DEVELOPING YOUNG QUAKERS AGED 11-18 LOCALLY

PROGRAMME EVALUATION – MAIN REPORT

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CHAMPIONING VOLUNTARY ACTION

NCVO

Acknowledgments

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Glossary

- **Community service:** working with the local community to meet a local need
- **Demographic data:** data relating to the characteristics of a population (eg age, ethnicity, gender etc)
- **Local support contact:** an individual in the region who is the primary point of contact for the youth development worker, having led on the region's bid for the work
- **Local support group:** a group of key local stakeholders who support the youth development worker in the region with both advice and practical support
- **Outcome:** a change, benefit or learning that has arisen as a direct result of an activity or piece of work
- **Outreach:** activities that enable Quakers to be better known and understood in the world
- **Participation Day:** annual event for young people alongside Meeting for Sufferings, to seek views of young Quakers on issues concerning them and Quakers in Britain
- **Reference group:** the national group of stakeholders, including local support contacts from both regions, who provided guidance and direction to the project
- **SYFAN**: Sheffield Young Friends Action Network: the name for the regular youth group in Sheffield
- **Theory of Change:** a description of why a particular way of working will be effective, showing how change happens in the short, medium and long term.

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Executive summary

Introduction

The Youth Work development project is a pilot project, which aims to work with local and area meetings to build capacity and make a difference in their ability to strengthen the young Quaker community through a range of opportunities. The project has employed two full-time youth workers: one in Sheffield and Yorkshire and one in Bristol and the West region.

This evaluation explores the following:

- set-up and delivery of the project
- who has participated in the project
- feedback on the project so far
- the difference the project has made to young people
- the difference the project has made to local and area meetings and BYM
- key learning for future phases of the project.

It is intended to support decision-makers in making informed decisions about the future of Quaker youth work.

With two pilot areas and small numbers of individuals involved, the evaluation is mostly qualitative. It is based primarily on interviews with key stakeholders, supported by monitoring data from the project. For more detail on data sources and limitations please see section 1.2.1.

Project set-up and delivery

The project has delivered **a combination of regular sessions and one-off events for young people** in both regions, as well as work with local and area meetings to build capacity and support engagement with young people. The youth development workers have also supported national youth work including facilitating at events and developing resources.

During the Covid-19 pandemic all delivery was moved online and **sessions were held more regularly, with greater frequency** than face-to-face sessions had been prior to the pandemic. Online sessions were more accessible for some young people.

Please see section 2.2 and 2.3 of this report for more detail.

Set-up of the project **took significant work** at local level and by national staff to clarify arrangements for hosting the youth development workers and define respective local and national responsibilities. Developing Memorandums of Understanding took significant work, time and negotiation, and, even once these were in place, a great deal of local liaison was needed to clarify expectations and establish local processes. Navigating Quaker structures and processes was

challenging even for local Friends who had extensive previous experience in roles within local and area meetings.

Involvement with the project

Local support contacts found it difficult to compile a list of young people connected to local meetings as they were often not found on membership lists. This makes it difficult to be confident that all young people connected to meetings had been reached by the project.

A local stakeholder in the West region identified three categories of young people, in addition to those already engaged with meetings, for whom the project could be 'attractive and worthwhile', identifying them as:

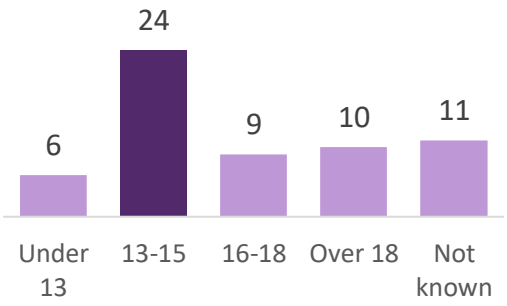
- **Loosely associated:** For example, they were the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Friends, who only attend meetings with their grandparents.
- **Lost:** Young people who had 'drifted away' from the meeting – for example, older teenagers.
- **Latent:** The children of people who themselves had only just become interested in Friends and were not considering how their children might also benefit.

Up to **twelve young people were regularly attending face-to-face project sessions** in each region, with numbers fluctuating depending on the time of year. There was hope from some stakeholders that numbers would have been higher.

There is detailed demographic data for 48 of the young people who have engaged with the project through attending the regular sessions offered, and minimal data for a further twelve young people who joined the project more recently. Demographic data is not held for young people who interacted with the project through one-off outreach events, estimated to be over 200 further young people.

As at February 2021, almost half of the young people who have engaged with the project are currently between the ages of 13 and 15.

More participants identifying as female have engaged with the project than those identifying as male or gender variant. The majority (39 of 48) are White. Seven young people have disclosed a disability.



The majority (48 of 58) of young people engaged with the project have a Quaker parent or carer. A minority (9 of 51) of the young people had not had previous engagement with Quakers before the youth project. For those who had engaged previously, the most common method was through attending local meetings. Just under half of the young people (23 of 51) had previously attended regional, local or national Quaker youth events.

Attendance **numbers and geographical spread of young people increased during the online sessions** run at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, as did the number and type of sessions the project offered to young people.

A number of factors affected young people's participation. Young people often referenced their **other commitments** as a factor in not always being able to participate. This meant that they sometimes **prioritised one-off national events** such as weekend residentials over regular sessions, or other local provision where it was available. Some young people, parents and project staff also mentioned that some sessions were more appealing to young people than others in terms of content. **Young people were particularly keen that regular sessions did not 'feel like school.'**

In the West region, the change of youth development worker and the gap between workers also affected participation, with some young people not returning after the project restarted.

It is also possible that the project may have reached all, or almost all, eligible young people within easy reach of the major cities in which face-to-face provision took place. This possibility is supported by the fact that the online delivery engaged more young people who were geographically more remote, on the edges of regions or in neighbouring regions, but did not necessarily engage more people in the main cities within each region.

There was **greater engagement by volunteers in the West region than in Yorkshire,** where the development worker has been challenged by lack of volunteer engagement at times.

Several young people who have transitioned out of the youth project have returned to help facilitate youth project sessions. **Young adults offering near-peer facilitation** provide role models to young people and support to the project.

The general **level of participation of local and area meetings, beyond initial key contacts, was not as high as hoped**, particularly in Yorkshire. This is despite the fact that it is felt that meetings are positive about wanting to engage more young people.

It was felt that **ideas for project activities in both regions were strongly youth-led**, with appropriate contribution from adults to make them happen and adult leadership to introduce new opportunities and be flexible about changes. However, interest among young people **to design and facilitate sessions and activities was low** – they had clear ideas about what they wanted from sessions and suggested ideas and activities but generally did not have the capacity or interest to run activities or sessions themselves, although there has been movement towards more young people stepping up during online sessions.

Satisfaction with the project so far

Strengths of the project so far

The predominant feeling from local stakeholders and young people in both regions was that the young people who have engaged with the project have **enjoyed it and were broadly happy with**

it. Young people valued the **relaxed and accepting feel of the sessions and the mix of discussion and activities.**

> The sessions are relaxed and we have fun. It's great to be around other young people my age in an environment where people aren't judging you – one that's open and friendly and secure. That's important, because at school there's social pressures and you're always being judged. (Young person, West region)

> I joined the group thinking would be boring but it was fun, interesting and welcoming (Young person, ad hoc feedback, West region)

Local stakeholders and national staff were impressed by the **youth development workers' response to the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic** and their ability to transition relatively seamlessly to online work. Parents and local stakeholders frequently described online provision and connection with the youth development workers at a challenging time as a 'lifeline' for some young people and families.

> Online meetings once a week have been a real lifeline for some of the young people. And the online residential that's being organised is a great way to make sure that young people still feel like there's an event going on and they can still connect with their other friends. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

Parents, local stakeholders and national staff have also been impressed by the **skills of the youth development workers** and their **ability to experiment with new approaches**.

> I would say that [the youth development worker] is completely brilliant at listening to young people and running activities that they're going to enjoy. And just bringing out the best in those young people and investing in those relationships. (Parent, Yorkshire)

Areas of challenge so far

One key area of challenge is that in some cases **parents' expectations differed from what the young people wanted.** This was more strongly the case in Yorkshire, where young people wanted more of a 'youth club with a Quaker ethos' than a social action group, while parents were concerned that not enough social action was taking place. Communication between the youth development worker and parents was important in managing expectations.

Some parents, young people and stakeholders suggested that some project events, particularly in Yorkshire, took longer than anticipated to be arranged or had to be cancelled or postponed at short notice, sometimes as a result of inadequate numbers or a lack of volunteer support. There was also a **gap in momentum** in the project in the West region during the period in between one youth development worker leaving and the next one taking up the post a few months later.

Group dynamics, particularly where the group was small with a large variety of ages, were raised as an area of challenge on a few occasions. While some young people found the group dynamics difficult, others appreciated the mixed-age aspect of the group and found it an inclusive space.

Local stakeholders noted that it was a challenge to **fully cover the region**. Youth development workers had planned for a hub-and-spokes strategy, but further work in area meetings outside of the hub city had been put on hold as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, the pandemic also provided opportunities to connect across the region without travel.

Outcomes for young people

The project **increased engagement in Quakerism** for those young people who participated regularly, significantly so for some. Increased engagement did **not necessarily manifest as more regular attendance at meeting for worship,** but rather in **young people identifying more strongly as a Quaker** and **forming their own relationship with Quakerism.**

> I think [the youth development worker] has sustained [the young people's] attachment to the meeting even if they're not in evidence on a Sunday as they used to be. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire region)

> I was about to stop going to Quaker meetings. But then I joined the Quaker youth project and I'd say that's been quite a big part of me not having done that. It's part of the reason I've stayed with Quakers and carried on going to meetings. (Young person, West region)

Young people reported **feeling more accepted within Quaker spaces and discovering a sense of shared values, leading to belonging.** This was raised as **a significant factor** in enabling their increased engagement in Quakerism. The discussions during sessions played an important role in this.

> You can't form an opinion on something without discussing it and seeing like all the sides of it. I think that the whole process for me of going to these Quaker groups has made a big impact on who I am as a person and as a Quaker. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

Young people became **more aware, and had greater understanding, of Quakerism** and what was available to them at a national level.

> SYFAN has helped me to understand what identifying as a Quaker is. It's shown me that not all Quakers believe exactly the same things and that that's ok. (Young person, Yorkshire)

> It's meant that I'm more active in Quakerism, because [the youth development worker] has sent me opportunities of things I can get involved in at national level. I've been a lot more involved because of that. (Young person, West region)

Making new connections with other young people enabled young people's increased engagement with Quakerism. This manifested itself **more in a sense of bonding as a community of young people** than in strong, new, individual friendships.

> I like the fact that I get to talk to other young Quakers because I don't think we would really see each other if it weren't for that … We just get to talk a lot together and we just get to know each other quite well ... I guess I just feel more connected with other people, other young people. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

> I think, for Quaker young people, you can quite often tend to see yourself as more part of a national group, because that's where you get your kind of most vivid experiences of Quakerness because they have such a brilliant time at their national events. Whereas, I think SYFAN brings some of that sense of being amongst your peers, but amongst your local peers, and amongst people whose families know each other, and whose family is part of the same community and it brings them together. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

Young people reported engaging in, or being supported in, **new social action through the project** but no evidence suggested that this has translated to increased social action outside of the project.

Significant **personal changes** were achieved for some young people including: increased confidence; greater ability to manage difference; a slightly smoother transition to adulthood; new skills and the chance to contribute them.

Outcomes for other groups

As well as changes for young people directly, the project aimed to create change in adults within local and area meetings (including attenders at meetings and adults volunteering to support or work with young people). Intended changes were also identified for Britain Yearly Meeting and the Society as a whole.

Adults **learnt new things about working with young people** from the youth development workers. Local stakeholders noted that, as had been intended, adults were better able to manage issues around safeguarding and risk assessment. Involvement in the project also **increased their confidence, 'joy and meaning'.**

A few closely involved adult stakeholders have **improved their relationships with young people and other adult volunteers**.

There was felt to be some **change in *attitude* of local and area meetings towards young people** and engaging them. **Changes in *action* to involve young people have been so far limited** to a small number of initiatives, which have had varying medium-term success. There have been some all-age initiatives related to sustainability and climate justice, and a small number of young people

have been better able to engage in working groups that have met online as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

> I do think it's made them [adults in the meeting] remember that we exist. They don't really forget but it's made them want to be more inclusive of young people and make an effort to do that. (Young person, West region)

Some parents and young people reported feeling **less in contact with each other** in a Quaker setting than before the youth project. A call was made for more all-age events, where those that have been held so far were felt to be successful.

> I think a common feeling from the adults at the meeting is 'Oh, it's the teenagers tonight, but they're not really part of [the meeting]'. (Young person, Yorkshire)

> There's not very much engagement between the Quaker youth project and the adult Quaker community. That's the impression I get. As it's the youth project, I'm not sure that's a key part of it. Ideally the adults would know what's going on with young people and vice versa but I'm not sure it's a key part of the agenda. (Young person, West region)

Through the youth development project, **more young people have participated in national Quaker events**.

The youth development workers have **contributed to national CYP (Children and young people) resources** and modelled excellent equality and inclusion in youth work.

Governance, support and management

The youth development project is managed and funded at a national level, but 'owned' locally. There is a national reference group for the project and line management of staff is carried out by a member of the national CYP team. Regionally, local support groups offer guidance to the youth development workers and two local support contacts from those groups offer more involved help, advice and contacts from a local perspective.

The **national reference group** has been useful for information sharing but would benefit from greater **clarity about its purpose,** in particular whether it has responsibility for governance and if so, how.

Local support contacts have been extremely helpful to the youth development workers, when in place. Yorkshire has been without local support contacts for a significant period.

> Having key local support group contacts who are committed and enthusiastic has been very enabling for me. Not just saying, 'That's great!' but having time to put towards it. (Youth development worker, West region)

The role of the local support groups has **shifted over time and differs between the regions.** In Yorkshire more practical support is desired from the local support group.

Young people currently involved in the youth project are needed on the local support group in both regions, though young people who have recently transitioned out of the project are involved in local support groups. The way young people are involved in the group needs to be **dynamic and flexible.**

National **management of the project has worked well.** The youth development workers' **contact with Friends House staff has been continuous and 'as and when' needed** and this has been sufficient for the project. Links have strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key considerations for future work

The effect of having *paid* youth development workers

Having ***paid*** **youth development workers was identified as a great benefit,** but some staff members felt that some local and area meetings may have **stepped back from their responsibility to young people**, which is key to the sustainability of the work.

> There's been elements of this project where meetings have gone, 'That's great, [the youth development workers] are doing that so we don't have to' as opposed to … 'Here's an opportunity to get involved.' That's understandable at a time where for lots of Quaker communities it's as much as they can do to maintain things, and maybe it's an unrealistic expectation for them to want to get involved in a wide variety of stuff and engage with local communities and young people in a way that's new. (Central staff member)

For the continued involvement of and feeling of belonging, young people also need relationships with adults in their local meetings, in addition to youth workers. Youth development worker appointments are short term compared to average length of membership and stability of local Quaker communities.

Size and location of region

Youth development workers have been covering **very large regions** with differing levels of engagement and expectations from meetings within them. It was suggested by a central staff member that a clear expectation of time spent in each part of the region would help meetings to manage this.

Interviews did not often discuss any question of whether the youth development worker should be locally or nationally hosted. Local knowledge was not raised as a requirement or a particularly important part of the role. A central staff member noted that it would be very hard to run face-to-face sessions and build intergenerational communities without being locally based. The ability to provide consistency and build strong relationships with the young people was of vital importance.

One local stakeholder felt that the new online work carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic had 'renewed their optimism' about the sustainability of the project and stretching the worker's resources over such a large region.

Success, engagement and value

The evaluation has highlighted that there are **varied understandings among stakeholders (including parents, local stakeholders and staff) of what the success of the project would look like.**

For some, success is based on sustaining and extending the number of young people regularly attending Quaker youth provision and ideally Meeting for Worship on a Sunday. Some local stakeholders raised the question of whether the project had been worth the money given the numbers engaging regularly. For others, the transformative impact that paid youth work may have on the lives of individuals, not just in terms of Quaker identity but in terms of navigating the challenges of teenage life and self-development, was of equal if not higher importance and the question of value for money was therefore answered differently.

This suggests that there is scope for some clearer thinking, based on the findings of the evaluation, about what the aims of any future work should be. It is possible that developing a **theory of change (an illustration of the intended change and how that will be brought about) for Quaker youth work** may be a useful part of the process.

Governance considerations

It is not clear whether all regions would have the **capacity to provide the necessary governance and support** required by the project. In a small community, where much of the momentum for specific projects is dependent on individuals' energy and gifts, capacity is often a difficult issue to manage.

One local stakeholder suggested that it would be useful to have a 'network' of advocates who could provide practical support, as well as a reference group for more strategic support. The youth development worker in Yorkshire suggested that ongoing open dialogue and joint planning at strategic points might also be helpful.

Balance of youth work and community development

For the youth development workers, 'community work' with local and area meetings and other Quaker stakeholders proved a greater proportion of the work than expected. This was found to be necessary in order to enable the wider Quaker community to include, host and accept young people. [See section 3.3 for estimated proportions of work.] One central staff member suggested that in future the youth development worker job description be altered so that it laid out 'more about community building, rather than just youth work'.

Two local stakeholders, a parent and a youth development worker felt that more all-age work would be desirable.

> I feel the one thing that's been learnt is that separating the teens out from everyone else is actually a little bit divisive and does remove them from the life of the meeting. If they're too separated out then there's no chance to engage them. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> What I should have done in hindsight is organised more all-age events. So instead of the ceilidh, I should have said, 'Tell you what, myself and the young people will plan an event and invite adults from the meeting. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Balance of in-reach, outreach and community service

Youth development workers **were keen to move into more outreach and community service work.** However, it is not clear whether local meetings were enthusiastic about this approach or were prepared for change if more young people with looser links to Quakers were to become engaged with the meeting.

> I think they [local stakeholders] mostly just want it to be heavily weighted on their young people being supported. However, they also want other young people to want to join in but don't really value how that would happen … We could do outreach, but then when we had reached people in the community that then wanted to access the meeting, I don't think the meeting is ready to receive them. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Local support groups agreed to trial some more outreach and community service, but did not initially see it as a priority. In interviews, staff and local stakeholders were clear that to them outreach was not about evangelising, or just about trying to recruit people, but about offering a Quaker presence in the community, along with providing community service in some cases.

Working with other initiatives

The potential for youth development workers to **work more closely with local development workers** was raised several times as a possibility for future regions.

One youth development worker noted an overlap in roles, as a portion of the work they were carrying out with local and area meetings was general development work, and meetings sometimes approached them with general queries, which they signposted on:

> Some people in meetings here expressed that some of their members have issues with mental health, so I signposted to the mental health empowerment officer [at BYM], which was useful. (Youth development worker, West region)

Given the specific skills needed for youth work, it may be that collaborative arrangements between youth workers and local development workers may be more effective than one individual attempting to cover everything.

One parent also suggested strengthening links with other non-Quaker youth workers locally

Recommendations

Recommendations from the evaluator team

These recommendations have been developed by the evaluator team, drawing on the outcomes of a workshop held with key local and national stakeholders on 5 September 2020 as well as the evaluation findings.

Short-term (final year of the project)

1. Continue to develop and test online engagement with young people.
2. Consider whether online engagement should extend beyond the two key regions, in the short term.
3. Pilot outreach and community service opportunities, if circumstances change to allow in-person work.
4. Continue to build community in local and area meetings to support all-age and intergenerational worship, social interaction and community.
5. Develop a theory of change for the future direction of the project, or otherwise clarify understandings of success, engagement and value for money.

Medium-term – beyond the end of this project cycle

This evaluation report is intended to support decision-making beyond the end of this project cycle. The key considerations for such decision-making are outlined in Chapter 8 of this report.

If the decision is made to continue or expand paid youth work, the following recommendations are suggested.

6. Review and simplify governance and support structures both locally and nationally.
7. Create systems for strong collaborative working with local development workers, particularly where regions overlap.
8. Clarify and manage expectations among parents and local stakeholders, especially where regions are larger.
9. Work with Quaker communities in the regions to understand their aspirations for all-age community and their understanding of what may need to change to become an all-age community.
10. Review the youth worker job description to emphasise the need for and importance of community building.

11. Codify good practice and learning from the pilot, drawing key learning from this evaluation report as well as the expertise and skills of staff and stakeholders, so that future work begins on a foundation of good practice.

Recommendations from CYP team

In parallel with the evaluation team, the CYP team at BYM developed a series of recommendations arising from their understanding of the report and workshop, which are reproduced here.

It is recommended that BYM:

1. **Recognise that modelling of values, expectations, skills, equality and inclusion in youth work (children/family work) is skilled and professional work.**
2. **Continue to develop relationships between local youth workers and 'national' staff team:** Continue to employ both youth workers both regionally and nationally. There is huge benefit from different perspectives of national and local; both are needed to develop relationships and expertise, build on the volunteer base, support young people at events and aid young people's transition to national work. Experience of regional work aids support for other regions without a worker to provide better youth provision within their Quaker communities. Relationships also need to be continued with other BYM/ Woodbrooke staff to watermark children/young people's and family work throughout all engagement and provision.
3. **Measure work in value, not just numbers attending.**
4. **Host Quaker activities for young people.** To support young people in Quaker communities, both within local meetings and across regions, there needs to be provision for work that is:
    a. ongoing
    b. one off
    c. face to face
    d. online
    e. residential work,

    - which can be carried out by national staff and by accompanying local friends

5. **There should be both direct provision for young people and intergenerational development work** within Quaker communities, this could be done alongside local development workers.
6. **Developing all-age business meetings.** Work is needed with area meetings to develop and support provision of methods of engagement that promote all-age attendance and participation in area and regional business.
7. **Watermark youth work** as an essential consideration in Quaker provision, alongside that for children, families, young adults, equality and diversity, so we can accompany Quaker communities in their journey to be more inclusive and welcoming.
8. **Continue to develop transition work** which allows for more flexible work between young people and young adults (NB safeguarding)

9. **Continue to Support Volunteer Development.** Hold regular twice-yearly training within many regions to spread skills, so work can be supported and carried out by wider pool of volunteers.
10. **Develop links with Quaker Schools and support the** connection between Quaker schools and their local Quaker communities**.**
11. **Continue transition work between children/young people and young people/young adults.**
12. **Continue online youth work training/accompanying volunteers**
13. **Support families.**
14. **Fundraise so that regional workers can be employed to do above 10 steps.**

If a paid local youth work position was to be set up, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The support group is set up by a simpler structure of a trustee/ CYP advocate from each Area meeting in the group holding the youth worker and a fluid involvement of young people.
2. Consultation with young people is carried out when work is to happen in a particular local or area meeting.
3. This work might be in conjunction with consultation work with Elders/Overseers/children and young people's committees and would involve the CYP advocate.
4. Memorandum of Understanding should be set up before (paid) worker is in place to aid clarity of expectations for local friends.
5. Office Space Office space: ensure the worker has company, office space with others either other Quakers or youth workers preferably. imperative that IT equipment is sufficient.
6. GDPR work with local data protection officer within area or regional meetings and with date protection staff at BYM to make most of lists and contacts.
7. A focus on non-Quaker Youth work in summer or working with national events e.g. YMG. Explore support for regional events.

