



Strategic Plan
2023 - 2026

Our Concern

Justice, fairness, and
opportunity are not
experienced equally
by everyone in
our community

Quaker Service in 2023

Following the laying down of our Societal Change programme in summer 2022, and the Family Programme and Mouteens Project at Quaker Cottage in December 2022, we have been presented with the opportunity to evaluate where unmet need lies in 2023, to strengthen and develop existing services, and to build new service and relationships collaboratively and with purpose. We have taken this moment to revise and replace our previous Strategic Plan (2021 - 2024).

Our Purpose

Led by Quaker values,
to provide services
that give support
and effect change

Our Vision

A community in
which each individual
is valued, their voice
heard, and their
need addressed

Our Values

All of our work is
value-led - values
which we hold in
common with
Quakers

Our Values

Because all human life is of equal worth, we hope to work creatively for **peace** and reconciliation. We seek to give voice where a need presents itself and to find creative ways of dealing with conflict by appealing to the capacity for understanding in ourselves and in others. We recognise the importance of human relationships for individuals, families, and communities. We believe that working in partnership with others to restore positive relationships is beneficial in bringing about reconciliation and can lead to change.

Our belief in **equality** inspires us to challenge those in power and to try to change systems that cause social injustice and hinder us from being a caring community. We aim to treat all people fairly and without judgement, respecting and accepting all, regardless of individual circumstances. We are true to the commitments we make and steadfast and compassionate in the support we provide. Clear sighted as to our purpose, we work quietly and with **integrity**.

As an organisation we seek to ensure that we are financially healthy, that we use our resources responsibly and that we work collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for those we serve. Aware of our impact on the planet, we recognise our personal and collective role in promoting **sustainability** and of proactive environmental management.

Peace

Equality

Integrity

Sustainability

Why we are needed

Are you ready to play your part in building the community we seek – one in which each individual is valued, their voice heard, their need addressed? **Paul Parker, Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, 2021.**

The charity's Concern is that justice, fairness, and opportunity are not experienced equally by everyone in our community. Though society has come a long way since the early days of our work, inequality persists in our community.

Nearly one-in-five people in Northern Ireland live in poverty, including over 100,000 children. One in fourteen households is experiencing food insecurity.¹ Energy price spikes throughout 2022 and into 2023, coupled with high inflation, have contributed to a prolonged cost of living crisis, the impact of which has hit home for many. The Bank of England has raised interest rates on thirteen consecutive occasions and energy, food, fuel and household bills have increased exponentially.²

Political instability is hampering and damaging community services and public confidence with 70% of the population thinking that the Good Friday Agreement has failed to deliver sound governance.³ The Northern Ireland Assembly has been suspended and without an Executive since February 2022, having only briefly emerged from another prolonged period of suspension between January 2017 and January 2020. As a result of the cost-of-living crisis and pressures on public spending, severe cuts in departmental budgets are being implemented, adversely affecting services and state supports for all sections of our community, but with a particular impact on the most vulnerable. Far reaching and critical budgetary decisions are being made by civil servants, highlighting the democratic deficit in Northern Ireland.

Unique challenges for public services have been created not only through inflation but also by the ongoing impact of Brexit and by the changes in the labour market wrought by the Covid pandemic. Back-logs in the court systems and staff shortages have contributed to an increase in the local prison population of 14% in the last twelve months⁴, with over 37% on remand⁵ compared to 17% on remand in England and Wales.⁶ The NI prison population reached a record high in June 2023, and it is clear many vulnerable prisoners need support.

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Poverty in NI 2022

² NI Consumer Council - Cost of living 2022

³ UK Parliament - Northern Ireland Good Friday Agreement Analysis - March 2023

⁴ Department of Justice NI - Weekly situation reports 2022/2023

⁵ The Irish News - June 2023 - Justice system needs a more targeted approach to reduce adult re-offending

⁶ Ministry of Justice UK - Offender management statistics Oct - Dec 2022.

