

Quaker Congo Partnership UK: Safeguarding Statement

The trustees of Quaker Congo Partnership UK (QCP) are committed to maintaining the standards asked for by Britain Yearly Meeting and we are a 'Quaker Recognised Body'. Some of the trustees have DBS clearance through their Area Meeting as a consequence of activities within that meeting. Some of the trustees are involved in the local reviews of Safeguarding which are now taking place in all Area Meetings.

As trustees of QCP we do not have regular contact with young people in the UK or the Democratic Republic Congo (DRC). Every two years a small group of trustees visits the DRC to see the work being undertaken by the projects and meet with groups of participants. We do not have any expatriate employees in the DRC and staff working for the projects we support are all employed by the local managing committee. Therefore DBS checks are not currently required. There is not an equivalent system in the DRC but we hope that the regular discussions we have with staff and members of the management group show that we regard safeguarding as important and share a common view as to the importance of respecting individuals. We have a formal agreement with our Congolese partners and discussions around safeguarding are already forming part of the preparation for the next agreement.

The DRC is an area which has a long and tragic history of rape being used as a weapon of war and of teenage girls being pressured to leave school and marry when they wish to continue with their education. These matters are part of the group social education supported by the counselling staff as well as involving more individual support. This open discussion should help to protect vulnerable people and enable those who have need of assistance to ask for it. If at any time any of our trustees, associates or volunteers have concerns about the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults they will immediately bring these concerns to the attention of QCP trustees.

Below is part of the statement from Quakers.

Quakers are committed to:

- the care, respect and nurture of all vulnerable groups encountered within Quaker activities
- the safeguarding and protection of children and other vulnerable people
- the promotion of a culture of good practice in relation to activities promoted by Quaker meetings and groups
- maintaining and developing procedures and good practice guidelines