Suggested role description and model for paid regional youth work

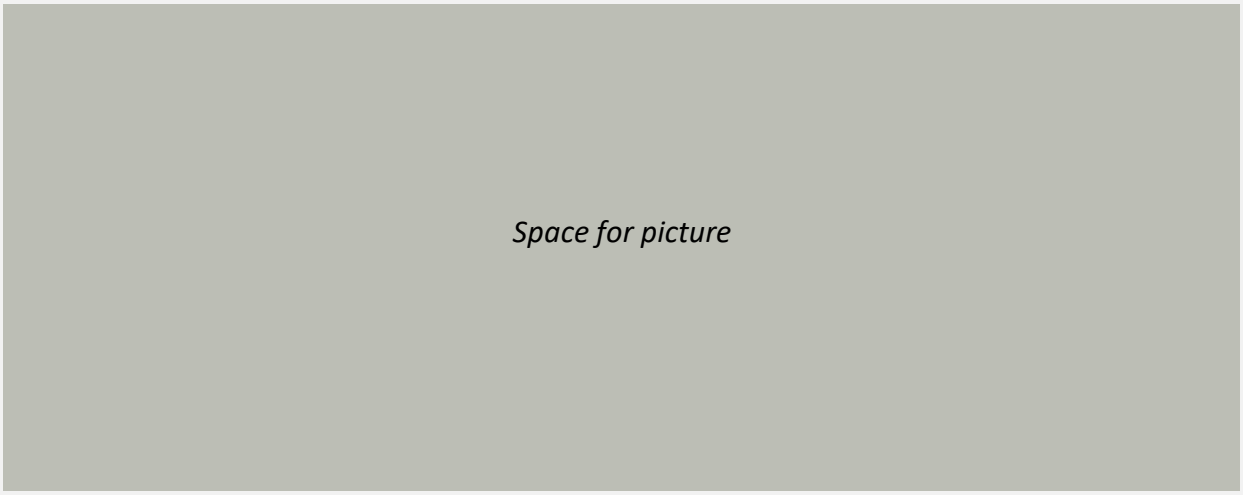
- Youth worker to be based in a hub.
- Run a regular monthly youth group in up to 4 places where there are existing numbers of teenagers.
- Run an online group fortnightly for each of these groups alternately with the physical group.
- Run online group(s) for more remote young people fortnightly, perhaps for different ages.
- Work with a Meeting to engage young people in the locality with youth work e.g. supporting refugee young people and engaging them through football.
- Support an All-Age Area Meeting; one per year for each Area Meeting in the region
- Support national work through online support meetings to share expertise and learning from others involved in Quaker youth work.
- Support local children's camp/holiday so one residential per year is for children up to age 13.

- Support young people's programme at Area Meeting residential
- Work with 11-18s primarily but support transition from children's work and into adulthood.
- Work with CYP advocates to support them and identify other areas of work.
- Supported by small team of trustees and by CYP advocates/others who are active in CYP work in the region.
- Connect with other CYP and Quaker youth work staff for regular training, exploration and work development.

Case Studies

Case example 1: Sustainability work with Bristol Area Meeting

Many Quakers across Bristol Area Meeting, both younger and older, have been very concerned about climate change and sustainability for some time. There have been ongoing discussions about the issue at area meeting level and some young people have participated in Extinction Rebellion protests or school strikes. The youth development project helped to bring these feelings and discussions together across the ages and for the area meeting to move towards collective action that was informed by young people.



Prior to this work, young people were not often involved at area meeting level and meetings were seen as 'not that interesting', as explained by one young person:

> I'm 15 and not many people younger than me relate to area meeting at all… I know area aeeting exists and does stuff and if I wanted to I could play a larger part in its decision-making processes... But the only time I've ever had anything directly to do with area meeting was at that Meeting for Business where we discussed sustainability.

A concern is shared and explored

A Young Friends Friday session in January 2020 was themed around climate concern and the passion and interest of young people around the topic was strongly expressed. They asked what Bristol Quakers were doing around the issue and discussed the idea of declaring a climate

emergency at an area meeting. The youth development worker explains how they supported the young people's enthusiasm and facilitated the connection to area meeting:

> I helped write up their concern and question and get it on the agenda for Bristol Area Meeting. In response Bristol Area Meeting asked young people through the youth project to help frame what a collective commitment to action might look like.

Young people were clear that the responsibility for such a task should rest with the adults but that they would value being involved. It was agreed that at February Area Meeting a workshop would be held around the issue, involving adults and young people. A local Friend explains the feeling of that session:

> I really felt like at that meeting the issue was coming from the young people and being handed over to the meeting, in a positive way.

As a result of the workshop, Bristol Quakers developed a Sustainability Champions group of individuals who took the lead on setting out what collective, radical and proportionate climate action would look like. The group was made up of adult representatives from each local meeting and was convened by the youth worker, so that, as they explain: 'the door would be open to youth involvement.'

A survey and action

A young adult who had been involved with the youth project as both a participant and co-facilitator, took on the task of finding out what Friends thought of how their local and area meetings were approaching sustainability; how sustainable their own lives currently were, ideas for change and which areas they could use more support in. This young adult reflects on what they learnt from the exercise:

> The experience I had in doing the survey was valuable and good practice…It's been interesting and developed my view on people's attitudes to changing these sorts of things and I've learnt about all the different places that people are on their journey to being sustainable.

The Sustainability Champions group have been meeting monthly online since April 2020 to address the issues identified in the survey and working independently inbetween. An action plan has been developed showing areas of work to address and examples of action that Friends might consider. A key achievement of the group was to draw up a set of 35 Advices and Queries around sustainability, which were circulated across the area meeting and made available to a wider Quaker readership as well.

Positive change

Efforts and changes around sustainability at local meeting level have been reported back to the Sustainability Champions. They include exploration of car share schemes, a public exhibition around climate change, deepened spiritual practice, recipe share and new discussion groups that include adults and young people, among other things. A young adult feels that sustainability has also continued to be 'on the agenda more for area meetings' and notes that each area meeting newsletter contains a piece written by a Sustainability Champion to keep people in the loop.

But the most relevant change here for the youth development project has been the increased involvement of young people at area meeting level. The area meeting clerk reflects their joy at having this new engagement through the work together:

> That February Area Meeting not only did we have some young people involved in the workshop, but we also had them stay for the area meeting! I believe that's the first area meeting we've ever had those in their early teenage years actually staying for the whole of the area meeting in session, which is pretty remarkable. And it's also happened since then, not often, but it has happened.

The clerk also feels there's been a following cultural shift to include young people more at area meeting level. Although this does not necessarily manifest as regular representation at area meeting, there is a greater sense of more togetherness:

> The difference is that before the project, at the local and area meeting level, young people were seen as separate. There's been a lot more activity now that involves them, not neccesarily at area meeting level but across the area meeting… People are working with and talking with young people in different ways. That has helped the area meeting to feel more aware of the presence of young people. It's not as tangible as seeing lots of young people in the meetings but there's a greater awareness of the need to think about and include them.

Covid-19 challenge and approach

This work took place during the Covid-19 Pandemic, a challenging time for young people, where capacity and interest for email and online engagement is stretched. The youth worker reflects that they have found that *'although young people's care for the environment remains strong, their capacity to take action has been curtailed at this time*.'

Initially, no young people chose to attend the Sustainability Champions meetings or were involved in developing the action plan. However, one young adult, who had been part of the youth project, has been involved throughout the sustainability work, attending meetings and running the survey. One year in to the work a young person joined the Champions group to represent their local meeting. Young people were consulted throughout the work and given opportunity to engage at any point, but one young person reflects on the challenge of the enforced medium of communication during this time:

> I know I wasn't engaging to my full potential… it just became an endless flood of emails and it didn't feel particularly engaging… I've been given the chance to know every single little detail I could possibly want to know about it but unfortunately it hasn't sparked my interest in the way it would need to for me to be more involved.

The slow pace of change during this time has also been a challenge to keeping young people engaged with the work. The question was raised of whether to bring the issue of sustainability forward while so much was changing in people's lives, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and decisions around this sustainability work were delayed. A young person notes that the project has been continuing throughout a full year so far and that their long-term attention span is 'a couple of months'. Their parent reflects that:

> My son has not lost interest in sustainability at all. But it needs things at different paces to keep young people engaged. It needs to have something else alongside the longer decision-making processes to keep them engaged.

Covid-19 also hampered ambitions to change the format of area meeting in session to be more attractive to young people. Obviously, it is not known how this work would have developed differently in a different time. However, the clerk of area meeting feels that they would have responded to the pandemic very differently in terms of engagement with young people without the 'bridge' between younger and older people that the youth worker provided.

What made it successful

The decision was taken to have the Sustainability Champions group facilitated by the youth worker so that they could act as a 'connector' to the young people throughout the work. One young adult explains the benefit:

> Because the youth worker has been doing it and knows the young people well, they know what to take to the young people and what they won't be

> interested in… Sometimes it feels a bit like school to them, they're fed up and they want to have fun.

It has also meant that the youth worker can work with the adults who are not the parents of the young people to support contact and also to represent the perspective of young people without them having to attend. They can also ensure that the ownership of the work around such a serious topic as sustainability is for adults to bear. This was reflected by both adults and young people and summed up by the clerk of area meeting:

> The difficulty in keeping this as something that continues to involve young people across all ages is that we're very conscious it's not their problem, it's ours. We're trying to resist the 'over to you kids' aspect of it and ensure it's not too much burden on them.

Having a dedicated youth worker enabled the work to be conducted in this way that is inclusive of young people without handing it over as their responsibility.

But young people still feel like the impetus for action 'came from them' and what they are passionate about. Having a shared area of passion and concern has given adults and young people something to bond and create a relationship over. The clerk of area meeting feels that something has changed in the way and tone that adults speak to young people:

> You could often detect a kind of patronising tone before. Now it's more 'hi, how's that going?'. Something's changed in how the adults are relating to young people generally. It's a little bit more ordinary talking now.

Future

A year on from when the climate concern was first raised by the young people, at January 2021 Area Meeting, Bristol Quakers met and reconsidered how Sustainability Champions would continue to support indvidiual and collective responses. An all-age meeting is planned for the summer, building on the work done so far and supporting each other to meet the challenges facing us all.

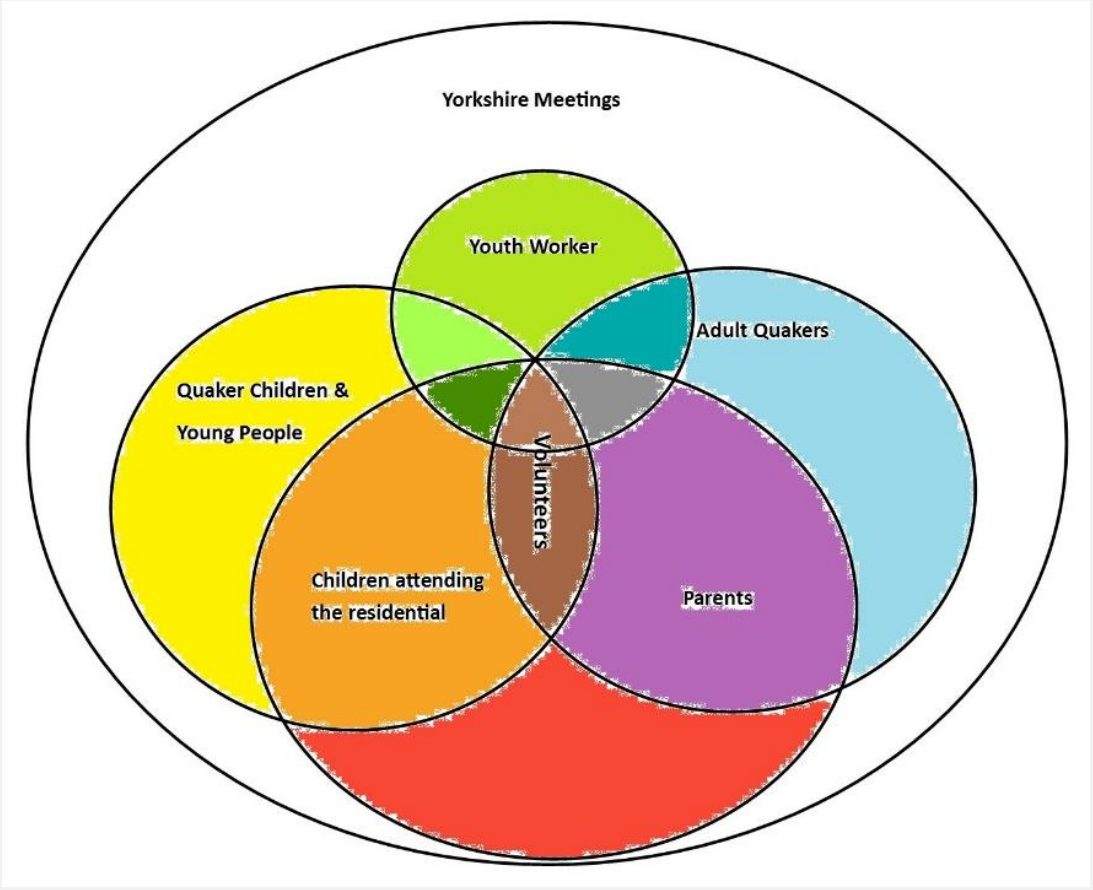
A young adult feels that young people are now starting to sense that if they're passionate about something then area meeting is 'a space they can turn up to with that'. The clerk of Bristol Area Meeting hopes to shift the culture and format of area meeting further in future to be more interesting and welcoming to young people. It's likely that these changes would in fact be of value to all of the Quaker community:

> My hope is that we can be more proactive and visionary and go into the stuff we have to do which can be boring and tedious and dry, but be doing it with more vision, in which young people have played a part. I'd like to break out from the standard 'everything has to be done in a business meeting' plan with more workshops, more interaction and more lightheartedness in our approach to serious matters.

Case example 2: Working with Yorkshire Friends Junior Holidays

The youth worker in Yorkshire worked for mutual benefit with Junior Holidays, part of the region's longstanding children's provision. Adult and teenage volunteers involved in Junior Holidays benefitted from the youth worker's skills, expertise, experience and enthusiasm and felt empowered to take on additional and new tasks, particularly when moving the residentials online as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The youth worker benefited from opportunities to quickly and easily build relationships with a larger group of children, young people, parents and volunteers from outside of Sheffield, thereby significantly widening the geographical reach of the youth work project.

Who was involved and benefitted



Junior Holidays in Yorkshire

Junior Holidays are weekend residentials for Yorkshire children, between 6 and 12 years old, that typically take place twice a year in June and October at various youth hostels around Yorkshire. The weekends consist of games, crafting, a talent show, epilogue and social time.

Usually between 15 and 20 children, and between five and 12 volunteers, attend including several teenage and catering volunteers.

Although Junior Holidays have been running for a long time the group of volunteers involved and their skills and experience isn't stable. Junior Holidays were just recovering from a few years of low volunteer and attendee numbers when the youth work project started.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the youth worker contributed to Junior Holidays by:

- sharing ideas and suggestions at planning meetings,
- delivering a training workshop for adult volunteers on handling challenging behaviour and situations
- coming along to residentials and taking responsibility for running particular activities, especially large group ones
- supporting the teenage volunteers in their volunteering and own personal development.

Adapting to COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, adult volunteers felt out of their depth and thought that they had to cancel Junior Holidays completely. However, the youth worker suggested moving the 2020 residentials online instead and made both of them happen despite the challenging circumstances, as explained by a volunteer:

> [The online residentials] would not have run without the youth worker, they just couldn't have run because us as volunteers, we don't have the skills and the expertise in the technology, but also in how to run activities online.

While fewer adults were involved, teenage volunteers took active roles in running sessions, especially in the evenings. Indeed, the online residentials offered teenage volunteers greater opportunities to contribute to planning on an even par with adult volunteers, to shape the programme and develop and run their own activities. For instance, teenage volunteers led on and delivered drama games sessions, epilogues and bedtime stories, which were 'super fun' for the 18 and 12 young people respectively who attended the June and October events.

Guiding, encouraging, reassuring and upskilling existing volunteers

Adult and teenage volunteers were able to learn a great deal and develop their own skills, confidence and overall approach as a result of the youth worker's support. Volunteers suggested that the following contributions from the youth worker were most helpful to them:

- 'doing stuff we could continually learn from'
- sharing ideas from wider Quaker children's and youth work practice
- having a 'supportive and can do attitude'
- being a reliable, consistent contributor
- bringing lots of enthusiasm and energy
- bridging 'the gap between adults and children'.

Volunteers explained that it was like having a professional support for, and at the same time 'a validation' of, what volunteers were doing.

Particularly for teenage volunteers, the youth worker's support and mentoring has allowed them to grow in confidence and out of their 'comfort zones', value their contributions and skills, and go after things they are passionate about in all areas of their lives. For example, one of the teenage volunteers has felt empowered to lean into her passion for reducing the stigma around periods by educating both boys and girls, as a direct result of the youth worker providing reassurance and encouragement. Overall, the teenage volunteers have come on in leaps and bounds as one of the adult volunteers explains:

> The youth worker played what I think is quite a crucial role in developing the confidence of the teenage volunteers […] to take on board some of the activities and have more confidence in their abilities to do that and through the youth worker's support the teenagers who've come along have really developed massively.

Also, teenage volunteers have carved out a much greater role in Junior Holidays for themselves during the Covid-19 pandemic, which the youth worker is keen to build on in future:

> The actual teenage volunteers didn't get that many opportunities to lead on anything. […] So I think there was something just about giving them some ownership and some authority and some of the luxuries and the privileges that adult volunteers have to shape what they wanted to do. And I think that might have helped them feel even more included, less sort of tokenistic. You know, I have to say, the teenage volunteers made [the online residentials] happen.

Enhancing Junior Holidays

As a result of the youth worker working with the volunteers and getting stuck in at the residentials, Junior Holidays were made even more accessible, inclusive, diverse and fun. Large group activities could happen that volunteers previously felt hesitant about delivering (on their own).

Beyond the residentials the youth worker helped some of the older children to find other opportunities to access Quaker events. Also, before the Covid-19 pandemic, the youth worker was working to plug the slight gap in current provision between Junior Holidays (for 6-12 year olds) and Holiday School (for 13-18 year olds) by organising a dedicated residential for 11 to 13 year olds to run at the same time and in the same place as Junior Holidays. A volunteer explains:

> The plan was that the youth worker would run the 11 to 13 year old bit. And we would have all the children together for some bits, and then break out into the different holiday age groups. So we could all plan it and work together.

However, the future of this potential new residential is less certain without the continued driving force of a youth worker behind it, as one of the volunteers reflects:

> I don't think we'll manage that without the youth worker. I think that was a bit too much for the committee in the future. It would need another input, which is what the youth worker gave saying 'I've seen this need I think we can fulfil it' and I felt we could do so and the committee was willing to take it on because the youth worker was holding it.

Stabilising provision through greater continuity and strategic direction

Volunteers felt that having a youth worker contributes to greater consistency and stability over time which may in turn reduce the vulnerability of Junior Holidays, as explained by one:

> The volunteers don't come every time so it does depend on which particular group you've got as to how well the whole thing goes. So the youth worker was a continuity and a reliable anchor for the work.

The youth worker feels that this consistency is also important for children and young people who have a better transition from children's into youth work and may be less likely to reduce their engagement with Quakerism as a result:

> I think by being present as young Quakers grow up and seeing a youth worker who was doing things with teenagers, they see a very linear path into getting involved in things because they see me doing youth groups for teenagers or they see me go into holiday schools and I think it gives them a very clear transition route. [They might think] 'Oh, the youth worker does that so when I get to 13 maybe I'll go to that'.

Establishing a presence across Yorkshire quickly

As volunteers explain, the youth worker's involvement with Junior Holidays helped to quickly establish a presence across Yorkshire, which enhanced the youth work project:

> We already had a group of young people and there was a mailing list as well and so a set of contacts that the youth worker could access… and a group of volunteers as well, who were working with young people… So that was set up and ready to go.

Similarly, the youth worker agrees that:

> In terms of Yorkshire knowing me, and knowing my role and seeing value in it, Junior Holidays has been the catalyst. Because people have really seen the impact. They've heard from young people.

What made the work successful?

1. Drawing on the professional expertise to make the work children and young people-led, and involving them in all aspects of decision making from the start, as explained by a young person:

> Quakerism is all about hearing everyone's voice, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, and it's very good at that. But we're still not the best at hearing children's voices. And they have a lot of really important things to say.

2. Making the most of the crucial role teenagers can play as near peer facilitators in children's work, expressed by a young person:

> The youth worker's quite good at understanding how important it is to have teenagers involved in children's events, because sometimes [children don't] feel comfortable talking to an adult, but talking to a teenager maybe feels a bit more like a friend.

3. Being really clear about boundaries and thinking about where a youth worker can add the most value. It's not about handing all the work and responsibility over to them but about using them to enhance what is already going on, says a volunteer:

> We were always aware that the youth worker's role wasn't coming to run the Junior Holidays, but that they could add an additional element to it. They could bring their skills and meet the gaps really that we needed to fill.

Tips for the future

When thinking about future work, the following things that this work taught us are useful to bear in mind:

1. While Junior Holidays volunteers were able to share a substantial contact list for children and young people with the youth worker, we have also found that information held by local meetings tends to be patchy. This means that some children and young people may have been missed. Therefore, it may be good for local meetings to review their records about children and young people before a youth worker starts so that they can hit the ground running.

2. A degree of tension may arise between aspirations linked to working in ways that are child led and those linked to working in ways that foster spirituality. This may be a result of children not choosing spiritual activities as a priority. It may also come about as a result of trying to make spiritual activities more engaging for children. While the right balance will depend on the particular circumstances, it is worth exploring this when planning activities, as explained by a young person and the youth worker:

> I would say, it's harder to get the kids involved with epilogues and spiritual things. If a lot of it is based around some sort of physical activity, like [arranging] glow sticks [into various shapes], for example, they don't really reflect on their day, which is what the epilogue is for. […] That's just something that may be a little different to the original young people's holidays.
>
> I think it's a balance. If I'm honest, I don't know many young people of that age that enjoy epilogue, because it is very spiritually based and it's about reflection and internal thoughts, and they find it quite difficult. […] but we always put it in because I think it does challenge them still.

1. Introduction

1.1. About the Youth Work Development Project

The Youth Work Development Project is a pilot project; its vision is that all young Quakers aged 11 to 18 have access to Quaker youth provision in their locality. The pilot aims to work with local/area meetings to build capacity and make a difference in their ability to strengthen the young Quaker community through a range of opportunities.

