Staffordshire Quakers Area Meeting

**Safeguarding Policy**

The Religious Society of Friends/Staffordshire Area Meeting recognise s that every person adult or child is made in the image of God and thus deserving or respect, value and care. This is reflected in our acknowledgement of “that of God in everyone”.

“How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured and strangers are welcome?” Advices and Queries 18

“Children and Young People need love and stability. Are we doing all we can to uphold and sustain parents and others who carry the responsibility for providing this care?” Advices and Queries 24

**Principles**

Staffordshire Quakers are committed to:

1 The care, respect and nurture of all vulnerable groups encountered within Quaker activities.

2 The safeguarding and protection of children and those in need of care

3 The promotion of a culture of good practice in relation to activities promoted by Staffordshire Area meeting including:

* A rigorous recruitment procedure for all people in a position of responsibility in relation to children and those in need of care.
* Safe caring communities where there is a culture of ‘informed vigilance’ as to the dangers of possible abuse.
* Knowledge and preparedness to refer to statutory agencies where abuse is known or suspected.
* A willingness to respond, without delay, to any allegation or complaint made which suggests that a child or adult may have been harmed, cooperating with the police or other statutory body involved.
* Providing, encouraging and participation in training in all aspects of safeguarding.
* Developing safer spaces around risks or potential threats, be that be known offenders against children or adults.
* A desire to offer pastoral care to anyone attending our Meetings known to have harmed a child or an adult within agreed risk assessed boundaries.

**Procedures**

**For Employees**

As an employer Staffordshire Area Meeting will ensure all those working having access to children or adults in need of care are fit and proper persons to undertake the role.

This will mean that the selection for such posts will include:

* Two written references including one from the last employer.
* Those who are providing written references should be spoken to as well.
* A DBS check
* A continuous employment history

For current employees who have access to children or adults in need of care we would ensure that any DBS checks are repeated at 3 yearly intervals. For current employees who are working with children or adults in need of care we will ensure that they receive training, in safeguarding, for adults and children.

**Providing Services to Children or Adults in need of care**

Where we are providing services for children or adults in need of care we will ensure the following:

* All those providing services are DBS checked.
* When working with children on our own away from their parents we have the contact details of those with parental responsibility.
* We have consent from their parents for the activities to be undertaken.
* We do a Health and Safety risk assessments for such organised activities.
* That we keep a record of such activities undertaken.

**Lettings**

Staffordshire Area Meeting is responsible for a number of Quaker Meeting Houses, these are available to let to groups and members of the public. We have no legal responsibility when letting our Meeting Houses to third parties for the safeguarding of children and adults of need of care when these events take place.

* We will ensure that all letting conditions of hire should reflect the above.

Quakers have a honourable history of working with those who have offended against children via “Circles of Support “ groups. Where such groups are held in our meeting houses we will ensure that no children’s events occur at the same time.

**Members and Attenders**

Staffordshire Area Meeting welcomes ex-offenders into our community either as members or attenders. Normally we get to know them via a Prison Chaplin or via the Probation Service. When the clerk of a local meeting is approached regarding coming to the local meeting we will ensure the following:

* The clerk of the local meeting will keep a written record of the offender and offending history as it pertains to children or adults
* Ensure that a risk assessment is completed and shared with the individual.
* That the risk assessment is shared with the safeguarding co-ordinator and retained in a confidential way
* Share the outcome from that risk assessment with the Overseers and Elders group on a need to know basis.
* Record that a risk assessment has been completed in the minutes of the E and O’s group for that local meeting.

**Disclosures or concerns**

Where an individual child or adult makes a disclosure about harm or abuse, or a member or attender has concerns regarding possible harm or abuse we will ensure that the following occurs:

* That the person who hears the disclosure ensures that they record what they have heard or observed.
* That they ensure that the child or adult is safe to go home as far as practicable.
* That the person shares this information with one of the elders or overseers of their local meeting and together they seek guidance from the safeguarding co-ordinator on what next to do.
* That if they feel a child or adult is in immediate danger they dial 999 and inform the police.

**Allegations against members, attenders or employees**

Occasionally we will be contacted by statutory agencies regarding allegations against members, attenders, or employees. When such event occur we will ensure:

* That we fully co-operate with the statutory agencies
* That we ensure that we continue to support the individual who is subject of the allegation, as required
* That we ensure that we separately and distinctly support the child or person making the allegation if they are known to us
* That we take such actions to mitigate risk the alleged victim, perpetrator and Staffordshire Area Meeting.
* That in these circumstances the Safeguarding co-ordinator for Staffordshire Area meeting will provide any necessary advice and guidance as required to the local or area meeting

**Records**

We will ensure that we will keep precise and accurate records regarding any safeguarding activities and will ensure the following

* All safeguarding records are to be held centrally and available to: the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and the their deputy, and the Clerk of the Trustees.
* Any records pertaining to ex-offenders coming to meetings we will retain for 5 years after their last contact with the meeting
* Any records pertaining to employers and employment records we will keep for 5 years after the point of them leaving our employment
* Any records pertaining to our work with children we will keep for 5 years after the activity.
* Any safeguarding disclosures or activities and actions to mitigate risk we will keep for 10 years from the event
* We will ensure that LM Business meetings or Overseer and Elders meetings reference any confidential safeguarding material but not the content.
* The Minutes form LM Business Meeting and LM Overseers and Elders Meetings should be kept in perpetuity.

**Affiliations**

Staffordshire Area Meeting will remain affiliated to the Churches Child Protection Agency. The Safeguarding Co-ordinator has access to the Safeguarding Network hosted by Society of Friends and British Yearly Meeting.

**Legality**

This policy fulfils our legal responsibilities as a registered charity to have a safeguarding policy.

TERESA MURRAY
SAFEGUARDING COORINATOR
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