



Elders and overseers



Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends entrusted with the spiritual and pastoral needs of their worshipping community.



Contribute to Quaker work

Contribute time – There are many opportunities to get involved with the work we do on behalf of Quakers in Britain, including serving on committees, volunteering at events and joining the Quaker Life Network. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service to find out more or email nominations@quaker.org.uk or phone 020 7663 1121.

Contribute money – You can contribute to Britain Yearly Meeting funds direct or via your local or area meeting. To find out more about making a financial contribution visit www.quaker.org.uk/contributions or email contributions@quaker.org.uk or phone 020 7663 1015.

Leave a legacy – Legacy giving helps sustain Quaker work for future generations. After taking care of family and friends, please consider leaving a gift for Quaker work in your will. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/legacy or email legacy@quaker.org.uk or phone 020 7663 1019 for more information.

Find out more and connect with us

Find out more – You can find out more about all of Britain Yearly Meeting's work by reading the Trustees' annual report. Copies are sent to every meeting in April or visit www.quaker.org.uk/annualreport. *Quaker News* is a free magazine about the work of Britain Yearly Meeting. It is distributed via local meetings. You can also subscribe by email, access electronic back issues and read it online at www.quaker.org.uk/qn.

Connect with us – Contact details for specific areas of work are provided throughout the Directory of Services. The general contact details for Friends House are:

Friends House, 173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ
www.quaker.org.uk
Email: enquiries@quaker.org.uk
Switchboard: 020 7663 1000.

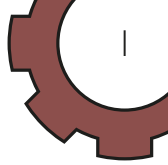
Quaker Centre Bookshop

You can order books, book boxes, resources and posters from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House, London.

Quaker Centre Bookshop, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

www.quaker.org.uk/shop
quakercentre@quaker.org.uk
020 7663 1030/1031.

Elders and overseers



Introduction

“The work of eldership and oversight is mainly carried out locally. Those responsible for pastoral care will need wisdom and sensitivity. Their ability to inform, advise and counsel will often be called on.”

Quaker faith & practice 12.10

Elders are responsible for fostering the spiritual life of a Quaker meeting, while overseers ensure the pastoral care of individuals and the worshipping community. Friends with responsibility for eldership and oversight in your local meeting are your first port of call for consultation and help with any problems. Overseers can always call upon elders, and vice versa, and holding joint meetings on a regular basis can be a great source of strength. Friends can also ask their area meeting elders and overseers for help when it is needed.

We support elders and overseers by providing training and resources. We also offer activities they might want to consider to help them meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of their worshipping community.

Resources

The following printed and electronic materials support elders and overseers.

Eldership and Oversight handbook series

This series of handbooks deals with various issues concerning meetings, and is available to purchase from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House:

- 1 **Patterns of Eldership and Oversight**
- 2 **Funerals and Memorial Meetings**
- 3 **Spiritual Reviews**
- 4 **Conflict in Meetings**

- 5 Quality and Depth of Worship and Ministry
- 6 Committed Relationships
- 7 Pastoral Care of Children and Young People
- 8 Moving into Membership
- 9 This Is Who I Am: Listening with Older Friends

Information leaflets

Free information leaflets are available on the following subjects:

- **'Confidentiality'** – brief guidelines for good practice and how to ensure confidentiality within the Quaker traditions of openness and plain speaking.
- **'Holding Quaker business meetings by telephone conference'**
- **'Maintaining boundaries'** – a guide for individuals on avoiding and preventing sexual harassment.
- **'Maintaining safe communities'** – information and guidance for Quaker meetings on dealing with sexual harassment.
- **'Meetings for clearness'** – a brief 'introduction to meetings for clearness, what they are used for and the processes involved.
- **'Membership: Principles and processes'** – a leaflet outlining the principles and processes behind our membership procedures.
- **'Nominations: Principles and testimonies'** – a leaflet exploring and offering guidance on area meetings' nominations processes.



- **'Threshing meetings'** – a brief introduction to threshing meetings, at which a variety of opinions can be openly expressed in preparation for a later meeting for worship for business.

All these leaflets can be downloaded from www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare. Printed copies are available from the Quaker Centre at Friends House. Large-print versions are available from our publications team at publications@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1162.

Living eldership practical course

This is a seven-session programme designed for elders or anyone else interested in enriching the spiritual life of their meeting. The course guide and all course materials are available free of charge at www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare. Printed copies can be purchased from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House.