The pilot scheme is being evaluated externally to test whether employing local youth development workers makes a difference to the engagement of young Quakers within local and area meetings. The pilot is currently just over two years into the three-year project in two areas: Bristol, with an additional focus on the West region (three area meetings) and Sheffield, with an additional focus on the Yorkshire region served by Quakers in Yorkshire.

The two full-time youth development workers in the pilot scheme are employed and managed remotely by Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) and helped by a local support group of Friends. These Friends offer support with the work plan, documents, policies, procedures and communications related to the work and help workers make connections with key stakeholders and navigate Quaker processes and structures. The workers are also supported by a national reference group of local and national Friends.

The youth development workers offer a range of opportunities to young people and support local, area and region-wide meetings in engaging with young people and developing all-age community. Further detail on the opportunities provided can be found in chapter 2 of this report.

1.2. About the evaluation

BYM commissioned NCVO to undertake an independent evaluation of the project in 2019. The team of evaluators from NCVO has worked alongside BYM staff from the beginning of the project. At the start, staff from NCVO and stakeholders from BYM and local Quaker communities worked together to map the factors that might affect young people's engagement with Quakers. NCVO then developed this discussion into an evaluation framework which has guided project monitoring.

In 2019, NCVO reviewed monitoring data from the project and interviewed the two youth development workers, BYM's Children and Young People's Officer and the head of the CYP staff team. From this, NCVO developed a 'taking stock' slide deck in May 2019 offering a snapshot of the project in the first year. This supported the staff team to reflect on progress so far and to consider the future direction of the project.

At the start of the project, it was decided that the main evaluation should be completed in 2020 so that the findings could support decision making about the future of the project, rather than completing the evaluation at the end of the project when any such decisions would have already been made. This report is therefore the main evaluation report and is aimed at supporting key

staff and stakeholders with decision-making. A further, brief evaluation will be conducted in 2021 to update any key findings and create a version of this report for wider circulation.

Given the small numbers of young people and stakeholders involved in the project, the evaluation is predominantly qualitative, focusing on how young people, their parents and other stakeholders understand their engagement with Quakers, how the project has impacted this and how they perceive the project.

1.2.1 Data sources

This report draws on a range of key data sources:

Monitoring data from the project

- List of young people involved in the project, with key demographic data and attendance at events.
- Ad-hoc feedback received by youth development workers.
- Sample of feedback forms, submitted by youth development workers.
- Additional documentation including a parent and carers' review from Yorkshire and set-up documents including memoranda of understanding with local support groups.
- Reflective diaries from youth development workers.
- Local support group reports submitted to the national reference group.
- Responses to a short survey of parents and young people during the Covid-19 pandemic

Primary data collected by NCVO

- Two interviews with each of the youth development workers.
- Interviews with ten young people who had taken part in the project (five in each region).
- Interviews with six parents of young people who had taken part in the project (three in each region).
- Interviews with eight local stakeholders (four in each region).
- Interviews with two members of the children and young people's (CYP) team at Friends House.
- Interview with the co-convenor of the national reference group.
- Focus group with the local support group in the West region.
- Observation notes from a local support group meeting in Yorkshire.

There are some limitations to the data:

- All interviewees were self-selecting and, where NCVO struggled to recruit interviewees, individuals were suggested by BYM staff which may have introduced bias. To mitigate this, BYM staff tried to engage people with an expected variety of opinions.

- It was a challenge to get enough young people to consent to being interviewed as some young people felt that a strong focus on evaluation in the early stages of the project had taken away from a focus on them.
- Some young people interviewed were children of parents that were also interviewed. This gave useful different perspectives on outcomes but limited the pool of young people represented in the data.
- Some additional data was available from the different regions (a parent and carers' Review from Yorkshire, notes from a focus group with the local support group from West region and a set-up report from West region). This was helpful, but at times meant we were unable to directly compare the regions or give an equal balance of attention to each region for that part of the report.
- Interviews were carried out during the Covid-19 lockdown and young people in particular reported more salient memories of the project provision during that time than before March 2020; this may have skewed the data towards recent months.
- With only two pilot areas and with small communities in both areas, it was not always possible to separate factors to do with individual personalities from those that were more systemic (for example, about processes or ways of doing things that were embedded in the culture of local and area meetings or of Quakers more broadly).

1.3. This report

This report covers:

- how the project was set up and project activities
- how young people and volunteers have participated in the project
- feedback from young people and other stakeholders
- outcomes for young people
- outcomes for other groups
- governance, management and support for the youth development workers
- key considerations for future work

2. Set-up and delivery

This section describes project set-up processes and what was subsequently delivered in each region, including key challenges and learning.

Key findings

1. Set-up of the project **took significant work** at local level and by national staff. The main tasks were clarifying arrangements for hosting the youth development workers and defining respective local and national responsibilities.
2. The project has delivered **a combination of regular sessions and one-off events for young people** in both regions, as well as work with local and area meetings to build capacity and support engagement with young people. The youth development workers have also supported national youth work including facilitating at events and developing resources.
3. During the Covid-19 pandemic all delivery was moved online and **sessions were held more regularly** than the project's face-to-face sessions had been. The online sessions were more easily accessible for some young people.

2.1. Project set-up

Bids and allocation of project regions

The original project objective was 'to test out whether having employed youth workers locally will improve the engagement with young Quakers aged 11-18 in local and area meetings'.

The initial project proposal was supported by extensive research and consultation with adults and young people across a range of events and individual interviews. The brief was developed based on the outcomes of that research and consultation.

Bids to host a youth development worker for the pilot were developed locally by Quaker area meetings and submitted to BYM in December 2017. In the brief to area meetings seeking expressions of interest, the scope of work was outlined as follows.

> The youth development workers will be centrally managed and will work closely with meetings in a geographical area. Youth development workers would be expected to offer around five to six opportunities per year to increase the number of opportunities for young Quakers locally.
>
> This might include things such as:
> - Linking with young people who engage with local provision, providing a quarterly youth provision opportunity across the area where they are located.
> - Working with meetings to offer youth provision to meet the needs of the local community, seeking to create and build strong local and all age communities.

- Providing training and support for meetings to enable them to engage with and respond to young Quakers in meeting; advocating and supporting young people in having a voice, taking on roles and being involved in decision making in meetings.
- Working with meetings to offer all age worship and other all age activities including intergenerational work.
- Linking with existing summer event and link/youth group provision to engage those young people who attend summer and link groups, but do not link with Quakers in other ways.

Initial aspirations for the project varied across regions but included:

- reaching out to a more diverse group of young people
- supporting over-stretched volunteers
- re-starting Quaker link groups
- supporting all-age and intergenerational provision
- working with older teenagers who at that stage did not have any specific provision
- creating cohesion and belonging within a group of young people known to the area meeting
- building a social media presence for young people.

In early 2018, a request by Quaker Life staff was accepted for Bristol Area Meeting and North Somerset Area Meeting to join with West Wiltshire and East Somerset Area Meeting to form a **'West region'** group. Similarly, it was requested that Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting join with the Quakers in Yorkshire regional body to form a **'Yorkshire'** group. This collaborative approach provided a larger pool of young people to work with in each region, although at the same time it stretched the youth development workers thinly across many meetings:

> For Yorkshire that's seven area meetings and I can't remember how many local meetings but an awful lot and they all thought that they could ask [the youth development worker] to come and do stuff with their young people or to bring in young people anytime. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

Initial set-up phase

Although the youth work is nationally funded and managed, it is locally owned. The project set-up started immediately on allocation of funds, and successful area meetings nominated local support groups and individual local support contacts to lead this phase locally. [See section 7 for more on governance arrangements].

By the end of the set-up phase, memoranda of understanding were in place between Quaker Life and the participating area meetings to clarify governance, including local and national responsibilities and relationships.

Three local stakeholders and one central staff member spoke of how, during this set-up process, the amount of work and liaison with area meeting clerks, and with trustees and staff at Friends House, was greater than anticipated and required them to learn quickly:

> I was caught slightly on the hop by the amount we needed to put in place in a tearing hurry. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> It felt like I had to go from kindergarten to PhD [in knowledge of Quaker structures], moving between local meeting, area meeting and trustees, working out who was doing what. We had hiccups like 'Should my appointment [as a local support contact] come from area meeting or not? Where will the worker be based and who will pay for office space?'… I lost sleep over it in the first six to nine months. (Local stakeholder, West region)

One local stakeholder estimated the time commitment required of them in this set-up phase to be around two to three days per week. Another said that, although the memorandum of understanding with Friends House was helpful, it was the end of the first year of the project before it was all formalised:

> [A central staff member] had put together a really tight structure about what it was for, but it didn't help us on the local end with how to get this all set up. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

Three local and central stakeholders noted that the youth development workers were appointed before memorandums of understanding were in place. This meant that the workers did not necessarily have clarity on 'the difference between management and support' and 'who they need to communicate with and how'. However, it was also acknowledged that, as a pilot project, there was a pressing need to 'get started and move on'.

Several interviewees felt that future projects could benefit from the template memoranda of understanding that had been developed during the set-up of the pilots. They had also learned about the significant local liaison that might be required, even with memorandum templates. Questions around where to base the youth development worker and how to fund the post could also be expected in any future project.

Recruitment

One youth development worker was appointed in each of the two regions and both began in post in June 2018. Both posts were advertised full time. However, the current worker in the West region works 0.8FTE, while the worker in Yorkshire works full time. One local stakeholder noted good equal opportunities practice in the interviews, although the midweek London-based interviews meant that local young people could not be involved in the interview process due to school attendance and travel.

The youth development worker in the West region left their post in November 2018 and, after a further three months, a replacement was appointed (February 2019). This was initially a job-share,

with one post-holder at 0.8FTE and another at 0.2FTE. The post-holder at 0.2FTE subsequently left in July 2019. Two local stakeholders felt that the learning from the initial appointment was around the importance of the role-holder having a sound and deep understanding and knowledge of Quaker values, structures and ways of working:

> It is very difficult to deliver the amount of education, entertainment, fellowship, support and personal development needed if the youth worker isn't a Quaker or familiar with Quakerism … If we were to do it again that [requirement for understanding Quaker values and ways of working] would be more prominent in the recruitment process. (Local stakeholder, West region)

A three-month induction was provided to youth development workers by Quaker Life staff, including visits to national summer youth projects. The content of this induction was praised and appreciated by the workers. However, the downside to such a thorough induction was raised by a local stakeholder:

> The induction and a lack of visibility locally led to a sense of 'nothing is happening' by local meetings, one of whom began to question the work. (Local stakeholder, West region)

Office space

There were different challenges around office space in the two regions. Finding office space for the West region youth development worker was difficult, taking more time and effort to arrange than anticipated and requiring additional budget, as none of the Quaker meeting houses were suitable. The worker was eventually hosted at 'Happy City' office space in central Bristol, funded by Bristol Area Meeting. There were benefits from being unattached to a single meeting:

> I can go where the energy is across different local meetings and respond to different individuals who have different ideas … Local meetings all have their own cultures. I don't have to adhere to one meeting culture and can help them learn from each other and that gives more freedom in how the project works. (Youth development worker, West region)

In Yorkshire the youth development worker was initially provided with office space in the Sheffield Quaker Meeting House. This was appreciated, though there was a perceived risk that other meetings might feel less ownership of the project, and there might be less 'cross fertilisation between meetings'. The worker also felt isolated by not having others working alongside them. Subsequently, the worker had a desk in a shared office space at 'Union Street'.

In both regions workers experienced challenges in enforced home-working during the Covid-19 pandemic. This highlights the need for suitable office space when restrictions allow. Sharing office space with colleagues, either within the Quaker or youth-work community, is also felt to be desirable for the role.

2.2. Sessions and activities for young people

The project delivered new, regular opportunities specifically for young people in the two pilot regions.

WEST REGION: Until March 2020, regular face-to-face meetings for young people from across the region were arranged and facilitated by the youth development worker once a month on a Friday evening, under the title of Young Friends Friday. Meetings were held in rotation in Quaker meeting houses in Bristol.

A programme of one-off trips and events included a residential on the theme of sanctuary for refugees, a residential to a sustainability centre, a theatre visit, a litter-picking event and a trip to a national children and young people's event in London at which Greta Thunberg spoke. In addition, funding support was offered to young people to attend other events, as well as advice and help to make arrangements.

In January and February 2020, two separate youth sessions were run by the youth development worker at Sidcot School, a school in North Somerset underpinned by Quaker philosophy. It was intended to hold these sessions monthly, but they were forced to stop them, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

From March 2020, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, regular face-to-face sessions were replaced by online sessions, provided via the Zoom platform. This included three weekly sessions (a lunchtime session on Tuesdays, a Friday evening session and a Sunday evening epilogue). In the school summer holiday the Tuesday lunchtime session was replaced by an activity day offered to the young people in both regions and staffed by both youth development workers.

YORKSHIRE: Until March 2020, regular meetings for young people were facilitated by the youth development worker at Sheffield Quaker Meeting House roughly once every three weeks. The regularity of the meetings varied to fit with holiday periods, so equated to once a month overall. The group was named the Sheffield Young Friends Action Network (SYFAN).

The programme of one-off trips and events in Yorkshire included, among others, a bowling trip, a winter party, a Holocaust Memorial Day vigil, a screening of a film for Black History Month and planting white poppies for Peace Week. As in the West region, support was offered to young people to attend other events in the form of advice, funding or help in making arrangements.

The youth development worker presented at the assemblies of Quaker schools in Yorkshire about youth work and social action.

From March 2020, face-to-face sessions were replaced by online sessions, provided via the Zoom platform. This included a weekly session on Sundays and a weekly lunchtime drop-in on Wednesdays, as well as sessions shared with the West region.

SHARED ACROSS WEST AND YORKSHIRE REGIONS: During the Covid-19 pandemic a shared weekly online session was run on Tuesday afternoons for young adults who had recently transitioned out of the project and their Quaker network. During the school holiday period in summer 2020, there was a shared weekly all-day programme on Tuesdays for all young people. This included an online session in the morning, an activity set for completion at home and then an online session in the afternoon. A shared online residential was developed and hosted during June 2020. Other social events were also held online in summer 2020 in response to demand and packs of snacks or activities were sent to home addresses to complement the online sessions.

Throughout the project both workers were available to support young people to plan any social or peace activism that they had identified, such as school strikes, Black Lives Matter activities and considering how they could participate in action safely or explore alternative action.

2.3. Support to other local or national youth work

Local and area meetings

The youth development workers had a key role to support local and area meetings to better engage with, and respond to, young Quakers. This took different forms in the two regions, for example:

WEST REGION:

- Helping a local meeting to deliver a teenage meeting for their young people on the second Sunday of every month. Tasks included supporting them to do risk assessments and to plan an activity, as well as occasionally facilitating sessions.
- Encouraging local meetings to open up existing events to all ages across the area and supporting those events. An example of this was an 'Amnestea' letter writing event in Bristol, hosted by a local meeting.
- Creating and facilitating new area-wide, all-age events, such as Quaker Question Time, where an audience asked questions to a panel of young people and adults.
- Attending each area meeting to talk about the project and 'help them think about how to engage young people', and providing two of them sustainability workshops with youth involvement.

YORKSHIRE:

- Leading the young people in an activity around sustainability that they delivered to Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting and an all-age session at Leeds Area Meeting, also on sustainability.
- Attending relevant Quakers in Yorkshire meetings to offer work updates and offer opportunities for young people and volunteers.
- Supporting Sheffield Central local meeting to reinvigorate their notice board/welcome area to include youth information.

- Visiting young people and adults at several local meetings to create links between them and the youth project and to provide advice and guidance on how to start similar youth projects to SYFAN.

Regional initiatives

WEST REGION: There were no region-wide activities in place in the West region that required support. The youth project activities filled this gap.

YORKSHIRE: The Yorkshire worker provided training and modelling of good youth practice to increase the capacity of volunteers for the Yorkshire Junior Holidays initiative, which they also supported in person and online. They also offered training and ran the young people's programme for Easter Settlement. They offered an online all-age keep fit session during the early part of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Volunteer support

In both regions the youth development workers, working with local CYP teams, ran training days for people from across the region who were offering support to young people [See section 3.4 for more detail]. Follow-up support was given to groups of volunteers to run their own opportunities for young people.

WEST REGION: Some volunteers subsequently ran their own sessions with minimal support from the youth development worker.

YORKSHIRE: Youth project sessions led by existing volunteers in Yorkshire took place only with the youth development worker heavily involved in their development and facilitation. In relation to other programmes already delivered by volunteers, such as Junior Holiday, the skills and good practice of existing volunteers were enhanced.

Outreach and community service

The youth development workers offered or attended some one-off events in the wider local community to help Quakers to be better known and understood (outreach) and to serve the needs of the wider community (community service).

WEST REGION: The youth development worker worked with volunteers to plan an open youth club provision for young people not affiliated with Quakerism, but this was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The worker also worked with a Quaker prison chaplain in the region to support that prison's family Christmas.

YORKSHIRE: The youth development worker in Yorkshire hosted a stall at the Sheffield Pride event. The worker also ran a football session for young refugees in Harrogate, supported by Harrogate Quaker meeting who are a Sanctuary meeting. An open access art project was planned to start in early 2020 but had to be cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

National events and resources

The youth development worker job description specified that 10% of their time should be spent on supporting national Quaker youth events. Both workers supported national events as part of the Quaker Life CYP team. This included designing content for, or facilitating at, events such as the Young People's Programme 2019 and Living as a Quaker 2019, and organising the 2020 Vision event that was cancelled due to low numbers. One worker also wrote an edition of the annual CYP publication 'Journeys in the Spirit Youth edition', which provides activities to use with young people, on the topic of gender equality.

In spring and summer 2020, both youth development workers also supported BYM's online CYP weekly sessions and the Young People's Online Programme. One worker supported Quaker Peace and Social Witness's racial justice online learning programme for adults.

3. Involvement with the project

This section is about people's involvement with the project. It covers how young people heard about the project and the profile of young people, adult volunteers and local meetings that participated up until the time of the evaluation. It also covers the way in which young people engaged in the project.

Key findings

1. Local support contacts found it difficult to compile a list of young people connected to local meetings as they were often not found on membership lists.
2. Up to **a dozen young people were regularly attending face-to-face project sessions** in each region, with numbers fluctuating depending on the time of year. There was hope from some stakeholders that numbers would have been higher.
3. Attendance **numbers and geographical spread of young people increased during the online sessions** run at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. **Factors limiting engagement of young people** were found to be: young people's other commitments; content of some sessions; workers not being able to get to know young people's family situations; a lack of clarity around whether outreach to non-Quaker young people is a project priority; young people not prioritising regular sessions; other local provision being available; change of youth development worker; size of Quaker community.
5. There was **far greater engagement by volunteers in the West region than in Yorkshire,** where the development worker has been challenged by lack of volunteer engagement at times.
6. Several young people who have transitioned out of the youth project have returned to help facilitate youth project sessions. **Young adults offering near-peer facilitation** provide role models to young people and support to the project.
7. The general **level of participation of local and area meetings, beyond initial key contacts, was not as high as hoped**, particularly in Yorkshire. This is despite the fact that it is felt that meetings are positive about wanting to engage more young people.
8. It was felt that **ideas for project activities in both regions were strongly youth-led**, with appropriate contribution from adults to make them happen and adult leadership to introduce new opportunities and be flexible about changes. Youth workers sometimes needed to act as **placeholders for young people** where young people wanted to input ideas but might not have capacity to carry them out.
9. Interest among young people **to design and facilitate sessions and activities was low.**

3.1. How young people found out about sessions

The youth development project and specifically Young Friends Friday or SYFAN sessions were made known to parents and young people in all local meetings in the participating regions. It was felt by parents and local stakeholders that youth development workers were very inclusive in approaching young people for attendance:

> [The youth development worker] went out of her way to make sure all the young people were invited (Parent, West region)

However, local support contacts who helped the workers engage young people in the project found young people harder to track down than they had at first anticipated:

> We learnt early on that we couldn't look to the membership lists of the meetings as young people weren't on the list ... I didn't expect that. (Local stakeholder, West region)

A local stakeholder in the West region identified three categories of young people, in addition to those still engaged with meetings, for whom the project could be 'attractive and worthwhile', identifying them as:

- **Loosely associated**: For example, they were the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Friends, who only attend meetings with their grandparents.
- **Lost**: Young people who had 'drifted away' from the meeting – for example, older teenagers.
- **Latent**: The children of people who themselves had only just become interested in Friends and were not considering how their children might also benefit.

Contacting the young people in these categories was both a challenge and a focus for the youth development workers and their local support contacts.

In Yorkshire there was a notice board for sharing promotional and ongoing information about the project at Sheffield Quaker Meeting House, intended to appeal to all those who might come across it:

> For both younger and older Quakers [the noticeboard is] something they can sort of bond over or ask the young people about how that's going. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

The stall that the youth development worker ran at the Sheffield Pride event was visited by over 150 people and they noted that 'as a result one young person attended SYFAN'.

Consent forms

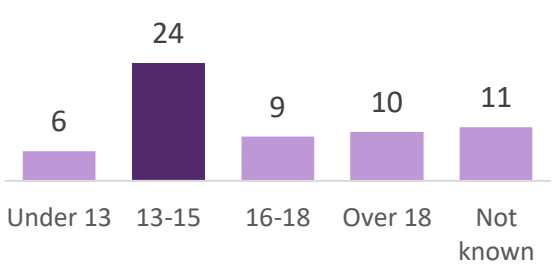
There was an initial challenge with consent forms for young people – the length, language and required frequency was felt to be off-putting to parents; one interviewee reported this as a particular challenge to boarders of Sidcot School. The issue was resolved by using an alternative form to be completed on enrolment and kept on file for future events.

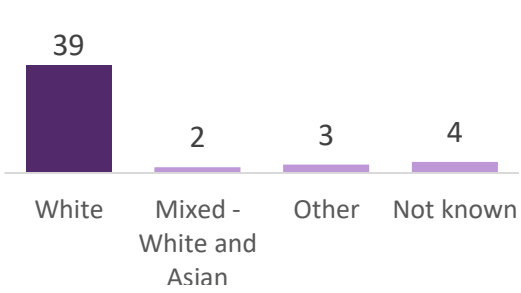
3.2. Attendance by young people

3.2.1 Characteristics of young people engaged

There is detailed demographic data for 48 of the young people who have engaged with the project through attending the regular sessions offered, and minimal data for a further twelve young people who joined the project more recently. Demographic data is not held for young people who interacted with the project through one-off outreach events, estimated to be over 200 further young people.

As at February 2021, almost half of the young people who have engaged with the project are currently between the ages of 13 and 15.





More participants identifying as female have engaged with the project than those identifying as male or gender variant. The majority (39 of 48) are White. Seven young people have disclosed a disability.

The majority (48 of 58) of young people engaged with the project have a Quaker parent or carer. A minority (9 of 51) of the young people had not had previous engagement with Quakers before the youth project. For those who had engaged previously, the most common method was through attending local meetings. Just under half of the young people (23 of 51) had previously attended regional, local or national Quaker youth events.

