

Britain Yearly Meeting Children and Young People's Work



Volunteer Involvement Policy Procedures & Guidance 3

References for volunteers working with Children and Young People

Following the publication of *Meeting Safety*, this guidance informs procedures when making use of volunteers to work with children and young people at Yearly Meeting events and other initiatives. These guidelines replace the previous guidelines of April 1998 (see minute QL/CYPC/2001/44) and were updated in November 2008.

Guidance on References

1. **Two references** must be sought for each potential volunteer. One referee may be a member, elder or overseer of the volunteer's LM and the other should ideally be an outside person who can comment on their suitability. Where possible a young person should be supplied as a referee.
2. **References** should be renewed at least once in every three years.
3. **When requesting a reference**, it is important to state the conditions in which the volunteer will be working so that the referee can comment based on their experience of the volunteer's interaction with Children and Young People.
4. **Volunteers unable** to provide the name of a referee may need a discussion to explore why this is, and encouraging them to think creatively about who might comment.
5. **Where a reference** indicates reason to suppose a volunteer may not be suitable, staff are expected to err on the side of caution.
6. **If a volunteer is considered unsuitable**, staff should consider whether to inform their local meeting children's committee of this. Decisions as to the volunteer's suitability for local work are the responsibility of their local meeting.
7. **Referees should be informed** that their reference may be shared with the volunteer concerned. This is a requirement of the Data Protection Act.
8. **References should be held** on file by CYP staff in a locked filing cabinet and the record logged in a database registered under the Data Protection Act. Access to the database should be restricted to those responsible for selecting, appointing and supervising volunteers. The information in the database should relate only to work with children and young people at Yearly Meeting level. CYP staff cannot be held responsible for references for local work, they may, at their discretion, write references in their professional capacity for volunteers known to them to work locally.
9. **The database should not** be used to record a list of those who must not be used because people can, and do, grow, develop and change. This is distinct from any database of information drawn from the Criminal Records Bureau, which should be held entirely separately and confidentially.
10. **Staff are not expected** to act alone in applying these guidelines, and can always consult with Quaker Life committee members, and call on their support in dealing with sensitive matters such as these.

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