

Safeguarding Policy

Hertford and Hitchin Area Quaker Meeting

This is the *Safeguarding Policy* for Hertford and Hitchin Quaker Area Meeting (AM). More detailed information on our organisation and practices (revised April 2026) can be found in *Safeguarding Procedures and Toolkit* (available on <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/safeguarding-procedures-and-toolkit-area-meetings-1>)

This policy has been written in line with legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in England and Wales. We have adopted this policy and associated procedures in accordance with statutory guidance.

We use the term “children and young people” to mean anyone aged under 18; this is interchangeable with “child” throughout the policy and procedures. We use the term “adults at risk” as used in government guidance; this includes “adults with care and support needs”, the term used in the Care Act 2014, and “vulnerable adults” used previously.

Purpose and scope of this Policy

1. This document displays our commitment to keep people safe, especially children, young people and adults at risk who are engaged with meetings or activities within Hertford and Hitchin Quaker AM.
2. This document provides members and attenders, as well as children, young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to the protection of children, young people and adults at risk in our Quaker communities.

What we do: a summary of our activities with children, young people and adults

- Meetings for Worship which are open to the public
- Social, learning and outreach activities and events
- Pastoral care (such as home visiting and giving lifts). The meeting does not expect those who provide pastoral care or other volunteers acting on behalf of the meeting, to provide regulated activities for adults such as personal care or regular support with activities such as financial affairs.
- Children and Young People’s Meetings are held weekly in some meetings. They are run by adult volunteers from the meeting. Occasionally, there may be special events and trips outside the meeting. We also hold All Age Meetings for Worship.
- Residential Events are occasionally organised for adults and/or children (eg Quaker Camp).
- In some meeting houses, there may be activities for adults with care and support needs, such as a Dementia café, or lunch club.
- Hiring out rooms in our buildings

Our commitment

Abuse in any form is unacceptable and we are committed to keeping everyone safe. Everyone, including children, young people and at-risk adults, has a right to participate in Quaker communities without suffering harm, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Quakers recognise ‘that of God’ in everyone. All people deserve respect, value and appropriate care. Our care extends to people who are potentially vulnerable to abuse and

even to those who may be perpetrators. We recognise abuse can include, but is not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. We know that Quakers may be open to risks because we foster a culture of welcome and trust for all. We accept that often an abuser is known to or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult and that sometimes abusers can be covert manipulators.

Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our trustees hold specific responsibility on behalf of the Area Meeting. One trustee is appointed as AM Safeguarding Coordinator and one or more Deputy AM Safeguarding Coordinators (not necessarily trustees) may be appointed with safeguarding work delegated as agreed between the parties. **Contact details** for our AM Safeguarding Coordinators and Local Meeting Safeguarding Lead are on the poster displayed in each meeting house.

Safer Appointments/Recruitment

We recognise the need to follow safeguarding legislation and accepted good practice to reduce risk, both to vulnerable groups and to Quakers as an organisation. We also have an established and complementary spirit-led Quaker nominations process. The primary focus of our Safer Appointments process for some roles is to prioritise the safety of our vulnerable groups. This will apply to the following roles:

- AM Safeguarding coordinator and Deputy
- LM Safeguarding Leads
- All volunteers and coordinators carrying out activities with children and young people, or responsible for the organisation of these;
- Those with pastoral care responsibilities

For these roles, the appointment should include

- a written description, so expectations are clear
- a personal details form and a self-declaration form
- a formal conversation or interview during which safeguarding is discussed
- written references
- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- a minute by the local or area meeting will be made to record when a role holder or employee has been checked and cleared by the DBS service. The minute should also record when the meeting needs to re-check (normally 3 years).

Those appointed will:

- be given a copy of the safeguarding policy
- know how to report concerns
- agree to abide by the Code of Conduct
- have a suitable induction and training programme
- have a probationary period

Training and Good Practice

Each individual in a role of responsibility will be appropriately trained according to their role description. In addition, our clerks, elders, nominations committees, and any paid staff, will have a safeguarding induction, and will be encouraged to have training.

Everyone involved in our Quaker activities will be familiar with our Code of Conduct, our Processes and Procedures and any specific safeguarding arrangements held locally. When we need safeguarding advice we use the online Safeguarding Manual from specialist Christian safeguarding agency Thirtyone:eight or their helpline: 0303 003 1111.

Procedure for responding to concerns or allegations of abuse

The Quakers in Britain Safeguarding Procedures and Toolkit contains detailed information about how to respond to a Safeguarding concern. If someone is in immediate danger we will contact the Police as soon as possible. Our Safeguarding contact details can be found at the bottom of this document.

Pastoral care

We will help those who have been affected by abuse who have contact with or are part of the AM to access pastoral care and support, working with or referring to outside agencies as appropriate.

Working with those who may pose a risk

When someone attending the local or area meeting is known to have abused others or is under investigation or known to be a risk to children or adults at risk, the LM and AM will be prepared to supervise the person and offer pastoral care. Robust arrangements will be put in place to protect children, young people and adults at risk. This may include supervision and boundary-setting, set out in a written contract to which they will be expected to adhere. Such a person will not be allowed to work with children, young people or adults at risk or have unsupervised contact with those groups.

Room Hire

Each of our local meeting room's hire agreements will require that organisations and individuals hiring rooms on our premises take responsibility for safeguarding for all their activities. It will require that any organisation using our premises has their own safeguarding policy which follows national good practice, and has their own insurance in place.

Regular Reviews

This policy will be reviewed annually in the light of any new guidance, information or legislation. A more comprehensive review will take place every three years.

Key Safeguarding Contacts

Trustee Safeguarding Coordinator: **Nick Needham: nnickn@outlook.com**

Deputy Safeguarding Coordinator: **Clare Cooper: 07538 454696**

Date: 7 September 2026 Next Review Date: September 2027