Attendance **numbers and geographical spread of young people engaging with the project increased during the online sessions** run at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, as did the number and type of sessions the project offered.

3.2.2 Numbers attending

Regular session numbers

In the second year of the project, once the regular monthly sessions had become established, up to a dozen young people were regularly attending each session in each of the two regions. However, there was considerable fluctuation in numbers at sessions depending on the time of year, ranging from around four to 12 young people attending. Regular attendance was much lower in both regions during school exams and the summer holidays than at other times of the year. One local stakeholder raised the idea of changing project delivery during future summer periods; this is

already being actioned by youth development workers for the remaining project time, though the Covid-19 pandemic has changed delivery plans for 2020:

> Something happened about May time when they had just had mocks or they were getting ready for them or something. Suddenly [the youth development worker] got this absolute brush off from all of them saying, 'Go away, we haven't got time for this.'… And then after they'd done their exams, they were straight into the summer holidays and they weren't there. So for half the year between May and September I think it needs a completely different pattern of work. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

One-off event numbers

Attendance at one-off trips or events varied greatly according to activity and timing.

In the West region, in summer 2019, the youth development worker experimented with arranging a programme of five events for young people, but only one event had enough young people signed up to go ahead. The worker learnt that 'most of the young people had other opportunities or holidays in the summer'. Other one-day or evening events outside of the summer period were well attended. Local residential events were less well attended than one-day events in the West region, but it was felt that, with a minimum attendance of five, those who did attend greatly appreciated them [see section 4.2.2].

In Yorkshire, there was also a large variation in attendance levels at different types of events. This caused difficulties for the youth development worker, who was asked by parents to provide educational or social action activities, which were then poorly attended. [This is discussed further in section 3.2.4].

Sidcot School attendance

In the West region, separate youth sessions were held for the young people at Sidcot School, facilitated by the youth development worker. Due to staff changes both at the school and in the project, the sessions did not start until January 2020, and were subsequently suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Twenty-two young people attended the first session; however, only five young people attended the second session. Low numbers were attributed to several factors including communication, the session being run at the start of term when many students were adjusting to new time zones and some international students already being concerned about Covid-19.

Through their involvement with national Quaker events, some young people from Sidcot School had also engaged with the general Young Friends Fridays sessions, before the school sessions had started. However, transport was a challenge, as was fitting into school schedules and policies around off-site visits:

> They enjoyed the sessions but it's a big deal for boarders to get involved in anything outside school. They're in a bubble here really, but it's a great opportunity for them. We're just so busy. (Local stakeholder, West region)

During the Covid-19 pandemic

Online sessions after March 2020 became weekly rather than monthly and additional events and contact, such as movie nights with popcorn packs posted home or a regular young adult group, have been held. Before March 2020, attendance numbers at face-to-face sessions ranged from four to 12. Even with increased provision, attendance levels at online events were reported to have been at least equivalent to that of the face-to-face sessions, and in Yorkshire greater, with up to 14 young people attending each session in each region. Some young people who had regularly attended face-to-face sessions engaged much less often with online sessions, while for other young people participation increased when sessions moved online. Some young people who had not attended all face-to-face sessions said they found it easier to commit to more regular attendance online:

> Before the sessions went online, they attended one in two, maybe one in three of the sessions. We went as often as was practical as the sessions were always Bristol and we were in Bath … But since it's been online, the Friday, it being a longer session, they've got into the habit of doing it and they look forward to it and it's been very helpful. (Parent, West region)

This increased participation was due to young people's availability at home, their lack of regular commitments and desire for contact, and the removal of travel barriers.

> [During lockdown] numbers have been fantastic. Young people who wouldn't normally have come to SYFAN have joined in … Suddenly the young people's availability just changed and they're not at archery club or piano … they are at home with their families, and are really valuing being able to take a break from family life and stress and have another outlet. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

For the online sessions, youth development workers have been able to expand attendance beyond geographical boundaries:

> The group is now wider than the original youth project as we've allowed a couple of people in Gloucestershire to engage on Zoom. It's also brought people from other West region meetings in. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> We've been able to have young people from all over the country in our groups now. SYFAN now has had a young woman from Limerick in Ireland join us because she's really good friends with someone in SYFAN group. And she's been hearing all about SYFAN through a friend and said, 'I wish I could go.' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

In June 2020, a joint online residential was held for young people in West region and Yorkshire that attracted 20 attendees. This is a higher level of participation than for previous local face-to-face project residentials, although these had been for one region rather than both and in rather different pre-pandemic circumstances.

3.2.3 Who was attending and where from

In both regions, the age range of young people involved is 10 to 18 with almost half of participants in the 13 to 15 age bracket. Although the sessions were intended to be for 11 to 18-year-olds, some ten-year-olds attend sessions where maturity or existing relationships mean it is appropriate for them to do so.

Young people attending project activities mostly identify as Quakers, or are part of families who are connected to a local Quaker meeting. At Sidcot School the majority of students would not identify as Quakers, but were attending a school administered on Quaker principles. All sessions were also open to those who did not identify as Quakers, or did not know much about Quakerism. Young people were invited to bring friends, whether they were Quakers or not, and this trend was increasing, particularly in Yorkshire. This was viewed positively by youth development workers, central staff and local stakeholders, both for what young people who were not Quakers could bring to the group and for the chance to introduce them to Quakerism:

> I thought [attendance would] be the core group of young people that attend Quakers due to their parents predominantly. What I'm really pleased about is there's been a couple of non-Quakers have joined as a result of knowing other young people that are Quakers and that provided a really nice demographic. They provide completely new energy, and it means we can't … just talk like everybody should know what you mean. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

> The winter social last year was one of the events that really impressed me. Because there were people coming from a wide geographical area rather than just Sheffield, and I think there were 19 young people who attended, eight of which were non-Quakers. And that sort of gave the young people a way to sort of introduce their friends to their faith and what that means to them. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

Youth development workers were planning some activities specifically to engage and serve the wider youth community, which were put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. [See section 8.6 for more detail].

In the West region, engagement throughout the project was much greater from young people in the Bristol area than the other two areas, particularly North Somerset where very few young people are connected to Quakers. This was partly to do with travel issues as the Young Friends' Friday sessions were held in Bristol. Plans to hold meetings in Bath and North Somerset were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the issue of wider engagement was helped in part by holding sessions online during the Covid-19 pandemic with young people from the other areas, and even from outside the regions, joining the online sessions.

3.2.4 How far the project met stakeholder expectations of participation

As an exploratory pilot project, there were no set expectations around numbers of participants. However, interviews revealed some individual expectations.

For several local stakeholders interviewed in both locations, for some young people and for one of the youth development workers, there was a feeling that overall attendance levels for the project had been slightly disappointing or had not quite met expectations:

> For Young Friends' Friday it would benefit from having more people I think. There were about 10 or 11 people at each session … having more diversity of sessions would be good but that has to come with having more young people there. (Young person, West region)

> Overall, I've not worked with what I consider enough young people. But BYM have recently struggled with numbers at events. Even holiday school which is so popular has had a drop in numbers over the last couple of years. So....I think I'm doing alright, if I'm getting in about 12, just in Sheffield, I think that's not bad for a regular group. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

One local stakeholder wondered why some young people at a large local meeting with a significant group of young people were not attending activities run by the youth development worker. However, others felt more positive about project engagement levels. One local stakeholder felt the project had 'exceeded her expectations' in what was delivered and who was attending. The West region youth development worker also was not sure about original expectations of numbers, but it now felt 'like a good core of young people who attend and value it'.

3.2.5 Factors affecting attendance

Size of Quaker community

It is possible that the project appealed to all, or almost all, of the young people with existing links to the Quaker community within the two regions and may now be meeting the local need. This was raised by one young person:

> There's only one other person in my local meeting in the age range and she does attend the project. Outside of that all the young people are under 10 years old. (Young person, West region)

This possibility is supported by the fact that the online delivery engaged more young people who were geographically more remote, on the edges of regions or in neighbouring regions, but did not necessarily engage more people in the main cities within each region.

However, the thinking about 'loosely associated', 'lost' and 'latent' young people who are not always attending or on the membership list, suggests there may be young people in these categories who have not been reached. [See section 3.1]. In addition, the fact that the original project intention was to work with meetings to offer youth provision to meet needs in the local

community and enable meetings to be more intergenerational indicates that there are more people to be reached – although they may not be within the local Quaker communities with whom the youth development workers have regular contact. The prospect of outreach and community service is discussed in section 8.6.

Young people's other commitments

The most commonly mentioned issue thought to be affecting attendance was the busy lives of young people. Youth development workers received feedback during the project about the challenge for young people in fitting in sessions and events, given other commitments. The increased participation online when other commitments were removed also spoke to this, and it was also reflected in interviews:

> I've always had a lot on and loads of things I have to get to, I have an incredibly busy timetable. (Young person, West region)

> I have another group before SYFAN so sometimes I'm too tired to come. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Young people's calendars, which had previously been very full with school, social and extracurricular activities, were suddenly very empty during the Covid-19 lockdown. With this extra unscheduled time, and with many opportunities no longer available, many young people became more involved with the youth project sessions and asked for them to run more often. Young people reflected that, for them, Quakers – mainly the youth project – were a stable force when everything else changed.

Content of the sessions

Interview data suggests that some session content was more appealing to young people than others [discussed further in section 4.2.2]. This was also reflected in varying attendance levels at one-off events. The Yorkshire youth development worker made this point strongly:

> No young people attended the Memorial Day vigil or the film for Black History Month, which were more educational activities I organised in line with the social action aspect of the youth work. But a bowling trip had maximum attendance and the winter party at Christmas had 19 people … I feel conflicted between what parents and wider stakeholders seem to want from the group and what young people seem to want as suggested by their attendance. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

In terms of the regular sessions, youth development workers noted that young people had asked them not to make it 'like school', and for one young person in West region, 'the type of discussion might put people off' as being 'a bit serious or too much for them'. The same young person also noted that the worker had learnt what young people liked most through trial and error:

> At the start she was trying things out to see what they wanted to do. She knows now what they enjoy and don't. (Young person, West region)

Links with wider family and the non-Quaker community

Although not thought to be an issue by the youth development workers themselves, it was suggested by two local stakeholders that it could be challenging for the workers to build strong connections with young people and secure their engagement without getting to know their family situations or being able to hold one-to-one sessions with them, due to safeguarding procedures:

> As a youth worker, it may be helpful to get to know the family. Within a Quaker meeting you get to know the family. But as a national worker who's working with the young people, there's less of a family connection. (Local stakeholder, West region)

It is not clear whether outreach to non-Quaker young people is a project priority [see section 8.6 for discussion of this] and this is felt to be impacting on numbers by some:

> Young people just aren't going to access it because no one's doing outreach. You know, no one in the community is going to schools or communities saying, 'Do you know what Quakerism is?' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Young people not prioritising regular sessions

Two young people mentioned that they did not prioritise attending the regular sessions as they knew they were always there. Instead they prioritised one-off events and national events as they happened infrequently. Young people were not required to commit to attend regularly.

> There's obviously a difference with national Quaker events, because you go for a week or you go for a weekend. But that's it for the year. So, I have to physically make time in my schedule, and I can do something that's once a year. (Young person, Yorkshire)

There is other provision offered by their local meeting

In the West region, some local meetings continued to offer provision to teenagers who attend, often with the support of the youth development worker. Increasing the capacity of other local provision is seen as a valid role for the youth development worker, and as arguably more sustainable. This could mean that for those young people who attend existing provision, their 'Quaker diary' might be already full up without attending youth development project sessions:

> It feels to me the youth project has been particularly well received where there was no provision [for young people]. Where there was provision there's not necessarily been the take-up we had hoped for. (Local stakeholder, West region)

Change of worker for West region

The change of youth development worker in the West region after the first nine months might have resulted in some young people turning away from the project if they could not find a consistent contact and given the time needed to build trust in the new staff member. There is no specific attendance data around this, but a local stakeholder felt it was the case:

> We had lost some young people during the start of the project [with a different staff member] and it's been hard to get people back. (Local stakeholder, West region)

3.3. Participation of local and area meetings

For the sustainability of the project, it is important for local and area meetings to take part, as well as young people, so that in future they can facilitate their own intergenerational connections, make provision for young people and foster a culture of inclusion that allows young people to feel they belong to the Quaker community and 'not just to a youth project'.

Data was not collected on the number of meetings participating, but central staff, local stakeholders and youth development workers felt that the general level of participation of local and area meetings in the project was not as high as they had hoped. In the West region, regular engagement from some larger local meetings and, in particular, from one area meeting had been achieved, although it was taking more time to build relationships and events than expected. Key people in the West region, such as local support contacts, clerks and trustees were seen to be very committed, but this regular involvement did not yet extend beyond those contacts:

> There are key people in both areas who are hugely involved. But I'm not sure where the ownership has been wider than that immediate circle despite our efforts. (Central staff member)

In Yorkshire there was less participation by adults from local and area meetings than in the West region, with one local stakeholder explaining that 'it's been difficult for the youth development worker to get the full support of members' in some meetings.

Interviewees suggested a number of possible reasons for this lack of full support: that Friends did not have time for extra projects; that local meetings did not recognise their 'loosely associated', 'lost' and 'latent' young people; and that culture and system change requires time. There was also a possible feeling that, with a paid youth development worker engaging young people, meetings did not need to be involved [further explored in section 8.1]. Interviewees generally acknowledged that local and area meetings did want to involve more children and young people but were being held back by lack of capacity:

> [The local meetings] don't necessarily have the time or the knowledge. Everyone wants young people to be involved … everybody loves a garden but doesn't want to do the gardening. (Central staff member)

The West region youth development worker estimated that they spent roughly 60% of their time in the last year relationship-building and capacity-building with adults, to support them to be aware of and engage more young people, compared to roughly 70% over the previous year. In Yorkshire, the youth development worker estimated spending around 50% of their time doing the same, with the remaining time spent working directly with young people. In Yorkshire, this focus on relationship-building with local and area meetings had significantly increased during the pandemic; this was because changes in young people's needs and availability meant that meetings

recognised young people needed different things and that they could approach the youth development worker for support. The speed of communication increased as there was less reliance on the structures of area meetings for communication.

3.4. Participation of volunteers

The project developed the opportunity for local Friends to volunteer as members of the two local support groups or, more generally, through designing, facilitating or helping at events for young people. Youth development workers in both regions ran volunteer training sessions.

A local support group of around eight adults in each region held a meeting three times a year, with two volunteers in each region acting as local support contacts and supporting the youth development workers with local advice and contacts. [See section 7.2 for more on the local support group].

There was far greater engagement by volunteers in the delivery of work to young people in the West region than in Yorkshire, with about ten people regularly volunteering and another five to ten involved 'as and when needed'. The West region youth development worker gained most of the volunteers through local support contacts, finding that people often did not respond to general requests for support, but would respond to 'a specific ask to a specific person.' The majority of regular and one-off sessions run in the West region had adult volunteers present – up to four, but usually between one and three. Eighteen adults and young adults attended the youth work training day held in Autumn 2019. Once they had attended the volunteer training day, volunteers became a 'key community of adults'.

In Yorkshire, however, no adults regularly volunteered, apart from the local support contacts that provided a safeguarding and emergency presence during a SYFAN session, but did not take part in the sessions. The youth development worker tried to recruit volunteers, for example by putting out notices in meetings and asking around, but had no success:

> We've been dismally unhelpful for [the youth development worker] in terms of coming up with [people to help]… We thought there'd be all sorts of interested people who would go and run weekends in woodlands with them. But no, actually, there aren't. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

For safeguarding reasons two adults always need to be present to run a session. Young people also benefit from having a variety of volunteers offering one-to-one support, practical support with activities and modelling cooperation and cofacilitation.

The Yorkshire youth development worker had some contact with volunteers through supporting and training existing volunteers:

> Quakers in Yorkshire have a bank of volunteers that work on lots of different projects. I've come in on those projects and gained those volunteers by proxy just by being on that project, for example, around the junior holiday residential online… They weren't my volunteers. I hadn't recruited them, trained them, or

> they weren't coming on board to be part of my project. People haven't approached me and said 'I want to volunteer.' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

The youth development worker and central staff hoped that those volunteers might also go on to run new youth work sessions, with their support, but this had not happened.

> I tried to set up a similar thing to SYFAN in other areas of Yorkshire, but the problem with that is I have to be there to ensure it runs. What I had hoped would happen is I could show volunteers and people within the meetings how, and then I could say, 'Here is a working model ' But it just wasn't working. After the proposed event, they were ringing me saying no one came. It needed more input and commitment. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

However, since provision has been online, volunteers have held sessions during staff holiday periods to offer continuity to the young people. They received support from staff in advance for administration and planning but not for the facilitation of the session. This is a model that is felt to be replicable.

A central staff member reflected that more modelling, training and working alongside volunteers was needed and the challenge lay in finding a critical mass of volunteers to be able to do that training and modelling, so that people were 'experienced enough to go on'.

The profile of West region volunteers was mostly young adult Quakers, aged 25 to 35. Two of them had transitioned from being young people to adults during the project and had moved into a volunteer facilitator role. The youth development worker reflected on the demographic of volunteers:

> They seem to remember their own Quaker teenage experience and want to offer something to young people. It works because they can be good role models to the young people. Quakers generally are quite aged, so these people felt more relevant. (Youth development worker, West region)

In the West region volunteers generally volunteered more than once, demonstrating a satisfaction with the experience and a desire to come back. A staff member noted that the online sessions enabled some volunteers to be more regularly involved as they did not have to travel to participate in what might be short sessions.

3.5. Youth involvement

The project proposal was supported by extensive consultation with young people. A questionnaire was completed by 292 young people at regional events in 2015 and further discussions were had with young people at Participation Day in 2017.

In both the West region and Yorkshire, adults and young people generally agreed that the content and format of the project sessions, activities and outings were created in a collaborative way

between young people and their youth development worker and volunteers. In practice, many of the ideas came from the young people, or were based on what adults observed they are interested in, but it was the workers taking those ideas forward and making them happen. The workers then provided a structure for the sessions, while also incorporating a choice of activities.

> It's planned by adults based on what the young people want … We've looked for those opportunities because that's what they've said they would like. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> When [the youth development worker] first arrived, I think there was a meeting where they went, 'What kind of things do you want to do?' So, we all brainstormed things that we wanted to do … If [the youth development worker] thinks it's a good idea, then we'll end up doing it at some point … so it feels very much like while they are deciding what we do, they're listening to us, and it's not their way or the highway. (Young person, Yorkshire)

In Yorkshire in particular, the strong early involvement of young people in designing the sessions meant that the overall purpose and structure of the group ended up quite different to what the parents wanted and to the youth development worker's own expectations:

> Very soon into meeting the young people, they articulated incredibly well that actually this was a space that they wanted to come and be themselves and not necessarily do 'work' or be challenged, that actually said they'd like a lot of the sessions to just be social and some games and some activities that just weren't about necessarily expressing how you felt on a topic or creating something… I had to very quickly change what I originally intended the group to be. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

There is further discussion in section 4.2.2 on the challenges this raised in terms of balancing what young people wanted against parents' expectations.

3.5.1 Low interest in design and facilitation

It was suggested at the evaluation design workshop in July 2018 that some young people might want to feel ownership but not necessarily take a key role in planning or facilitating. This was supported by the data, particularly in the West region, where the youth development worker found little capacity or interest from young people to design and facilitate sessions, beyond offering or discussing initial ideas. This observation was echoed by a young person:

> There haven't been a lot of youth actually leading the sessions … but I did feel like if someone expressed an interest in running a thing or a game there would definitely be room for it. (Young person, West region)

In Yorkshire, the youth development worker had slightly more engagement from young people in running activities but also found a varied response by young people:

> I talk to the young people about notable dates such as Holocaust Memorial Day and say, 'These events are coming up. Does anybody feel particularly strongly about a certain activity or a certain topic around this?' Some of them do definitely with certain topics say, 'Yeah, we'd really like to watch a film relating to Black History Month, that would be great. I've heard about this film'… or 'I'll do a talk or bring in some materials I've got'... Other times they don't know much about it and that's when I'll just plan something that I think is suitable and we see where it takes us. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

However, a staff member noted that since the sessions have been online during the Covid-19 pandemic, young people have become more open to 'stepping in' at the time and facilitating parts of the session, usually a game or activity. Also, as young people have transitioned out of the project, they have taken up opportunities to plan and facilitate events and residentials as young adults.

3.5.2 Listening versus guiding

In the West region, stakeholders discussed the need to sensitively balance having ideas led by young people with also providing leadership to introduce new ideas or topics. Being youth-led meant being guided by what young people wanted to offer or explore, by the passions of individuals, but also filling in the gaps where ideas were not forthcoming:

> They choose topics they are aware of, or the topics came from the wider Quaker community. But really it's a balance of ideas from young people and adults. For instance, the declaration of climate emergency came from them and I took it on. They've mentioned lots that they'd like to do cooking, so we did that. But my choosing a film last summer came from me ... Also having other people coming in to offer them new experiences expands their ideas ... In general I thought they'd [young people] have more decisive ideas about what they wanted to do, but it hasn't worked out like that. (Youth development worker, West region)

3.5.3 Flexibility

Several young people and adults in both locations talked about how sessions were sufficiently flexible to permit changes, based on the needs and wishes of the young people at the time, and over time when needs changed. In West region, this flexibility was most often offered through providing a choice within session boundaries – for example, around the order or nature of session activities, or the amount of time spent on worship during a session.

The Yorkshire youth development worker described starting the session with a 'loose plan, with structure but flexibility, depending on who turns up'. This structure was valued by the young people:

> I think the fact that [the youth development worker] has ideas going into it means that there's never really time where you're sitting around doing nothing, which like is obviously not what you want. And so I think it does work really well

> because it means that you've got things to do going in. If halfway through you think, wow, that'd be a really fun idea to do, there's the space for it to open and you don't have to wait for ages or anything like that. (Young person, Yorkshire)

The youth development worker for Yorkshire also explained how the planned activities were there to guide the group into a discussion rather than be rigidly carried out; it was important to prioritise the conversation over the activity:

> I bring an activity but often the activity doesn't get completed and we end up in a discussion. I think that's an important part of youth work as well. I don't think they need to always complete the activity. I think the activity is just the vehicle to take you where it needs to go … For Mental Health Week we made stress balls out of balloons and flour, and most of them didn't get made, most of them got spilled on the floor. But the discussion we had around young people's mental health, and all the different things they felt in the media and lots of other things was one of the best. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

> [The youth development worker] usually plans the sessions but we all decide on the things we want to do and the sessions are very flexible, so if you don't want to do an activity you don't have to. (Young person, Yorkshire)

3.5.4 Protecting the youth-led nature

At times the youth development workers had to be advocates for the youth-led nature of the work and protective of the voices of young people so that the work was not appropriated by other ideas or agendas, such as the desire of parents for more social action. Both youth development workers were focused on slowly changing culture so that the work was youth-led, rather than 'tacking on youth work to existing patterns'.

