

## **Queer Church Birmingham Safeguarding Policy**

This policy can be amended or changed at any time. It will be kept under constant review. Members can suggest changes or schedule discussions at any time.

Reporting Form: <https://forms.gle/P94MN9NRfLfM9WK9>

Contact Email Address for Safeguarding Team: [qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com)

### **Guiding Principles for Reporting and Escalation**

#### **1. Transparency and Accountability**

- All safeguarding concerns must be carefully documented, including reasons for escalating or not escalating the issue to external authorities such as Adult Social Services or the police.
- Any incidents reported should be immediately passed to the safeguarding officers for consideration.
- The safeguarding team will meet, take necessary action in consultation with the complainant, and document all actions taken. Notice of actions will be sent to the complainant.
- All reports and agreed actions must be stored confidentially, both digitally and physically.
- A 'safety first' approach will be taken, and the subject of complaints may be suspended during discussions about necessary actions. Safeguarding officers have the power to suspend members pending investigations. This can be

appealed via the governance group of QCB. Suspension safeguards complainants, the subject of complaints, and congregation members.

- Decisions will be recorded, and efforts will be made to liaise with a third-party safeguarding agent for regular case reviews and advice when needed.

## 2. Decision-Making Considerations

- The wishes of the complainant
- The nature and severity of the concern
- Risks to others, including children or vulnerable adults
- Whether the incident involves a criminal offense or a person in a position of trust

## 3. Record Keeping

- All records must be securely stored with both a digital and a signed physical copy.
- Each report must be signed and dated by both the person taking the report and the complainant.

## Refer

When deciding whether to refer a concern, the Safeguarding Officer should consider:

- The adult's wishes and preferred outcome.
- Whether the adult has the mental capacity to make an informed decision about their own and others' safety.

- The safety or well-being of children or other adults with care and support needs.

- Whether a person in a position of trust is involved.

- Whether a crime has been committed.

This should inform decisions about notifying the following authorities:

- The police, if a crime has been committed.

- Adult Social Services for the relevant area, for a possible safeguarding enquiry.

- Relevant regulatory bodies such as the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, or the Charities Commission.

- Service commissioning teams.

- Family or relatives, as appropriate (seek advice from Adult Social Services).

The Safeguarding Officer must document the reasons for referring or not referring.

Abuse may involve single or multiple incidents and affect one or more people.

Accurate records assist in identifying patterns of harm.

## **Appendix: Safeguarding Report Question Template For Safeguarding Officers**

### **Taking a Report**

You can fill in a physical copy of this form or use it as a template to take notes. A signature of the complainant and the reporter is needed (even if it is a digital signature). If the complainant does not wish to sign then safeguarding officers will reach out officially anyway on the record in writing to ask for their confirmation of what was discussed, their preferences and next steps. You can also use the online form as a reporter or as a victim or safeguarding officer:

<https://forms.gle/P94MN9NRfLfM9WK9>

*Section 1: For complainants / witnesses / volunteers / safeguarding officers taking the report*

### **Queer Church Brum Safeguarding Report Form**

- Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_
- Person Taking Report (Name): \_\_\_\_\_
- Complainant/Reporter (Name): \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Concern/Incident:

(Provide as much detail as possible, including dates, times, people involved, and any actions already taken.)

*Section 2 For Safeguarding Officers:*

Decisions Regarding Measures Implemented:

Reasons for Decisions:

Decision Regarding Escalation:

- Was the concern escalated to external authorities (e.g., police, Adult Social Services)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Reasons for Decision:

- Signature of Person Taking Report:

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- Signature of Complainant/Reporter:

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Please ask that the complainant sign a copy of your notes .

Please take a photo and send to the contact email address for Safeguarding Team:

qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com

Please hand a copy of your notes or this form to a safeguarding officer.

This form will only be seen by the safeguarding officers and all copies will be held securely and confidentially.

