

# **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY**

**For**

## **New Life Conference**

### **A. Introduction**

1. New Life Conference is a not-for-profit organisation run by The Trustees of the Summer Fellowship Conference Trust, registered charity number 293590.
2. New Life Conference is based at: c/o Richard Higgs, 59B Cholmeley Road, Reading, RG1 3NB.
3. New Life Conference is managed by a board of trustees (the Trustees). One of the trustees has particular responsibility for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
4. The Trustees have adopted this safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy and expects every adult working or helping at New Life Conference to support it and comply with it. Consequently this policy shall apply to all leaders, trustees, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of New Life Conference and it is intended to support them to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
5. Copies of this policy should be available from Richard Higgs and from the conference office during the week of conference. New Life Conference will not tolerate the abuse of children and vulnerable adults and leaders and volunteers should be made aware of how this policy can be accessed.

### **B. Objectives and purpose of the Policy**

1. The key objectives of this policy are for all leaders and volunteers to:
  - have an overview of children and adult safeguarding
  - be clear about their responsibility to safeguard children and adults
  - ensure the necessary actions are taken where a child, or an adult with care and support needs, is deemed to be at risk
2. This policy is intended to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive any service from us, including those who are the children of adults who may receive services from us.
3. We believe that no child, young person or vulnerable adult should experience abuse or harm and are committed to the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff and to guide our approach to child and vulnerable adult protection and safeguarding.

### **C. What is child and vulnerable adult protection?**

Child and vulnerable adult protection is the response to the different ways in which a young person's, child's or vulnerable adult's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual health are damaged by the actions of another person.

#### **1. Principles**

New Life Conference adheres to following the six key principles that underpin safeguarding work:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection

- Partnership
- Accountability

## 2. The risks to children

Many children grow up in a safe and happy environment and it is important not to exaggerate or overestimate the dangers. Nevertheless, there are situations where children need protection including:

- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Physical and emotional abuse and neglect
- Domestic violence
- Inappropriate supervision by staff or volunteers
- Bullying, cyber bullying, acts of violence and aggression within our schools and campuses
- FGM
- Victimisation
- Self-harm
- Unsafe environments and activities
- Crime
- Exploitation

## 3. The risks to vulnerable adults

A “vulnerable adult” is someone who:

- has care and support needs, and
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse and neglect, and
- is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect, because of those needs.

In the context of vulnerable adults: ‘Safeguarding means protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.’ (Care and Support Statutory Guidance, Department of Health, updated February 2017).

All adults should be able to live free from fear and harm. However, some may find it hard to get the help and support they need to stop abuse. An adult may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to many reasons, including their mental or physical incapacity, sensory loss or physical or learning disabilities. This could be an adult who is usually able to protect themselves from harm, but may be unable to do so because of an accident, disability, frailty, addiction or illness.

Relevant guidance sets out the 10 main types of abuse of vulnerable adults:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory

- Organisational
- Domestic violence
- Modern Slavery
- Self-neglect

However, you should keep an open mind about what constitutes abuse or neglect as it can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered.

Our approach to adult safeguarding should be person-led and outcome-focused. The individual should be involved in identifying how best to respond to their safeguarding situation by giving them more choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

New Life Conference will not tolerate the abuse of adults and will ensure that adults are involved in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is dealt with on a case by case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and life styles, the same process may not work for all.

#### 4. Universality of protection

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount
- all children and vulnerable adults regardless of race, gender, religious belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from harm.
- some children or adults are more vulnerable to harm as a result of their circumstances, prior experiences, communication needs or level of dependency.
- working with children, young people, their parents and/or guardians, vulnerable adults, carers or other agencies is essential to protecting their wellbeing.

### **D. Safeguarding responsibility at New Life Conference**

1. The named responsible persons for safeguarding duties for New Life Conference are Peter Cowling (tel 07891 958043; email [pete.cowling@ntlworld.com](mailto:pete.cowling@ntlworld.com)) and Richard Higgs (tel 07759 398387; email [higgsrdnlc@gmail.com](mailto:higgsrdnlc@gmail.com)).
2. All staff and volunteers should contact Peter Cowling or Richard Higgs for any concerns/queries they have in regards to safeguarding adults. A log of the concern must be kept.
3. Peter Cowling and Richard Higgs will be responsible to make decisions about notifying social services if required and consider alternative actions, where necessary.
4. Richard Higgs will ensure that the safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policies and procedures are in place and up to date. They will ensure a safe environment is promoted for staff and volunteers and adults accessing the service (if relevant to your organisation). Richard Higgs will ensure they are up to date with their safeguarding adults training.