> Things come up that aren't to do with young people but I'm good at stepping back and saying 'where are the young people within this?' (Youth development worker, West region)

> One of the issues with the project in Sheffield is that it appeared that some from Sheffield Central Meeting don't want the work to be as youth-led as it is … [the youth development worker] is a youth worker and sees it definitely as being youth-led. (Central BYM staff member)

In the West region the youth development worker needed to act as a placeholder for young people during a process where they might want to input ideas but not have the capacity to carry it out:

> [I've been impressed by…] their absolute dedication to keeping young people's voices and needs at the forefront of the work. Other adults might have responded to needs but would have other considerations as well. (Local stakeholder, West region)

3.5.5 Where it could be more youth-led

The general consensus from young people interviewed was that they were happy with how youth-led the content and format of the sessions were. They felt listened to and felt they had some ownership of the sessions, while still being guided by someone with experience.

Adults felt it was 'as good as it can be' and that the youth development workers did their 'utmost' in terms of being youth led, while still maintaining practicality, focus and momentum.

While there was general contentment with the amount of youth involvement in ideas for project work, some young people were frustrated by not always being involved right from the beginning, at the idea-generating stage. Some young people on the Yorkshire local support group spoke of feeling that the adults had not involved them in the conception of the project:

> They said, 'Well, we're really quite tired of you guys deciding on some exciting project or something that you're going to do … and once you've decided it, coming to us and saying, "Would you like to help us with this, or would you like to join in?" Actually,' they said, 'Please, could you involve us when you're beginning to think about a new project? You know, when you think who might be interested in planning this will you put us in it as well because we'd like to be in the planning at the beginning.' (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

It was also felt by some adults in both regions that it would be beneficial to find a way to involve more young people in the local support groups. The groups had included two or three young people, but some had since moved to being young adults and were therefore no longer involved as participants (while remaining involved as facilitators). It was suggested that, for a youth project, a greater proportional representation of current young people would be desirable. It may be that alternative meeting structures and approaches may be more attractive to current young people. [See section 7.2 for more on the local support group.]

3.5.6 Challenges to being youth-led

Interviewees spoke about a number of challenges to being youth-led encountered during the course of the project:

- The youth development worker had sometimes to make a call about choosing something suitable for all participants in order to meet the needs of a diverse range of ages, but perhaps not reflecting the desires of some age groups:

  > What I see online are some younger ones who want to play games, that's really important, and others who want to do more thinking stuff and development of ideas. And I see some have moved along that continuum. The age range of 11 to 18 is probably too wide. (Local stakeholder, West region)

- Carrying out activities online during the Covid-19 pandemic limited the scope of what could be done and young people's ability to suggest new things:

> In lockdown it's harder as only a certain number of things can be done online. (Young person, West region)

To encourage more youth involvement online, the West region youth development worker introduced shorter sessions on Tuesdays which would be led more by young people than the core Friday session. The youth development workers also noted that meeting more frequently gave the groups an opportunity to be more experimental.

- In Yorkshire, ownership was achieved through young people successfully designing the logo for the group. Two West region interviewees raised the only instance reported of a situation where the youth development worker had needed to 'overrule' in the case of an inappropriate or unworkable idea:

> There was a funny episode where [the youth development worker] wanted them to think of a name for themselves and they came up with a version of Boaty McBoatface (Parent, West region)

> There's no point in having a stupid name. Nobody said a word about it afterwards. (Local stakeholder, West region)

4. Satisfaction

This section covers areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the content and approach of the project and relationships within it.

Key findings

1. The predominant feeling from local stakeholders and young people in both regions was that young people engaged with the project have **enjoyed it and were broadly happy with it.**
2. In particular, young people valued: the relaxed and accepting feel of the sessions; the mix of discussion and activities; the response to the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic; the learning approach taken; the skills of the youth development workers.
3. Some areas of challenge include: the momentum and variety of the project; parental expectations and communication; group dynamics for the young people; geographical reach of the project.

4.1. Project overall

The level of satisfaction with the project overall expressed by individual local stakeholders and parents related to their original expectations. For example, some stakeholders' views about what could be achieved in the youth development project were influenced, both positively and negatively, by their previous experience of youth work:

> [The project has] surpassed my expectations. Even before lockdown we had got a pattern established with regular meetings. I would have been happy if we'd got the young people together two or three times over the year. My reason for thinking that might have been considered a success is I came in with little experience of working with this age group. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> I think it's exceeded my personal expectations without a doubt. My expectations were that the teenagers might just not sustain their enthusiasm for what is on offer but they seem to have done that. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

As a part of a pilot project, both regions aimed to trial different approaches to supporting young people and increasing engagement with Quakerism, rather than primarily being led by stakeholders. However, the Yorkshire region in particular was challenged by differing expectations, particularly by what parents wanted for their young people and by what young people themselves wanted to do. This is further discussed below in 4.2.2.

Although some stakeholders had hoped a greater number of young people would be involved, and for stronger engagement from some local and area meetings and adult volunteers, the predominant feeling from local stakeholders in both regions was that those young people who engaged with the project enjoyed it and were broadly happy with it. This view was supported by the young people interviewed, as well as by ad hoc feedback collected throughout the project.

> Even though I'm saying there aren't a lot of young people, more are coming than at the start and the young people who are coming, the sessions are really valuable to them. (Young person, West region)

4.2. Positive aspects of the project so far

4.2.1 Feel of the sessions

When asked what they liked about the sessions, four of the ten young people interviewed spoke about valuing the relaxed, open and accepting nature of the sessions. Three other young people spoke of how they valued the space to meet other young people:

> The sessions are relaxed and we have fun. It's great to be around other young people my age in an environment where people aren't judging you – one that's open and friendly and secure. That's important, because at school there's social pressures and you're always being judged. (Young person, West region)

> At the moment stuff is so stressful at school and at home so this group is literally the highlight of my month. (Young person, ad hoc feedback, Yorkshire)

A young person with additional support needs and their parent both spoke of the importance of the inclusive nature of the sessions:

> There is a great contrast between this experience and the experiences of exclusion that we've unfortunately occasionally had in some other Quaker settings… [The young person] always really enjoys it and he feels clearly very comfortable in the SYFAN setting and very accepted. (Parent, Yorkshire)

4.2.2 Mix of discussion and activities

Most young people spoke about really enjoying the content of the regular sessions, describing sessions as 'relevant' and 'interesting', one reporting after a SYFAN meeting 'I feel really inspired and excited'. Young people liked both the discussion and activities and the balance between them.

In particular, young people in the West region mentioned the games, the session at a community kitchen and a Friend from Bath speaking to them about Quakers in politics. Young people in Yorkshire mentioned planting white poppies, discussions about topics such as climate change and making posters as their highlights. Parents also reported positive experiences they had noted for their young people:

> [The young person] came home saying it was the best food he had ever tasted in his life! And full of what a lovely person the teacher was, and the story of her challenging life experiences. What a brilliant evening. (Parent, ad hoc feedback, West region)

There were differing opinions from parents about the suitability of discussions. Two felt they were helpful and worthwhile and a nice contrast to the activities, while a third felt they were 'too forced':

> The discussions have a big effect on [young person]…they have prompted deep conversations in the family. (Parent, West region)

> In the face-to-face sessions what didn't work is I think they were a bit heavy handed with the Quakerism. I'm a practising Quaker but I think there was perhaps too much worthy discussion, not enough fun. Sometimes some of the discussion felt a bit forced to them, a bit unnatural. (Parent, West region)

The young people interviewed did not experience the sessions as 'heavy-handed': one young person from the West region said sessions did not feel 'Quakerly' at all, and four said they like the discussions best, perhaps illustrating a mismatch between parents' expectations and what young people themselves wanted.

When asked which aspect of the sessions has been the most important during the Covid-19 pandemic, all of the young people (5 of 5) and the majority of the parents (11 of 17) said the social aspect, which appeared to have particular value during this time of isolation, albeit supported by Quaker ethos:

> It is social with Quaker underpinning which makes it special and reassuring (Parent, survey)

Two parents also highlighted that it is the 'blend and balance' of the social and discussion that they appreciate most in the online sessions, which echoes what young people reported in the interviews, cited at the beginning of this subsection.

Two young people mentioned appreciating the regularity of the sessions, which became even more regular during the Covid-19 pandemic:

> I've always come out of national events going 'wow, I wish I could be at one of them every month'. And to have that space available now is really amazing. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Young people and parents also appreciated the additional activities offered by the youth project, with regular mentions of enjoying the visit to hear Greta Thunberg speak and three young people saying the residentials had been the highlight of the project so far. Those young people and other stakeholders who were interviewed after the online residential reported young people very much enjoying it as a substitute for a face-to-face residential when meeting in person was not possible.

4.2.3 Response to Covid-19 situation

Local stakeholders and national staff were very positive about the swift response of the youth development workers to the national lockdown in setting up online sessions in place of, and even more frequently than, face-to-face project sessions. The workers were able to transition to online work relatively seamlessly, thanks to the strong relationships within the groups of young people and the workers' ability to experiment with technology and with the form of sessions.

Two stakeholder interviewees valued the workers' quick response:

> I've been impressed with both her willingness to engage and to learn technologically. Without her I think we'd have done something but not the quality of work [the youth development worker has] enabled. (Local stakeholder, West region)

In an online focus group, several stakeholders from the West region identified the response to the Covid-19 situation as the 'highlight' of the project.

> It has gone off in such a positive and helpful and constructive direction. I wonder even whether the project will be the better for it in the end. (Local stakeholder, West region)

The online sessions were also much valued by young people and their parents and were seen to have given the project a chance to try out a 'new way for people to connect'. Of the parents surveyed during the Covid-19 pandemic, almost all (16 of 17) said the sessions had been very important or quite important to the young person, corroborated by all of the young people who responded (5 of 5) saying it was important to them.

> I cannot imagine lockdown without what my young person has been part of because of this project… It has made one part of our important and valued patchwork of love and support through this time. (Parent, survey)

Changes to project work due to the pandemic will have been in place for almost half of the pilot project period. The online provision has developed throughout this time due to the learning amassed and positive aspects will be taken forward when restrictions are lifted in future.

Important contact for young people

Parents and local stakeholders frequently described the provision as a 'lifeline', or similar, for young people, particularly with the risk of isolation during the pandemic:

> I can see for one or two of the young people it's been a lifeline for them during lockdown. It's helped to bridge the isolation that's physical and emotional. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> Online meetings once a week have been a real lifeline for some of the young people. And the online residential that's being organised is a great way to make sure that young people still feel like there's an event going on and they can still connect with their other friends. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

All of the young people and the majority of parents (14 of 17) surveyed said that it was quite important or very important for the young people to have youth workers to talk to regularly during this time.

> This is a very challenging and stressful time for young people and their families and an external person to talk to is incredibly valuable in that situation. (Parent, survey)

Almost all (16 of 17) parents said the online sessions had been quite important or very important to them as parents or to the family during this time. Two parents also reflected that it was a 'respite' for them during the sessions:

> In this situation of 24-hour parenting and schooling I can totally relax, knowing that they are safe and happy and positive. (Parent, survey)

New connections

Holding sessions online put people in touch that might not have met, worked together or been involved with the project otherwise. This included bringing in young people from outside the regional borders:

> I was really impressed with some of the things [the youth development worker] had done online that could link the young people together as a preliminary to them linking up face to face. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

The youth development workers also had more opportunity online to support each other in their work and run joint sessions.

Good way to try things out

The situation forced the project to try out online engagement, to learn quickly about what works best to engage people online and made Quaker meetings more generally open to new ways and times of worship. It was recognised that this would be helpful for engaging young people and that new methods should be tried out more generally in the Quaker community beyond the pandemic.

> Somehow [the youth development worker] manages to make Zoom calls fun: a rare and valuable talent! (Parent, survey)

Highlighted and increased project value

The concern and interest by young people and local stakeholders about how the project would run during the pandemic emphasised how much the project was valued:

> The moment that lockdown [was announced] I had seven messages on my phone within the hour being like, 'What's going to happen with the group?' And I didn't think that would have been a priority but they suddenly realised, actually, this was a space that they really needed. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

There was a feeling from the Yorkshire region that stakeholders had increased their understanding and appreciation of the project during the pandemic:

> I've had more emails and more phone contacts from parents, but not only parents, also other people within the meeting who weren't necessarily parents. I've had more contact from them being like, 'It's great that you're doing stuff for the young people' than before. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

The enhanced regular visibility of the youth development worker to young people and parents during this time, with sessions weekly rather than monthly, appeared to increase parent and local stakeholder satisfaction with the project. One youth development worker spoke of their own satisfaction in the role increasing too:

> I've felt like I'm doing what I had originally really wanted to do with the project with the amount of face-to-face work and the amount of actual frontline support and holistic care for young people. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Influencing the project in future

Two young people and two parents mentioned finding the online format sometimes a bit 'stilted', 'similar' or 'not personally engaging', although 'good enough for now'. The youth development workers have continued to respond to the ongoing situation throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and have developed new ways of working and connecting with young people remotely, based on live feedback.

It was broadly felt by all stakeholders that there is a place for more online engagement with young people in the project, even when face-to-face engagement has returned, to overcome barriers of distance and travel.

4.2.4 Ability to experiment with new approaches

It was important, as a pilot project, to be flexible and responsive and to build learning through the work. Both development workers reported that this approach had been appropriately carried through and appreciated being able to try things out, even if they failed. After some difficulties in the West region at the start of the project when the first appointed youth development worker was in post, it took some time before trust was built up in the new worker to try out these new approaches:

> Being trusted to make my own decisions and experiment is really valuable. For young people it's more interesting if the project is dynamic and not fixed. (Youth development worker, West region)

Two local stakeholders were positive about the way youth development workers had been innovative in their approach, one feeling 'the whole experimental project is absolutely humming along because we have learned so much.' (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

4.2.5 Skills of youth development workers

Central staff members, parents and local stakeholders were impressed with the youth development workers, and highlighted their particular strengths in engaging and including young people in Yorkshire and relationship-building and facilitation in the West region:

> She's based in Bristol but always keeps us informed about what she's up to and what we can attend … she's also a great facilitator. She related to the young

> people so well, she was so confident and relaxed. She worked her magic here. (Local stakeholder, West region)
>
> I would say that [the youth development worker] is completely brilliant at listening to young people and running activities that they're going to enjoy. And just bringing out the best in those young people and investing in those relationships. (Parent, Yorkshire)
>
> [The youth development worker] is just fabulous with young people. It's so nice to see the relationship growing between [the youth development worker] and the young people and the strength of it and their loyalty to them that's really strong. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

The youth development workers were also described as an 'asset to the wider children and young people's team' by a central staff member; workers had brought additional knowledge such as the 'nuances of safeguarding', for example. Some ad hoc feedback was received about the volunteer training run by the youth development workers. Attendees highlighted workers' skills in supporting volunteers to have the confidence to work with young people.

4.3. Areas for improvement at the mid-point of the project

4.3.1 Momentum, vitality and variety of the project

Feedback from parents, local stakeholders and central staff members suggested that some project events in Yorkshire took longer than anticipated to be arranged or were cancelled at short notice, which could be frustrating and disruptive to family plans:

> [The young people] find it frustrating that events get cancelled or rearranged without much notice as they look forward to them. They also don't really know what to trust as planned future events … They have looked forward to several projects that have yet to happen eg the self-defence day advertised as happening in February and the art project at the Art House which was due to begin in February. Last year felt similar with promises of a photography project that didn't happen. (Parent review, Yorkshire)
>
> It has been frustrating watching it seem to slide last year and [it] has impacted on family plans when events on the calendar have been cancelled at the last minute (eg several Sunday SYFAN sessions were cancelled last year without much notice). This year has felt much better with four monthly meetings planned already which are all on our calendar. (Parent review, Yorkshire)

It should be noted that both the self-defence day and the art project in Yorkshire had to be cancelled as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, having previously been postponed.

Interviewees suggested a number of possible reasons for delays and cancellations, including: a lack of volunteer support to arrange things; general logistical delays common to any project; the length of time it takes to follow some Quaker processes; inadequate numbers to run some events;

alteration and change as a characteristic of pilot projects more generally. Interviews also touched on communication issues with parents (see also section 4.3.3).

> Quaker parents have this expectation that [the youth development worker] is there 24/7… The number of times I've tried to properly explain the sheer breadth of [the youth development worker's] job description, but until really recently they are still coming back with questions about what is happening and how much is being delivered. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

The momentum of the project was held back by staff changes, both in the West region and also in the project's national lead after the first year. In both cases, there was a gap before the new staff member was in post, which also affected momentum. This meant that time was needed to establish new relationships and – in the West region – to start to make links with West Wiltshire and East Somerset Area Meeting and North Somerset Area Meeting.

> It's going to be harder to get people to come along because the project started and stopped and there has been such a gap since we last met. (Volunteer, Ad hoc feedback, West region)

In both regions, youth development workers highlighted the effect of Quaker processes, particularly around decision-making. Sometimes they did not put things on because they felt young people's interest would not be sustained during the time it would take.

> Quaker processes can be very long, very drawn out and there's a lot of really having to listen to everybody. And I value all those things and they're very important in Quakerism, but they're sometimes not complementary to youth work practice, because youth work practice has to happen quite instantly to keep people's energy and motivation. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

When asked what they thought could be improved about the youth project sessions, three young people hoped for greater variety or for particular one-off events, a feeling supported by two central staff members:

> Having more diversity of [online] sessions would be good … But if we had more young people then having different sessions with different topics would be good. We could have one session purely games, another more discussion based. (Young person, West region)

> We could do like bigger things more often. We were going to do a residential. That would have been nice, without coronavirus. … I think we were going to make a film about Quakerism at some point as well but I'm not sure really now. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Based on this feedback, youth workers have already acted to create greater diversity of online sessions including one-off events around the theme of 'pride' or around growing plants, with complementary activities or snacks sent by post to home addresses. They have also increased the

number of sessions joining together young people from both regions, including a residential and another planned for the future.

> I'm in awe of how creative you have all being in keeping things interesting and enjoyable! (Parent, Survey)

4.3.2 Parental expectations and communication

In the Yorkshire region, parents' expectations differed from what the young people wanted. This led to some concern from parents and put the youth development worker in a challenging position of trying to negotiate expectations, while keeping the project youth-led. Discussions about this formed a large part of meetings between youth workers and their local support contacts. For example, the youth development worker had to change the original concept of the project sessions, as outlined in section 3.5, to fit with what young people said they wanted, which was more of a 'youth club with Quaker ethos' than a 'social action group'. However, parents were raising concerns that not enough social action was taking place:

> I suppose I thought that they might actually kind of do some more, I don't know, maybe constructive things in the world – so, Quakerly things: get out and get involved in some projects, but that doesn't seem to have happened. As far as I can see, it seems mainly to be enjoying themselves, which as I say, is fine, but that's not necessarily what I expected it to be at the beginning. (Parent, Yorkshire)

The contrast between high attendance at purely social events and much lower attendance at social action events [see section 3.2.4] led the youth development worker to a different understanding of what the young people wanted from social action:

> What my young people meant by action was to build a community together, in which they felt stronger and more connected to their faith and more able to support other people. And that was their action. That's where the disconnect was because parents were saying, 'My young people want to do more action. They want to do more projects and be more out there'. But actually, they get enough of that activism in their families … In SYFAN they want to talk about families, they want to talk about their thoughts and their feelings and be more vulnerable with their peers … It's about that belonging. I think that's far more powerful than the frontline activism because they have so many other outlets to do that if they want to. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

The youth development worker also noted that a Quaker call to action needed to come from the young people themselves:

> If they want to take that into their call to action, that is to go out and do things, I can help facilitate that, I can support them, I can signpost them, but it's got to really come from them … A call to action comes from within telling them that

> they need to do it. It's got to happen organically. It can't be forced. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

In relation to expectations concerning social action, two parents reported being 'confused' by the name of the Yorkshire group, Sheffield Young Friends Action Network. Local stakeholders, a central staff member and the youth development worker themselves raised the issue of communication as important in managing expectations. One local stakeholder had hoped for more regular communication about the group, and a parent wanted 'a bit more big picture information ahead of time' about plans and the intention of the group. On the other hand, the youth development worker made themselves available at meeting for worship in Sheffield Quaker Meeting House, should any parents want to discuss issues with them, but this did not bring forward any additional approaches from parents.

Another local stakeholder suggested the local support group or other volunteers could have offered more support to the youth development worker around this; this had been part of its intended role.

Young people in both regions felt that communication with their youth development worker between sessions was appropriate and met their needs. Workers were available for young people to contact them between sessions (and young people had the necessary contact details), but they did not need to be in contact 'as we say it all in the actual session'. Young people frequently use social media apps outside of the age regulations. As youth workers there is a need to use legally age appropriate communication tools and within safeguarding practices. Sometimes these two things are at odds with each other.

4.3.3 Group dynamics

Group dynamics varied according to who was present. One young person said that if people were 'forced to come' to the session it changed the mood. However, it is noted that now sessions are online young people have total agency to come and go as they please. Two parents (one from each region) who felt less positively about the project than other parents, mentioned that their young people 'don't feel included in friendship groups' or felt 'on the fringes of the group' in the session, or that the young people had not been 'kept together as a group' outside of it.

One possible reason, raised by four adults, was the limited size of the regular sessions and the broad age range of those taking part, meaning that young people did not have many direct age peers, or were doing activities not designed for their specific age group.

> I think some of the challenges for our girls have been in the social context of this quite small group and the age span because it's trying to be inclusive of younger young people and older young people and that's really something that our girls find quite difficult. (Parent, Yorkshire)

> My daughter really enjoyed it on Friday and meeting the new youth workers and had a good time, but said she felt like at times it was just her and A and the young ones (Parent, ad hoc feedback, Bristol)

On the other hand, two local stakeholders and another parent appreciated the youth development workers' ability to remain inclusive of all age groups and to design appropriate sessions. The Yorkshire worker felt that as most attendees were 14- and 15-year-olds, it had not been too challenging. Existing regional events also meant that cohorts of young people knew each other already, across age-groups.

It is known that events such as summer residentials help group bonds, but the Covid-19 pandemic meant that all such events were postponed for summer 2020. Two adult stakeholders mentioned that there were 'bigger, national picture' opportunities for any older young people who felt they had outgrown the sessions. One parent suggested the idea of sometimes including slightly younger children in some activities to smooth their transition to joining the group. Suggestions for addressing the age range issue included splitting groups into 11-14 and 14-18 age ranges or creating a 'theme' for sessions that people could group around. Asked about this idea, young people in Yorkshire were strongly averse to it:

> I've been back to the young people and they were like, under no circumstances divide the group or we won't come to another session if it's different ages. We don't want anything different. Our call to action is all age. We respect our 11-year-old friends, we respect our 14-year-old friends, we respect our 16-year-old friends, and we're better together. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

The youth development worker pointed out that they might have only around three to four people attending each group if young people were split by age range.

