

# Quakers in Britain briefing for MPs

October 2024



Quakers in Britain are a faith group committed to peace, equality, truth and sustainability. We believe there is something sacred in everyone. We put our faith into action through our local, national and international work on democracy, climate justice and peace.

Our national church and charity supports a network of thousands of Quakers across England, Scotland and Wales. You may already be in touch with Quakers in your constituency.

We recognise that being an MP is an extremely challenging job and we want to support you throughout your journey in public office. We are nonpartisan and believe in engaging with MPs from all political parties to find common ground from which to move forward. In this briefing, we set out three key issues we would like to work with you on. We also suggest three ways you can work with us.

## What you can do

1. Contact our public affairs team to arrange a meeting. We'd love to discuss how we can support you and work with you to bring about positive change. Email [politics@quaker.org.uk](mailto:politics@quaker.org.uk)
2. Get in touch with your local Quaker meeting to find out how they can support you and discuss ways you can work together. Visit <http://www.quaker.org.uk/meetings>
3. Table a parliamentary question or debate on one of our issues. You can contact us for further support and information.

## Our vision

### 1. Democracy, truth and integrity

Democracy puts our commitment to equality into practice. We are concerned that UK democracy remains under threat. The words and behaviour of some politicians have weakened people's trust in the political system. People, and the civil society groups who represent them, are often excluded from the decision-making process, leading to disillusionment and division. Laws such as the Policing Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023 have undermined human rights. Peaceful protest is an important way in which many Quakers put their faith into action.

We ask MPs from all parties to:

- Champion steps to strengthen the processes and culture in Westminster to promote truth, integrity and equity. We are working to bring policymakers in Westminster together to discuss this issue using a Quaker method called '[quiet diplomacy](#)'.
- Protect and promote human rights and civil liberties at home and abroad. Work to repeal recent legislation that undermines them and champion the Human Rights Act as an essential tool for enabling everyone in our society to flourish. Recognise

peaceful protest as an important way for people to participate in democracy and campaign for positive change.

## **2. Climate justice**

Quakers are committed to equality and sustainability. We want to see a world in which all living beings can thrive. The climate crisis is a grave situation affecting us all, but it does not affect us all equally. The poorest and most marginalised people in the UK and around the world, who have done the least to cause the crisis, are hardest hit by climate breakdown. By taking more robust action on the climate crisis, we could both alleviate the cost-of-living crisis at home and meet our international climate finance obligations.

We ask MPs from all parties to:

- Work to phase out fossil fuels, ending policies that enable oil and gas extraction. Encourage UK government funding to be redirected to fair and sustainable solutions to the climate and cost-of-living crises, such as renewable energy and home insulation. We need a just transition from fossil fuels to a sustainable economy.
- Call for fossil fuel giants to be taxed more to pay for the loss and damage caused around the world by climate breakdown. The UK must increase its contribution to the international Loss and Damage Fund to make sure it's paying its fair share.

## **3. Peace and peace education**

Quakers believe that all life is precious. We have opposed war and promoted peace since the earliest days of our faith. We believe that genuine human security comes from investing in all the things that make us feel secure, such as healthcare, a fair economy, a healthy environment, peacebuilding and diplomacy. We ask MPs from all parties to:

- Call for investment in things which build real security in the long-term – such as conflict prevention, peacebuilding and climate finance – rather than increasing military spending.
- Call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza by all parties, an unconditional release of all hostages and prisoners, and for unrestricted aid to flow into Gaza.
- Immediately suspend all UK arms licences to Israel and review the UK's trade relations with Israel. In line with recent International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings, Quakers recognise that Israel is maintaining a system of apartheid over Palestinians in occupied Palestine and that there is a plausible risk that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. The ICJ made clear that third party states are obligated to ensure they are not complicit in these violations.
- Champion the use of diplomacy to seek an end to the devastating conflict in Ukraine.
- Work to create a culture of peace and nonviolence through the education system, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 and UNESCO recommendations Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. See our report, [Peace at the heart](#).

*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).*