

Quaker Service

Annual Report

‘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?’

*Clerk of Britain
Yearly Meeting of
the Religious
Society of
Friends 2021*



Quaker Service Management Board

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Margaret Hastings – Finance and Administration Officer
Sinéad Bailie – Quaker Connections Development Manager
Rory Doherty – Societal Change Project Manager
Finn Stoneman - Societal Change Project Assistant (to May '21)
Grant McCullough – Quaker Cottage Manager
Jain Livingstone – Family Worker
Sharon Crainey – Deputy Quaker Cottage Manager / Childcare Coordinator
Elaine Bailey – Deputy Childcare Coordinator
Gillian Wright – Childcare Worker
Siobhán McKinley - Mounteens Manager (to August '21)
Thomas Faulkner – Mounteens Leader-in-charge
Ronán Walker-Cunningham – Mounteens Assistant

Quaker Cottage International Volunteers

Amelia Gunn – USA
Michael Brewer-Berres – USA
Jan Marx – Germany
Chloe Halstead - USA

Quaker Care Staff

John Henry Parker – Retail Development Manager
Jennifer Hughes – Online Retail Assistant
Jean Morelli – Retail Assistant

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'I have been referring women to Quaker Cottage for over 20 years. Women often hit a brick wall and need help. Quaker Cottage is the turning point to help them get back onto their feet and make better choices in the future.'

Wendy Robinson,
Senior Support Manager at Shankill Surestart

Our Shared Concern

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

Our Purpose

To play our part in creating positive change in our community by supporting, working alongside, and advocating for individuals and families in practical, purposeful, and resourceful ways. Grounded in our Quaker values of equality, integrity, peace, reconciliation, and sustainability, we invest in practical and relationship-based support to address the identified needs.

Our Charity Vision

Our founding Quaker ethos is embedded in our work and approach. Confident and outward looking, we seek as a charity to be purposeful, resourceful, innovative, and dynamic in responding to need and to opportunity; collaborative in our relationships and committed to enabling positive change.

Our Values

Quakers have a tradition of putting faith into action and providing service to others. Quaker Service had its beginnings some fifty years ago in 1969 when Friends in Belfast took practical action to provide shelter at the Meeting House for families left homeless due to sectarian violence.

We believe that there is a divine spark in everyone, and this leads us to value the worth and unique nature of each person. 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 caring communities. 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 all human life is of equal worth, we seek to work creatively for **peace** and reconciliation, commit to change and give voice where we feel there is a need, finding 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. Working in partnership with others to restore positive relationships can lead to change, develop support structures, and bring about **reconciliation**.

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.

Chairperson's Foreword

Elizabeth Dickson



The opening months of the 2021-2022 year brought a gradual lessening of the restrictions of the previous twelve, but not an end to the disruption caused on many levels by the pandemic. For all of us, these are uncertain and challenging times, but for our service users Covid has had a disproportionate impact. The priority, whether at the Cottage, in our prison work or through the Quaker Shop, has been to maintain our services and to provide much needed continuity of care and support. My thanks go to our staff and volunteers, who have shown resilience, cheerfulness, and sure footedness as they seek to negotiate the shifting terrain of the day to day.

There is gratitude also to our funders who have continued to enable the work of Quaker Service throughout the year. We value the longstanding relationships we enjoy with a range of Trusts and Foundations, as detailed in this report. The support we receive from Quaker Meetings across Britain and Ireland, as well as the donations from individuals and from fundraising events, are of great importance and emphasise the role of Quaker Service as the charity of Friends.

The Management Board of Quaker Service has collective responsibility for all aspects of the running of the charity. The Board and its sub committees met regularly over the course of the year, although it is indicative of these strange times that virtual rather than in person meetings were the norm until well into 2022. Financial oversight is exercised through the Finance and Personnel Committee, and it is pleasing to be able to report a small surplus at the end of the year. Our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan was agreed in September 2021. It is ambitious in scope but firmly grounded in our Quaker values and directed towards achieving our purpose of playing our part in creating positive change in our community by supporting, working alongside, and advocating for individuals and families in practical, purposeful and resourceful ways.

Since 1988 the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has been a major funder of our work at the Cottage, contributing in recent years around 50% of costs. That mutually beneficial relationship has been integral on many levels and greatly appreciated, although there has always been an awareness of the risks inherent in dependence on one source of funding. In March 2022 the Trust contacted us to propose a change in the contract, moving the method of service delivery to individual home visits across Belfast for family support and play therapy and ending the group centred work with women and their children at the Cottage. Board and staff agreed that we could not accept the contract and so we enter 2022-2023 with that shortfall in funding and with the significant challenge – and opportunity – of sustaining and developing our work at a time when need could not be more urgent.

Thank you for your support.

Elizabeth Dickson

Chief Executive's Report

Shane Whelehan

It is reassuring to read the details contained in this Annual Report, of the service that staff and countless volunteers have successfully delivered in translating Quaker values in the communities where we work, and of the testimonies of beneficiaries of that service. I am thankful to work amongst such committed teams.



In September last year, after pandemic related delays, we published the External Review of The Family Programme at Quaker Cottage. The review was commissioned by Quaker Service and written by Dr Liz McShane with additional research completed by Annie Campbell, and it reports significant positive outcomes for vulnerable families with high levels of need because of the uniqueness of the Programme and its relationship focused therapeutic practice. It reassuringly notes that mothers attending experience many life-changing outcomes through the Programme, for them personally and for their children. All participants identified positive changes in their lives, in their children's lives, in their relationships with their children and in their confidence and ability to access help and services in the wider community. A full copy of the review can be found on our website.

The Societal Change Project also published a wholly positive evaluation in February this year, covering the project's activities and outcomes for the period May 2019 to April 2021. The evaluation, completed by Andrew Hamilton from Ulster University, noted the project was a highly successful initiative with a commitment to influencing change at policy level regarding mental health services and support for young people. In consideration of the recommendations from the evaluation it was agreed that there was no sense that we should embark on an extension of the societal change programme in the form in which it was running. A period of consolidation is required to interrogate the recommendations that we develop a clear strategy and position on how the Charity can have a public facing role in shaping and influencing policy, through campaigning and advocacy.

