



Leading Quakers in Britain

Our purpose and principles

Our purpose

Quakers in Britain is a membership organisation that exists to support the ambition and needs of the Quaker community. Its vision flows from the faith and discernment of Friends.

This vision evolves over time and is not articulated by a single body within the Church. As employees of Quakers in Britain, our role is to interpret and prioritise it; developing aims and objectives to achieve this vision either directly through our central work or through supporting Quakers in their activity.

Our aspirations are ambitious, so we need to be faithful, impact-driven and pragmatic in how we work towards achieving them. We are focussed and committed in pursuit of our goals, determined in our aim for a just and peaceful world, and compassionate in our treatment of people.

Nonetheless, we are honest and realistic about what can be achieved through our work alone. Sometimes we need to tell Quakers what we cannot do, as well as what we can.

Our leadership principles

We are committed to fostering a culture where colleagues can flourish and embrace continuous learning, to effectively work towards our organisational goals. To achieve this, we will exercise supportive leadership that builds trust and nurtures a commitment to inclusivity and mutual respect.

Working within these principles, we accept respectful challenge and robust conversations as part of our process, enabling us to be accountable and effective.

To embed these principles, we aspire to demonstrate the following practice in our leadership, and nurture it across the organisation:

- **Accountability**

We are all accountable for the use of our own time, that of the people we manage, for the resources and budgets we manage, and for the impact of our own and our teams' work. As leaders and managers, we seek to empower our team members to direct and prioritise their own work, but where this is not happening, we have a responsibility to direct, prioritise and manage appropriately to achieve the work of Quakers in Britain.

- **Agency and empowerment**

We believe that colleagues are more motivated by meaningful work and understanding how it contributes to our goals. We work with colleagues to plan their work. We delegate appropriate control and agency over delivering it.

- **Appreciative relationships**

We demonstrate cultural, relational and emotional intelligence in our working relationships. We model the development of strong appreciative relationships that are

characterised by compassion, respect, and integrity, and robust enough to include constructive challenge.

- **Decision-making**

We believe that better decisions are usually made by groups rather than by individuals. When we make decisions, we try to find the right balance between including all stakeholders, applying relevant expertise, and making timely progress. Where we are not part of the group entrusted with a decision, we trust and uphold those who are.

- **Fairness and transparency**

All colleagues have equal worth. Whenever possible, communication and policies on working practice are delivered and applied equally to all. Where specific variations are required relating to location, work pattern and type of work, our aim is to provide outcomes that are practical, equitable and consistent with our values.

- **Inclusive leadership**

We uphold the commitment of Quakers in Britain to foster inclusion, diversity, equity, and radical acceptance in our workplaces; where different experiences are valued and appreciated. We do not privilege certain voices because of who they are, how much they are paid, if or how they worship and who they know.

- **Learning and development**

We believe that effectiveness and efficiency are supported by continuous learning. We encourage colleagues to regularly reflect on their work, discuss challenges, collaborate with others, innovate, and develop solutions on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we will offer more traditional forms of learning and development opportunities, such as workshops and courses where appropriate.

- **Psychological safety**

We ensure that colleagues can voice ideas and concerns, acknowledge uncertainty, express vulnerability, and learn from mistakes. We will work proactively to manage misunderstandings and conflicts well.

- **Wellbeing and good work-life balance**

We believe that workloads must be sustainable. We are clear about expectations, provide support that enhances wellbeing, and support flexible working arrangements where operationally possible.

Leading Quakers in Britain

Our management practice

Accountability

We are all accountable for our time and that of the people we manage, for the resources and budgets we manage, and for the impact of our own and our teams' work. As leaders, we empower our team members to direct and prioritise their own work. Where this is not happening well, we will direct, prioritise and manage appropriately to achieve the work of Quakers in Britain.

We do this through:

Responsibility for delivery

We are focussed and committed in pursuit of our goals. We do not overpromise, but once we have agreed a goal together, we are determined to deliver. We are responsible for ensuring that our own time, and that of those we work with, is impactfully used.

We are observant and truthful. We take the time to notice and celebrate good work where we see it. We are supportive and constructive when colleagues face setbacks. We acknowledge where our own work has not achieved what we had hoped. We take the time to share concerns, and to seek and give constructive feedback. While we do this with compassion, we do not shy away from conversations about improving performance or developing capability where these are needed.

When we need step in as leaders to support, re-prioritise or manage our colleagues' work, this is a short-term response. Our goal is to hand back responsibility to the appropriate colleague.