## **Appendix Risk Assessments**

### Sunday Services at 'The Box' Bar

#### Hazards Identified:

- Alcohol presence: Risk of inappropriate behavior or intoxication.
- Accessibility: Bar setup may not be fully accessible.

#### Actions to Mitigate Risks:

- Clearly designated alcohol-free zone.
- Accessibility review to ensure inclusivity for attendees with mobility challenges.
- Safety briefing with staff regarding safeguarding procedures.

### Sunday Services at 'Friends of the Earth'

#### Hazards Identified:

- Limited space: Risk of overcrowding.
- Exit access: Potential confusion in case of emergency evacuation.

#### Actions to Mitigate Risks:

- Limit attendance to venue capacity.
- Display clear signage for emergency exits.
- Conduct pre-event fire drills for volunteers.

## One-Off Socials

### Hazards Identified:

- Venue hazards: Unfamiliar spaces may pose accessibility or safety risks.
- Behavioral concerns: Group dynamics in informal settings.

### Actions to Mitigate Risks:

- Pre-inspect venues for safety and accessibility.
- Assign a designated safeguarding point of contact for the event.
- Distribute emergency contact information to attendees.

## **Appendix Expectations Document**

### **Expectations & Code of Conduct**

Church Members:

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
  - Report any safeguarding concerns promptly and confidentially.
  - Follow the outlined code of conduct to maintain a safe and welcoming environment.
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- Respect, uphold and help to maintain safeguarding procedures and safeguarding officer decisions in order to help keep everyone as safe as possible.
  - Do not touch anyone without explicit permission and consent sought each time. Do not assume that a member would like a hug or handshake or any other form of touching without asking and seeking consent before initiating on every occasion. Some people will experience touch as painful. Some people will not wish to shake hands etc. It is up to everyone to seek consent every time and give an explicit opportunity for the person to accept any interaction that could involve touch (eg hugs or handshakes). Without a clear acceptance or invitation or if there is any doubt then consent should be assumed not to be given and no touch of any kind should be initiated.

Safeguarding Officer:

- Ensure all reports are documented, stored securely, and appropriately escalated.



- Provide ongoing training and guidance to members.
- Liaise with external authorities and organizations as required.

#### Person Taking the Report:

- Listen without judgment or interruption.
- Record details factually, ensuring both digital and signed physical copies are created.
- Refrain from making promises or offering personal opinions.
- Tell the complainant that you will have to pass on every single piece of information to the safeguarding officers. Nothing can be kept secret or anonymous in safeguarding. Even the smallest of things can form part of the important wider picture in keeping everyone as safe as possible.
- Refer the complainant to the online complaint form and safeguarding email if they wish to make any additional disclosures they remember later. The complainant can also report anonymously through the online reporting form if they so wish.

## **Appendix: Safeguarding Summary of Steps and Contacts**

Queer Church Birmingham Safeguarding

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Space Together

What to Do If You Have a Concern or Someone Reports a Concern to You:

1. Speak to one of our Safeguarding Officers: Matthew Hughes, Pat Nimmo, or Chris Mells.
2. Fill out a Safeguarding Report Form (available online or you can use the template in this document to take digital or physical notes and send to [qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com)).
3. Report anonymously via our [online form](#). You can also leave your name and contact details for follow-up.

You can also send an email with your concerns to [qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com)

During QCB events this phone will be available to get hold of the safeguarding officers if the matter is urgent. Between QCB events this number should not be used and the email address or online form (as stated above should be used):

+447961715963

What Happens Next:

- All reports are reviewed confidentially by the safeguarding officers who will meet to discuss and review the case.
- Decisions are made with care, and actions are taken to ensure safety.

- Where necessary, concerns are escalated to appropriate authorities.
- The safeguarding officers will liaise with the governance group if necessary whilst protecting confidentiality of all parties.
- The safeguarding officers will liaise with the complainants

Contacts:

- Safeguarding Officers: Matthew Hughes, Pat Nimmo, and Chris Mells
- External Resources:
- Galop (LGBTQ+ Anti-Abuse Helpline): 0800 999 5428
- Birmingham Local Adult Social Services

If you wish to report to the police, a member of the church can accompany you for support.

