

# Quakers in Britain Democracy briefing for MPs

October 2024



Our democracy should embody the Quaker values of equality, peace and truth. We have long campaigned for a better society based on these principles. In recent years, we have focused much of our work on democracy, human rights, and civil liberties, as Quakers believe that these principles are under threat in the UK.

## Truth and integrity in public life

Truth and integrity are central values of our faith. As Quakers, we try to live according to the deepest truth we know. We are guided by integrity, so we expect to see it in public life. We have become increasingly concerned about the culture of Westminster over the past few years and for this reason, truth and integrity has become part of the national advocacy work of Quakers in Britain.

We believe that the vast majority of UK politicians have strong integrity and work extremely hard for the public interest. We acknowledge that politicians work in a challenging environment that doesn't always reward integrity and public service. We also know politicians face an onslaught of abuse and fear of physical attack. We wish to understand more about the problems you face to support and accompany people working in public life.

We have been meeting with individual policymakers and we have hosted dinners for MPs and Peers to discuss this topic in a comfortable and confidential environment. In these discussions, we identified an ongoing need that many parliamentarians have for a space to share ideas, experiences, and strategies with each other in an open and judgement-free environment.

**We welcome the government's commitment to introduce an Ethics and Integrity Commission and the introduction of the Modernisation Committee for the House of Commons. We urge all parliamentarians to make this work a priority.**

## Civil liberties and human rights

Quakers have been involved in social justice movements for centuries, campaigning for the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and prison reform. We have a long and celebrated history of undertaking nonviolent action against injustice. We know from experience that this be an effective way to bring about lasting positive change.

Some Quakers, such as Gaie Delap, are currently serving lengthy prison sentences under draconian legislation targeting peaceful protest. Quakers in Britain believe in safeguarding the right to protest and refocusing our criminal justice system on prevention, rehabilitation, and restorative justice. **We are calling on the government to repeal legislation that violates human rights, such as the Public Order Act 2023, parts of the Policing Act 2022, and the Nationality and Borders Act 2022.**

**We also ask parliamentarians to protect and promote human rights at home and abroad. This includes at the very least retaining the Human Rights Act and our membership of the European Convention on Human Rights.**

*We look forward to working with you on these issues. To follow up please contact us at [politics@quaker.org.uk](mailto:politics@quaker.org.uk).*