



# Quaker Peace & Social Witness: an introduction

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) helps British Quakers live out their faith in the world. QPSW's work draws from the deep spiritual experience of Quakers to build sustained action for peace and social justice. As part of Quakers in Britain, we support Quakers who are led by faith to take action, and help them to extend and amplify that work for social change.

# Why Quakers work on peace and social justice issues

Our faith and our social action work – our witness – are inseparable. Each inspires the other. The Quaker testimonies to peace, integrity, equality and simplicity provide signposts, guiding us to spiritual action. Our work and our faith help us make the world more just, more equal, and more peaceful.

QPSW supports local meetings in their witness, and directly contributes to building peaceful and just communities, both in Britain and beyond. Through the activities of QPSW, working with staff in other departments of Britain Yearly Meeting, we promote equality and peace for all people touched by our work.

People who experience Quaker worship often feel inspired to try and make the world a better place. In recognising that there is something holy in all people, Quakers recognise that all struggles and joys are connected. Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) holds this holistic view of social change in our work, creates links between different issues, and connects Quakers to a wider movement for peace and justice.

The social actions that Quakers call ‘witness’ are expressions of faith.

Many Quakers respond to an inner call by joining civil society campaigns, organising through their local meetings, or making personal commitments that reflect their values.

The QPSW Central Committee, made up of 15 appointed Friends, is responsible for discerning which issues QPSW can work on. The

committee also appoints Quakers to subcommittees that oversee the distinct programmes. The largest representative Quaker decision-making body, Meeting for Sufferings, and Quakers who serve as Britain Yearly Meeting trustees then oversee QPSW work. QPSW also supports

local Quaker witness in Scotland, Wales and England by linking Friends who share common concerns. We work closely with other Quaker bodies, including the Quaker Housing Trust and the Quaker United Nations Office. Information on their work is included in this leaflet.



Quakers at a Quaker Activist Gathering, organised by QPSW. Photo: BYM

# Our work

## Justice & equality work

### Migration

Quakers around Britain have responded to the migration crisis by acting in solidarity with refugee and migrant communities. QPSW now accompanies Quakers in this work through the Sanctuary Everywhere programme. Launched in 2017, we offer resources, networking opportunities, guidance and political advocacy support to a growing network of Quaker local meetings who pledge to create a culture of welcome in their communities.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/migration](http://www.quaker.org.uk/migration)

### Crime, community and justice

QPSW works for a justice system that is restorative not retributive. The programme has an expanded concept of justice that includes societies as well as individuals, that speaks in terms of harms

rather than crimes and that works towards the downsizing of the criminal justice system and the building up of a transformative and collaborative approach to justice.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/crime-community-justice](http://www.quaker.org.uk/crime-community-justice)

### Housing

Quaker Housing Trust (QHT) is Britain Yearly Meeting's national housing charity since 1967, providing a practical response to a Quaker spiritual concern. It makes grants and loans to social housing projects. Those funds come directly from Quakers and meetings, independent of BYM. QPSW pays for a part-time member of staff as a reflection of the Yearly Meeting's concern for housing issues.

- Learn more at [www.qht.org.uk](http://www.qht.org.uk).



## **Economic justice**

Quakers seek an economic system that has equality, justice and environmental sustainability at its heart. Working alongside other faith and campaigning groups, we are calling for political action to address the damaging levels of economic inequality experienced in Britain today. We provide resources to help Friends better understand and develop an informed critique of current economic systems. We also support Quaker groups who model practical alternatives to neoliberal capitalism and enable people and the planet to prosper sustainably.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice](http://www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice)

## **Sustainability**

We support Quakers to take action on climate change, working alongside them to call for political change to keep fossil fuels in the ground and invest in a green economy that works for people and the planet. We help Quakers find ways of taking action locally and within their meetings, including divesting their money from fossil fuels, and joining with local communities to resist fossil fuel extraction projects.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability](http://www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability)

# Peace work within Britain

## Peace activism and disarmament

QPSW works to raise awareness of the human and environmental costs of militarism, the arms trade and nuclear war. We work with international peace campaigns to ban nuclear weapons and challenge the arms trade.

Together we create resources, advocate for peacebuilding, and support nonviolent direct actions that share the Quaker peace testimony with the world.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/peace](http://www.quaker.org.uk/peace)

## Peace education

Our peace education programme challenges the militarisation of schools and provides training, skill-sharing and resources for both teachers and children. We aim to nurture inner peace, helping children value themselves. By supporting peer mediation, the programme helps children to resolve their own conflicts.

We promote an understanding of the root causes of violence and war, and a commitment to justice and human rights.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education](http://www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education)

## Peaceworker scheme

QPSW funds year-long employment opportunities within small organisations that work for peace. People employed through the scheme gain valuable paid experience, and the organisations get an extra pair of hands. The scheme sustains the long-term strength of the peace movement.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers)

## Turning The Tide

QPSW's Turning The Tide (TTT) programme supports Quakers and others to take nonviolent action in ways consistent with the ends we seek – without harm and with respect for all, including those with opposing

views. The programme provides training and resources with groups working for peace and social justice and places a strong emphasis on networking and shared learning.

- Learn more at [www.turningtide.org.uk/](http://www.turningtide.org.uk/)

## International peace work

### Israel and Palestine

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a World Council of Churches programme.