In Spring last year, Family Group Conference NI dissolved and transferred their assets and resources to Quaker Service to support the inclusion of the Family Group Conference model into our practice as well as to better support restorative practice across our organisation. We value FGCNI's confidence in us to develop this model and we are thankful to Mena Wilson and the Board of Family Group Conference NI for all the hard work, advocacy, and successes of the Programme throughout the previous 25 years. We look forward to reporting positively on the development of this initiative within our work over the coming months and years.

I hope the following reports illuminate how our staff and volunteers, most of whom are not Friends, are living and working Friends' testimonies in profound and humbling ways. Thank you to our staff, volunteers and Board for their tenacity and commitment, and to those staff who have moved on in the past year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Shane Whelehan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Family Programme at Quaker Cottage

For Quaker Cottage, the year to the end of March 2022 was a period where the transition out of the Covid19 pandemic dominated much of our decision making. On almost a weekly basis we needed to re-evaluate, reassess, and rewrite risk assessments, taking into account Early Years directives, agency policies, government guidelines, staff, volunteer, and service user anxieties. Thankfully there was little resistance to most of the measures that were needed although it was quite clear that there was some pessimism and anti-vaccine support within the communities our families come from.

One example of this was a mother, who was agreeable to wearing a mask while travelling on the minibus but asked if she could remove it whilst in her own street as she felt that neighbours would think that she was 'stupid' for wearing a mask and would ridicule her if they saw her. For the most part the restrictions quickly became the norm, and it is only recently that we have eased many of the preventative measures such as taking temperature readings of all our bus passengers, maintaining a one-way system in the building, having children gather in small and distinct bubbles and restricting mothers access to the play areas.

"When I see the Quaker bus, I feel fuzzy in my tummy, because I know I'm going there, I love going to Quakers"



The Family Programme is a bespoke and unique service that allows the families attending to grow and blossom together in a welcoming inclusive environment. The work is diverse, intense, and enriching for all who are involved. To some it may appear that the focus of the work centres around the mother. It is true that she is generally the main carer and nurturer of each family, and it would be our hope that by building on her strengths, and increasing her opportunities, the result will be a stronger and a more resilient family unit.

The childcare work is as transformative as the groupwork with the mothers. Every day when we collect the afterschool children from their homes and bring them for their group time at the cottage, it is obvious how excited they are when they see our bus arriving. Chloe, one of our long-term volunteers from the United States is regularly greeted with hugs from the children. The excitement on the bus is palpable with lots of questions about the afternoon's activities – will we have a picnic on the deck; how are the sunflower seeds we planted doing, will we get to decorate the candles made at a previous craft session. Of course, there are times when a child's mood is different, and a sullen mood requires a different response.

The children honestly respond to being asked how their day was and staff will respond appropriately. The volunteer's skills and commitment to the children is invaluable to the work we do. We aim to give children that attend the afterschool sessions the tools to cope better with what life might throw at them and to help teach them healthy and positive ways to cope when life gets tough.



Many describe the year with us as a life changing experience that will live with them forever. They often use their group time to explore and work through some of the most difficult and challenging issues in their lives

During and on completion of the year-long family support programme, most participants report that their personal development - self-awareness, self-esteem, skills, and aspirations have all greatly improved. Many describe the year at the Cottage as a life changing experience that has a long-term impact. They often use their group time to explore and work through some of the most difficult and challenging issues in their lives and they regularly relay stories of having 'moved on' and found themselves renewed and refreshed by the experience of being a part of the Programme.

Participants attribute this to the breadth of experiences offered including group therapy, talking therapy, one-to-one counselling sessions, team-building activities, peer support and encouragement. The programme strikes a balance by giving the mums opportunities to have new and enriching experiences such as day trips on our summer programme and health and beauty sessions at the cottage. We find that nutritious food, opportunities for sharing stories, companionship, and a healthy dose of 'good craic' are all elements that create a sense of belonging and of enjoying life outside their home environment. Quaker Cottage is a place that they want to come to and where they feel that they belong. Participants report that they have learned to value themselves as women and as parents as a result of the programme, recognising and emphasising their positive personal attributes.

Domestic abuse, abusive and coercive relationships are prevalent for the women attending either as adults or during childhood. Staff observe increased 'self-esteem' which is evidenced by changes in the way participants speak about themselves more positively, taking an increased pride in their appearance, valuing, and taking time for themselves, and becoming more aware of both their physical and mental health needs.

The most recent Inspection by Early Years was very positive about the management and delivery of the childcare services and also observed the importance of this style of working by combining childcare and mothers support groups within the one facility.

The Inspector went on to say that “Staff interactions with the children were very child centred as they listened, engaged, and responded to individual need in a way that was gentle, encouraging, and respectful. Smiles, hugs, comfort, and praise all contributed to a nurturing and caring environment for children”.



Working with agencies such as FareShare and In Kind Direct helps us to provide additional support to families



How much has been delivered?

Group therapy



167
full
sessions

980
individual
attendances

90%
against
target

Creche and play therapy



204
full
sessions

2,211
individual
attendances

110%
against
target

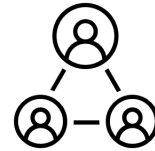
437 Individual
Counselling
Sessions



624 Home
Support
visits



166 specialised pro-
social modelling
sessions (parenting)

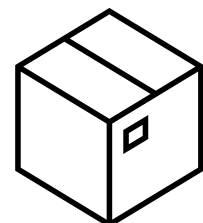


Over **1,440** courtesy
minibus pickups
taking mothers and
young children to our
purpose-built centre
on the mountain



Healthy, fresh
home-cooked
meals for adult
participants

720 Food
Parcels
delivered to
families



Quaker Cottage Afterschool Programme

We cannot change the past 2 years we have all lived through, but we are looking forward instead of back. Everyone's journey is different and together the aim is to ensure the journey of the children is a kind and pleasant one. Some of the younger children are too young to remember the lockdowns during the pandemic and the older children do not need to be constantly reminded of Covid and how tough it was. When Covid is raised in conversations staff recognise how challenging it was for the children and reinforce how well they adapted and lived through all the challenges and restrictions.

