions only to clarify information.
9. Do not investigate.
10. Contact the **Safeguarding Coordinator** (name and number in back of this file) as soon as possible when the conversation has finished.
11. If they ask for their parent or carer say that you will talk about this with the Safeguarding Coordinator.
12. Make careful notes, ideally on the disclosure reporting form, as soon as possible. Include:

* **What they said, dates and times of incidents**
* **What you said**
* **Date and time of conversation/recording**
* **Sign and store safely until you can pass it onto the safeguarding coordinator**

1. Do not talk about it with other people including parents, carers, people at meeting or staff/participants at an event.
2. If you have concerns about the actions of someone in the meeting or a staff member at an event contact the safeguarding coordinator immediately.

**What the Safeguarding Coordinator will do:**

* Talk with the person that has received the disclosure
* Talk with the individual who has made the disclosure
* Decide if there is an ongoing risk to the individual or someone else
* Decide if there is a need for statutory involvement, and if so to inform the appropriate authorities
* Provide you with adequate opportunity to debrief and talk with you about any support that you might need.

**Section 12: Guidance for working with children and young people**

The following is some common sense guidance for working with children and young people. The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service has more comprehensive guidance but this is a quick reference guide.

* Workers should treat all children/young people with dignity and respect in attitude, language and actions
* Consideration should be given to how many workers should be involved with the group and whether they should be male/female worker or both

Adult Children

2 years & under 1 : 3

2 - 3 years 1 : 5

3 and over 1 : 8

If all children are 8 or over 1 : 10

* Have a clear strategy for summoning additional adult help (if needed) in situations where a worker is alone with a child (e.g. Sunday morning children’s meeting)
* The level of personal care (e.g. toileting) must be appropriate and related to the age of the child whilst also accepting that some children have special needs
* The privacy of children should be respected, avoiding questionable activity such as rough or sexually provocative games and comments
* Where confidentiality is important (e.g. counselling) and young person is being seen on their own, ensure that other workers know the interview is taking place and that someone else is in the building
* No person under 16 years of age should be left in charge of any children of any age. Nor should children or young people attending a group be left alone at any time.
* Ensure that the only people allowed to participate in a children’s activity are the workers assigned to that group. Other adults should not be allowed free access
* Consideration could be given to signing in/out for parents collecting children from the crèche/children’s group, particularly large groups

**Section 13: Required checks and references**

* **It is essential that all adults working with children and young people complete an application to join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme if they have not already done so**

**These forms can be obtained by phoning The Churches Agency for Safeguarding, telephone: 0207 467 5206 or email:** [cas@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:cas@methodistchurch.org.uk)

**The forms come with instructions of how to fill in the form and what is required for verifying the form.**

* **As well as the above, adults working with children and young people should be asked to complete a form stating their details and what experience they already have of work with children and young people. They should also be asked to provide two referees, one of whom should be a Quaker and the other a non-Quaker who knows the volunteer well.**

**Section 14: Protection of vulnerable adults**

So far this document deals mainly with work with children and young people. But just occasionally there may be a situation where a vulnerable adult with particular needs will require regular input from an individual in the meeting over a period of time. In this situation the individual doing the caring should be asked to complete the PVG application form.

This is unlikely to be needed very often but it is important to understand what is meant by; “vulnerable adults” and “particular needs” and how it is relevant to our Quaker Meetings.

**A protected adult is defined as an individual over the age of 16 who is provided with (and thus receives) a type of care, health care, community care or welfare service.**

This may, on occasions, be provided voluntarily by someone in the Meeting on a regular basis for a period of time. Lots of people need some help at some time in their lives and as a Quaker community we will help each other e.g. people may require someone to take in food or help to prepare meals after a stay in hospital. Others may appreciate regular visits because they are housebound or need some company. These people do not have “particular needs”, and you would not be required to join the PVG scheme.

**Particular need is described as: “a specific requirement an individual may have arising from either physical or mental illness, or physical or mental disability which may disadvantage that person when compared to the rest of society”.**

To be clear about who is included in the category of individuals with particular needs the following may help:

**Individuals with particular needs**

* Individuals with (temporary or permanent) physical capacity issues, above and beyond the normal course of events, i.e. not including ailments that affect everyone from time to time such as cold or flu.
* Individuals with (temporary or permanent) mental disorder i.e. mental illness, learning disability or personality disorder
* Individuals with degenerative diseases
* Individuals with drug or alcohol issues

**It does not include**; people with debt problems, the elderly, individuals suffering bereavement, people who do not have English as their first language, individuals who are homeless, people in detention, the jobless, or otherwise economically deprived, people with literacy or numeracy problems (although these may be symptoms of a condition which does give rise to particular needs), friends or relatives of protected adults or individuals with particular needs.

It is most probable that the only people who may from time to time need to complete a PVG scheme disclosure are overseers who are caring for someone in the meeting with “particular needs”. This is because overseers are appointed by the local and area meetings and are therefore doing a task on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends. People caring as friends do not need to complete a PVG scheme disclosure form.

**If a protected individual makes a disclosure the same procedure must be followed as for children and young people – as in this document.**

[www.quakerscotland.org](http://www.quakerscotland.org) [ScotFriends@gmail.com](mailto:ScotFriends@gmail.com)