### **E. General safeguarding**

1. We are committed to ensuring that all persons attending New Life Conference are properly safeguarded. The trustees are not able to take responsibility for every child and vulnerable adult staying on or visiting the site. Those responsible for these need to be the parents, guardians or carers accompanying children and vulnerable adults on site.
2. Our policy is to ensure that every child and vulnerable adult is properly supervised by a parent, guardian or carer, who needs to be aged 25 or over in the case of a

temporarily assigned guardian. We will make this policy known to all persons booking into conference via the website and to all delegates in the welcome packs handed to delegates at the start of the week of conference.

3. Each delegate needs to be registered at conference to be allowed on the site. Each delegate will be expected to wear a wrist band for the entire week, which can be age-appropriate. The trustees reserve the right to challenge delegates to ensure that they are registered with conference.
4. The trustees will keep under review the appropriate procedures for managing the site in an appropriate way so far as possible to eliminate safeguarding risk.

## **F. Safeguarding children in activities at New Life Conference**

### **Group Activities**

1. Each child and young person should be formally registered within their group. The information includes an information/consent form, which their parent/guardian must complete. These forms have vital information about health and emergency contacts and should be kept securely and brought to each session.
2. An attendance register should be kept for each session. For youth work, it is sufficient that the leaders and small group leaders are aware of who is present or absent during the week. A copy of the list of children and young people registered for each group should be kept centrally with the conference office. At the end of each session for children below secondary school age, children should be collected by a parent/guardian or known authorised responsible person at the end of each session. Do not let children leave without an adult unless the parent has specifically said they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent/guardian or responsible person(s) has informed you that this will happen.
3. The youth tent meetings are not to be generally attended by persons over the age of 18, save for those who are in positions of leadership or helpers, all of whom will have been DBS checked.

### **Other activities**

4. At other events and activities which are open to all ages, children under 16 must be accompanied throughout by an adult over the age of 18 who not only brings the child but also takes the child back to its parent/guardian or responsible adult(s) afterwards. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parents/guardian or responsible adult(s).
5. At other events and activities for children accompanied by a parent/guardian or responsible adult (such as low ropes, games or swimming), children under 16 must be supervised throughout the event by an adult over the age of 18 who not only brings the child to the event but also takes the child back to its parent/guardian or responsible adult(s) afterwards. If a lone adult brings more than one child, then the children will have to stay together, so that the one adult can supervise them. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parents/guardian or responsible adult(s).
6. At any events and activities for unaccompanied children, children under the age of 16 must be enrolled by a responsible adult before being left with the event leader. The enrolment must record the child's name, age and address and the names and addresses of the child's parents/guardian, plus the parents' or guardian's or responsible adult's mobile telephone numbers. Young people aged 16 or 17 may attend unaccompanied if they bring the written consent and mobile telephone number of one of their parents.

7. Both event and activities are to be defined broadly to include any occasions where New Life Conference will be providing a service.

### **Trips/outings**

8. When organising a trip/outing make sure a trip/outing slip is completed. This includes details about the trip and a section for parents/guardians to give their consent. These slips must be returned before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms. (If a group information/consent form has not already been completed for a child or young person, then it will need to be completed).
9. If private cars are used for an outing, the drivers must be approved by the committee, be properly insured, have rested before driving, and should have clean licenses. There should always be at least one other responsible person (16 or over) in each vehicle. All vehicles should be fitted with full seatbelts, not just lap belts. Full seatbelts should always be used. Car booster seats are required and should be used for children below 135cm tall or, if earlier, when a child reaches 12 years of age.

### **Insurance**

10. NLC shall ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities.

### **Personal/personnel safety guidelines**

11. A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.
12. Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another leader or volunteer knows where you are and why.
13. At no time should a leader or volunteer arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being there.
14. Teenage assistants should always be supervised.