4.3.4 Geography

Local stakeholders from both regions reported feeling that project work was too heavily skewed towards the cities where the youth development workers are based, while accepting that it had been a challenge to fully cover the region:

> At the outset of the project, I think that it was my interpretation, and some other people on the committee's interpretation, that it would be more of a 50:50 split between Sheffield and Yorkshire … However, we soon realised that it's not really possible to expect somebody to base half their time in Sheffield and then travel around the rest of Yorkshire for the other half of their time. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

> We're still not getting full coverage across the three area meetings. Part of that is geography and part is the numbers and sizes of meetings. In the last year I hope we can build on the success of Bath and Bristol and not leave anyone out on the fringes ... We're not getting the buy-in from the two peripheral area meetings. Maybe they aren't seeing enough being done in their area. (Local stakeholder, West region)

By contrast, both youth development workers noted the intention of the project to focus on where they were based, with additional work in the other areas, one of them describing it as a

'hub and spokes' strategy, with energy concentrated in a central city, reaching out to the other areas where necessary.

Both development workers were planning more work in the other area meetings as the project progressed, but plans were put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This also provided a different opportunity to reach young people across, and even outside of, the region without the travel, as discussed in section 3.2.1. However, the development workers also have the challenge of keeping the local community of young Friends connected, which is a consideration when expanding reach beyond the region.

5. Outcomes for young people, and what enabled them to occur

The overall intended outcome of the project is **increased engagement of young people in Quakerism.** Early in the project, staff and evaluators mapped out potential factors predicted to affect engagement among young people including:

- sense of belonging in Quaker communities, including alignment with Quaker values
- belief that religion is outdated, rigid or irrelevant
- level of understanding of Quakerism
- knowledge of the opportunities available to them within local and national Quaker communities and events
- social connections with other young Quakers
- social connections across generations
- feeling that their voices are heard
- sense of ownership of activities that affect them
- commitment to social action.

In this section, we explore the extent to which the project achieved more engagement by young people in Quakerism, how far these factors were indeed relevant, and whether their presence or absence was felt to have enabled engagement.

Key findings

1. The project **increased engagement in Quakerism** for those young people who participated regularly, significantly so for some.
2. Increased engagement did **not necessarily manifest as more regular attendance at meeting for worship,** but rather in **young people identifying more strongly as a Quaker** and **forming their own relationship with Quakerism.**
3. Young people reported **feeling more accepted within the groups and discovering a sense of shared values, leading to belonging.** This was raised as a significant factor in enabling their increased engagement in Quakerism. The discussions during sessions played an important role in this.
4. Young people became **more aware, and had greater understanding, of Quakerism** and what was available to them at a national level.
5. **Making new connections with other young people** enabled young people's increased engagement with Quakerism. This manifested itself **more in a sense of bonding as a community of young people** than in strong, new, individual friendships.
6. Young people reported engaging in, or being supported in, **new social action through the project** but no evidence suggested that this has translated to increased social action outside of the project.
7. In addition to the main intended project outcome, significant **personal changes** were achieved for some young people including: increased confidence; greater ability to manage difference; a slightly smoother transition to adulthood; new skills and the chance to contribute them.

It is acknowledged that, after just over two years of a three-year project, only early indications of changes for young people can be expected. In both locations, the first year of the project was spent in a set-up phase and in the West region there was a change of key staff member during the first year, with some set-up tasks and relationship-building having to be repeated. At the end of the second year of the project, the Covid-19 pandemic brought significant changes to the work with young people.

5.1. Engagement with Quakerism

The project increased engagement in Quakerism for those young people who participated regularly, significantly so for some. Some young people and their parents talked about how the youth project had contributed in a major way to their turning towards, rather than away from, Quakerism. All parents and young people surveyed said it was important to them that the group was Quaker. All young people and almost all (15 of 17) parents also felt that it had increased the young person's connection to Quakerism. One of the minority that didn't see an increased connection saw this as 'not necessarily a negative' thing as it served its purpose as a 'safe place with a Quaker identity'.

The increased engagement with Quakerism that has been seen was not necessarily strongly represented in new *activity* at local and area meeting, but more clearly in young people's *identity* as Quakers.

> I was about to stop going to Quaker meetings. But then I joined the Quaker youth project and I'd say that's been quite a big part of me not having done that. It's part of the reason I've stayed with Quakers and carried on going to meetings. (Young person, West region)

> He's stopping and thinking and reading Advices and Queries and trying to understand them. He did his first bit of ministry recently which was lovely. He's sad if he misses [Quaker] things. The youth project has contributed to this change hugely. If there hadn't been the youth project and the activities available he may well have turned his back on Quakerism and decided it's not for him at the moment. In contrast he's now thinking about becoming a member. (Parent, West region)

> Certainly around the time he started attending Young Friends Friday is when he first started being interested in being a Quaker. Before that it hadn't been part of his life at all. But he seems to have somehow taken to it. (Parent, West region)

> [Young person] has come home bubbling with excitement and has proclaimed she is going to meeting this Sunday! Knock me down with a feather! (Parent, Yorkshire region)

5.1.1 Activity: Engagement with local meeting

Attending meeting for worship

Only two of the ten young people interviewed (one in each region) said that they personally felt they had been attending meeting for worship at their local meeting more often since being engaged with the youth project. One of the two speculated that this could have been because of the Covid-19 pandemic and having less in his diary, rather than because of the project.

One young person reported attending meeting for worship less often since being engaged with the youth project. In Yorkshire in particular, the youth development worker and several other stakeholders noted the unexpected outcome that young people had decided to attend SFYAN *instead of* their local meeting for worship. Suggested reasons for this included: discussions in SYFAN sessions about it being their choice; a misunderstanding that it was an either/or situation; or an inevitable change that would have happened as they progressed through their teenage years.

> The parent of one of our current young people who does come to meeting on Sunday mornings has recently said to me that she doesn't think she or her child will be coming on Sunday mornings any more as her child wants to go to SYFAN instead now they are 13. Her perception was that her child could go to SYFAN or meeting … Some of our young people do go to both but there are certainly fewer

> young people around on a Sunday morning than before the project began. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

It could be considered that this is not an issue and that youth project sessions are another form of meeting for worship under the care of the local meeting, although if meetings were to see it that way, they may need to provide eldership and oversight to young people's groups as they do for other worshipping groups. The youth project does not mean local meetings contract their support of young people out to the youth development workers. Local stakeholders were keen that local meetings should maintain an interest in the care and spiritual nurture of young people and were concerned about the occasions on which this does not seem to be evident.

On the other hand, a parent, a local stakeholder and a young person in Yorkshire all noted that the project might not be able to overcome the existing lack of interaction between the adults and teenagers in the meeting community:

> I think there are some people in the meeting who feel that they have less contact with the teenagers than they did previously. Because what is happening doesn't happen at a time when there are any other Quakers in the building. … But that's not to say that they were, you know, hugely engaged in the life of the meeting before. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

A youth development worker and parents noted that getting up on a Sunday morning to attend a worship space was not what young people wanted to do. One young person felt that it was hard to resolve this situation as teenagers required an afternoon or evening meeting to fit with their timetables:

> I think because we meet at a different time, in the evening rather than in the morning, they kind of think of us as something separate and it makes us less part of the meeting … It makes me certainly feel less connected to the whole meeting. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

Engaging with local meeting in other ways

Instead of increased attendance at meeting for worship, some local stakeholders and parents noted increased *involvement* with their local meeting from young people:

> She's getting a little bit old for children's meeting now, but not quite old enough where she'd like to sit up with the adults, so I think it's helped keep her involved with Quakerism at her particular age … It's not so clear what her involvement with Quakers would be except for through Young Friends Friday. (Parent, West region)

> I think [the youth development worker] has sustained [the young people's] attachment to the meeting even if they're not in evidence on a Sunday as they used to be. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire region)

Some local stakeholders felt it positive that the project gave young people 'a way to be involved without necessarily going to meeting for worship'. A young person explained how the meeting felt more relevant to him now that he was 'part of a Quaker group'. A youth development worker also described this:

> For some young people it means they still feel part of their meeting … For 13-year-olds, for example, if they turn up on a Sunday there's either a children's meeting for very young children or they have to sit in an hour of adult's meeting. They wouldn't feel connected to either of those. (Youth development worker, West region)

5.1.2 Identity: Personal engagement with Quakerism

Identifying as a Quaker

Half of the young people interviewed said the youth project had affected their sense of identity as a Quaker to some extent.

> Being a Quaker now feels like a bigger and more relevant part of my life. (Young person, West region)

> I've always felt like a Quaker but I do even more now. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Other young people already had a strong identification with being Quaker, or felt that the sessions had not affected their Quaker identity.

Parents and local stakeholders felt even more strongly than young people that the project had changed young people's identification with Quakerism, especially in the West region. From an external perspective, some parents and stakeholders felt it had had an effect even on those young people who did not note it themselves:

> One of the things that's been emerging is young people being more willing to identify as Quaker. We might find people saying now, 'I'm proud to say I'm a Quaker' or 'I get something from saying I'm a Quaker' or 'I get something from doing activities that I do as a Quaker'. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> I think for all three of them it's had an impact on their engagement with being a Quaker … It has made a big difference to how they think of being a Quaker and what that might mean. For [one young person] it's not just something he's brought along to on a Sunday morning but something more complicated and wider. (Parent, West region)

> There was a point about a year ago where I was on the brink of saying 'Quakers can't fit into my timetable anymore' and I was about to stop going to Quaker meetings. (Young person, West region)

Own relationship with Quakerism (separate from parents)

At least four parents or local stakeholders identified young people developing a relationship with Quakerism independently of their parents as a project benefit. A parent noted the importance for their young person of having experience of Quaker silence, discussion and activism, as part of developing their own relationship with the faith. Another felt that their young person could now see that Quakerism might be a way of life for him, not just 'something a bit odd that his dad does'. One local stakeholder suggested that it was helpful to have someone else to guide young people in getting a 'Quaker basis' to help them be led by their spirituality.

For one young person in Yorkshire the youth development worker's skills in inclusion meant that, on a practical level, his parent no longer needed to attend with him to offer support:

> He is now able to come to Quakerism on his own terms and engage with Quakerism in his own space. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

A youth development worker described the change they had witnessed in one individual:

> He only came along to things if his friends were going in the past. But after one particular event he had a big change. He then started coming to events in a more committed way and going to meetings on his own. It feels like it's gone from the ownership of his faith being through his dad to being his own relationship with it. (Youth development worker, West region)

While it was noted by some that an individual's engagement might be hindered by being forced to attend, one young person said that she was only able to take part in the amount of social action she had because of having very supportive parents, and a parent noted that the session was a 'way of encouraging my daughter to stay connected to Quakers'

5.2. Enablers of engagement

At the start of the project, a series of factors believed to affect young people's engagement in Quakerism were identified (outlined at the beginning of this chapter). Our evaluation explored the extent to which young people experienced changes in these areas, and how far each enabled their engagement in Quakerism. Each factor is explored in detail below.

5.2.1 Belonging to wider Quaker community

Feeling valued and important

Several adult stakeholders felt it was very important that young people felt valued and important, and that they were being provided with something 'just for them'. There was a strong feeling that this in itself was a positive outcome of the project as well as leading to greater engagement.

> Young people have felt valued, have had someone looking out for them, wanting to support them in their Quakerism and wider. (Central staff member)

Feeling welcome and accepted

Young people reported the feeling of being 'accepted', part of something bigger than them and feeling 'at home' or 'more of a Quaker' as a benefit of the project.

> I've felt more of a part of the Quaker community since I started SYFAN. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

This acceptance, leading to a sense of belonging, was raised as a significant enabling factor for engagement.

> He has felt that there is a place for him in the meeting, that it is somewhere where he can be himself, where he's accepted. (Parent, Yorkshire)

The same parent emphasised that the skills and professional expertise of the youth worker were crucial to inclusion.

> Having a trained youth worker means that there's somebody who is paid to have an expertise or professional understanding of inclusion and working with young people. And that has made a massive difference, because it's challenging to include young people with additional needs. Volunteers without professional training, however well-meaning, are just not going to manage inclusion. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

Discussion and shared values

Four interviewees (two young people, one parent, one local stakeholder) highlighted the discussions during project sessions as particularly important in helping young people to see the breadth of views in Quakerism, find their place in it and discover a shared sense of identity and values.

> For both of them it [attending Youth Friends Friday] does mean they have a good grounding in terms of Quaker values and discussion. (Parent, West region)

> You can't form an opinion on something without discussing it and seeing like all the sides of it. I think that the whole process for me of going to these Quaker groups has made a big impact on who I am as a person and as a Quaker. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

These discussions were identified as a strong enabling factor in engagement. One young person in Yorkshire region said the chance to 'talk about Quakerism more' was the main contributor to changing how they identified as a Quaker. This was not an opportunity given in Sunday morning worship. The discussions also benefited young people in the wider world:

> One young person has reflected that at school they stand out for their opinions. This can be tiring and not comfortable for them. But they feel that they can explore them in a safer way in the group. They can practice explaining things and then take it back to other situations. (Youth development worker, West region)

5.2.2 Awareness and understanding of Quakerism

Awareness and understanding of Quakerism was considered by some stakeholders to be an enabling factor in engagement, with adults prioritising this more highly than young people during the initial workshop. The interviews show that this is was an enabling factor for some young people, though not in a straightforward way.

Understanding of Quakerism and how they fit

Seven of the ten young people interviewed felt that their participation in the project had increased their understanding of Quakerism. The majority of these reported that this had happened slightly or subtly and was about changing preconceptions and exploring ideas through discussion, rather than learning the history of Quakerism, for example.

> SYFAN has helped me to understand what identifying as a Quaker is. It's shown me that not all Quakers believe exactly the same things and that that's ok. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Similarly, one youth development worker explained that their young people had 'benefited from a greater awareness of Quakerism and reduced stereotypical preconceptions about what Quakers are like'.

The Yorkshire youth development worker described the importance of helping young people realise they could fit within Quakerism:

> [One young person] has realised you don't have to be somebody who constantly talks about Quakerism or acts in a certain way … I think he was worried that to be a Quaker, he had to be a certain way and he was conflicted about what that meant, in terms of his life and things he wanted to do. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire region)

Those young people (mostly from the West region) who did not feel that the project had increased their understanding of Quakerism said that the sessions did not 'feel Quaker' in the way that they had previously experienced; it was more about enjoying the session itself and just 'happens to come from Quakers'.

Awareness of national opportunities

The youth project was seen as bringing national opportunities closer to young people, translating into more engagement with national opportunities [see 6.3.1]. Two local stakeholders and one young person mentioned seeing young people become more aware of what was available to them.

> I see that for some it's opened doors to things like Young Quakers Participation Day or going to Yearly Meeting. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> It's meant that I'm more active in Quakerism, because [the youth development worker] has sent me opportunities of things I can get involved in at national level. I've been a lot more involved because of that. (Young person, West region)

Concept of religion being outdated

Young people's views of religion was suggested at the start of the project to be a negative factor affecting their engagement in Quakerism; young people felt 'religion' was outdated, rigid or irrelevant. Although not asked about it directly, three young people interviewed talked about now seeing Quakerism as more of a philosophy or ideology for them, rather than a religion. The youth development project supported discussion around what Quakerism meant to them and gave them a regular way to engage with the philosophy:

> The youth project got me a lot more involved with Quakers. To have a regular weekly thing that wasn't, as I thought at the time, going once a week to sit with old people while they talked about God. It made it a lot more engaging and relevant to me. (Young person. West region)

New people understanding Quakerism

The project provided an opportunity for those who do not identify as Quakers or do not know about Quakerism to increase their understanding. In interviews, a parent and a youth development worker mentioned this change in a young person:

> She was a non-Quaker and never really knew anything about Quakerism but came along to one of the parties … she absolutely loved it and afterwards said, 'I'm really interested in Quakerism. I thought it was really religious and I thought it was really going to be a bit like tense but I've realised it's not like that and you're all really normal and I'd really like to like learn more.' She has attended pretty much every session since and every trip. She comes to every single one of these online sessions we do on a Sunday, she's become really involved. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire region)

Overall, understanding more about Quakerism increased engagement in so far as this change in understanding enabled young people to understand the diversity of Quakerism and how they might fit within that diversity.

5.2.3 Connections with other young people

Connection between young people was predicted to be central to engagement, with young people being much more likely to attend events if their friends were going, and equally more likely to choose not to go if their friends were not, or if there would be no one of their own age. The data supported this as an enabling factor. One young person who had transitioned to adulthood explained how it was for them before the youth project:

> My experience is that I've been going to meeting since I was born but I dropped off around age 13-14 because there was no one in my meeting my age. They

> were either three years older than me or three years younger than me, and I lost interest because there wasn't anyone I could relate to … if there had been a local area group then I would have felt more like I related to Quakers because there would have been people more like me in it. (Local stakeholder, West region)

This contrasts with a young person's experience with the youth development project in place:

> I started going to Quakers more when I joined SYFAN, because I knew more people in my group. (Young person, Yorkshire)

New friends

Three of the ten young people interviewed (two in Yorkshire, one in the West region) mentioned with enthusiasm the new friends they had made through the youth project. The parents of two of these young people noted that they had challenges in friendships outside of the project. For those individuals, the project was very important.

However, most other young people interviewed did not talk specifically about new individual friendships, but more frequently spoke of just enjoying the group when there. There was little mention of meeting up or keeping in touch outside of sessions. In the West region, one parent's hope for a close group of teenagers had not been realised:

> I had hoped there'd be a coherent group of young people who might want to hang out together … I'd hoped there might be more online social media, a WhatsApp group where they might chat or organise to meet up, for example. I imagined they'd all be friends and happy Quakers together. (Parent, West region)

The broad age range in the group might have acted against young people bonding as friends meeting up outside the sessions. As the group numbers were not large, the age variation could be more evident and it could be hard for young people to find age peers:

> I've got to know some people a bit but I'm older than all of them so it can be a bit weird. (Young person, West region)

Community together

In contrast, there was a strong feeling among young people, local stakeholders and staff that the project had achieved a sense of community. A parent in Yorkshire described the young people as seeing themselves as a 'distinct group', and in the West region a parent observed that there 'seems to be a really good group of teenagers now, which before was very fragmented'. Several young people, particularly in Yorkshire, mentioned getting to know people they would not otherwise have known, and feeling more a part of something.

> I like the fact that I get to talk to other young Quakers because I don't think we would really see each other if it weren't for that … We just get to talk a lot together and we just get to know each other quite well ... I guess I just feel more

> connected with other people, other young people. (Young person, Yorkshire region)

A local stakeholder celebrated the way the project had given young people a sense of 'individuality and community at the same time'. One parent highlighted the importance of a *local* group for young people, whereas usually young people connected at a national level:

> I think, for Quaker young people, you can quite often tend to see yourself as more part of a national group, because that's where you get your kind of most vivid experiences of Quakerness because they have such a brilliant time at their national events. Whereas, I think SYFAN brings some of that sense of being amongst your peers, but amongst your local peers, and amongst people whose families know each other, and whose family is part of the same community and it brings them together. (Parent, Yorkshire region)

Sharing faith with friends

A parent, a youth development worker and a young person noted that the youth project had been a useful way for young people to share their faith with their Quaker and non-Quaker friends and include them in sessions and experience things together.

5.2.4 Connections with adults

Connections with adult Quakers outside of their own family was considered as a potential enabling factor for engagement. The data did not strongly show that connection with adults was considered by young people as a key benefit for them. However, intergenerational work is at a very early stage, and the benefits of intergenerational connection may take a long time to become evident.

Intergenerational connections

Local stakeholders and staff felt that some connections between young people and individual adults had been created or strengthened through the project. This was more frequently mentioned for the West region, where more adult volunteers had been engaged. For example, at Sidcot School it was mentioned that new relationships with the adult volunteer persisted outside of the sessions:

> Around school it gives me and the other Quakers there a different relationship with those young people that have come [to the youth project sessions] … I think they are some of the most profound and honest discussions I've ever had with young people at school. (Local stakeholder, West region)

Those young people represented on the local support groups in both regions had the opportunity to connect with adults frequently. However, evidence of greater connection between the young people and the broader adult community was not found at this stage. Young people did not mention new connections with adults as a key benefit for them:

> There's not very much engagement between the Quaker youth project and the adult Quaker community. That's the impression I get. As it's the youth project, I'm not sure that's a key part of it. Ideally the adults would know what's going on with young people and vice versa but I'm not sure it's a key part of the agenda. (Young person, West region)

Feeling voices are heard

It was expected that, if young people felt that their voices were heard, and that they were not patronised or treated as if their opinions were less important, there would be a more sustained engagement with Quakerism and a building of social connections across generations. Some progress has been made in this area through the project, but a central staff member noted that this change required a culture shift that would take a longer period to achieve.

There was a feeling from adults and two young people that the youth project had created more of a space for young people to express their voices and be heard. This space was principally found within the project session, but opened out to other local forums:

> If he goes to the big meeting, people talk to him and he can access it, but no one's asking how he feels on a range of subjects. Whereas [in SYFAN] he gets asked, directly, what do you make of this and he finds a way to kind of communicate that … it's that thing of being listened to by somebody who is a trained listener (Parent, Yorkshire region)

> I think the Quaker community is a lot more aware of our presence and our thoughts and views. I think we have also got a lot more of a voice in Quaker meeting. The adults are a lot more willing to listen to us and support our ideas. (Young person, Yorkshire)

In the West region, one specific example of young people having their voices heard due to the youth project was given by the youth development worker. Following a Young Friends Friday session on the environment, planned and run by a group of adult volunteers, the worker supported the young people to take a concern to Bristol Area Meeting 'to commit to act in proportion with the climate emergency'. Bristol Area Meeting agreed they wanted to do that and to engage with the youth project to continue this work. This was a successful model of how young people's voices could be received at area meeting level. However, further attempts to discuss other changes suggested by young people were 'bumped off' the agenda due both to pressing priorities and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although some young people and parents in Yorkshire felt that young people's voices were heard, the youth development worker and some other local stakeholders said that young people's voices were not yet meaningfully included and recognised,. Reasons given included a lack of understanding in some local and area meetings about how to manage accessibility and inclusion in practice and a reluctance to adapt traditional ways of doing things, as well as the practical issue of young people not attending Sunday meeting for worship, so not being heard there.

Sense of ownership of activities affecting them

It was predicted that young people having a sense of ownership of activities affecting them would lead to greater engagement in those activities and in Quakerism. Section 3.5 gave examples of young people feeling ownership of youth project activities. Local stakeholders noted that the youth involvement aspect of the project had led to young people 'feeling valued' and 'properly listened to' and providing 'activities on topics that they care about'. Events planned around what young people wanted, such as the bowling trip, showed much higher levels of attendance.

However, it is too early to assess whether or not young people having ownership of activities within local or area meetings will increase engagement, as that culture change takes a long time to be established.

