

Quaker Peace & Social Witness: an introduction





Quakers believe that each person is unique, precious, a child of God. The work of QPSW reflects this belief. Photo: Mike Pinches for BYM

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Why Quakers work for peace and social justice

The work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) emerges from the deep spiritual experience of Quakers. We aim to tackle the root causes of violence and build a more just

and peaceful world. Quakers call this form of action 'witness' – living out our faith in the world.

QPSW supports Quaker witness in Scotland, Wales and England by accompanying, connecting and providing resources for Quakers and meetings with shared concerns. We also work on behalf of Quakers where it is appropriate to act or speak as a whole faith body. And we often



work closely with other Quaker bodies such as the Quaker Housing Trust, Quaker United Nations Office and Quaker Council for European Affairs.

Our work is guided by a central committee of 15 Quakers, which is appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, our national decision-making body. QPSW Central Committee appoints Quakers to subcommittees that oversee

distinct programmes of work.

In this booklet we describe our current work programmes, how we support Quakers and meetings, and how you can get in touch with staff.

For extra copies of this booklet, available on request, please email qpsw@quaker.org.uk.

Quakers campaign for policies that put people and the planet before profit.
Photo: Mike Pinches for BYM



Social justice

Climate action

We work with Quakers and others to call for the economic and political transformation needed to address climate breakdown: a global 'just transition' that puts poor and marginalised people first in the shift to zero carbon. We help Quakers find ways of taking action locally, including engaging with decision-makers and joining with their local communities to resist fossil fuel extraction projects.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice.





Quakers are working to close down immigration detention centres and end deportations. Photo: Kristian Buus

Crime, community and justice

Our vision is of a society that works collaboratively to transform structures that create harm. This programme brings together diverse groups to explore this vision and to campaign for a downsized criminal justice system and a stronger social infrastructure.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/crime-community-justice.

Sanctuary Everywhere

Quakers across Britain have responded to the forced

migration crisis by acting in solidarity with refugee and migrant communities. Our Sanctuary Everywhere programme accompanies Quakers in this work. We offer resources, training and political advocacy support to a network of Quaker meetings that have pledged to create a culture of welcome in their communities.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/migration.

Economic justice

Quakers seek an economic system that has equality, justice



and sustainability at its heart. Working alongside other faith and campaign groups, we call for political action to address the damaging levels of economic inequality experienced in Britain today. We provide resources to help Quakers better understand and develop an informed critique of current economic systems. We also support Quaker groups that model practical alternatives to a broken economic system, enabling people to prosper sustainably.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice.

Housing

Quaker Housing Trust (QHT), Britain Yearly Meeting's national housing charity since 1967, provides a practical response to a longstanding Quaker concern. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Its funds come directly from Quakers and meetings rather than from Britain Yearly Meeting. QPSW employs a part-time member of staff to support QHT trustees in taking this work forward.

Learn more at www.qht.org.uk.

Peace work in Britain

Peace and disarmament campaigning


QPSW works to raise awareness of the human and environmental costs of militarism, the arms trade and nuclear war. We support grassroots action for political change and work with international peace campaigns to ban nuclear weapons and challenge the arms trade. We work with different churches and faith traditions, and offer a faith voice within the secular networks and campaigns of the UK peace movement. Together we create resources, advocate peacebuilding, and support nonviolent direct actions that share the Quaker peace testimony with the world.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/peace.



QPSW supports Quakers to live out their deep commitment to peace.
Photo: Philip Wood for BYM





QPSW produces peace education resources and delivers training in primary and secondary schools.
Photo: Michael Preston for BYM

Peace education

Our peace education programme challenges the militarisation of schools and provides training, skill-sharing and resources for teachers, children and volunteers. We aim to nurture inner peace, helping children value themselves. This enables children to resolve their own conflicts through peer mediation, explore the root causes of violence and war, and champion justice and human

rights. The programme is also highly collaborative: we connect different peace education organisations to build lasting, effective partnerships.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education.

Peaceworker scheme

QPSW funds year-long work placements within small organisations that work for peace. People employed through the scheme gain valuable paid



experience while developing their skills and deepening their understanding of peace. Many undertake a significant project or piece of work for the host organisation, which could not otherwise have been achieved. The scheme strengthens the peace movement and builds lasting relationships.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers.

Turning the Tide

Our Turning the Tide programme supports Quakers and others to take nonviolent action for social change – without harm and with respect for all, including those with opposing views. We offer training and resources to groups working for peace and social justice, with an emphasis on networking and shared learning.

Learn more at www.turningtide.org.uk.

QPSW has long supported peacebuilders internationally, changing core conditions that lead to violent conflict. Photo: EAPPI





International peace work

Israel and Palestine

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a World Council of Churches programme. It sends volunteers from 24 countries to the West Bank and East Jerusalem to serve for three months, on a rolling basis, as human rights monitors, or ecumenical companions (EAs). QPSW coordinates EAPPI in the UK and Ireland on behalf of 16 partners. We work for a future in which the military occupation of Palestine has ended and Israelis and Palestinians enjoy a just peace with freedom, dignity and security based on international law.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/eappi.