All of these resources are available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House, London; contact details can be found on the back page of this booklet.

With a tender hand: A resource book for eldership and oversight

This comprehensive publication supports new and experienced elders and overseers, drawing on the experience of many different meetings across Britain. It is available as an e-book or in print from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House, London.

Supplementary material is available online at www.quaker.org.uk/tender-hand. If

you have ideas about material that could be added to these webpages, please contact our Support for Meetings Officer at supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1023.



Support

Support for Meetings Officer

The Support for Meetings Officer can assist with general and specific enquiries about eldership and oversight. You can ask for help with worrying, long-standing or seemingly intractable meeting problems and gain advice on creating a meeting community where all are welcome. See 'Key contacts' section below for contact details.



Being Friends Together meeting visit

Being Friends Together is an online learning resource developed by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and Quaker Life to help meetings develop spiritually, learn about aspects of the Quaker and Christian traditions, and grow as communities. It is available

online at <http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/welcome.php>.

We can also arrange a visit your meeting to help you discern how best to engage with the Being Friends Together learning project. Email together@quaker.org.uk or phone 020 7663 1017. Alternatively, complete the online request form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/bft-meeting-visit-request-form>.

Bespoke support from the Quaker Life Network

Make a request for bespoke support from the Quaker Life Network at qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1007. Alternatively, complete the online request form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qln-request-form>.

Conflict in meetings (Quaker Life Network cluster)

The Quaker Life Network has a cluster devoted to conflict in meetings. It explores these themes and shares experiences and practice to work with meetings to help resolve issues. To seek assistance from this cluster, contact the Quaker Life Network Development Officer (see page 7 for contact details).

Mental health in meetings (Quaker Life Network cluster)

What support can meetings be expected to offer to Friends who experience mental illness? When is it right to say that the support requested is beyond the capability of a meeting and needs to be met by professional expertise or the state? This cluster has been developed to work to find a balance that is realistic for Friends and meetings. To request support or advice, please contact the Quaker Life Network Development Officer (see page 7 for contact details).

Training and events

Eldership and oversight conference

This triennial eldership and oversight conference is organised jointly by Quaker Life and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Booking information is sent out to meetings in advance of each conference.

Eldership and oversight training provided by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

'Exploring Eldership' and 'Exploring Oversight' courses help Friends gain a better understanding of the roles and give people the confidence to undertake them. Woodbrooke also offers related training for local and area meetings on a local or regional basis as part of 'Woodbrooke on the road', plus training in particular areas such as 'Handling conflict in our Meetings'; 'Mental Health in our Meetings': For details of these and bookings, visit www.woodbrooke.org.uk, email enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk or phone 0121 472 5171.

Other related publications

Being Friends Together

This is an online learning resource developed by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and Quaker Life to help meetings develop spiritually, learn about aspects of the Quaker and Christian traditions, and grow as communities. It is available online at <http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/welcome.php>.

Being Quaker, Doing Quaker

This is a simple resource activity pack for groups sharing spiritual stories together. It is available online at www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare. Large-print versions are available from our

publications team at publications@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1162.

Explorations: Opportunities for meetings to explore their Quaker life (final review)

Between 2010 and 2012, Quaker Life offered 'Explorations' to meetings as a chance to develop as worshipping communities in a variety of ways. A review of the initiative makes interesting reading for those who have a responsibility for nurture, learning and development in meetings. The review of the initiative is available at www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare.

***Quaker faith & practice* chapters 4 and 12**

These chapters cover eldership and oversight. Go to <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk> to read the latest version.

Sharing our meetings' stories

This report is based on stories from individual meetings and offers insights and reflections into the things that nourish the life of our meetings. It is available online at www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare.



What do you do in meeting for worship?

This is an activity to encourage spiritual exploration. It is available online at www.quaker.org.uk/dos-pastoralcare. Large-print versions are available from our publications team at publications@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1162.

With the exception of 'Being Friends Together' and 'Explorations', printed copies of these publications are available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop at Friends House, London; contact details can be found on the back page of this booklet.

Key contacts

- **Support for Meetings Officer:** supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk; 020 7663 1023
- **Britain Yearly Meeting Safeguarding Officer:** safe@quaker.org.uk; 020 7663 1023
- **Quaker Life Network Development Officer** (for requests to the Quaker Life Network or involvement in its clusters): qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk; 020 7663 1007

Other organisations

This list is not exhaustive. For a full overview of other Quaker organisations that can offer resources, support, training and events go to www.quaker.org.uk/listed-informal-groups.