### **Risk assessments**

15. Risk assessments for child safety – all group leaders for children's and youth work should ensure that the risk assessment at **Appendix A** is carried out and adhered to prior the start of conference week. Copies of completed assessments shall be retained by the conference office.
16. Before starting any other event or activity for unaccompanied children, those organising that event or activity will carry out a risk assessment and then take steps to minimise all risks to health and safety. Parents/guardians/responsible adults and children will be made aware of any particular risks and of the steps to be taken to minimise those risks. A record of all risk assessments will be kept in the conference office.
17. Sufficient adults must be present at any event for unaccompanied children to enable one adult to deal with any emergency, while another adult supervises the children not directly affected by the emergency.
18. Each children's or young people's group shall have a person who is trained in first aid and the identity of that person shall be notified to the named safeguarding representatives prior to the start of each conference week.
19. New Life Conference shall provide adequately stocked first aid kits to each children's or young people's group.

## **G. Disclosure and barring**

1. New Life Conference offers the following activities for children: residential Christian conference with children's and youth activities
2. New Life Conference does not specifically provide activities for vulnerable adults. However, it is recognised that vulnerable adults may attend New Life Conference.
3. Some of our activities may therefore require adult participants, adult leaders or adult volunteers to undergo DBS and/or police checks under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The required level of checking (if any) will broadly reflect the degree and frequency of unsupervised access given to other people's children.

## **H. Investigations and sanctions**

1. The Trustees will take very seriously any allegation of impropriety on the part of any trustee, leader, volunteer or delegate at or visitor to New Life Conference. Anyone who discovers anything amiss should get in touch immediately with the following: Richard Higgs
2. The Trustees will review the allegation and the likely risk to children and, if appropriate, will consider excluding that person from conference and, if appropriate, a ban from conferences, but only in full accordance with the policies and procedures of New Life Conference.
3. Any such sanction would be determined and applied by the following officer: Dr David Vine.
4. A parent/guardian who is aggrieved by a ban involving bullying or inappropriate behaviour by a child may appeal to New Life Conference who will hear the views of all relevant persons. The decision of New Life Conference is then final.

## **I. Child safeguarding – what I do if I am concerned?**

Leaders and volunteers at New Life Conference who have any child safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond
  - Take emergency action if a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 or 112 for emergency services.
  - Listen to the child/young person
  - Look at them directly and do not promise to keep any secrets before you know what they are, but always let the child/young person know if, and why, you are going to tell anyone
  - Take whatever is said to you seriously and help the child/young person to trust his/her own feelings. Take notes of exactly what is said to you avoiding assumptions and conjecture.
2. Report
  - It is not the role of the leader or volunteer to investigate any allegations (this would contaminate evidence if a situation went to court). Any disclosure by a child/young person must be reported to the named safeguarding lead.
  - Do not discuss the matter with anyone except the correct people in authority.
  - Do not form your own opinions and decide to do nothing.
3. Record
  - As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.
  - Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any

unauthorised personal for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

4. Refer

The designated safeguarding lead should decide whether to notify the concern to the following people:

- the police if a crime has been committed; and/or
- social services for possible safeguarding enquiry; and/or
- relevant regulatory bodies such as the Charities Commission; and/or
- the church leadership for the home church (if applicable).

5. Things to say or do:

- 'What you are telling me is very important'
- 'This is not your fault'
- 'I am sorry that this has happened/is happening'
- 'You were right to tell someone'
- 'What you are telling me should not be happening to you and I will find out the best way to help you'

6. Things not to say or do:

- Do not ask leading questions – e.g., "Did Mr X do this?".
- Do not say 'Are you sure?'
- Do not show your own emotions e.g. shock/disbelief
- Do not make false promises

## **J. Adult safeguarding – what should I do if I am concerned?**

Leaders and volunteers at New Life Conference who have any adult safeguarding concerns should:

1. Respond

- Take emergency action if someone is at immediate risk of harm/in need of urgent medical attention. Dial 999 for emergency services
- Get brief details about what has happened and what the adult would like done about it, but do not probe or conduct a mini-investigation
- Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.

2. Report

Leaders and volunteers should report any potential adult safeguarding concerns to Richard Higgs, the designated safeguarding lead.