5.2.5 Commitment to social action

Young people generally felt that they had gained more experience of, and more opportunity for, social action through the youth project activities in both regions. There is some indication that social action enabled engagement with Quakerism for young people, but in other cases it seemed that it was the engagement that led to social action.

Three of the ten young people interviewed reported that they had got to know about other social action, such as climate strikes, through the youth project, and been facilitated to attend opportunities through funding and advice:

> I think being part of the Quaker youth project helps because you get to know about protests or movements or causes. (Young person, West region)

> I don't know if I would've done the climate strikes otherwise since I went with some of my friends from SYFAN (Young person, Yorkshire)

Two other young people said that they would have been attending those wider social action events anyway, but liked feeling supported by the project.

Both youth development workers explained how they had facilitated some local social action through the project, for instance sowing white poppy seeds as an emblem of peace or distributing food to a night shelter. For wider social action such as climate strikes or marches, they had offered light-touch support for young people to take the action that was right for them, without pushing them into it:

> I was clear not to encourage people but offered that 'if you are going, I'm here for support'. It was about wanting people to make their own choices and supporting that. I want to support people to explore what action feels right for them. We held some discussions about why you would or wouldn't attend a strike. It's about enabling young people to think about different routes to action. (Youth development worker, West region)

There was no specific evidence of action taken through the project translating to more social action by young people that was completely unconnected to the youth project.

Considering social action as an enabler of engagement with Quakerism for young people, the project data suggests a complex, two-way relationship. There was no direct mention from young people that their social action increased their engagement with Quakerism, but the youth development worker noted that actions such as sowing white poppy seeds 'helped to link young people to Quakerism'. Young people spoke of enjoying the social action, although they wanted it balanced with socialising and games and a local stakeholder noted the 'sociable' aspect of the action as a bonding factor, while a parent said that their young person returned from a social action trip 'inspired'. The same local stakeholder also felt that young people's increased engagement with the project and Quakerism was what had caused the social action:

> I think the young people are more engaged in Quakerism as a whole and Quaker values and so a passion for social action seems to have developed through the various activities that [the youth development worker] has helped to organise. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

5.3. Personal growth outcomes

Intended outcomes for the project focused on the involvement and engagement of young people in Quakerism and the enabling factors for this. However, the work was also concerned with young people's growth and development and the interview data indicated a wealth of personal changes, with some very engaged individuals showing significant change.

5.3.1 Confidence

The change in young people most frequently observed by adults was in their confidence and self-esteem. Youth development workers, parents and local stakeholders spoke of seeing young people 'come out of their shell', 'find a new voice', 'express themselves' and 'speak up'. This was most often attributed to being able to try new things through the project, feeling safe and supported to talk about and explore who they are, as well as to the skills of the youth development workers.

> They make the children so much more confident and able to cope and make them think about things and challenge things. (Parent, West region)

5.3.2 Ability to discuss and manage difference

Two young people and a parent noted that the ability to have conversations with people and tolerate difference in opinion had been a real growth point. Related to this, several interviewees mentioned the inclusive nature of the youth project as important not only for ensuring that different kinds of young people could participate, but also in supporting young people to manage individual differences.

5.3.3 Transition to adulthood and personal identity

Two parents and a central staff member both talked about the role of the project in smoothing the transition from childhood to adulthood and the benefit they had seen for the young people in having a new trusted adult in their lives at that time. A young person, a local stakeholder and the youth development worker all noted that having role models that were more diverse had helped some individuals to negotiate their own identity at this time.

5.3.4 Skills and service

In the West region, several individuals who had moved from being young participants to young adult facilitators during the project reported on their increased facilitation skills; these were also noted by local stakeholders and the youth development worker. Their development was also contributed to by their participation in a national Facilitation and Leadership course provided by the CYP team and Woodbrooke.

The added value of the youth development project for these young facilitators was the opportunity to actively try out supporting other young people locally. The individuals were able to transfer skills developed locally to the national level and vice versa:

> Hers has been a really good journey where she's developed her skills and her own relationship to Quakerism, but she's also been able to facilitate and support others. She's just about to come into membership and service is a really important part of that, so it's a great opportunity for her to give service to the Quaker community through this group. (Youth development worker, West region)

> I've also grown a lot more confident because [the youth development worker] has said, 'have a go at this' and I've thought, 'okay'. She's given me a lot of opportunity to have a go at facilitating. That means when I was going to do the national thing I'd have been using those skills at a national level. (Volunteer, West region)

6. Outcomes for other groups

As well as changes for young people directly, the project aimed to create change in adults within local and area meetings (including attenders at meetings, as well as adults volunteering to support or work with young people). Intended changes were also identified for Britain Yearly Meeting and the Society of Friends as a whole.

Key findings

1. Adults in local and area meetings **learnt new things about working with young people** from the youth development workers. Involvement in the project also **increased their confidence, 'joy and meaning'.**
2. A few closely involved adult stakeholders **improved their relationships with young people and other adult volunteers**.
3. There was felt to be some **change in *attitude* of local and area meetings towards young people** and towards engaging them. **Changes in *action* to involve young people have been so far limited** to a small number of initiatives, which have had varying medium-term success.
4. Some parents and young people reported feeling **less in contact with each other** in a Quaker setting than before the youth project. A call was made for more all-age events;those that have been held so far were felt to be successful.
5. Through the youth development project, **more young people have participated in national Quaker events**.
6. The youth development workers have **contributed to national CYP resources** and modelled excellent equality and inclusion in youth work.

6.1. Outcomes for adult volunteers

In project planning, two factors were identified as enablers of engagement of young people in Quakerism:

- Ability of adults in meetings to engage effectively with young people.
- Ability of adults to handle the bureaucratic requirements of running events for young people.

The youth development project brought about some improvement in both of these areas. The data also shows that the individual adults who volunteered for, or were involved with, the project also benefited personally. Data for this section comes predominantly from the West region where there was greater recruitment and involvement of new volunteers. In Yorkshire, where volunteer numbers were lower, the project worked more with existing volunteers to strengthen skills.

Ability of adults to engage effectively with young people

An aim of the project was to help adults in meetings to understand more about what works for young people and how to do effective youth work. A past lack of understanding in this area had been identified as off-putting for young people and adults.

Local stakeholders in the West region talked about picking up 'tips' and new skills for engaging effectively with young people. The youth development worker described changes and areas of support she gave to volunteers in the West region:

> [The volunteer] was developing skills in how to work in an inclusive way with young people. I supported her to make her skills transferable and keep things short and in making sure there are opportunities for people to be involved in different ways, for example. I also supported volunteers to work through youth empowerment … I can help people step away from a school-y way of being to a more creative and interactive way of doing things. (Youth development worker, West region)

After the training, volunteers in the West region engaged regularly with the young people, with a group of volunteers designing their own session around climate justice. One volunteer reported that they had 'definitely learned new things about working with young people'. The youth development worker also mentioned that she thought adult volunteers in the West region had started to realise that they could consider how to include young people in existing activities, rather than plan a whole new event.

In Yorkshire, two volunteers reported that the training provided by the youth development worker had helped them with their confidence and to 'think about how we embed our values within our work with young people'.

Volunteers were not interviewed directly for this evaluation, except where their role crossed over as a local support contact or in hosting youth sessions at Sidcot School. Further conclusions about whether they were applying a new ability to engage with young people cannot therefore be drawn.

Ability of adults to handle the bureaucratic requirements

An intended outcome of the project was to improve the ability of adults to handle issues such as safeguarding and risk assessment. It was noted by local stakeholders that development workers had brought a high standard of youth development work, from which adults had learnt. One local stakeholder described herself as no longer 'fumbling in the dark' around safeguarding and youth work.

Fun, joy, inspiration

An unexpected outcome of the project was that some adults got personal 'joy and meaning' from being involved in the work with young people. One adult talked about people having a 'revelation

at how fun it can be' and another remembered a volunteer 'dancing around with the young people and reflecting that it was joyful for them'.

Two stakeholders talked about how the project has increased their confidence to try things with young people and helped them to realise how easy it could be. One of the enabling factors in this was being able to ask questions of, and sharing enthusiasm with, a personal local contact:

> I've always wanted to have a youth group for 20 years and it's given me the confidence to do that … Also, having someone really excited by young people and seeing the importance of having these opportunities for them and being on the same page as me has been amazing. (Local stakeholder, West region)

A different relationship with young people

For some of the adults with close involvement with the project in both locations, there seemed to be a shift in the dynamic of their relationship with young people. A local stakeholder from each location mentioned being more aware that young people wanted to be involved in things and realising that young people could 'teach them something'. One person explained that the project had shown how useful young people's voices could be:

> As part of our support group in Yorkshire they have had good things to say at the meetings and good suggestions to make. I also feel it shouldn't be seen as being about grown-ups doing things for young people. It's more about the young people doing things for themselves and for the Quaker network and the wider society. And they're very good. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

In the West region, a local stakeholder said they felt closer to the young people involved since the sessions. Another local stakeholder from the same region talked about being inspired by the young people at a particular event that was co-arranged with the youth development worker:

> It was a wonderful occasion and a marvellous way for connections to be made between the adults and the young people of our [local meeting] community. I was so impressed at the way in which the young people who spoke to me had taken to heart the plight of the people to whom we were invited to sign cards. It encouraged me to engage with their stories and take great care over the messages which I wrote in their cards. (Local stakeholder, West region)

More connected to other adults

A youth development worker and a central staff member both cited instances where the project had helped adults working with young people to connect with each other. In the volunteer training in the West region a group of people came up with an idea of running a session for the young people around the environment. Three people came together to plan the session independently of the youth development project and delivered it to the young people, with the support of the youth development worker.

Online sessions and events shared across the regions provided opportunities for volunteers supporting the project to connect across the two regions.

The youth development workers were also a regular part of national Quaker youth work support online meetings, facilitated by the CYP team. It was presumed that those attending would be more connected to other adult volunteers than before; however, outcomes of this meeting were not assessed as part of this evaluation.

6.2. Outcomes for local and area meetings

The project aimed to increase the ability of local and area meetings to provide opportunities to engage young people and become more inter-generational, loving, inclusive and all-age. Overall it was felt that, although more was needed in this area in future, progress had been made in terms of awareness of young people and attitude towards them and there were some early changes in involving young people or hosting all-age gatherings.

6.2.1 Engagement with young people

Attitude

Local stakeholders and staff felt that local meetings were more aware of their young people and the importance of doing things for them as a result of the project. The West region youth development worker felt that their presence, sharing young people's experience, helped with this. One local stakeholder noted that their area meeting, in the West region, had become more 'responsive' to young people and the previous feeling of being 'frightened' of young people had changed. This local stakeholder felt that 'having a highly organised person pushing' for inclusion of young people (the youth development worker) had been the key to getting a response. Another area meeting in the West region expressed the same idea:

> It feels like there is a different presence and awareness of young people in Bristol Area Meeting since [the youth development worker] started in the job. (Local stakeholder, West region)

In Yorkshire, a local stakeholder felt that the organised all-age activities helped to bring age groups together and contributed to 'young people being recognised more' and 'having a greater understanding of young people and their needs'.

Young people's views on this varied. Four of the ten young people interviewed did not think adult perceptions of young people had changed, while three others were unsure. However, the remaining three young people interviewed did feel that the youth project had changed how adults in their local meeting saw young people, in terms of being more aware of their views and wanting to include them more:

> I do think it's made them remember that we exist. They don't really forget but it's made them want to be more inclusive of young people and make an effort to do that. (Young person, West region)

> I think the Quaker community is a lot more aware of our presence and our thoughts and views. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Local stakeholders described key people such as clerks and trustees as more 'young-people friendly' as a result of the project, but it was highlighted that there was more to be done and at times progress was slow. A local stakeholder in the West regions said that the response of some local meetings was that the project was not relevant for them as they did not have any young people. This was seen in some of the ad hoc feedback during the project:

> Unfortunately, [our local meeting] has no young people at all … So at the moment we have no-one for you. (Local meeting, West region)

It had been a challenge to help them realise that young people were there, even if they were not attending the local meeting. The same local stakeholder observed that it was difficult for the youth development worker to get a 'foot in the door' at local meetings:

> [The local development worker] found it hard to get a 20-minute slot to talk to them. They kept pushing back that 'it's nothing to do with us'. Our argument is if you don't offer anything for young people, you will never know whether there were in fact young people who could have been interested. (Local stakeholder, West region)

One youth development worker explained that, due to the move to online provision in the Covid-19 pandemic, there was more awareness among local and area meetings of the role that young people could play in helping them navigate online tools and readiness to involve them in the life of the meeting and decision making:

> They realise now a lot of it's going to have to be done online and through other things and young people are really competent and really able to do that. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Action

The project saw an increase in engagement of young people at some area meetings around the topic of climate concern. The Yorkshire youth development worker was approached by Leeds Area Meeting to work with young people, for them to lead an all age sustainability workshop. This led to the area meeting taking action around individuals and the meeting reducing their carbon footprint.

In the West region, workshops for two area meetings were facilitated in partnership with young people and the youth development worker. This included the young people taking a minute to Bristol Area Meeting and then writing it up in partnership with the adults [described in section 5.2.4].

> Thank you for bringing the note with young people's words on it to area meeting, it really helped us move forward with the agenda, we couldn't have done that without them. (Local stakeholder, ad hoc feedback, West region)

> It was great to have a young person at the climate workshop in Bristol and at area meeting. He was so dynamic and it really changed the whole atmosphere. (Local stakeholder, ad hoc feedback, West region)

A similar initiative was trialled in Sheffield with a session around sustainability presented by the young people at Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting. However, this was not felt to be as successful as the West region work because the idea and format came from the area meeting, rather than from the young people:

> The meeting said: 'We would like them to be more interested in sustainability and we would like them to lead the adults in an activity.' That wasn't youth led because when I came back to SYFAN and said, 'The adults have said, will you lead an activity?' They were like, 'Ugh, if we if we have to.' … The all-day weekend commitment also didn't meet up with what the young people would have chosen. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Young people wanted to be involved, but more 'on their terms'. The youth development worker felt that the new use of online tools across Quakerism would help to 'shift the power dynamics' between adults and young people. In some instances, adult Friends had set up working groups meeting online in the evening where young people had become involved.

The project was felt to have made a big difference in the West region to how Bristol Area Meeting thought about engaging young people. However, no concrete changes had yet been seen and the youth development worker acknowledged the process had been lengthy.

In Yorkshire there was a challenge in getting the full support of the members in Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting; staff note that there was 'good stuff in individual meetings for a day', but that had not led to longer-term change of thinking. The youth development worker felt that people in the meeting 'really genuinely do want the youth voice to be heard' but there was a gap around what that looked like and a slight reluctance to change established patterns.

However, promisingly, one local stakeholder in the Yorkshire region reported discussions in their local meeting about changing worship times and local business meeting times to better engage young people.

> And quite recently, in one of our business meetings, somebody said, 'Well, you know, if we don't see [young people] on Sunday, maybe we should change the time of our meetings to suit them'. And then there was a discussion about why don't we once a month have a meeting for worship on Sunday afternoon? How about that? And, and let's have local business meeting at different times so that we might get them in it as well. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

In both regions, change in local and area meetings over the period was limited mostly to the urban centres, with staff hoping to broaden out in the third year of the project, an ambition which was slightly delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Confidence and support

Two local stakeholders reported that the presence of the youth development workers gave meetings 'confidence' and 'comfort' that there was somebody there if they needed help or support to try to engage young people or try to bring young people into meeting. One local stakeholder who was an area meeting CYP advocate felt some relief from the pressure of having to provide activities for young people. More negatively, two local stakeholders picked up a feeling from meetings that it was no longer their responsibility to provide for young people as 'the youth development worker will do that'. The risk of local volunteers disengaging is explored further in section 8.1. At times the youth development workers also practically supported area or regional events that were being run for young people. For example, in Yorkshire, the youth development worker helped to arrange the Yorkshire Junior Holidays through its transition online; it was felt that their support 'meant that it will be able to happen'.

6.2.2 All-age community

Parents and young people both reported feeling, at times, less in contact with each other in a Quaker setting than they had before the youth project, particularly in Yorkshire. In addition, local stakeholders and staff in both regions hoped for more area-wide all-age events than had yet been realised.

> It seems to me that BYM was kind of wanting to address this whole gap between lots of young people and lots of older people. I don't feel that this project has really addressed that ... There are some people in the meeting who feel they have less contact with the teenagers than they did previously. (Parent, Yorkshire)

> I think a common feeling from the adults at the meeting is 'Oh, it's the teenagers tonight, but they're not really part of [the meeting]'. (Young person, Yorkshire)

Disunity within some area meetings and local personalities not strong at building bridges across meetings were suggested as factors holding back more area-wide all-age activities.

There was some success in the West region through two all-age Quaker Question Time events (one in person and one online). Several interviewees mentioned that a central staff member had run an all-age local support group meeting in the West region with the addition of a representative from each local meeting; this was felt to have been cohesive and successful. Quakers in Yorkshire intended to introduce some all-age meetings, and there was a general feeling from the adults interviewed that more all-age provision would be welcomed and perhaps 'the way to go'.

> Alongside meeting the needs of young people, which the youth project is doing and is great, we also need to build all-age community. The connections with adults is important and it would be sad if an area meeting felt we could pay for others to do our work, thank you Britain Yearly Meeting, rather than to acknowledge and uphold their own all-age community. (Local stakeholder, West region)

Young people did not mention the desirability of all-age provision. There is no data on whether or not they would welcome it, and this might be further explored.

6.3. Outcomes for Britain Yearly Meeting

Assessing the outcomes for Britain Yearly Meeting and The Society as a whole was not the focus of the evaluation and only the two staff members based at Friends House interviewed were asked about possible changes. Nonetheless, some indications of benefit for Britain Yearly Meeting came up in interviews and this could be worth further investigation.

6.3.1 Increasing youth involvement in national events

Following the increased awareness among young people about national Quaker opportunities, discussed in 5.2.2, youth project staff noted that this had translated into greater interest in, and attendance at, national events by young people in the two regions. A parent explained how this came up for their young person:

> [Young person] came back [from a youth project trip] buzzing and wanting to go to the age-appropriate yearly meeting next year and feeling he's perhaps not fully understood Quakers previously. (Parent, West region)

Both youth development workers saw that young people from their regular groups had signed up to attend events at the national level, when they felt they would not have done so before. A BYM staff member noted seeing the involvement of young people from the project in national events such as Participation Day and Living as a Quaker. There was a two-way relationship between a local project and national events:

> Because the young people came to a national event, they went home wanting to get in touch with the youth work project. Because they were involved in the project they then wanted to continue the relationships and then that's brought them back to national things. (Central staff member)

A local stakeholder felt that the strength of these national events had helped Bristol Area Meeting to engage more widely with the Society, showing the importance of strengthening the link to these events for young people and meetings:

> Two years ago, Bristol Area Meeting was very poorly engaged with BYM opportunities, but the Participation Day, Junior Yearly Meeting and Engaging Families have opened doors, hearts and minds. (Local stakeholder, West region)

6.3.2 A model for equality and inclusion

Several adults felt that the project had demonstrated excellent equality and inclusion practices around both physical access and personal identity and perspectives; it was felt that these could provide a model for future projects.

> I think you dealt with [two young people] really well. I think it is the first time [one of the young people] has participated in a meeting like that. You made it very inclusive and valued all contributions. (Parent, ad hoc feedback, West region)

One youth development worker noted that the new online provision also made it easier for young people with physical disabilities to engage with sessions without physical travel.

One parent in Yorkshire felt that the work of the project had the power to 'challenge and move the Society on' in terms of inclusion. The parent gave a specific example of a previous regional Quaker event that had not been able to accommodate the physical needs of their young person, whereas the youth project was resourced with the funding and skilled staff to do that. The parent said that what had been helpful in the youth project was having a trained person to properly support the 'chemistry' in the group so people were included, ensure physical access such as meeting downstairs or having a ramp, challenge any 'unexamined discrimination' in adults and run appropriate extra social activities that could be accessed by those with specific needs.

> It's not only important for the experience of kids like mine, but it's important to show the society what equality really means. If we have a testimony to equality, this is what it looks like … The inclusion of him and other people who might otherwise not have experienced inclusion is an exemplification of the testimony to equality. (Parent, Yorkshire)

6.3.3 Contribution to national resources

The youth development workers contributed to national Quaker youth events and written resources, as outlined in section 2.1. A central staff member also felt that having regionally-based staff helped central staff to know more about what was happening at a local level:

> Having [the youth development workers] has increased our knowledge of the local situation. It's only two but sometimes we can be a bit removed from the local situation. If you hear from a local source it helps you understand others. (Central staff member)

7. Governance, support and management

The youth development project is managed and funded at a national level, but 'owned' locally. There is a national reference group for the project and line management of staff is carried out by a member of the national CYP team. Regionally, local support groups offer guidance to the youth development workers and two local support contacts from those groups offer more involved help, advice and contacts from a local perspective. This section reviews how these structures have worked in the project.

Key findings

1. The **national reference group** has been useful for information sharing but would benefit from greater **clarity about its purpose**.
2. The role of the local support groups has **shifted over time and differs between the regions.** In Yorkshire more practical support is desired from the local support group.
3. **More young people currently involved in the youth project are felt to be needed as part of the local support groups** in both regions. The way young people are involved in the groups needs to be **dynamic and flexible.**
4. **Local support contacts have been extremely helpful** to the youth development workers, when in place. Yorkshire has been without local support contacts for a significant period.
5. National **management of the project has worked well.**
6. The youth development workers' **contact with Friends House staff has been continuous and 'as and when' needed** and this has been sufficient for the project. Links have strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.1. National reference group

The national reference group was established to provide a link between the project and Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC) as well as to provide oversight and encouragement to the project. It was a requirement that there should be a member of QLCC on the reference group. The reference group meets three times a year, for a full day in each case. Meetings have taken place at Friends House, although during the Covid-19 pandemic meetings were, and will continue to be, held remotely.

The reference group received reports from each of the two local support groups as well as further information from Friends House as needed, including the findings from previous phases of this evaluation.

The reference group was not seen by its members as a governance group, although its role was to provide oversight. It was perhaps more of a space for information sharing and to ensure that QLCC were informed about the progress of the project. The co-convenor of the reference group did not believe that it had a strategic role, except at the start of the project when defining relationships between the project and the local support groups.

It was perhaps not clear to its members how the reference group fitted into the management structure for the project, and this may have limited the effectiveness of the reference group.

> I've also learned that you need clear management structures which everyone understands at the beginning of trying to put workers into a new area. (Co-convenor-of reference group)

7.2. Local support and decision-making

Local support groups

The area meetings making the bid to host a youth development worker offered a local support group to ensure 'young people are appropriately supported at a local level'. Each area meeting nominations committee was asked to appoint an adult and a young person to represent them in the group, with responsibilities of the group set out in a memorandum of understanding (see also section 2.1). Since September 2018, the local support groups have met three times a year.