Most families have only one opportunity to attend the Quaker Cottage programme and staff aim to support families in making that first step. We know that stepping onto that minibus for the first time with new people and travelling up to the white house on the mountain can be scary, so we provide lots of encouragement and support as each family places their trust in the staff and programmes at the Cottage.

Throughout the year the childcare team have ensured that all the planning and preparation of the sessions, the setting and the activities are approached with the child's needs to the fore. The childcare team witness day in day out how the children are influenced by positive words, actions, and activities and these often become a visible part of the children's thoughts, words, and actions. Experience tells us that that smiling and laughing becomes contagious.



It is important for staff to understand what is happening in the children's lives, and by listening, believing, and empathising with them, it is possible to help them move forward and help them find ways to become stronger and more resilient. We strive for their year at Quaker Cottage to be full of positive experiences and for them to have an abundance of love, laughter, and positive thoughts which will support and nourish them through their life's journey.



"I try to tell my friends about Quakers, but they just don't get it, I just love Quakers"

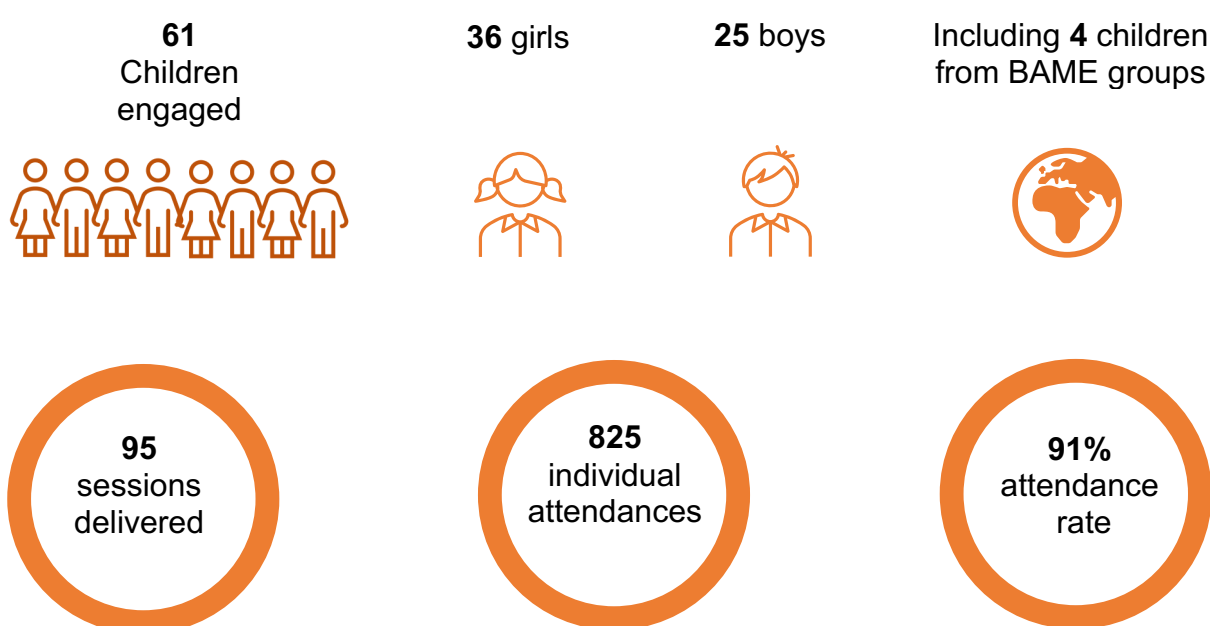
Ellagh age 10

"I think of Quakers every day, not just a Wednesday"

Lori age 10

The playrooms are always bright and inviting for children, inviting and not overwhelming. Most afternoons can be calm and relaxed though busy and productive, with programme planning bespoke for each child and involving them in the process. The children attending the Cottage are all *“at risk of not developing to their full potential”* and this may not be personal to that individual’s additional need but personal to a trauma they have been subjected to or witnessed or because of the environment they are living in. The needs of the children are paramount, and staff support them to feel valued, respected and loved. In demonstrating the value of love, care and assurance, happiness can be found.

How much has been delivered?



Programme Outcomes

Progress was measured within the programme across three main areas of impact.

1. Ability to make new friends / develop new friendships
 93% of our afterschool’s showed progress in this area. The average improvement across the duration of the programme was 75%
2. Ability to communicate in a group
 86% of our Afterschool’s showed progress in this area. The average improvement across the duration of the programme was 68%
3. Ability to deal with challenging situations
 93% of our Afterschool’s showed progress in this area. The average improvement across the duration of the programme was 20%



Mounteens Programme

Mounteens is a whole-community project aimed at engaging, and empowering young people referred and assessed by health and/or social care professionals as “at risk” or “in need.” The young people, often with complex needs and presenting as at risk attend Mounteens every evening, with one-to-one support and house visits integral to the programme. Many have significant barriers to participation and engagement, having slipped through the net of formal education, statutory services, and other support agencies. Young people attending the Mounteens programme present a wide range of issues, with many impacted by low self-esteem, isolation, trauma, and mental-ill health and these are significant learning challenges.

The programme provides a safe, therapeutic space to explore areas of concern both on an individual and group basis. It is a place where young people can begin to trust others, grow together in confidence, and make those vital steps towards building positive, transformational outlets within their lives.