What we will do next

This is a time of opportunity for Quaker Service. We have consulted widely on the way forward with our members and with F/friends in Ulster Quarterly Meeting and beyond. We are grateful to the F/friends, programme beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, elected representatives, community groups, and voluntary sector partners who have helped us in our discernment of the way forward.

A key focus is our work in the criminal justice system, central to which is the contribution made by volunteers in support of those serving sentences in prisons or making the transition into the community on release. This work within and beyond prisons has continued through our Quaker Connections programme. It consists of a befriending programme whereby men with no or few visitors can receive visits and a friendly ear in person or by zoom. The programme is volunteer led with a staff coordinator and works primarily with men in the care of HMPs Maghaberry & Magilligan. Befrienders also support prisoners at risk (SPAR) within the prisons, men in the Care and Supervision Units, and support drop-in and education programmes in Maghaberry. Our Circles of Support programme helps men returning to the community after long spells in prison, building a volunteer circle of support with the man, to help him in rebuilding his life. This programme also works with other agencies to assist in resettlement and reintegration into the community and to support the repair of relationships.

Aligned to our work in the criminal justice system is our desire to strengthen our agency in restorative practice. This is apparent in our operational practices, through our representation on the Restorative Practices Forum NI, which we co-chair, and through our commitment to Family Group Conferencing. Our intention is to pilot the FGC model amongst prisoners in the care of Hydebank Wood College.

Underlining the importance of our relationships with Friends is the planned move of Quaker Service to Frederick Street Quaker Meeting House in North Belfast. Quaker Service wishes to be a strong, outward facing presence at Frederick Street, highlighting that our work is a visible demonstration of the values of Quakerism. Within the building's shared space, we aim to provide new services to respond to community need and to develop social enterprise to ensure our sustainability moving forward. In that way, working alongside the Quaker Meeting, Quaker Service can promote outreach and address our shared concern.

The use of the Cottage by Black Mountain Shared Space Project throughout 2023 means that cross community work has continued there, and we are consulting with a number of stakeholders so that these assets may continue to support our purpose.

①

We will strengthen
and invest in the
Quaker Connections
programme

②

We will
strengthen our
relationships
with Friends

Between July 2023 and June 2026, we will focus on four strategic aims

③

We will be
responsive to
community need

④

We will be
a sustainable
charity

1. We will strengthen and invest in the Quaker Connections programme

- **By developing our skilled and experienced volunteer base**
 - Developing new volunteer recruitment pathways and partners to increase the number of our volunteers across all our programmes
 - Developing a volunteer support model that is inclusive, that supports the training needs of volunteers, and which allows us to show the impact of volunteering
- **By consolidating and strengthening our befriending, Supporting Prisoners at Risk, (SPAR), drop-in and education programmes**
 - Agreeing new procedures for arranging visits with the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS)
 - Developing new referral pathways for befriending programmes with NIPS and other agencies within the prison
 - Developing our role in SPAR and in Care and Supervision Units
- **By consolidating and developing our Circles of Support programme**
 - Commencing 12-week pre-release engagement with referrals for the Circles of Support programme for people leaving prison after lengthy sentences
 - Formalising the stages and durations of support, recording and engagement
- **By piloting and developing new services**
 - Developing specific support services for prisoners from ethnic minority groups in line with volunteer feedback
 - Piloting Family Group Conferencing, focusing on those prisoners in the care of Hydebank Wood College

- **By developing better internal and external communications and reporting on the impact of our work**
 - Developing a Service Advisory Group for Quaker Connections
- **By developing pre-release work opportunities for people returning from prison**
 - Strengthening relationships for referrals through NIPS Resettlement branch and the Probation Board of Northern Ireland
 - Developing pre-release work and volunteering opportunities through Quaker Care Ltd.
- **By collaborating with others for penal reform in NI, and in conjunction with them:**
 - Establishing the need and support for a penal reform entity in NI
 - Enabling the recommendations (if any) from this exercise
- **By completing our work on housing and homelessness issues impacting on women in contact with the criminal justice system**
 - Publication of research paper in Autumn 2024