## **Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment practices ensure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Trustees will ensure:

- A written job description exists for every post/role.
- Self-declaration forms are completed where applicable.
- Applicants/volunteers are interviewed, with safeguarding discussed during the interview.
- References are obtained and followed up.
- Disclosure and barring checks are conducted as required.
- Qualifications are verified where relevant.
- Training is provided, and a probationary period is completed.
- The safeguarding policy is given to each applicant/volunteer, who is informed about reporting concerns.

## **Children and Young People**

QCB is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthy environment where children and young people can develop their relationship with and awareness of God.
- Ensuring that children and young people are not subject to any form of abuse (verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual) within the church environment.
- Ensuring that appropriate action is undertaken when an instance of abuse is discovered.

Note: The primary responsibility for the care and protection of children rests with their parents or guardians.

Note: The primary responsibility for the care and protection of children rests with their parents or guardians. QCB will not be running children clubs or arrange for children to be away from their parents or guardians. QCB will not be providing childcare of any sought. QCB is primarily a place for adults to come together.

Children are welcome, but must be accompanied by their responsible parent or guardian at all times during QCB events.

All parents or guardians must have sight of and be responsible for their children at all times during QCB events. Whilst safeguarding principles and measures are in place and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at QCB - QCB volunteers, members and safeguarding officers are not responsible for childcare and should not accept responsibility for children at QCB events or in their capacity as a designated QCB volunteer or member.

If a situation arises whereby there is a child separated from their parent or guardian at a QCB then ***at least two adults*** should be present with the child. The safeguarding officers should be contacted immediately. Attempts will then be made to contact the child's parent or guardian or external authorities.

## **Adults at Risk**

An adult at risk is defined as someone who:

- Is aged 18 or over.
- May be in need of community care services due to mental or other disability, age, or illness.
- May be unable to care for themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or serious exploitation.

The Care Act 2014 identifies six principles for safeguarding adults:

1. Empowerment – Supporting and encouraging people to make their own decisions with informed consent.
2. Prevention – Taking action before harm occurs.
3. Proportionality – Providing the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. Protection – Offering support and representation to those in greatest need.
5. Partnership – Promoting local solutions through collaboration with communities, which play a role in preventing, detecting, and reporting abuse or neglect.
6. Accountability – Ensuring transparency and accountability in safeguarding practices.

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## Understanding Abuse

Definition: Abuse can occur through an act of harm or through a failure to prevent harm. Both children and adults in need of protection may experience abuse in family, institutional, or community settings.

Key considerations:

- The abuser is often someone known to the victim or in a trusted relationship.
- Abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, or financial exploitation.

For detailed definitions, signs, and indicators of abuse, refer to:

- [NHS Abuse and Neglect Guide](#)
- [Galop: Types of Abuse](#)

## **Anti-Bullying Statement**

We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect.

- Bullying or harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited within QCB.
- Reports of bullying or harassment will be addressed promptly and effectively.
- Anyone aware of bullying is expected to report it to the safeguarding team.

Reporting Process: There should be a clear and accessible reporting structure, starting with the safeguarding team.

## **Suggestions from Best Practices to Enhance Safeguarding Policy to Be**

### **Discussed with QCB Group:**

- 1) Regular Feedback – Conduct annual safeguarding reviews, inviting community feedback to identify areas for improvement.
- 2) Mental Health Support – Partner with LGBTQ+ mental health organizations to offer workshops or support sessions.
- 3) Appeal process via the governance group
- 4) Questionnaire part of training for all members
- 5) Training mandatory for governance group
- 6) Regular governance meetings minuted. Start of each there could be a safeguarding update from the safeguarding team.
- 7) A governance meeting could be triggered on a safeguarding matter whether that is due to the need for advice, an intervention, an extension or change to intervention or complaint