The project has seen some staff changes in development throughout 2021, with the Manager Siobhan McKinley leaving to pursue a career opportunity within the arts, the Youth Support Worker becoming appointed Leader-in-Charge in December '21 and a new Assistant Youth Worker employed all in a short period. This staff



complement, with varied youth work backgrounds and experiences, has resulted in a strong team to reach, support, and provide a range of workshops, activities and interventions aimed at supporting young peoples' personal, social, and educational development

Covid restrictions presented many challenges for staff and young people over the past year, and many young people were feeling isolated. Participation in group workshops and group activities became narrowed at times, though opportunities for one-to-one support increased for some of the work. These opportunities provided space to explore values, ideas, and issues, enabling young people to progress and find their voice. There was a significant rise generally in numbers of young people wrestling with mental health and higher levels of anxiety were evident; the Mounteens programme continues to support young people finding their place in society through offering educative, empowering, and inclusive programmes and opportunities

Case Study - K

Having had a problematic childhood which has continued throughout her adolescent life, K struggled both within her home life and academic studies. Her father walked out of her family home when she was just 13, a place where she lived with a constant fear of the unknown. She was then regularly moved from one parent's home to the other. Having parents from both sides of the community has negatively affected both her education, and social life. Her father has stated on multiple occasions that he doesn't want his daughter to be taught at a Catholic school, whilst her mother has the same stance when it comes to her education, stating she doesn't belong in a Protestant school. This has resulted in K being moved from a grammar school where she was regularly bullied and being transferred to a special school that caters for individuals with social, emotional, and behavioural disorders. K's erratic behaviour is a consequence of the trauma and negative experiences in her



"I usually get really anxious meeting new people, like I get panic attacks and all, but it's ok up here"

YP age 13

Going to Quakers has made my life better by having new, good friends, building my confidence more, and speaking up more about things."

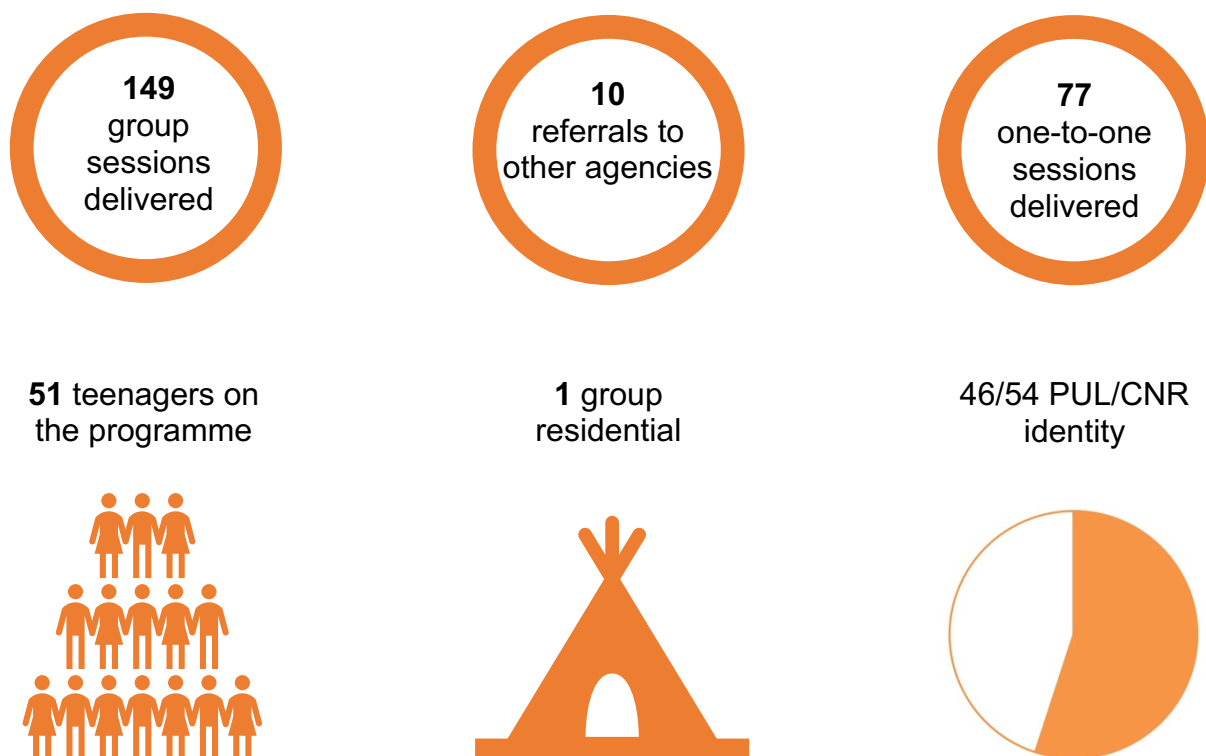
YP age 15

upbringing and which she has experienced throughout her life. K has fallen through the net of formal education and turned to drugs as a means of escaping her reality. Throughout her time at Quakers, K would not eat or drink, and rarely communicated with the group. Staff began by building trust through a non-judgmental, empathetic approach towards her. Throughout the programme staff conducted several workshops

such as risk-taking, self-care, positive relationships, drug awareness, and LGBTQ awareness. In addition to showing K positive reinforcement, through patience and persistence staff began to notice positive changes. She began to smile more often and gradually began to trust her peers in the group and staff. Having a safe space at Quakers has allowed for the young person to express herself in ways she didn't think possible when she initially came onto the programme. She began to document her emotions and thoughts through creative writing and art. As a result, she has made significant progress in her communication.

Expressing herself through her art provides her with tools to reflect on her life. Discussing a range of issues that have affected her, including her parents' leniency regarding her coming home late, frequent drug use, and being severely bullied at school, K went from rarely communicating, to becoming a vocal participant in a story telling project. Later in 2022 she will be presenting one of her poems to MLAs in Stormont.

How much has been delivered?



Quaker Connections

After two years of landing lockdowns the prisons have slowly begun the process of opening up and allowing external agencies back into the prison. The process of lockdown has been quite gruelling and while the men have been resilient and compliant in adhering to all prison protocols it has taken a toll on people's mental health.