3. Record

- As far as possible, records should be written contemporaneously, dated and signed. Avoid assumptions or conjecture.
- Keep records about safeguarding concerns confidential and in a location where the alleged abuser will not have access to the record. Access should not be given to any unauthorised personal for accessing confidential information including the sharing of passwords.

4. Refer

In making a decision whether to refer or not, the designated safeguarding lead 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 wellbeing 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 possible safeguarding enquiry; and/or
- relevant regulatory bodies such as Care Quality Commission, Charities Commission; and/or
- the church leadership for the home church (if applicable).

The designated safeguarding lead 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. Leaders and volunteers should look beyond single incidents to identify patterns of harm. Accurate recording of information will also assist in recognising any patterns.

#### **K. Policy on the prevention of bullying**

We will not tolerate the bullying of children either by adults or by other children. If any incident of child-on-child bullying should arise at a New Life Conference event, those involved will be separated immediately and the parents of the children involved will be asked to deal with the matter. The Trustees will review all incidents of child-on-child bullying and assess the likely future risk to children. If appropriate, the Trustees will consider banning a child from future events, but only in full accordance with the rules and procedures of New Life Conference. Allegations of adults bullying children or allegations of bullying of vulnerable adults will be dealt with under Section H above.

#### **L. Photographing children**

No photos will be taken or published of any child attending an event or activity unless prior written permission is sought from a person with parental responsibility. If any person has any concerns regarding any person taking photos at an event or activity, that person should contact New Life Conference immediately.

#### **M. Social media**

New Life Conference recognises the importance of putting thought into boundaries when communicating with children, young people and vulnerable adults. The law and the remainder of this safeguarding policy applies in communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults by Trustees, leaders and volunteers of New Life Conference.

The following principles and guidelines apply:

- It is essential to obtain parents' or guardians' permission before you contact young people via social media or email, and consent for use of photographs (as set out above).
- You should not add children or young people on your personal social networking page who are part of the children's and youth ministry at New Life Conference who are under

the age of 18. You may set up a Facebook group for your group and invite them to be members (if they are over the required minimum age limit).

- Keep all your communications public and only send messages to whole groups, rather than to individuals. Behave as you would in a public setting – always maintain a second leader 'in the room', and make sure a leader is able to see what is posted or emailed.
- Only contact young people during daytime hours, not in the evening or at night.
- Leaders and young people could develop agreed 'internet guidelines'. A group such as the Youth Tent or Searchlights is a good context for healthy use of the internet to be encouraged (for more ideas on this see <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/children-and-youth/the-well-forworkers/downloadable-resources/social-media-guidelines>), if desired.
- It is potentially easier to form inappropriate relationships using social media. Online banter and private messaging can lead to a level of intimacy that you would ordinarily guard against. Be alert to the potential for misinterpretation. Keep your boundaries in place.
- If a young person uses social media to disclose sensitive or difficult information to you, save these messages in case they are needed later, for example in sharing with the police or social workers. If someone uses a social media space to access pastoral care, or disclose information inappropriately, you may need to take the conversation offline or into a more private location.
- Avoid interacting more with one young person than another, e.g., if you wish happy birthday to one person, you need to do it for all users.
- Humour – without the cues of non-verbal communication, humour can be easily misconstrued. Be alert to childish or adolescent sensitivities.
- Be a good example. Remind young people that there's no such thing as 'private' online. Tell them what kind of photos and information are okay to post and to never share personal information like name, school, age or address.

## **N. Managing behaviour, discipline and acceptable restraint**

1. Adults supervising children at New Life Conference events must never use any form of corporal punishment. If physical restraint is absolutely necessary to prevent injury to any person or to prevent serious damage to property, then the minimum necessary restraint may be used — but for that purpose only.
2. Unacceptable behaviour at New Life Conference events for unaccompanied children will generally be stopped by separating the children from each other and from the group. Those responsible will be suitably supervised and will be returned as soon as possible to the care of their parents/guardian or responsible adult(s).
3. The Trustees of New Life Conference will not be responsible for the use or misuse of social media or mobile phones during the conference. Individual group leaders may set guidelines acceptable to their groups or activities relating to the use of mobile phones (see section M above). Any bullying or abuse on social media or by the use of mobile phones will not be tolerated.

## **O. Recruitment**

Leaders and volunteers are by far the most valuable resource New Life Conference has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting leaders and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- Reference or recommendation from local church/trusted leadership.
- Completion of a formal application (on a form if used) if required.

