

Library of the Society of Friends – Access policy

Our collections are open for research to registered readers of the Library of the Society of Friends. Access to collections is by appointment only. For information on how to register and make an appointment, go to the [Visit the Library](#) page on our website. There may be times when we are unable to provide access to material in our collections, this guide sets out some of the conditions under which we reserve the right to restrict access.

Access to Archive material

Archive material includes manuscript volumes and papers, archives of Britain Yearly Meeting and its committees, family and personal papers, records of independent bodies, and London & Middlesex meeting records.

Our current standard closure period for all archive material is 50 years. Any material under 50 years old will not be open for research. This includes volumes and files that span this closure period (for example a minute book, 1928-1978 will be closed until 2029).

Some archive material may be closed for longer than 50 years. This will usually be due to Data Protection issues or other reasons of confidentiality where a longer closure period has been deemed necessary.

In addition, collections that have not been listed or catalogued to an adequate extent will not be open for research.

Permission to access closed archive material

In certain circumstances, it may be possible to gain access to archive material under 50 years old. We will judge all applications on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the donors of the material.

Archives of Britain Yearly Meeting – permission for access

We will consider applications in writing for access to Britain Yearly Meeting archive material that is under 50 years. This covers committees and departments of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Other archive records – permission for access

For London & Middlesex meeting records and records of independent Quaker bodies, we can make requests for permission to access records under 50 years old on behalf of enquirers, provided a donor can be contacted. For family and personal papers in our collections, this will not be possible.

All collections (published, archival, special collections)

We reserve the right to restrict access to any material in our collections. This could be for any one of the following reasons:

Condition: We may restrict access to material if we believe that handling could cause damage. Such items will require conservation work to repair, stabilize or dis-bind to make handling possible, but until then will remain closed.

Temporary withdrawal: Occasionally material may be loaned to other institutions or offsite for conservation work. During this time, it will not be available to researchers.

Material ordered in advance

Material must be ordered in advance of a visit. We will assess if any closure applies and aim to inform the reader in good time where possible.

However we reserve the right to restrict access to any material at any point in the reader's visit for the reasons outlined above.