QPSW works with community organisers in Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda who are building a nonviolent peace movement. Photo: BYM

Conciliation

Quakers are occasionally invited to provide quiet assistance in regions experiencing armed conflict. Historically, this work has taken place in Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Israel-Palestine, and South Africa. A part-time staff member currently coordinates a group of

appointed Quakers to support local conciliators in South Asia. Together they seek to develop nonviolent solutions to entrenched conflicts. Faith is at the heart of the work.



East Africa

Since 2010 QPSW has supported community organisers in East Africa to build a nonviolent grassroots peace movement. Focusing first on Kenya, the work has expanded to Burundi and Rwanda. Local peace activists deliver Turning the Tide training to community

groups, empowering them to intervene peacefully in violence and corruption. These groups have led campaigns on diverse causes, from opposing land-grabs and domestic violence to promoting environmental rights.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/east-africa.

Quakers involved in nonviolent direct action can get funding, advice and training from QPSW. Photo: Suki Ferguson for BYM



What Quaker Peace & Social Witness offers

Events and workshops

QPSW staff expertise is available to all Quakers in Britain, at our events and on request.

Our annual **QPSW Spring Conference** gives new attenders and members an opportunity to meet staff and learn more about the programmes. The annual **Quaker Activist Gathering** is a chance for Quakers working for social change to meet up, learn and reflect on different aspects of witness. Staff run regional campaign training from time to time and can also be booked to facilitate workshops at your local meeting.

QPSW grants

QPSW recognises that money can be an important factor

in turning faith into action. Through grants, QPSW funds international projects to relieve those affected by natural disasters, climate change, war or conflict. We also fund individuals in need of financial assistance and local groups working on sustainability or new economy initiatives.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making.

Accompaniment and networking

Quakers who wish to take action on any of the issues featured in this booklet, but who aren't sure where to start, can get support from our team. We'll introduce you to Quakers in other areas who share your concern, and offer suggestions and support by phone, email and in workshops.



To get started, call us on 020 7663 1000 or email qpsw@quaker.org.uk.

Resources

We offer a range of resources designed to help Quakers and others campaign for social change. They cover topics like peace education, the new economy, and how to plan and document actions. All of our resources are freely available online at www.quaker.org.uk, and we can post many of our briefings, leaflets and guides to Quakers and meetings on request.

Please email qpsw@quaker.org.uk to request information from a particular programme, or to ask what is available.

Volunteering opportunities

If you wish to experience

peacebuilding work first-hand in the field, we invite you to volunteer as a human rights monitor with the EAPPI programme (see the previous section on international peace work). We also help to recruit young adult volunteers for the annual QUNO summer school in Geneva.

Paid opportunities

Each year we announce paid placements with organisations that work for peace and justice and embrace Quaker values. Our year-long peacemaker scheme enables young activists to gain valuable experience of working for NGOs such as the Peace Pledge Union, War Resisters' International, CND, and Leap Confronting Conflict.

Learn more at www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers.

Support our work

Give time

QPSW correspondents relay news of peace and social witness work, as well as opportunities for involvement, to their Quaker meeting. Have a chat with your meeting's correspondent, or, if it doesn't have one, put yourself forward for nomination. What action could your meeting take together? Alternatively, you may like to serve on a QPSW committee or subcommittee.

Find out more at www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service.

Give money

Donations enable us to go on supporting the Quaker community and working with and on behalf of all Quakers in Britain to make the world a more peaceful, just and sustainable place. All gifts and fundraising efforts help us turn faith into action. Find out how to give at www.quaker.org.uk/donate.



QPSW works with groups that are building a society founded on cooperation.
Photo: Suki Ferguson for BYM

We would love to hear from you!

QPSW supports Quakers in Scotland, Wales and England who are passionate about social change. Get in touch to connect with our programmes, share news of witness work happening in your community, or link up with active Quakers across the yearly meeting.

- Email us at qpsw@quaker.org.uk.
- Call 020 7663 1000 to be put through to a member of staff.
- Sign up to *Quaker faith in action*, our monthly email update, at bit.ly/FaithInActionNewsletter.
- Like our *Quaker faith in action* page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/faithinactionquaker.
- Browse our work online at www.quaker.org.uk/our-work.



Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) helps Quakers in Britain live out their faith in the world. As part of Britain Yearly Meeting, we support Quakers who are led by their faith to take action, and we work on behalf of Quakers to build sustained action for peace and social justice.

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Their unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where they seek a communal stillness.



Quakers peacefully blocking an access road to one of the world's largest arms fairs.
Photo: Michael Preston for BYM

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