As far as possible normal life continued in a limited way with access to visits and education via zoom and access to the yard and exercise strictly monitored allowing access for all, albeit on reduced times.



The level of Covid on the landings has been small because of the strict protocols around isolating new committals. However, on the handful of occasions when there has been a case (or suspected case) on the landings, the people in prison have found this particularly challenging to be suddenly thrown back into a lockdown scenario. As a result, we have found when talking to men in our drop-in sessions that these have been accompanied by an increase in feelings of isolation and instances of self-harm.

Maghaberry appointed an existing Governor to oversee, the task of leading the prison through the pandemic. He has assembled an enhanced senior team and promoted senior officers (most of whom had worked on the ground as landing officers) to governors to support his role. The 'on the ground' experience of the senior team resulted in an understanding of what actions practically worked on the landings. A strategic part of the Quaker Connections job is meeting with Governors to discuss Quaker Service ambitions and how this marries with our strategic objectives.

A key ambition for this year was to have an allotment space up and running for those prisoners transitioning back into the community. The Governor has agreed that life

sentence prisoners and those who are transitioning back to the community can avail of the allotment as a means of therapeutic intervention and socialisation. To date restrictions and logistics have meant that access has not been granted but we remain determined and optimistic. This has had a knock-on effect on our allotment plans. Three volunteers, (Andy, Megan and Niall) worked tirelessly all summer to prepare the site and build planters and seating areas. Friends from South Belfast Meeting House also kindly donated materials for us to use. Although our volunteers remained as committed as ever, as autumn gave way to winter, it became clear that the prison were not in a position to release men resulting in the volunteers stepping away for now. Understandably the volunteers want to give their time to support the prisoners which they are currently unable to do at the moment. At times maintaining enthusiasm and commitment is challenged by events beyond our control



Staff have gradually been allowed back into Maghaberry, currently three afternoons per week since November 2021. This has had an impact on the services Quaker Connections can deliver but the work remains effective and efficient

There is now a 'drop-in' two afternoons per week in Davis House, the new purpose-built facility, housing the majority of the prisoners. Within this house we have an allocated space, and we also have an allocated peer mentor. During the

week the peer mentor works and associates with the men and is able to signpost and refer men who need additional support often presented through self-harming or mental distress. The peer mentor compiles a list of people for Quaker Connections to provide confidential support to.

There are often more people waiting for the service than we are able to support, though recently two additional volunteers have been allowed access; an average of 12 people are now seen per session. The issues affecting men through this service are different to those we saw working with SPAR (Supporting Prisoners at Risk) in pre-pandemic times. A lot of the men supported are middle-aged and have either not offended before, or if they have been in prison previously there has been a significant gap in offending. The pandemic resulted in many addictions and mental health challenges, previously managed, getting out of control, and escalating offending behaviour. Often the people supported are experiencing feelings of shame and bewilderment at having offended, being in jail and, at the same time experiencing withdrawal symptoms from alcohol and/or drugs. For staff there are also mixed feelings of disappointment on the one hand, to see familiar faces from the earlier days and to engage with the men once again that we have supported before.

Quaker Connections has been working with the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) in the Republic of Ireland and with governors in Maghaberry to introduce the programme in Northern Ireland. Whilst in principle there appears to be no adverse

issue given and governors are supportive of the programme, in practice we have failed to reach agreement to start delivering the programme. Changes in personnel are usually a challenge and it is hoped that the Project will be introduced in due course. The peer mentor is a fully trained AVP facilitator and has successfully lobbied senior officers and governors to introduce AVP to prisons. In the interim a short 6-week programme - *'Making the Correct Moves'* has been developed and delivered. The first group have successfully completed the programme. The course engages those who have issues involving violent behaviour and it helps the participants to recognise and address the broader contexts and triggers which led to their offending/reoffending. Many of the men have been open about their life experiences including childhood sexual abuse, or the loss of a primary care-giver in childhood, issues which exacerbated addictions, self-medicating pain that led to offending behaviours. For others it has been the normalisation of violence in their upbringing that led them to believe that this is an accepted norm. Listening to these experiences can be shocking and humbling. Twelve participants completed the training with a certificate presentation and celebration following. A second group has now commenced.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Warwick Edinburgh Scale is used to measure the mental wellbeing of participants at the beginning and end of the course. Across the 14 measurements of the scale the participants showed improvements across every measure.

Most significantly this has included the following feedback from participants,

"I've been dealing with my problems well" At the beginning of the course this was 'rarely' and it increased to 'often'.

"I've been feeling good about myself". This increased from 'rarely' to 'often'.

"I've been feeling optimistic about the future". This increased from 'some of the time' to 'often'.

Staff at the prison have been encouraging of progress and feedback and have agreed to its continuation. The prison offered the use of the staff boardroom for the training, and this has been a significant endorsement for prisoners and trainers.

This year the Criminal Justice Inspectorate highlighted the need for enhanced meaningful human contact for both prisoners in the Care and Supervision Units and older prisoners in their report. As a volunteer led project Quaker Connections understand the importance of impartiality and it has been due to this, in part, that the project and team has successfully evolved. In consultation with volunteers, the Quaker Service Chief Executive has met with the Director General of the NI Prison Service in relation to volunteers supporting prisoners in the CSU and offering the same service as used in the SPAR model.

Quaker Connections has been working to introduce a range of activities for older prisoners. Currently one of our volunteers delivers guided meditation and storytelling for older prisoners with mobility issues in Moyolla House. Volunteers are very much appreciated for their creative ideas, skills, and commitment; implementation delays however usually involve security clearance.

Restorative Practice

The Governor has spoken enthusiastically of his commitment to Restorative Practice and the Quaker Connections team have enrolled on courses provided to further their professional development. In September and October 15 staff and volunteers completed an Introduction to Restorative Practice training developed by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Over 6 weeks issues explored included:

- How we deal with incidents of harm and how we can make things better or worse
- Resolving conflict and building relationships
- Avoiding stigmatisation and investing in emotional capabilities
- How the restorative model helps for harm against identity



Which aspects of Restorative Practices have most meaning for you?

