

Coronavirus

Advice to Quaker employers



23 March 2020

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This advice is issued to Quaker meetings in Britain. It is to give advice and guidance to employers on how to support employees as best as possible during the global coronavirus [Covid-19] outbreak in 2020.

Check on the BYM website, www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus, as information is changing daily.

Trustee responsibilities

Area meeting trustees will be required to take decisions that may affect their employees. It is really important that you make these decisions quickly without rushing them. Each area meeting's response will be slightly different and will depend upon the resources available the meeting. Local meetings will need to liaise carefully with AM trustees to be sure that what is offered across each area meeting is consistent and fair to all employees and volunteers.

Volunteers

You do not have legal responsibility to volunteers in the same way as to employees. Do remember though that decisions you take may have a significant effect on some volunteers, in particular if they have accommodation tied to their role. Be mindful of how you can support people during this time.

Taking care of your employees

Communicating

It is really important that during this time you communicate well with colleagues and volunteers that work for your meeting. For an employee the uncertainty about ongoing employment or the status of their role may be more unsettling than the personal effect of the virus.

Be aware that you may need to issue advice more regularly than you would usually expect to. Area meeting trustees may need to be more readily available to deal with requests and issues that employees have at this time.

There may not be a one-size-fits-all solution for all employees so be sure to treat people fairly, and in comparable roles equally.

Mental health

Many people will be experiencing raised levels of anxiety at this time. As an employer you try to be sympathetic towards employees and requests that they make of you. Try to accommodate people where possible and most of all treat people fairly and with love and tenderness.

Pastoral care

You may find it helpful to put in place a support group that can be available by phone or video for employees to seek pastoral support. Consider other ways that you can support employees, volunteers and role-holders.

Isolation

Being isolated can be damaging to people's wellbeing. Be aware of role where people may now find themselves isolated. If you are closing your meeting house and you have a residential warden think about how you can keep in touch with them and avoid them becoming separated from the community.

Useful contacts and links

In person

- supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk or wardenship@quaker.org.uk
- 020 7663 1007

Online information

- www.quaker.org.uk/coronavirus
- www.quaker.org.uk/employers

Social media

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/BritishQuakers/
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BritishQuakers>
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/britishquakers/

Online non-Quaker information

- The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS): www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO): www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus