

Queer Church Birmingham Safeguarding Policy

This policy can be amended or changed at anytime. It will be kept in constant review.

Members can suggest changes or schedule discussions at anytime.

Reporting form: <https://forms.gle/P94MN9NRfLfuM9WK9>

Contact email address for safeguarding team: qcbsafeguarding@gmail.com

Guiding Principles for Reporting and Escalation

1. Transparency and Accountability:

All safeguarding concerns must be carefully documented, including the reasons for escalating or not escalating the issue to external authorities such as Adult Social Services or the police. Any and all incidents reported should be passed up to the safeguarding officers immediately for consideration. The safeguarding team will meet and take the necessary action in consultation with the complainant. The actions will be noted and notice sent to the complainant. All reports and actions agreed need to be stored confidentially both in digital and physical form. The safeguarding team will take a 'safety first' approach and suspend the subject of the complaints if necessary whilst discussions take place on the necessary action. Suspension is a way of safeguarding both the complainants, the subject of complaints and congregation members. A record will be kept of these decisions. Efforts will be made to liaise with

a third party safeguarding agent who can review the cases on a regular basis and be called on for advice if 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 stored securely with both a digital copy and a signed physical copy.
- Each report must be signed and dated by both the person taking the report and the complainant.

- **Refer**

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the Safeguarding Officer should take into account:

the adult's wishes and preferred outcome
whether the adult has 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 there is a person in a position of trust involved
whether a crime has been committed

This should inform the decision whether to notify the concern to the following people:

the police if a crime has been committed and/or
Adult Social Services for the area concerned for possible safeguarding enquiry
relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Charities
commission
service commissioning teams
family/relatives as appropriate (seek advice from adult social services)

The Safeguarding Officer should keep a record of the reasons for referring the concern or reasons for not referring. Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple and may affect one person or more. Those responsible for safeguarding should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

Appendix: Safeguarding Report Question Template

If you are a complainant or a person taking details from a complainant please use this template to make sure you capture all the relevant information. This information should then be sent straight to the safeguarding officers.

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: _____

Signature of Complainant/Reporter: _____

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

Expectations Document

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.

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.

Poster for Display

Title: 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 and Chris Mells
2. Fill out a Safeguarding Report Form (available at events or online).
3. You can report anonymously using our online form. You also have the option to leave your name and contact details if you would like us to get back to you:

What Happens Next:

- All reports are reviewed confidentially.
- Decisions are made with care, and actions are taken to ensure safety.
- Where necessary, concerns are escalated to appropriate authorities.

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 go to the police then a member of the church can go with you to support you if that helps.

Safer recruitment

Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Trustees will ensure that all staff and volunteers will be appointed, trained, supported and

supervised in accordance with government guidance on safer recruitment. This includes ensuring that:

- There is a written job description for every post/role;
- Where applicable, those applying/volunteering have completed a self-declaration form;
- Shortlisted applicants/volunteers have been interviewed;
- Safeguarding has been discussed at interview;
- A reference has been obtained, and followed up where appropriate;
- A disclosure and barring check have been completed where necessary (we will comply with Code of Practice requirements concerning the fair treatment of applicants/volunteers and the handling of information);
- Qualifications where relevant have been verified;
- Appropriate training has been provided;
- The applicant/volunteer has completed a probationary period;
- The applicant/volunteer has been given a copy of the organisation's safeguarding policy and knows how to report concerns.

Children and Young People

QCB is committed to:

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

The primary responsibility for care and protection of children rests with their parents/guardians.

Adults at Risk

An adult at risk is a person who is 18 years of age or over, and who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.

The Care Act 2014 promotes these six principles:

1. Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
2. Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs.
3. Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
4. Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need.

5. Partnership – local solutions through services working with their communities; communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse.
6. Accountability – accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice.

Understanding abuse

Defining abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse by inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm. Children and adults in need of protection may be abused within a family, an institution or a community setting. Very often the abuser is known or in a trusted relationship with the child or adult. Detailed definitions, signs and indicators of abuse can be found below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/help-from-social-services-and-charities/abuse-and-neglect-adults-at-risk/>

<https://galop.org.uk/types-of-abuse/>

Anti-bullying statement

We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in our organisation. If it does occur children and adults are able to report the matter and it can be dealt with promptly and effectively. There is an expectation that anyone who knows that bullying is happening will report it. There should be a clear line of reporting and should initially be raised to the safeguarding team.

Suggestions from Best Practices to further enhance safeguarding policy:

1. External Helpline Integration: Display helpline numbers (e.g., Galop, Refuge) prominently in all materials for direct access to external support.
2. Regular Feedback: Conduct annual safeguarding reviews, inviting community feedback to identify areas for improvement.

3. Dedicated Safeguarding Email: Create a specific email address for reporting concerns to maintain a direct line of communication.

4. Code of Conduct Agreement: Require all members to sign a Code of Conduct, reinforcing shared expectations for behavior and accountability.

5. Mental Health Support: Partner with LGBTQ+ mental health organizations to provide workshops or support sessions.