

## Managing a person who may pose a risk at a Triratna Buddhist Centre or other Triratna enterprise 2020

From time to time a member of a Triratna sangha, or someone wishing to join your sangha, may disclose that they have a criminal conviction for a serious crime, whether or not they served a prison sentence.

It is also possible that, probation services may ask if an ex-offender may attend meditation classes.

The advice below is particularly tailored to those who pose a sexual risk to children, but can be adapted for those with other convictions or behavioural problems. It follows UK best practice, but may be helpful for Triratna centres and enterprises in other countries too.

Email the Triratna safeguarding team for advice: [safeguarding@triratna.community](mailto:safeguarding@triratna.community).

A person with a sexual interest in children needs to be regarded in the same way as someone with an addiction. It is a mistake to think that now they have completed their sentence they no longer pose a risk; or that they can be cured or prevented from offending simply through practising the Dharma or the kindness of Buddhists. They (and we) need the protection of clear boundaries and they need professional help.

### Your Chair or Safeguarding officer should

- check with police and social services whether, in attending your activities, the person is breaching any probation agreements made with them
- agree with them a contract setting out the terms on which they may engage in your activities. If they refuse this, or do not keep to the agreement, or you lack the resources to manage your relationship with them, you are fully entitled to exclude them because your first duty is always to protect your existing sangha/beneficiaries from the harm they may pose.
- inform social services if you believe children or adults are at risk from them elsewhere; eg if you know they have a job working with children.

### Confidentiality

Legally, you may share information about this person only with those who need to know in order to prevent harm, and those with legal or otherwise key responsibility; eg your Chair, a trustee with particular responsibility for Safeguarding, president, mitra convenors and safeguarding officer, and anyone else it has been agreed will particularly care for this person or act as their minder on your premises or at your activities. If you do share information, you may not share the details; simply the fact that they may be a risk to children or adults.

Nobody else necessarily has a “right” to know, including, in the case of a person with a conviction for child-related offences, parents of children; proper implementation of **your Child protection policy and Code of behaviour** will ensure that children are as safe from this person as from the many other people with an *undisclosed* sexual interest in children.

### Behaviour contract – suggested content

This is a list of possible clauses you might include in a contract. It is not exhaustive. These are just examples of what may need to be taken into account in the particular circumstances of the individual and the Triratna Centre/enterprise concerned. (Email the Safeguarding team for examples of contracts already issued.)

### Agreed boundaries

- *I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone with children.*
- *I will attend meetings and activities as agreed with the Chair and Safeguarding officer of the Buddhist Centre/enterprise.*
- *I will sit where directed at activities (e.g. shrine room activities, social gatherings) and will not place myself near children.*
- *I will not enter certain parts of the building as agreed with the Chair and Safeguarding officer, nor any area where activities for children are in progress*
- *I will decline invitations of hospitality where there are children in the home*
- *I accept that "x" and "y" will sit with me during activities (e.g. shrine room activities, social gatherings) and accompany me when I need to use other facilities such as the toilet. They will know I am a sex offender/someone with a sexual interest in children.*
- *I accept there are certain people who will need to be told of my circumstances in order that they can protect the children for whom they care*
- *I accept that contact will need to be made with my probation officer, who will meet with the Centre Chair and Safeguarding officer as and when necessary*
- *I accept that "z" will provide me with pastoral care.*
- *I understand that any other concerns about me will be taken seriously and reported.*

### **Care and support**

It is important to be clear and realistic. As well as outlining the boundaries you expect this person to keep, it is also helpful to outline the types of care and support you are able to offer, or to be clear that you are **not** able to offer support outside your Centre's normal activities. For example:

*'X' and 'Y' have agreed to provide you with care and support; as part of that undertaking, they and the Buddhist Centre agree to:*

- *Support you in finding employment which will not bring you into contact with children*
- *Support you in seeking any specialist help e.g. attendance on sex offender treatment programmes, drug or alcohol or psychiatric rehabilitation or counselling appointments.*
- *Liaise with previous places of worship you have attended, with the prison chaplaincy team, or any other organisation you have worked with prior to joining us.*
- *Work closely with any statutory authorities with responsibility for you, such as your probation officer, police or children's social services*
- *Where appropriate, ask for risk assessment in order to determine how best we can meet your needs while protecting children*
- *Attempt to meet practical needs*
- *Support you in joining a support programme.*
- *Provide care and support to those you live with.*
- *Be there for you and to support you.*

Or

- *We regret that the [Name of Triratna Buddhist Centre or enterprise] does not have the resources to provide you with care or support outside its normal activities.*
- *You are welcome to attend [specify class/activity].*
- *We have agreed you will not attend [specify activity].*
- *We expect you to participate in treatment and support groups, as appropriate, supported by your probation officer/social worker etc.*
- *The [Name of Triratna Centre/enterprise] will review this contract every x months.*
- *The [Name of Triratna Centre/enterprise] reserves the right to refuse entry to you if we feel the terms of this contract are being breached, or that we no longer have the resources to manage this relationship with you, or that children are at risk.*
- *In such circumstances the Chair and Safeguarding officer may choose to inform statutory agencies (e.g. police, probation, social services), and any other relevant organisations.*

***Name of the person concerned***  
***Name of Triratna Centre/enterprise Chair***  
***Name of Triratna Centre/enterprise Safeguarding officer***  
***Signatures of all three***  
***Date***

*This document is to be read in conjunction with the [name of Triratna Buddhist Centre/enterprise]  
Child protection policy and Child protection code of conduct 2020.*

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safeguarding@triratna.community*