The role of the support groups shifted as the project moved on and was different in each region. In the West region, the group began by supplying local links and contacts and moved to a discussion of ideas and general support without which, the worker felt, 'the project would be a million times harder'.

> It was at first the case that the local support group was to supply the missing geographic link … We were sure that's what the purpose of this group would be. But it has changed. When you get a particular person in a post that person brings qualities and skills to a post and you realise, 'I don't need to worry about that; she's got that'. So it's become more tailored to suit the individual. (Local stakeholder, West region)

In Yorkshire, the group proved less able to provide practical support than the development worker had hoped for:

> My ideal support group was I'd come along and then it'd be a very informal meeting facilitated by my contact, which would be people practically offering me help. Me saying, 'I've got this idea for this cookery day.' And someone saying, 'Brilliant, do you need me to book a space for you at the meeting house? or...I have a great recipe you could use' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

> I'm relatively active and relatively enthusiastic and I've had some experience of some of the same type of work but I would have found it very difficult to involve myself in the activities that people were invited to support. It was just more than I could countenance doing. (Local stakeholder, Yorkshire)

It was also suggested that this lack of practical support had been even more problematic when both local support contacts left their role in the second year. A central staff member reflected that the intention was for the local support group to be supplemented by a volunteer network; in

Yorkshire this had not happened, possibly contributing to frustration at the lack of practical support.

The large proportional representation of parents on the Yorkshire local support group meant that it had become a space for 'questioning' the youth development worker, who felt it has merged into more of a 'scrutiny group'. The worker explained:

> I think there's some problem about having so many parents on the support group. I think that conflict of interest is problematic. They're there to ensure that their young person understandably is getting what they want from it. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

The youth development worker was keen to keep open dialogue with parents but suggested that a separate group might be most useful for this.

Involvement of young people

By April 2020, approximately three young people were attending each support group meeting in each area, together with around eight adults. Moreover, young people were often represented by 18- and 19- year-olds who had moved on from the project, rather than current recipients of project activities. Although those individuals offered a useful perspective, more representation from current young people was needed, so that they could be the 'voice' of the current group. In Yorkshire it was suggested that this might also help with navigating differences of expectations between parents and young people, as parents could hear opinions from the young people themselves.

It was suggested that young people's involvement needed to be more natural and fluid, rather than through a nomination process and committee involvement; for example, young people might be welcome to drop in to local support group meetings on a one-off basis.

Local support contacts

Two individuals in each region acted as local support contacts for the youth development workers, putting in significant and much appreciated time on a voluntary basis to provide advice, local contacts and support around Quaker processes.

> Having key local support group contacts who are committed and enthusiastic has been very enabling for me. Not just saying, 'That's great!' but having time to put towards it. (Youth development worker, West region)

> I found [the local support contact] really helpful. She set meetings up for me and her and she'd ring me quite a lot to clarify things with me. If there was an event coming up, she'd ring and say, 'Have you got any volunteers?' and then I'd say, 'No'. She'd say, 'You want me to come along?' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

In Yorkshire, there were some challenges resulting from one local support contact taking on the majority of support; this was a significant time commitment for an individual with many other commitments. During the second year of the project, both support contacts asked to be released from their appointment and the youth development worker was without support contacts for a period. This increased the work of the national manager in relation to the project until a new contact was appointed.

7.3. Management of workers

The youth development workers and central staff felt that the management arrangement for the youth development workers had generally worked well. Regular and frequent contact between youth development workers and the national project manager was supplemented by a weekly Skype call between the three, as well as monthly supervisions and in person visits to the localities:

> There could have been some tension being employed and managed by BYM in London and the work being directed locally, but I've had a fairly easy ride with that. (Youth development worker, West region)

One local stakeholder interviewed mentioned the change in national manager for the project after the first year as being 'handled well'.

The only issue raised concerning the management structure was by a parent who noted that, at a time of challenge, they were not always clear with whom to raise issues, as the support group was local but the management remote.

In the West region, local Quakers were increasingly unhappy with the way the project operated under the first appointed youth development worker. The local support contacts did not feel they had sufficient processes (although there were clear processes) to communicate and get action on grievances experienced locally, when the youth development workers were managed centrally.

7.4. Links with staff at BYM

Children and young people's (CYP) team

The Children and Young People's Officer, within the CYP team, is the project manager and the youth development workers' main contact with other BYM staff. Youth development workers are part of the CYP team and attend relevant team meetings, planning sessions and away days. In interviews, youth development workers seemed content with relationships with the CYP team. Youth development workers contributed their knowledge and skills to the CYP team, through facilitating at events or producing written resources. They also benefited from the resources and skills of the team.

Connections with the CYP team were felt to have strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic, as many of the team were furloughed, but the project staff were not, so supported wider work:

> The three of us [two youth development workers and the national manager] have been doing all kinds of work on each other's projects. It's felt a lot less like we're restricted to our areas. It's just felt like the three of us are just keeping up the CYP work. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Britain Yearly Meeting staff more widely

One youth development worker reflected that they felt 'a part of Britain Yearly Meeting' but that the connection went 'in phases'. It was noted that a lot of organisation-wide internal communications seemed to be directed to staff based at Friends House, rather than to remote staff. The youth development workers did not feel very close to teams at Friends House, but had collaborated with individuals and been able to offer extra opportunities to the young people thanks to colleagues at Britain Yearly Meeting. Examples of this included linking in with the work of 'Turning the Tide' and accessing the Greta Thunberg and Caroline Lucas speeches, which was described as 'a profound experience for the young people'. The youth development workers were also able to signpost to Friends around certain issues, and noted that having some links with Friends House made them feel less isolated in their role.

8. Key considerations for future work

This section covers some aspects of the project that were commonly mentioned in interviews as being important or as a key area of challenge, learning or consideration for future work in this area.

Key findings

1. Having ***paid*** **youth development workers was identified as a great benefit,** but some staff members felt that some local and area meetings may have **stepped back from their responsibility to young people**, which is key to the sustainability of the work.
2. Youth development workers have been covering **very large regions** with differing levels of engagement and expectations from meetings within them.
3. The project would benefit from clearer thinking about **value, engagement and success** – there are different expectations on all of these from stakeholders.
4. It is not clear whether all regions would have the **capacity to provide the necessary governance and support** required by the project. This needs to come from **meetings and not individuals**.
5. Youth development workers **were keen to move into more outreach and community service work.** However, it is not clear whether local meetings were enthusiastic about this approach or were prepared for change if more young people were to become engaged with the meeting.
6. The potential for youth development workers to **work more closely with other BYM-employed local development workers** was raised several times as a possibility for future regions.

8.1. The effect of having *paid* youth development workers

There was unanimous agreement among those adults who talked about it in their interview that having a *paid* youth development worker was an overall benefit: having a paid post brought in workers who could be an 'anchor' for the young people and provide an offering that is highly professional, attractive to young people, flexible, responsive and inclusive.

> Well-meaning volunteers just aren't going to engage young people so successfully. (Parent, survey)

Youth work was seen as a specialist skill, and year-round, consistent support something very difficult to sustain with volunteers. It was noted that both youth development workers had tried hard to keep volunteers engaged as well:

> [The youth development worker] has made every effort to involve more volunteers wherever it was possible. I don't think it can be said that they have taken away opportunity to help in some way from volunteers. (Local

> stakeholder, Yorkshire)

In interviews, two negative aspects relating to engaging paid workers were suggested. First, the workers themselves faced higher expectations than those placed on volunteers, but with less support, although this could be argued to be reasonable. The second, raised by two staff members, was that some local and area meetings were felt to have stepped back from the responsibility to provide support for young people themselves because it was now covered. However, involvement and shared responsibility was considered key to the long-term sustainability of the youth development work.

> There's been elements of this project where meetings have gone, 'That's great, [the youth development workers] are doing that so we don't have to' as opposed to … 'Here's an opportunity to get involved.' That's understandable at a time where for lots of Quaker communities it's as much as they can do to maintain things, and maybe it's an unrealistic expectation for them to want to get involved in a wide variety of stuff and engage with local communities and young people in a way that's new. (Central staff member)

For continued involvement and a feeling of belonging, young people also need relationships with adults in their local meetings, in addition to youth workers. Youth development worker appointments are short term compared to average length of membership and stability of local Quaker communities.

8.2. Size and location of region

Local stakeholders noted that youth development workers were covering very large regions with differing levels of engagement and differing expectations from areas and local meetings within them. This was particularly the case for the Yorkshire region, which contains more local meetings than the West region. It was suggested by a central staff member that a clear expectation of time spent in each part of the region would help meetings to manage this.

One local stakeholder in Yorkshire region suggested that, while Sheffield Central Meeting was well known for its young people, it would be interesting to trial hosting a youth development worker where there were not so many existing young people, to see whether it would 'bring out more young people'. In the West region, the West Wiltshire and East Somerset Area Meeting has fewer young people than other regions. Data was not collected about whether more young people were visible or attending local meetings than before the project, but engagement of meetings in this area has been slow, as discussed in section 6.2.1, even if there was some evidence that they were becoming more open to young people.

Interviews did not often discuss any question of whether the youth development worker should be locally or nationally hosted. Local knowledge was not raised as a requirement or a particularly important part of the role. A central staff member noted that it would be very hard to run face-to-face sessions and build intergenerational communities without being locally based. The ability to provide consistency and build strong relationships with the young people was of vital importance.

One local stakeholder felt that the new online work carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic had 'renewed their optimism' about the sustainability of the project and stretching the worker's resources over such a large region.

8.3. Success, engagement and value

The evaluation has highlighted a varied understanding among stakeholders (including parents, local stakeholders and staff) of what the success of the project would look like. For some, success is based on sustaining and extending the number of young people regularly attending Quaker youth provision and, ideally, Meeting for Worship on a Sunday. Some local stakeholders raised the question of whether the project had been worth the money given the numbers engaging regularly. For others, the transformative impact that paid youth work may have on the lives of individuals, not just in terms of Quaker identity but in terms of navigating the challenges of teenage life and self-development, was of equal – if not higher – importance and the question of value for money was therefore answered differently.

The project began with a very broad definition of 'engagement' and with deliberate ambiguity about whether the aim was to enable existing young people to become more engaged, enable more young people to become engaged, or both.

The evaluation has also highlighted that some stakeholders had high hopes for this project leading to greater all-age community, but that there have been a number of barriers to this. These barriers have included a reluctance on the part of meetings to move away from the traditional Sunday morning, some wariness on the part of some individuals in meetings about engaging with young people, and lack of capacity and resources to develop all-age community.

This suggests that there is scope for some clearer thinking, based on the findings of the evaluation, about what the aims of any future work should be. It is possible that developing a theory of change for Quaker youth work may be a useful part of the process.

8.4. Governance considerations

Section 7 considered both the importance of the support groups to the work in both regions, but also some of the challenges this arrangement had posed in terms of resources and capacity. One local stakeholder felt that, in future, local and area meetings wanting a youth development worker should consider whether they had the capacity to support the work in the way anticipated by the project, through support groups and local contacts. It should be noted that area meetings committed to this during the bidding process, but, as mentioned in section 2.1 above, perhaps did not anticipate the demands of the project. Additionally, the circumstances of both the project and some key contacts changed, leading to further capacity challenges. In a small community, where much of the momentum for specific projects is dependent on individuals' energy and gifts, this is always a difficult issue to manage.

A parent reflected on the need for the support to transform local support work into more joint practical work. This had been the original intention of the project but had perhaps not materialised as hoped.

> All youth work I've done before has always been in teams … it might be a lot easier to achieve some of the things that we've been thinking about with more than one person involved … I wonder whether one of the learning points is how to enable not just support from a support group but active working together. (Parent, Yorkshire)

One local stakeholder noted the potential, negatively, for local contacts to become a 'gatekeeper' for the region, which 'isn't the way of Friends'. To avoid this, the local stakeholder suggested that it would be useful to have a 'network' of advocates who could provide practical support, as well as a reference group for more strategic support. The youth development worker in Yorkshire suggested that ongoing open dialogue and joint planning at strategic points might also be helpful.

8.5. Balance of youth work and community development

For the youth development workers, 'community work' proved a greater proportion of the work than expected, in order to enable the wider Quaker community to include, host and accept young people. [See section 3.3 for estimated proportions of work.] One central staff member suggested that, in future, the youth development worker job description be altered so that it laid out 'more about community building, rather than just youth work'.

A local stakeholder felt that the local work could have benefited from youth development workers offering one-to-one meetings with young people, although safeguarding issues made this challenging.

> I did envisage the project would get to know young people in their local meetings and then bring them together. It didn't really go that way and I wonder if that reflects some characteristics of a national approach. (Local stakeholder, West region)

Two local stakeholders, a parent and a youth development worker felt that more all-age work would be desirable.

> I feel the one thing that's been learnt is that separating the teens out from everyone else is actually a little bit divisive and does remove them from the life of the meeting. If they're too separated out then there's no chance to engage them. (Local stakeholder, West region)

> What I should have done in hindsight is organised more all-age events. So instead of the ceilidh, I should have said, 'Tell you what, myself and the young people will plan an event and invite adults from the meeting.' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

8.6. Balance of in-reach, outreach and community service

The main focus of the project so far has been on serving the existing young Quaker community, here referred to as *in-reach*. Several staff and local stakeholders spoke of their desire to offer more to the wider local community: to help Quakers to be better known and understood in the world and to gain more participation, here referred to as *outreach*, and to serve the needs of the wider community, here referred to as *community service.*

The small number of non-Quaker young people involved in the project were mainly in the Yorkshire region. Some engaged in regular sessions and in a few one-off activities delivered to other parts of the community, such as a football session to refugee children in Harrogate and a stall at the Sheffield Pride event. The football session to refugee children received extremely positive feedback from local Quaker stakeholders in Harrogate and has been a factor in their considering the possibility of focusing on support for secondary age young refugees in 2020. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the West region youth development worker was making plans for more activities aimed at non-Quaker young people, in North Somerset in particular. However, this and plans for an open-access art group in Sheffield were necessarily put on hold.

Youth development workers were keen to move into more outreach and community service work. The reasons for this included: increasing the numbers in the project; potentially creating a greater impact; reaching those less privileged, promoting inclusion and strengthening the local community; and increasing young people's overall understanding of, and engagement with, Quakerism. The workers felt that outreach and community service work could be key to increasing the impact of the project and identified the quieter summer period as a potential time to reach out to others:

> This summer I can do more outreach for young people without privilege and opportunity. It's easier because there's more [stakeholder] trust in me now. (Youth development worker, West region)

> Young people just aren't going to access [the project offer] because no one's doing outreach. You know, no one in the community is going to schools or communities saying, 'Do you know what Quakerism is?' (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

However, it is not clear whether local meetings were enthusiastic about this approach or were prepared for change if more young people were to become engaged with the meeting:

> I assumed that Quaker youth work is for everyone in the locality. What we've seen is that local meetings see Quaker youth work as being about Quaker young people. (Central staff member)

> I think they mostly just want it to be heavily weighted on their young people being supported. However, they also want other young people to want to join in but don't really value how that would happen … We could do outreach, but then when we had reached people in the community that then wanted to access the

> meeting, I don't think the meeting is ready to receive them. (Youth development worker, Yorkshire)

Local support groups agreed to trial some more outreach and community service, but did not initially see it as a priority. In interviews, staff and local stakeholders were clear that, to them, outreach was not about evangelising, or just about trying to recruit people, but about offering a Quaker presence in the community, along with providing community service in some cases.

8.7. Working with other initiatives

Several local stakeholders, staff and parents suggested that it would be beneficial for the youth development workers to be working as part of a team, either regionally or as part of an enlarged national team. The main reason put forward was the too-high expectations that had been placed on individual workers; workers had been expected to have broad skills in youth work, community development and project management. One parent suggested strengthening links with other non-Quaker youth workers locally and putting money in a shared pot so that meetings could access youth work provision some of the time, rather than trying to organise it independently.

In Yorkshire the relationship with Quakers in Yorkshire was spoken about positively by local stakeholders and staff. Some parents talked fondly of the Yorkshire Friends Holiday school (YFHS) and speculated about a future amalgamation. The youth development worker has worked alongside YFHS to support them to develop their online work during the pandemic.

The potential to work as part of a future local development team with other BYM-employed workers was raised several times as a possibility by local stakeholders and staff. One youth development worker noted an overlap in roles, as a portion of the work they were carrying out with local and area meetings was general development work, and meetings sometimes approached them with general queries, which they signposted on:

> Some people in meetings here expressed that some of their members have issues with mental health, so I signposted to the mental health empowerment officer [at BYM], which was useful. (Youth development worker, West region)

The youth development workers were not covering the same regions as local development workers, and had minimal contact with them. However, one youth development worker felt it was a 'missed opportunity' not to have a local development worker and youth development worker in the same space; they argued that this would enable them to link together, particularly around the community development aspect of the work and integrating young people into meetings.

One national stakeholder suggested that local development workers might be able to carry out the youth work as well. However, this might be an unrealistic expectation given the wide range of skills involved in both youth work and community building.

> But then someone with skills in one area might not have skills in another… Perhaps [the youth development workers] can document what they've done and how and offer it as something that local meetings could take on, with the

> assistance of the local development workers to support that. Co-convenor of national reference group)

Given the specific skills needed for youth work, it may be that collaborative arrangements between youth workers and local development workers may be more effective than one individual attempting to cover everything.

9. Recommendations

9.1. Recommendations from the evaluator team

These recommendations have been developed by the evaluator team, drawing on the outcomes of a workshop held with key local and national stakeholders on 5 September 2020, as well as the evaluation findings.

9.1.1 Short-term (final year of the project)

1. Continue to develop and test online engagement with young people.
2. Consider whether online engagement should extend beyond the two key regions, in the short term.
3. Pilot outreach and community service opportunities, if circumstances change to allow in-person work.
4. Continue to build community in local and area meetings to support all-age and intergenerational worship, social interaction and community.
5. Develop a theory of change for the future direction of the project, or otherwise clarify understandings of success, engagement and value for money.

9.1.2 Medium-term – beyond the end of this project cycle

This evaluation report is intended to support decision-making beyond the end of this project cycle. The key considerations for such decision-making are outlined in Chapter 8 of this report.

If the decision is made to continue or expand paid youth work, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Review and simplify governance and support structures both locally and nationally.
2. Create systems for strong collaborative working with local development workers, particularly where regions overlap.
3. Clarify and manage expectations among parents and local stakeholders, especially where regions are larger.
4. Work with Quaker communities in the regions to understand their aspirations for all-age community and their understanding of what may need to change to become an all-age community.
5. Review the youth worker job description to emphasise the need for, and importance of, community building.
6. Codify good practice and learning from the pilot, drawing key learning from this evaluation report as well as the expertise and skills of staff and stakeholders, so that future work begins on a foundation of good practice.

9.2. Recommendations from CYP team

In parallel with the evaluation team, the CYP team at BYM developed a series of recommendations arising from their understanding of the report and workshop. These are reproduced here:

It is recommended that BYM:

1. **Recognise that modelling of values, expectations, skills, equality and inclusion in youth work (children/family work) is skilled and professional work.**
2. **Continue to develop relationships between local youth workers and 'national' staff team:** Continue to employ both youth workers both regionally and nationally. There is huge benefit from different perspectives of national and local; both are needed to develop relationships and expertise, build on the volunteer base, support young people at events and aid young people's transition to national work. Experience of regional work aids support for other regions without a worker to provide better youth provision within their Quaker communities. Relationships also need to be continued with other BYM/ Woodbrooke staff to watermark children/young people's and family work throughout all engagement and provision.
3. **Measure work in value, not just numbers attending.**
4. **Host Quaker activities for young people.** To support young people in Quaker communities, both within local meetings and across regions, there needs to be provision for work that is:
    a. ongoing
    b. one off
    c. face to face
    d. online
    e. residential work,

    - which can be carried out by national staff and by accompanying local friends

5. **There should be both direct provision for young people and intergenerational development work** within Quaker communities, this could be done alongside local development workers.
6. **Developing all-age business meetings.** Work is needed with area meetings to develop and support provision of methods of engagement that promote all-age attendance and participation in area and regional business.
7. **Watermark youth work** as an essential consideration in Quaker provision, alongside that for children, families, young adults, equality and diversity, so we can accompany Quaker communities in their journey to be more inclusive and welcoming.
8. **Continue to develop transition work** which allows for more flexible work between young people and young adults (NB safeguarding)
9. **Continue to Support Volunteer Development.** Hold regular twice-yearly training within many regions to spread skills, so work can be supported and carried out by wider pool of volunteers.
10. **Develop links with Quaker Schools and support the** connection between Quaker schools and their local Quaker communities**.**
11. **Continue transition work between children/young people and young people/young adults.**
12. **Continue online youth work training/accompanying volunteers**
13. **Support families.**

14. **Fundraise so that regional workers can be employed to do above 10 steps.**

If a paid local youth work position was to be set up, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. The support group is set up by a simpler structure of a trustee/ CYP advocate from each Area meeting in the group holding the youth worker and a fluid involvement of young people.
2. Consultation with young people is carried out when work is to happen in a particular local or area meeting.
3. This work might be in conjunction with consultation work with Elders/Overseers/children and young people's committees and would involve the CYP advocate.
4. Memorandum of Understanding should be set up before (paid) worker is in place to aid clarity of expectations for local friends.
5. Office Space Office space: ensure the worker has company, office space with others either other Quakers or youth workers preferably. imperative that IT equipment is sufficient.
6. GDPR work with local data protection officer within area or regional meetings and with date protection staff at BYM to make most of lists and contacts.
7. A focus on non-Quaker Youth work in summer or working with national events e.g. YMG. Explore support for regional events.

Suggested role description and model for paid regional youth work

- Youth worker to be based in a hub.
- Run a regular monthly youth group in up to 4 places where there are existing numbers of teenagers.
- Run an online group fortnightly for each of these groups alternately with the physical group.
- Run online group(s) for more remote young people fortnightly, perhaps for different ages.
- Work with a Meeting to engage young people in the locality with youth work e.g. supporting refugee young people and engaging them through football.
- Support an All-Age Area Meeting; one per year for each Area Meeting in the region
- Support national work through online support meetings to share expertise and learning from others involved in Quaker youth work.
- Support local children's camp/holiday so one residential per year is for children up to age 13.
- Support young people's programme at Area Meeting residential
- Work with 11-18s primarily but support transition from children's work and into adulthood.
- Work with CYP advocates to support them and identify other areas of work.
- Supported by small team of trustees and by CYP advocates/others who are active in CYP work in the region.
- Connect with other CYP and Quaker youth work staff for regular training, exploration and work development.

‘Being a Quaker now feels like a bigger and more relevant part of my life.’

(Young person, West region)

I think, for Quaker young people, you can quite often tend to see yourself as more part of a national group, because that's where you get your kind of most vivid experiences of Quakerness because they have such a brilliant time at their national events. Whereas, I think SYFAN brings some of that sense of being amongst your peers, but amongst your local peers, and amongst people whose families know each other, and whose family is part of the same community and it brings them together.

(Parent, Yorkshire region)

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