- **The Kindlers**

The Kindlers is an experimental group working to rekindle the power of Quaker worship by renewing and deepening our spiritual practices. To find out more or to attend a workshop, visit www.quaker.org.uk/kindlers.

- **Swarthmoor Hall**

Under the care of BYM, Swarthmoor Hall runs a diverse programme of courses, retreats and events and is a visitor attraction in its own right. Visit www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk, email info@swarthmoorhall.co.uk or phone 01229 583 204.

- **Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre**

Woodbrooke is a major provider of learning for Quakers in Britain and Europe from its site in Birmingham, via its travelling teaching service and through online courses and learning materials. Visit www.woodbrooke.org.uk, email enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk or phone 0121 472 5171.

Supporting information

Safeguarding – Safeguarding is protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm. For more information visit www.quaker.org.uk/safeguarding. Here you will find a link to Meeting safety, which outlines the responsibilities for Quaker meetings in Britain. We recommend that area meetings join the Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service. Visit www.ccpas.co.uk or email info@ccpas.co.uk.

For general safeguarding advice, as well as Quaker advice on how specific safeguarding matters may affect the pastoral needs of individuals and the meeting community, contact our Safeguarding Coordinator at safe@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1023.

General issues relating to a Quaker meeting

– If you have concerns about issues in your Quaker meeting that you would like to talk over, contact our Support for Meetings Officer at supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1023. Alternatively, contact the Recording Clerk's Office at recordingclerk@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1161.

Information updates – Please keep us informed of changes to the key role-holders in your local and area meetings: clerk, treasurer, safeguarding coordinator, registering officer, clerk of (area meeting) trustees. To let us know of any such changes please contact our Database Administrator at updates@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1119.

Data safety – Quaker meetings in Britain need to store information on their members and attenders in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, which protects individuals from the unauthorised use of their personal information. Friends House Data Safety Group can offer meetings general advice on data safety. For more information visit www.quaker.org.uk/data-safety. Here you will find a link to Data Safety and Information Security, which offers guidance to meetings. You can also contact our Data Safety Officer at datasafety@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1161.

Complaints and feedback

– Britain Yearly Meeting's complaints and feedback procedure enables anyone to let us know about problems or to give feedback on service received from staff at Friends House. To find out more visit www.quaker.org.uk/contact-us. Complaints can be made in writing to the Recording Clerk's Office at Friends House. Alternatively, email feedback@quaker.org.uk or phone 020 7663 1161.

Quaker faith & practice – *Quaker faith & practice* is the book of Christian discipline of Quakers in Britain. It expresses the breadth of Quaker theology through the experience of Friends and describes our corporate structures. Copies can be purchased from the Quaker Centre Bookshop. It is also available at <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk>.

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Information on how to access the resources and support available from Britain Yearly Meeting




Directory of Services

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Directory of Services

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Information on how to access the resources and support available to local and area meeting treasurers and those managing financial contributions.




Directory of Services

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Elders and overseers




Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends entrusted with the spiritual and pastoral needs of their worshipping community.




Directory of Services

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Trustees



Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends responsible for the governance of Quaker area meetings.



Directory of Services

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Registering officers




Information on how to access the resources and support available to registering officers and those responsible for the right holding of Quaker marriages.




Directory of Services

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Information on how to access the resources and support available from the Library at Friends House.




Directory of Services

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Wardens




Information on how to access the resources and support available to wardens and meetings that employ people to care for meeting house premises.




Directory of Services

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Libraries and records



Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends responsible for their meeting libraries and records.



Directory of Services

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0 to 18 Year olds




Information on how to access the resources and support available to those working with or responsible for children and young people.




Directory of Services

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Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends running outreach events and sharing the Quaker experience.



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Information on how to access the resources and support available to those entrusted with the care of Quaker property.



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Peace



Information on how to access the resources and support available to those working with peace and nonviolent social change.



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Information on how to access the resources and support available to those challenging inequality and working for a fairer society.



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Sustainability



Information on how to access the resources and support available to those working locally and globally to build sustainable communities.




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Information on how to access the resources and support available to Friends engaging with politics and the media to call for positive change.




Directory of Services

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The library



Information on how to access the resources, support and advice available from the Library at Friends House.



www.quaker.org.uk

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or see our Facebook page at
www.facebook.com/QuakersinBritain

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