"The possibility of allowing healing and growth for the person harmed and the person who caused harm so that their lives aren't ruined by the weight of the harmful event as an ever-present burden. It cannot undo the harm, but it could turn lives around and allow a more peaceful and fulfilling future for both"

Restorative Practice training participant

A fully participative experience, through a mix of group exercises, reflective practice, group discussions and training were delivered, where participants realised how consciously or unconsciously individuals might engage in restorative practice and to identify how to best develop this. The evaluation of the course demonstrated that participants found it very beneficial and are committed to being part of a restorative organisation. All participants stated that they would like to do more training and to have the opportunity to put their learning into practice. This bodes well as we develop our delivery of Family Group Conferences.

The Circles Project

Our most ambitious project, it is challenging and isolating, and our volunteer team are to be commended for their unwavering support and commitment.

The more we learn about Circles of Support, the more complex and challenging it becomes! The good news is that we now have two circles in operation. Our Circles Team continues to support our first Circles member. It has been a difficult couple of years for the attendee since he got his licence. Despite support from a community psychiatrist, childhood traumas continue to unfold and whether these exacerbate addiction issues, addiction issues remain an ongoing issue.

This has led to the real possibility of a return to jail for breach of licence, but with the Team support this has been avoided. Residential rehabilitation has been impossible to secure and hostel accommodation presents many challenges; gaining

suitable NIHE accommodation will take time and the Circles team continue to offer support weekly the second Circle member has been in prison for almost fifty years and although he has completed work with psychology and has gained increased self-awareness, challenges remain. This is an ambitious project, it is challenging and often isolating, and the volunteer team are to be commended for their unwavering support and commitment. As one recently said:

“... we are operating as befrienders. If there is a genuine desire, not merely to tick boxes it needs all stakeholders to be on board and that’s not happening. It takes commitment, an agreed plan.

The potential for Circles and the need far exceeds what was initially anticipated. Some of the life sentence prisoners shared some of the challenges they face; on unaccompanied temporary releases they are given £20 for travel and expected to make their own way to Belfast and back and entertain themselves in a positive and productive way for a day. Their fears and vulnerabilities, about basically everything - from the volume of traffic on the road from Maghaberry to the train station, to being in a city they don’t know after all these years, results in some turning down their unaccompanied temporary releases and as a consequence are then being turned down for parole because of their failure to engage.”

Many reported that they would really benefit from a befriender to accompany them and assist with practical arrangements that need to be put in place for their return to the outside world and to support socially and undertake activities with them. In some respects, the allotment would provide an effective means of meeting some of these objectives. Attempts to progress this have been frustratingly slow.

Housing and Homelessness

This past year has once again seen the publication of new reports on prison welfare and further underlining the need for a targeted gendered approach to supporting women who have been involved with the criminal justice system, broadly speaking and in relation to accommodation specifically.

The fact remains that there is no gender specific accommodation for women returning from prison and their pathway to prison is likely to involve gender violence.

The fact remains that there is no gender specific accommodation for women returning from prison and their pathway to prison is likely to involve gender violence. This issue is widely acknowledged by many key stakeholders and researchers including the NI Housing Executive, the Department of Justice, voluntary organisations, and a range of academics.

The recent closure of Regina Coeli Hostel in West Belfast has been a great loss as many women coming out of prison and facing homelessness used this facility. Quaker Service made a successful funding application to the Community Foundation (CFNI) Housing and Homeless Fund providing the organisation with the opportunity to carry out further research and consultation in order to identify the women's needs, system changes and interagency approaches that will contribute to addressing the housing needs of women coming out of prison with no accommodation.

We are delighted to have made contact with an organisation working in this area, The Right Key, in Loughbrickland which offers accommodation and support for women recovering from addiction, including those who have been in prison. NIACRO, Women's Centres and The Right Key all offer support to women with lived experience and have offered to facilitate workshops to share their experiences and insights into possible solutions that would work for the women. This is a positive and challenging opportunity to provide a solution focused response, along with evidence that a small-scale solution is possible and replicable.

Befriending

At the heart of all we do is befriending, every piece of work developed is aimed to support those most isolated. Referrals have not been as frequent this year because of the lack of visibility in the prison, though the team have remained consistently committed to their befriendees over the course of the pandemic. On average the volunteers provided 40 zoom visits per month across Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons, and whilst it is acknowledged that zoom is not a substitute for face-to-face visits, it has made the process of befriending easier and has provided a consistency for those without family contact during the pandemic.

Thank you to all our team for their commitment and mostly patience, as despite the pandemic and the change in booking procedures, it has not been any less difficult to get through.

How much has been delivered?

11
Prisoner workshops
delivered



33 hours of
workshops
delivered in prisons



255
zoom befriending
sessions



664 Circles of
Support sessions
delivered



48 prisoners
supported through
befriending



4 prisoners
supported in Care &
Supervision Units



55 meetings with NI
Prison Service



58 meetings with
voluntary and
community partners



11
volunteer training
workshops



45 hours of
volunteer training



15 volunteers completed
Restorative Practice training



12 volunteers completed
Samaritans training



Societal Change Project

The 'MyStoryYourStory' (MSYS) mental health campaign came to an end in May 2022 after some striking achievements. At the beginning of this financial year, we put in place plans to deliver some salient pieces of work and to create and implement support plans for all the young people who had been involved in the programme.

The coronavirus pandemic continued to have a detrimental impact on our ability to deliver face-to-face work, though it also created an opportunity to create more videos and online material. We were thrilled to learn that the two of our films 'Stigma' and 'Recovery' produced in partnership with the 'Northwest Regional College' came second and third place in the 'Moving Image Factual' category at the Northern Ireland College Media Awards 2021.

