



September 2026

Governance Gold 12

Prison and court register update (replaces Governance Gold number 10)

For the attention of area meeting clerks

Court and prison register: guidance

Yearly Meeting is now responsible for the recording of the names of Friends who have been brought before the courts for matters of conscience.

Purposes of the register

The purposes of recording the names of Friends who come into conflict with the law when acting under concern and bearing witness to the truth as revealed to them are:

1. To enter the details of the matter into the permanent records of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), acknowledging Friends' witness and their willingness to face its consequences
2. To remind ourselves that being a Quaker does not come without cost
3. To record the Society's prayerful upholding of Friends who are suffering for their faith
4. To serve as a record of the actions of the State in restricting our freedom to worship and witness.

Meetings may submit the names of Friends who have been charged with an offence. It is not necessary to wait for a trial to have taken place. However, the names of Friends who have been arrested but not yet charged should not be submitted.

The names of both members and attenders may be submitted.

Role of area meeting

It is for area meetings to decide, after appropriate discernment, whether to submit the name of a Friend for inclusion on the register.

Area meetings are reminded that they are responsible for discerning whether it is right to submit any name to Yearly Meeting for inclusion in the register. In undertaking this discernment they should consider the purposes of the register set out above. Also important is to consider whether the Friend concerned used an appropriate process of Quaker discernment and testing before taking the action.

Area meetings will want to consider how to uphold all Friends in their area who are suffering for their faith, regardless of whether their names are to be submitted for inclusion in the register.

Before submitting any name, the area meeting must ensure that the Friend knows that the minute of record concerning the register will be publicly available.

The area meeting should provide accurate details of the action and the charge. Where the outcome is known then this should be stated, including any sentence.

The area meeting should make its request in a minute to Agenda Planning Committee via YMAgenda@quaker.org.uk. If further information becomes available later (e.g. the details of a sentence) then these can be submitted by email only and a second minute is not required.

Role of Yearly Meeting

The court and prison register is part of the work of Yearly Meeting to uphold the community of Friends – in this case, focused on those who are suffering for their faith.

When Yearly Meeting enters the name of a Friend, it is recording the discernment of the area meeting that has submitted it. Yearly Meeting is not asked to test the Friend's concern afresh and is not asked to agree with or condone the action taken.

Agenda Planning Committee**July 2026**