

The Queery Safeguarding Policy

The Queery is open to everyone, under-16's must accompanied by a parent/carer who are responsible for their children at all times when they attend an event, the cafe or the bookshop.

16-18-year-olds can attend events at The Queery unaccompanied. As an inclusive organisation, The Queery welcomes audiences over-16 to our events, all of which are produced specifically for LGBTQ+ identifying people.

Selecting an appropriate event for under 18s: Parents can receive guidance from The Queery regarding events for a 16-18 year-olds. The Queery wishes to ensure that young people are not subjected to content which is inappropriate to their age. When responding to a recommendation, parents ultimately have responsibility for deciding whether the event is suitable for their 16-18 year old.

Staffing

The Queery is run by a friendly team of volunteers who assist with the safe and smooth running of all events. Participants at events should be aware that disclosure and barring checks are not required for all Queery volunteers, but all events are run with a volunteer with Level 2 Safeguarding Everyone training in attendance.

The Queery has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol in place.

First aid assistance is available at all times when The Queery is open.

The Queery needs to ensure that the way we engage with 16-18-year-olds and vulnerable adults keeps them safe and does not place them at risk of harm. It is also the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that any employees or volunteers who come into contact with young people and vulnerable adults who use our services are protected and understand the procedures to follow if there are any concerns.

The purpose of The Queery safeguarding policy is to educate all employees and volunteers in The Queery with a framework to prevent and minimise the risk of harm to young people and vulnerable adults who use our services.

Scope

This policy covers all employees and volunteers. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and The Queery may amend it at any time.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and young people in the UK. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from the NSPCC.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the approach that we as an organisation take to ensure that anyone using our services is safe. Safeguarding means putting processes in place to ensure that 16-18-year-olds

and vulnerable adults are not abused in any way, including verbally or physically. The Queery's safeguarding policy outlines good practice to provide young people with appropriate safety and protection, allowing staff and volunteers to make informed responses to child protection issues.

Prevention

The Queery will:

- appoint a nominated safeguarding lead: Jamsheed Master hello@thequeery.co.uk
- develop safeguarding policies and procedures which reflect best practice
- design and undertake all activities in a way that protects 16-18-year-olds and vulnerable adults from any risk of harm when using The Queery
- recruit staff and volunteers safely
- ensure relevant staff and volunteers receive training and support on safeguarding at a level appropriate to their role
- ensure effective reporting procedures are in place
- follow up reports on safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process
- share concerns with relevant authorities who need to know, and involve young people, vulnerable adults, parents/guardians/carers as appropriate

How to raise a concern

It's not your responsibility to diagnose a type of abuse or decide what kind of help a young person or vulnerable adult needs. It is your responsibility to share your concerns. If you have a concern, no matter how small, then it's essential that you tell someone. You can:

- speak to a colleague
- report it to your designated safeguarding lead: Jamsheed Master hello@thequeery.co.uk
- contact social care directly

Whichever option you choose, what's important is that you report the information so that the appropriate people can work together to safeguard the young person or vulnerable adult.

Confidentiality

We hope that volunteers will feel able to voice safeguarding concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained in all stages of the process when dealing with safeguarding concerns. The Queery will ensure information relating to the concern and your identity will only be shared as necessary to investigate the concern and will be kept secure at all times.

External disclosures

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body. If you are concerned that a young person or vulnerable adult may be at risk of harm, please contact your local children's social care team.

The Queery Child Protection Policy

Protection and support

We aim to encourage openness and will support anybody who raises safeguarding concerns under this policy. Individuals must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising safeguarding concerns. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform our designated safeguarding lead immediately.

You must not make false allegations of such detrimental treatment maliciously or with a view to personal gain. You must not threaten or retaliate against individuals who raise safeguarding concerns in any way.

This policy makes provision for 16-18-year-olds and vulnerable adults to ensure that

- the welfare of the young person or vulnerable adult is paramount
- everyone, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, however, all staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns to The Queery.

The Queery has a duty of care to safeguard all young people and vulnerable adults involved in its activities from harm. All young people and vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled people and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The Queery will ensure the safety and protection of all young people and vulnerable adults involved through adherence to the child protection guidelines adopted by The Queery.

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A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Young people and vulnerable adults Act 1989).

Policy aims

The aim of The Queery's child protection policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing young people and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst participating in events
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues
- Promote and encourage a supporting environment for young people and vulnerable adults

participating in Queery events and activities

Scope

Employees, volunteers and members of The Queery and all participants at Queery-run events.

Good practice guidelines

Providing young people and vulnerable adults and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in its care

- Being respectful and encouraging
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity
- Always working in an open environment, avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with young people and vulnerable adults
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people and vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process

Allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

- Securing parental consent if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given

Promote and encourage a supporting environment for young people and vulnerable adults participating in Queery events and activities.

- Making the events fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Being mindful of the impact of words, comments and actions
- Being aware of different experience levels and appropriate encouragement rather than rebuke or reprimand
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people

Practices to be avoided:

- Avoid spending time alone with young people and vulnerable adults away from others
- No adult should be in a one-to-one situation with a young person
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow young people and vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reduce anyone to tears as a form of control

- fail to act upon and record any allegations made
- do things of a personal nature for young people and vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves

Incidents that must be reported/recorded. If any of the following occur you should report this immediately and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the young person are informed:

- if you accidentally hurt them
- if they seems distressed in any manner
- if a young person or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

The Queery recognises that all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure all relevant volunteers and staff (those who will be working with or have direct involvement with young people and vulnerable adults) should complete appropriate safeguarding training

At all Queery events, the safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of volunteers should be explained and clarified

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in The Queery in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate safeguarding lead or the appropriate authorities.

The Queery will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports a concern of abuse.

Action if there are concerns

- Any suspicion that an abuse has taken place should be reported to The Queery who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the young person in question and any person who may be at risk
- The Queery will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- The Queery will deal with any media enquiries

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only. This includes the following people:

- the event organisers
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser and how this should take place.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The Queery may make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended from participation at The Queery pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries The Queery will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, The Queery must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true

The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with young people and vulnerable adults). Where such an allegation is made, The Queery will follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other young people and vulnerable adults, either within or outside the sphere of activity, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with young people and vulnerable adults. This is reinforced by the provisions of the Protection of Young people and vulnerable adults Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all young people and vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the event organiser. Create an open environment
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- Report any concerns to The Queery
- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully (ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- Keep a written record of action taken
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by staff and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to The Queery in "responding to suspicions or allegations" (see above)
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- Details of witnesses to the incidents

- Where possible, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a Queery member, you can contact social services directly or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111. Please also see the NSPCC and Childline websites for further information and advice.

This policy is adopted and adapted with the kind permission from the sample policy provided by the NSPCC.