- At the discretion of the Trustees, an interview by the Trustees, who will take the final decision.
- Checking of the applicants' identity (passport, driving licence, etc);
- Taking up references prior to the person being able to work at conference.
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Taking appropriate advice before allowing someone with a criminal record to volunteer.
- Allowing no unaccompanied access to children until all of the above have been completed.
- On-going supervision of volunteers.
- Ensuring good practice is followed in working with children and young people by providing appropriate training and guidance.
- A nominated child and vulnerable adult protection representative from among the Trustees.

**P. Other Policies**

This safeguarding policy should be read together with the other policies of New Life Conference adopted from time to time.

**Q. Legal Framework**

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the following:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice - Guidance on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25, from 1 September 2014
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services
- Working together to safeguard children (2017)
- The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support statutory guidance

NOTE: This Policy was approved by the following officer on \_\_\_\_\_ 2019 and is due for review every 2 years:

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**Dr David Vine**  
**Chairman of Trustees**  
**New Life Conference**

**Appendix A**  
*Risk assessment*

1. Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games.
2. Make sure that all leaders and volunteers know
  - Where an emergency phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in an incident book
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
3. At the start of conference, the procedure for what to do in the event of fire should be explained to each group by the leader of that group.
4. The risk assessment below should be completed and a copy handed to the conference office.

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Severity</u>	<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<b>Weather</b>				
Sunstroke/Sunburn in Hot Weather			Open windows to provide ventilation for indoor activities.	Brief parents to bring sunhats and to apply sun cream before session
			Head gear to be worn and sunscreen to be applied prior to session by parents	
Cold/rain			Alternatively on cold and wet days team leader to make decision to restrict activities. Children to be dressed up in wet weather gear	
<b>Security</b>				
Loss of children from group			Control door at all times with a dedicated door person. Door person with assistance to check each child in against register	A deliberate hand over to be undertaken when changing door persons

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Severity</u>	<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Intrusion from third party			door person responsible for any third party entry into the Lodge room	Door person to alert team leader, call for help from other team members
			team lead in conjunction with door person to undertake head count each time children leave and re-enter meeting room for external activities	
			Team lead to ensure correct child helper ratio.	
			At the end of each session children to be instructed to remain seated until individually met by parent or authorised person	
<b>Child protection</b>				
Inappropriate contact with children.			All helpers to be appropriately DBS checked	Only helpers with DBS check to be allowed to conduct toilet trips
Vulnerable children			Photographs of vulnerable children is prohibited	Helpers to be briefed on identity of vulnerable child. Parents to be advised at performance that only photographs for personal use may be taken and that placement of photographs on social media is not allowed
<b>Allergies</b>				
Allergic incident			Allergy needs to be obtained by parent prior to the event	Helpers to be briefed regarding any children's allergies
			Food-related activities to avoid significant allergens as far as possible.	
<b>Accidents</b>				

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Severity</u>	<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Slips trips and falls			During indoor activities, create sufficient space in which to play games	
			Floor surface to be checked and monitored throughout session in order to maintain safe environment	
			Construction toy to be supervised to allow climbing only within safe limits	
			Running not to be allowed during trips to toilet or outdoor activities especially on un-even ground	
			Ground for sports activities to be restricted to area without pot holes or particularly un even ground	
<b>Hygiene</b>				
Bugs and Sickness			Children and helpers to be instructed to use hand wash before undertaking food activity, drink and biscuit time and after toileting.	
Toilets			Use of inside toilet to be used with appropriate supervision & cleaned after each session	
Scolding			Making of hot drinks for helpers to be done in controlled manner in an area clear of children	
<b>Other Hazards</b>				
Electricals			Use of electrical equipment i.e.. Computer to be restricted to helpers. Electrical wiring placed carefully in room to avoid a hazard	

<u>Risk</u>	<u>Severity</u>	<u>Likelihood</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Sharp objects			Meeting room to be inspected prior to commencement with any hazardous protrusions removed or covered.	
Emergency response			First aid kit to be kept in meeting room with first aid administered by qualified paediatric first aider.	
			Emergency calls if required to be made through Quinta office where possible to facilitate affective and efficient response.	Mobile phones only to be used as a last resort.