2. We will strengthen our relationships with Friends

- We will move our base to Frederick Street Meeting House
 - Working alongside Frederick Street Friends to be a strong, outward facing presence at Frederick Street, highlighting that our work is a visible demonstration of the values of Quakerism
 - Developing new services and social enterprise at Frederick Street
- By reviewing and enhancing all external communications
 - Agreeing and implementing an appropriate communications strategy for the charity
 - Redesigning and launching a new website
 - Consolidating charity social media channels
 - Holding public events and talks that enable reconciliation, truth, equality and sustainability in NI
- Through developing agency in effecting societal change
 - Advocating the values of Friends in an audible and visible way
 - Collaborating with appropriate social justice campaigns
 - Actioning the Societal Change Programme Evaluation 2022 recommendations
 - Assessing the feasibility of a policy function within the charity

3. We will be responsive to community need

- **Through researching and piloting services which address unmet need**
 - Through community outreach at Frederick Street
 - Through developing befriending initiatives beyond our prison work
 - Through listening to the voices of refugees and asylum seekers and encouraging appropriate support in collaboration with community and Friends interest groups
- **By maintaining links and support for former beneficiaries of the Family Programme**
 - Through re-engagement at Frederick Street
 - Through collaborative programmes with community partners
- **By engaging with statutory and voluntary partners to explore future uses for the Family Centre, Quaker Cottage and office accommodation vacated at 541 Lisburn Road**
 - Engagement with NSPCC, Department of Justice and Department of Health on the establishment of a Barnahus⁷ in NI
 - Engagement with the National Trust regarding their plans for improving community access on Divis and Black Mountain
 - Engagement with Black Mountain Shared Space Project partners on their views about the Cottage and Family Centre and future service there
 - Engagement with agencies developing solutions to housing and homelessness issues
 - Responding to the consultation on the Independent Review of Social Care

⁷ Council of Europe - a child friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency response model to child sexual abuse and provision of services for child victims and witnesses of violence

4. We will be a sustainable charity

- **By developing social enterprise initiatives through our trading arm, Quaker Care Ltd.**
 - Recruitment of a Business Development Manager for Quaker Care Ltd.
 - Open a café which can also function as service space at Frederick Street
 - Develop and diversify our circular economy social enterprise interests
- **Increasing our fundraising capacity**
 - Redefine our 'Case for Support' within a five-year fundraising plan
 - Increase unrestricted income through private giving
- **By cultivating and sustaining a network of purposeful relationships that support our concern**
 - Engagement with students and departments at Ulster University
 - Developing relationships with Friends globally
 - Support for the governance of other value compatible organisations
 - Inviting third sector management representation on our Boards
- **By effectively measuring the quality and impact of our work**
 - Developing case work and case studies in Quaker Connections
 - Adopting standardised outcome measurement across our work
 - Through measuring the individual and social impact of our work
- **By managing and minimising our impact on climate change**
 - Through Social Enterprise which upholds our values
 - Through responsible governance and operations
 - In our investments and supply chains including support for community wealth building⁸
 - Development and adoption of sustainability policies and procedures

⁸ Centre for Local Economic Strategies - a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people

Our Purpose

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to provide services
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and effect change

How you can help us

There are many ways that individuals, businesses, and organisations can support the work of Quaker Service

Financial support

- Nominate us as your charity of the year.
- Make a donation or a collection for our work.
- Hold staff fundraising events.

Volunteer support

Volunteer your skills, time or resources. We always need volunteers to help in our charity shop, befrienders to help people in prison, or gardeners for our allotment. There are many and varied skills useful to a modern charity – graphic design, data management, app development, jam-making, building maintenance, driving, cleaning, cooking, and so on.

Raise Awareness

- Raise awareness of what we do and the services we provide.
- Let others know who we are – a regional charity meeting community needs.

Give us feedback

- What's working well, where can we improve.

Our Vision

A community in which
each individual is valued,
their voice heard, and
their need addressed



To find out more about how you can work
with us to make a real difference locally,
please get in touch by calling

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