"There's a lot to learn from readings and videos, but those can't really explain the factors that define someone's childhood or way of life. You can't understand why the conflict is so deeply rooted until you hear from people who have been shaped by it."

Julian Taylor a student with Carrboro Hight School in North Carolina following an outreach session in June 2021.

In the short film 'Recovery' we hear about the process of 'Storytelling' and how it has helped to transform not just the lives of those sharing their story but also for those listening. This film was made while under the second lockdown and recognised that when a lot of people are feeling low, a message of positivity and hope is needed more than ever before. The film was produced in partnership with media students Evan McMenamin, Leo Griffiths, and Shea Doherty from the North West Regional College. Both videos were launched across the social media platforms with Stigma receiving over 100K views from one social media account alone. As a result of MSYS, one of the young people has become a real advocate for mental health setting up their own Facebook page and using social media platforms along with delivering workshops to share techniques to promote positive mental health.

Over the past year the Societal Change project organised seven outreach events, one of which was at Quaker Ireland Yearly Meeting on the theme '*Working to bring about societal change in Northern Ireland*'. This was a good opportunity for the team to share the challenging work of the mental health campaign. Those in attendance heard the young people's stories first-hand and engaged in interactive activities around adolescent mental health and the direct action they undertook to bring about change. We also took advantage of opportunities for MSYS young people to influence policy and practice. The launch of the draft Mental Health Strategy in June was welcomed, and the team submitted a response to the draft mental health strategy with three recommendations identified by the young people themselves. Alongside this they participated with - 'Our Minds, Our Future', the National Children's Bureaus' Northern Ireland Young People's Mental Health Charter.

Due to first hand experiences within the group of young people, group members have recently started legal proceedings to challenge the law for young people (16-17yrs) being placed in temporary unregulated accommodation. The aim is to ensure young people in the care system are safe and supported with their accommodation needs. Support for this issue has been taken up by the Children's Commissioner and support was also forthcoming from local politicians.

In May 2021, three young people from the Societal Change project participated in the 'Youth, Leadership and Peace' seminar series at Ulster University attended by the UN Youth Envoy. The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms Jayathma Wickramanayake held a private meeting with 10 youth organisations; a total of 20 young people from across Northern Ireland had the opportunity to talk about their activism as young leaders and were asked the question 'What does peace and security mean to you?' and 'What are some of the challenges facing young people today?'. The key messages they shared were - the feelings of fear when leaving your own community; the lack of opportunity to integrate (schools, youth centres); the importance of having a safe space to meet and learn about other cultures, with one member referring to Quaker Cottage and their non-judgemental approach. The young people also referenced the MSYS mental health outreach sessions - as a method to help educate others, while also encouraging other young people to develop an understanding, coping strategies and to seek professional help. The group talked about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the effects lockdown had on many young people's mental health and their ability to gain a meaningful third level or further education and/or employment. Poverty was identified as one of the main challenges impacting the young people; discussing how living in poverty impacted on your place in the world, the relationships you have with others and the lack of opportunities. Additional issues resulted in living a life in debt, being unable to socialise with friends, feeling ashamed and humiliated. Many of the young activists have become inspiring mental health 'champions', role models and change makers.

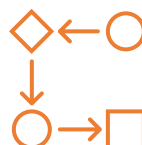
"Small steps lead to big change"

Programme participant

17 Mothers
supported



Participants
connected to **14**
other organisations



32 Young people
supported



New Storytelling Projects across Quaker Service

Within the past year we have been embedding the storytelling model across Quaker Services work streams, in particular the Mums and Mounteens Project at Quaker Cottage. The storytelling project with the group of mothers from Quaker Cottage started in September. A total of five mothers registered and completed the programme along with four young people from Mounteens. On the third session a trauma recovery specialist delivered a session on trauma and the impact it has on the body. The session covered self-care techniques, the art of Kintsugi along with how our neurology and physiology can be used more consciously and effectively to promote healing.

"The project was not only a platform for me to speak about my journey, but it also gave me the courage and the strength to express myself through the art of dance. I got to meet people who had gone through what I went through, and the project made me feel that I wasn't alone. I hope that the project will raise awareness on certain issues, subjects that people don't normally talk about in a bid to help other people".

Programme participant

"Last week we had an amazing and very unique session teaching us how to give ourselves some self-love. It was great and it worked a treat. She also asked us to experiment with sound and whilst it was totally out of my comfort zone it was fun."

Programme participant

December saw the completion of the storytelling project with the mother's group at Quaker Cottage. The five mums created their story, a piece of art and a short film with the sessions taking place in The Mac arts centre. We were very fortunate to have an artist on placement to provide support with the art pieces. The artwork was fantastic, and all the women have developed a real sense of achievement. The importance of offering creative ways to tell a story, to join with others and to share very personal aspects of life cannot be undervalued. In December the women's artwork was exhibited in the Mac where there was an opportunity for the mothers to invite friends and family to see their art and hear their stories. The event itself provided an opportunity for increased confidence, developing public speaking skills and preparation to share their stories further.

"I can't believe I created that painting. I would never have said I was artistic but I'm extremely proud of that. I welled up watching my wee video, they were happy tears though. I showed my daughter, and she started crying".

Programme participant



Family Group Conferencing

There have been new developments within Quaker Service as we are beginning to embed Family Group Conferencing (FGC) within the organisation. This is a new opportunity for Quaker Service, and we have been supported in developing this work through the resources and legacy of Family Group Conference NI. The hope is that it will prove to be extremely beneficial for the families involved. This restorative process empowers the family to work together to identify solutions to their own issues and come up with a family plan as identified by themselves. This is seen as a means of early intervention where the families take ownership of an identified problem or concern before it gets beyond their control and before social services or the courts need to get involved.

Initially the service is offered to those from within Quaker Service programmes, and staff believe it is a good fit for those participating on the storytelling and Family Programmes.