Openness and adaptability

We do not continue performing certain tasks because we have always done them. Where work is not happening as expected, we communicate this early and provide support and guidance. We know that difficult feedback needs to be provided with care to have a positive impact.

We will look for new ways to overcome obstacles or reprioritise resources to resume progress.

Agency and empowerment

We believe that colleagues are motivated by doing meaningful work and understanding how this contributes to our goals. We work with colleagues to plan their work. We delegate appropriate control and agency over delivering it.

We do this through:

Delegation and creating a culture of high trust

We communicate openly about organisational goals, expectations, and decision-making processes. This creates a transparent environment where staff understand their own role and the context of their work.

We build trust by giving staff the freedom to make decisions and own their work, within the framework of planned objectives and parameters. Managers empower staff to set their own milestones, prioritise tasks, and monitor their progress towards planned goals. We encourage a self-management approach that allows staff to develop their decision-making skills, whilst working to understand and adapt to the different needs of neurodivergent colleagues.

This involves modelling interactions that demonstrate, individually and collectively, that senior leaders are trustworthy.

Learning and growth

We model positive behaviours, such as initiative, integrity, learning and accountability. We appreciate and encourage these behaviours when we see them.

We cultivate a mindset of continuous learning and provide constructive and motivating feedback.

We provide opportunities for colleagues to understand their strengths and areas for improvement. We provide and champion spaces for learning and collaboration, for example through action learning or team coaching initiatives.

Appreciative relationships

We demonstrate cultural and emotional intelligence in our working relationships. We model strong relationships characterised by compassion, respect, and integrity. Appreciative relationships are also robust enough to include constructive challenge.

We do this through:

Compassion and Respect

We build and model relationships that allow colleagues to share their stories, views, concerns, vulnerabilities, and strengths. Managers demonstrate cultural and emotional intelligence.

We listen to colleagues and respect their opinions and expertise.

Integrity

We model and encourage relationships based on integrity. This means that we can be open and honest and provide robust challenge.

Healthy and productive relationships

We help colleagues to build healthy and productive relationships and to manage complexity and tension.

As leaders, we respond effectively to conflict, naming and exploring it, and removing structural difficulties to help colleagues to move towards healthy and productive relationships.

Decision-making

We believe that better decisions are usually made by groups rather than by individuals. When we make decisions, we try to find the right balance between including all

stakeholders, applying relevant expertise, and making timely progress. Where we are not part of the group entrusted with a decision, we trust and uphold those who are.

We do this through:

Balance

We want decisions to be made by those with expertise and authority in the relevant areas, with the involvement of significant stakeholders. We will maximise participation wherever possible, drawing on available experience and expertise to support success.

We take time and make effort to ensure that we reach decisions after informed discussion between appropriate colleagues and, where relevant, Quakers. But we recognise that we cannot reach unanimity of every issue, and we will balance these aims with the need to make timely progress in our planned work.

Respect

We contribute actively and thoughtfully to decision-making when needed, helping to find the right way forward and being open to solutions and decisions that are not our preferred way of doing things.

Once a decision is made, save where there is a genuine legal, health and safety or whistleblowing concern, we do not try to undermine it or revisit it unless significant new information becomes known. We trust and uphold those we ask to make decisions and encourage colleagues to do the same.

Fairness and transparency

All colleagues have equal worth. Whenever possible, we will deliver and apply communication and policies on working practice equally to all. Where we require specific variations relating to location, work pattern and type of work, our aim is to provide outcomes that are equitable and consistent with our values.

We do this through:

Equality

We treat ourselves, and those we work with, as our equals. We recognise that our different roles mean we have different accountabilities. We strive for behaviours and outcomes that are equitable, rather than equal.

We recognise that leading in our hybrid, geographically dispersed work environment requires skills that balance the needs of in-person and remote team members in ways that maintain organisational identity, cohesion, and flexibility.

Inclusive leadership

We uphold the commitment of Quakers in Britain to foster inclusivity, diversity, and equity in our workplaces; where we value and appreciate different experiences. We do not privilege certain voices because of who they are, how much they are paid, if or how they worship and who they know.

We do this through:

Showing leadership

We encourage and validate inclusivity, challenging reluctance to embrace diversity and confronting unacceptable behaviour. We hold ourselves and others to account when we get things wrong.