It brings people from 24 countries to the West Bank to serve for three months, on rolling basis, as human rights monitors called Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs).

In the UK and Ireland it is coordinated by QPSW on behalf of 16 partners. We work for a future in which the military occupation of Palestine has ended and Israelis and Palestinians enjoy a just peace with

freedom, dignity and security based on international law.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/eappi](http://www.quaker.org.uk/eappi)

### East Africa

Since 2000, QPSW has supported community organisers in East Africa to build a nonviolent grassroots peace movement. The programme started in Kenya, and in recent years Kenyan peacebuilders have worked to share their skills with peacebuilders in Burundi and Rwanda.

Local peace activists deliver Turning the Tide training to community activists, empowering them to develop

peaceful interventions to social injustice and violent conflict.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/kenya-work](http://www.quaker.org.uk/kenya-work)

### **Conciliation**

Quakers are occasionally invited to provide quiet assistance in regions experiencing armed conflict. Historically this assistance has taken place in Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Israel-Palestine and South Africa.

At present, a part-time staff member coordinates appointed Quakers who support local conciliators in South Asia. Together they seek to

develop nonviolent solutions to entrenched conflicts. Faith is at the heart of the work.

### **Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)**

QUNO Geneva works with UN agencies and other multilateral organisations to develop international standards and practices and to promote peace, disarmament and human rights and to tackle climate change. UN diplomats, staff, and nongovernmental partners are invited to Quaker House to work on difficult issues in a quiet, off-the-record atmosphere.

- Learn more at [www.quno.org](http://www.quno.org).



# What Quaker Peace & Social Witness offers

## Events and workshops

QPSW staff expertise is a valuable resource available to all British Quakers. Our annual QPSW Spring Conference gives new attenders and curious members an opportunity to meet the staff, learn more about the work, and how QPSW can support Friends.

The annual Quaker Activist Gathering gives Quakers working for social change a place to meet up, learn and reflect on different aspects of witness, in a Quaker context.

Staff can also be booked to give a workshop or talk at your local meeting, and run regional campaign trainings from time to time.

## QPSW Grants

QPSW recognises that money can be an important factor in turning faith into action.

Through grants, QPSW fund worldwide projects to relieve those affected by natural disaster, climate

change, war or conflict. QPSW also funds individuals in need of financial assistance, and local groups working on sustainability or new economy initiatives.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making](http://www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making)

## Accompaniment and networking

Quakers who wish to take action on the issues featured in this booklet but aren't sure where to start can get support from our team.

We'll introduce to you to Quakers in other areas who share your concern about particular issues, and provide you with suggestions and support through phone conversations, emails and in-person workshops.

- To get started, call 020 7663 1056 or send an email to [qpsw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qpsw@quaker.org.uk).

## **Resources**

We offer a range of resources designed to help Quakers and other groups campaign for social change. These cover topics including peace education, building the new economy, and how to plan and document social change actions. All of these resources can be found for free online at [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk), and we can post many of the briefings, leaflets, and guides to Quakers and meetings upon request.

- Please email [qpsw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qpsw@quaker.org.uk) to request information from a particular programme, or to find out what's currently on offer.

## **Volunteering opportunities**

Those who wish to experience peacebuilding work in the field first-hand are invited to apply to our Ecumenical Accompaniment scheme in Israel and Palestine. The three month programme trains participants to be human rights monitors within a faith context.

We also help recruit young adult volunteers for the Quaker United Nations Office summer school in Geneva.

## **Paid opportunities**

Each year we announce paid placements at peace and justice organisations that have Quaker values at their heart. Our year-long peaceworker scheme enables young peace activists to gain experience of working in charities like Peace Pledge Union, LEAP Confronting Conflict and Medact.

- Learn more at [www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/peaceworkers)

# Support our work

## Give time

Help us share news of peace and social witness work by becoming a QPSW Correspondent, supporting your existing QPSW Correspondent in sharing updates with others.

Offer service for a QPSW committee or subcommittee:

[www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/quaker-service)

## Give money

Donations enable us to go on supporting the Quaker community and working with and on behalf of all Quakers in Britain to make the world a more peaceful, just, equal and sustainable place. All gifts and fundraising efforts help us turn faith into action.

[www.quaker.org.uk/donate](http://www.quaker.org.uk/donate)

## About this booklet

Published November 2018 by QPSW for Meeting for Sufferings.

A full print publication will be produced by BYM in 2019.

# We would like to hear from you!

Quaker Peace & Social Witness aims to support Quakers in Scotland, Wales and England who are passionate about social change. Get in touch with us to connect with our programmes, share news of witness work happening in your Quaker community, or link up with active Quakers across the yearly meeting.

- ★ Call 020 7663 1000 to be put through to a member of staff
- ★ Sign up to our monthly Quaker Faith in Action email newsletter:  
[bit.ly/FaithInActionNewsletter](https://bit.ly/FaithInActionNewsletter)
- ★ Like our Quaker Faith in Action page on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/faithinactionquaker](https://www.facebook.com/faithinactionquaker)
- ★ Email us at [qpsw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qpsw@quaker.org.uk)
- ★ Browse our work online: [www.quaker.org.uk/our-work](https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work).