

Meeting-Centred Support: Frequently Asked Questions

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Do we need to complete the expressions of interest form as a local or area meeting?

You can express interest as an individual or as a group. Groups can be formal bodies, such as a local or area meeting, general meeting or Quaker Registered Body. But we also want to hear from other groups of Friends who may have discussed this informally, in a Quaker setting.

Can only role holders complete the form?

No. Anyone can fill out the form on the website, you do not need to be a role holder.

Can I talk to someone before I fill out the form?

Yes. Please email mcs@quaker.org.uk and you can ask any questions about the process.

When is the deadline to fill out the form?

Sunday 1 December

What happens after that?

We hope to make decisions about the general location of a pilot hub and base for four new local development workers in the spring of 2020. As part of the decision making process we are intending to have more detailed conversations with Quaker communities where we feel there is a critical mass of interest or need for a hub or local development worker. This might include more detailed conversations about hopes, aspirations and challenges in your area as well as the logistics and resource implications of placing a worker or hub near to you.

We expect to share an update with Friends who have contributed to this consultation in early 2020.

Who will be making the final decision?

Decisions about where the next group of local development workers will be based will be made by a working group of Woodbrooke and Britain Yearly Meeting staff.

The decision about the location of the pilot hub will be made by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Are local development workers paid, and are they paid ministers?

Local development workers are paid staff, employed by Britain Yearly Meeting. They are not ministers or pastors. The work of local development workers will not take responsibility away from local Friends. Their role is to support Friends in the work Friends choose to do, in that locality. Local development workers have no special authority over the communities they work alongside.

What are the motivations for Britain Yearly Meeting working with Woodbrooke?

This move is driven by the needs of Quaker meetings and in response to the feedback and evaluation of the Vibrancy Project. Britain Yearly Meeting is working closely with Woodbrooke as Woodbrooke has over 100 years' experience of supporting Quaker communities with matters of faith, witness, love and service. Woodbrooke has a long working relationship with Britain Yearly Meeting providing Quaker learning to the Yearly Meeting.

This move aims to bring the work of both organisations closer to Friends. We have heard for a long time that Friends feel far from the work in London. They also need solutions specific to the challenges they face being Quakers in the world.

Will all staff be moved out of London and Birmingham?

Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke already have a significant number of staff based outside of London and Birmingham. So this development represents an evolution rather than a revolution. Friends House in London and Woodbrooke's site in Birmingham will continue to be a base for Quaker staff. There will also be the opportunity for people to work for Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke without having to work in Birmingham or London. We are excited by the prospect of a wider variety of people being able to apply for jobs in the two organisations.

Will the hub model make it harder to contact staff?

We hope that it will make it easier. Of course there are always teething problems in any new work, however we hope that staff will become closer to the Friends they serve.

Will hub staff only be working for the locality they are based in?

Staff in hubs or clusters may be local development workers, or they may be staff who are doing other centrally managed work, that can be delivered from outside of London or Birmingham. Some work will need to stay based in London or Birmingham and we expect to assess this on a case-by-case basis.

Can meetings in London express interest in having a local development worker?

We are planning to have a local development worker within reach of all local meetings within five years. This includes meetings in London.

What criteria will you use to decide locations?

We'll be looking at a range of factors to decide the bases of both local development worker and the location of a hub/cluster. These will include the needs and views of Quaker communities, geographical spread (including the realities of being a three-nation yearly meeting), transport links, costs of working spaces and the need to provide adequate facilities and a safe working environment. One of the factors we'll be particularly interested in for the location of the hub is whether there are already clusters of staff working outside of London/Birmingham whose work could be enhanced by the presence of a hub. This is not an exhaustive list and we expect to explore these things in greater detail through conversations with Friends expressing interest.