# Seven principles of public life

**Quaker briefing for MPs ahead of Westminster Hall debate on 7 September 2022**

## About us

[Quakers in Britain](http://www.quaker.org.uk) are a faith community dedicated to equality, peace, truth and integrity, simplicity and sustainability.

## Our view on principles of public life

Quakers believe truth and integrity are an essential part of living a moral and productive life. By being honest and true, early Quakers believed we came closer to the ultimate truth of God in ourselves and others. The success of Quakers in commerce was because of their integrity and the confidence this inspired. Quakers today carry forward this deep commitment to truth. If we have integrity, our actions match our values. If we lack integrity, we become separated from ultimate truth, our deepest selves, and our community.

On a national level, the public trust that flows from governing with truth and integrity is essential to democracy and our confidence in it. When that trust breaks down, people become disillusioned with democracy, and leaders lose their mandate to govern. It provides a platform for those offering undemocratic, unfair and non-inclusive alternatives.

Quakers in Britain believe the [Seven Principles of Public Life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2) are an important tool for maintaining truth and integrity in public life. They set expectations for a person’s attitude and behaviour from the start of their time in public office. They give a benchmark against which a person’s behaviour can be measured. By being incorporated into the codes of conduct that guide the behaviour of MPs, Peers and Ministers, they serve as a guarantee that public interests, not self-interest, will prevail.

We are concerned that existing rules and frameworks have been insufficient to protect truth and integrity in public life. In recent years we have seen a marked decline in the standards in public office, including a frequently casual attitude towards the truth.

## Our ask

We ask those in government and parliament to take further steps to embed truth and integrity into the culture of public office. We hope to work with MPs, Peers and staff in the coming months to establish a shared view of what this would look like. We believe the questions to consider include:

* How can those in public office be regularly reminded of core principles and values?
* What would parliament and government be like if everyone told the truth?
* How can Ministers, MPs and Peers be role models for truth and integrity in society?
* How can we celebrate those who show truth and integrity and support those who are struggling to do so?

If you are interested in working with us to explore these issues, or have any questions, please contact Grace Da Costa, Public Affairs and Media Manager, Quakers in Britain (graced@quaker.org.uk / 07410 981786).