Where appropriate, we model standing back, to allow wider participation, whilst understanding that some colleagues need different ways to contribute comfortably.

Managers take responsibility for calling out and resolving negative behaviour, structural problems and systemic issues that contribute to conflict and detract from our ability to achieve our goals.

Listening and learning

We approach colleagues and their lived experience with curiosity and compassion. We encourage a culture of continued learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion, seeking to dismantle barriers for inclusion and belonging when we see them.

Embracing diversity

We will respect and treat everyone fairly. We take responsibility for creating inclusive and anti-oppressive conditions for the areas and people we are responsible for.

We recognise the need to generate social activities on an on-going basis that lead to collaboration, productivity, innovation, and creativity. We commit to creating space to do this in the face of demanding workloads.

Learning and development

We believe that effectiveness and efficiency are supported by continuous learning. We encourage colleagues to reflect on their work, discuss challenges, collaborate with others, innovate, and develop solutions on an ongoing basis. Additionally, we offer more traditional forms of learning and development opportunities where appropriate.

We will do this through:

Training

We support training, using action learning and team coaching.

Learning and development

We provide resources for staff learning and development programmes, including management development, interpersonal skills training, continuous professional development (CPD) training for professional roles and relevant apprenticeships programmes.

Psychological safety

Psychological safety is the ability to take interpersonal risks without disproportionate negative consequences. It is a feeling of trust and confidence that allows team members to be vulnerable, share their ideas, and ask for help.

We ensure that colleagues can voice ideas and concerns, acknowledge uncertainty, express vulnerability, and learn from mistakes. We work proactively to manage misunderstandings and conflicts well.

We will do this through:

Openness and curiosity

We support colleagues to experiment in how they approach their work. Where they share and discuss risks with us in advance, we support colleagues to take calculated risks without fear of punishment for failure.

Approaching challenges with curiosity. We know the value of listening. We engage with our colleagues' and our stakeholders' opinions, concerns, and ideas.

We are thoughtful and intentional in responding to errors. We use mistakes as opportunities for learning and improvement.

Support and challenge

We notice and celebrate achievement, effectiveness, and creativity. We take the time to provide constructive feedback – we do not shy away from challenging ourselves and our colleagues to enable improvement, but we balance this with trust in our colleagues' ability and experience. We acknowledge our own fallibility and take responsibility for our mistakes.

Handling conflict, valuing equity

We invest time in handling tensions and conflict in a way which respects the dignity of everyone involved and allows the right way forward for our work to emerge. We are not afraid to question and challenge norms that may be holding us back.

We deal with unacceptable behaviour including the abuse of power and privilege.

Wellbeing and good work-life balance

We believe that hard work and commitment must be sustainable. We are clear about expectations, provide support that enhances wellbeing, and support flexible working arrangements where operationally possible.

We will do this through:

Clear and appropriate expectations

We are clear in providing expectations for delivering work and measuring progress. Managers are alert to staff working excessive hours and accumulating TOIL and leave, supporting staff to review and prioritise their work.

We create a level playing field, where remote and office-based colleagues have an equal chance to contribute and develop.

Flexibility and inclusivity

We coach staff to work with agility and flexibility where possible, focussing on delivery and progress rather than physical presence.

Where we can, we support flexible working arrangements that meet colleagues needs and promote work-life balance.

Active support for wellbeing

We value the wellbeing of our staff. Managers listen to concerns about issues affecting their colleagues and their work/life balance, and actively promote the support services we provide.

Working together as a leadership team

- Working as a team of leaders requires us to work across team and department boundaries, creating robust, caring, and supportive relationships.
- We invest in those relationships. Using those relationships, we try to resolve issues between teams and departments directly and only involve a more senior leader where this has not been possible.
- Holding responsibility for line management brings additional accountability, because we have direct influence over how colleagues use their time and the organisation's resources.
- We prioritise time for learning as a group.
- We are accountable to our peers for effective delivery of our work – particularly where this has an impact on, or relates to, their work. As peers, we find the right balance of challenge and support in our relationships with each other.
- Leadership and management require skills, attitudes and approaches which can be developed, refined, improved, and adjusted as the situation demands. We use our time together to invest in our ability to lead and manage.
- As a group of leaders, we have shared accountability for our budget and resources. We treat our budgets as shared resources, acknowledging that sometimes the right decision for the organisation will not be the decision which prioritises our own work.
- We have accountability for shared work as a leadership team, and we agree systems which allow us to share this equitably.