

Southern Marches Area Meeting

CHILD PROTECTION and VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY and GUIDELINES

Children and Young People are an important part of our Local and Area meetings. We are committed to providing an environment in which they can feel safe, free from harm and can be nurtured spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. All children and young people have the right to be protected from harm, regardless of their gender, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation. This policy and the associated guidance also apply to any vulnerable adults.

We recognise that all members and attenders of our meetings are responsible for the children. We each have a role to play in protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm and to report it when it is discovered or suspected. All concerns or allegations about harm will be taken seriously.

We are committed to giving support and adequate resources to those who work with children or young people on our behalf, and to providing them with oversight.

Our policy is based on information in 'Guidance to Churches', adopted by Britain Yearly Meeting in March 2008.

We will appoint a Child Protection Co-ordinator to implement the following guidance.

- Respond to any concern about the welfare or safety of children- see Procedure 1
- Maintain a register of volunteers who are to work regularly with our children or young people. This will be kept by the Child Protection Co-ordinator. Seek references in respect of these volunteers. Ensure that enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is obtained by them.
-see Procedure 2
- Encourage each of our local meetings to appoint a suitable Friend who will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and guidance in their own Meeting. Similarly we expect that those Area Meeting events that provide activities for children or young people will appoint a named person who will exercise a similar role for the duration of the activity.
- Ask local meetings and organizers of relevant events to adopt their own policies for health, safety and safeguarding children from harm. Those local meetings which undertake to offer care for children without parents present will need to ensure that at least one registered volunteer is present. These policies should be reviewed triennially and a risk assessment appraisal undertaken. These matters should be included as part of the meeting's spiritual life report for the Area Meeting or periodic report of other Area Meeting events.
- Ensure that every local meeting and Area Meeting committee has an up to date copy of the Area Policy and Guidance and that all members of the meeting or those attending the event are aware of them/have access to them
- Liaise with those responsible for arranging periodic training events and others in the Area Meeting who may have responsibility for children, in order to familiarize them with matters concerning health and safety and safeguarding children.
- Liaise with Trustees, Area meeting clerk, Local meeting clerks, overseers and all those involved in organizing events for children and young people.

- Ensure that the working of the Child Protection Policy and Guidance is reviewed annually.

Procedure 1, in the event of concern about abuse

- **when you suspect a child is being abused physically, *emotionally* or sexually**
- **when you are concerned about the behaviour of an adult or young person**
- **when you receive an allegation about your own behaviour.**

There is good guidance in the publication ‘ Meeting Safety’ held by all local meetings.

In short:

Share what you know with the child protection co-ordinator

Isabel Pebody 01989 565804

Or with either David Binney (01544 267903) *or Julia Richardson (01989 763746) children’s advocate*

Or with your local Social Services. The Team Leader of the Children and Young People’s Team is a good contact.

If there is physical injury or possible recent abuse, action should be taken without delay.

It is good practice to write down what you heard and/or saw and what you know of the situation.

Information from a child/person should be accepted without close questioning.

Remember, if you have concerns about a child’s welfare or safety this overrides confidentiality.

It may be possible, initially, to discuss concerns without mentioning names but, if the matter needs to be further assessed, names will have to be given *and Social Services and the Police may need to be involved.*

If you have concerns, do not keep them to yourself.

Procedure 2, for volunteers helping with children

- Friend/attender expresses desire to help with children
- Clerk provides Personal Details form and information on applying for Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance (with advice from Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC) if necessary)
- Applicant completes Personal Details Form and sends to CPC who sends for references.
- Applicant completes CRB form
- Local clerk acts as verifier and completes Churches Agency for Safeguarding(CAS) forms
- CAS form indicating CRB clearance is received by clerk and forwarded to CPC
- CPC confirms that process is complete.
- ***If concerns are raised during this process, the CPC will discuss them with those who need to know.***

Sept 2010