Progress to date:

- Coordinated a cohort of qualified and experienced FGC facilitators
- Coordinated appropriate training to ensure that staff and volunteers at Quaker Service can achieve the necessary qualifications and experience to facilitate and support conferences. A total of 6 professionals and 2 young adults completed their OCN level 3 training in FGC.
- Developed self-referral opportunities within Quaker Service.
- Established positive relationships with key stakeholders and agencies.
- Successfully completed the first Family Group Conference with a family referred by the Prison Fellowship NI.

"I want to thank you both from the bottom of my heart for what you have both for myself and our wee family.

It has been a long and tough journey for us all and especially for our children. We know we still have a long way to go but thanks to God, the Quaker Family Conference and Prison Fellowship we can now see light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Love and best wishes. "

Family Group Conference beneficiary

Treasurer's Report

At 31st March 2022, I can report a surplus of £27,277. In what was another very challenging year for fundraising and the charity sector generally this is a pleasing outcome. Our original budget at April 1st of £631,267 was revised to £600,228 in the budgetary review which took place in November 2021. Overall income this year was £553K compared with £746K in 2021 – the reduction being mainly due to the fact that in 2021 the Charity received significant benefit from Covid funding. Expenditure was £530K compared to £533K in 2021. Our portfolio of investments rose in value in year from £177k to £179K. The Finance & Personnel Committee have designated reserves to ensure compliance with our reserves policy in terms of liabilities and to prepare for the requirements emerging from our strategic plan from 2021 to 2024. The loss of the BHSCCT contract will be our main priority in 22/23 wherein the absence of replacement funding there will be significant pressure on our reserves in 2022/23 potentially putting the charity in a perilous position.

The Finance & Personnel Committee met 8 times during the year with fundraising, monitoring of cash flow, income, and expenditure, and Covid19 being standing items at its scheduled quarterly meetings. Regular risk assessments were provided to the committee throughout the year as well as staff, volunteer, and beneficiary updates. The general work of the committee included the scrutiny of accounts and projections, monitoring of income, expenditure, investments, and reserves; fundraising plans and progress; capital purchases; staff and salary reviews; committee membership; the Corporate Risk Register annual review as well as undertaking quarterly management checks on the use of the company credit card.

Quaker Care Ltd had a very difficult year but were able to covenant to Quaker Service £8,982 at year end.

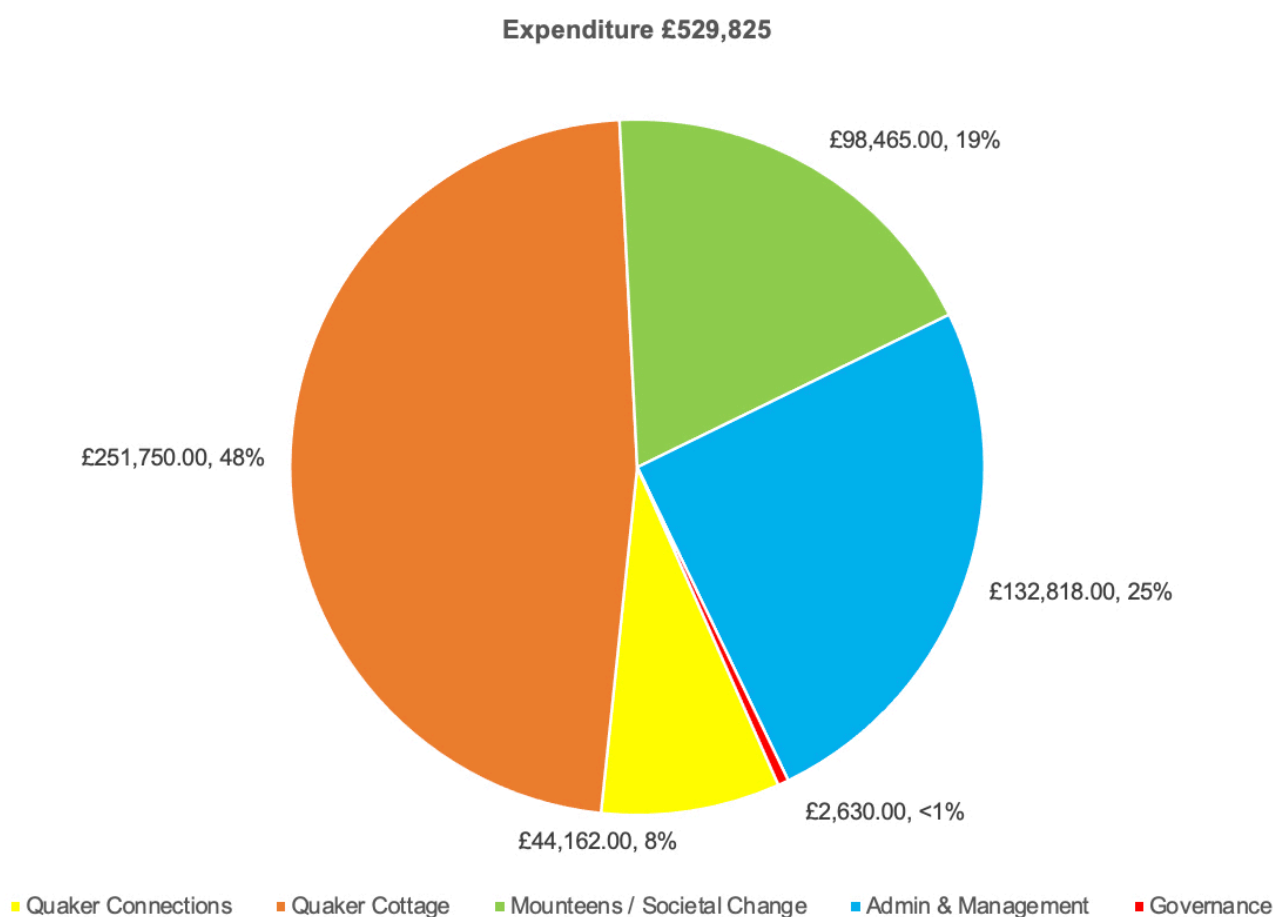
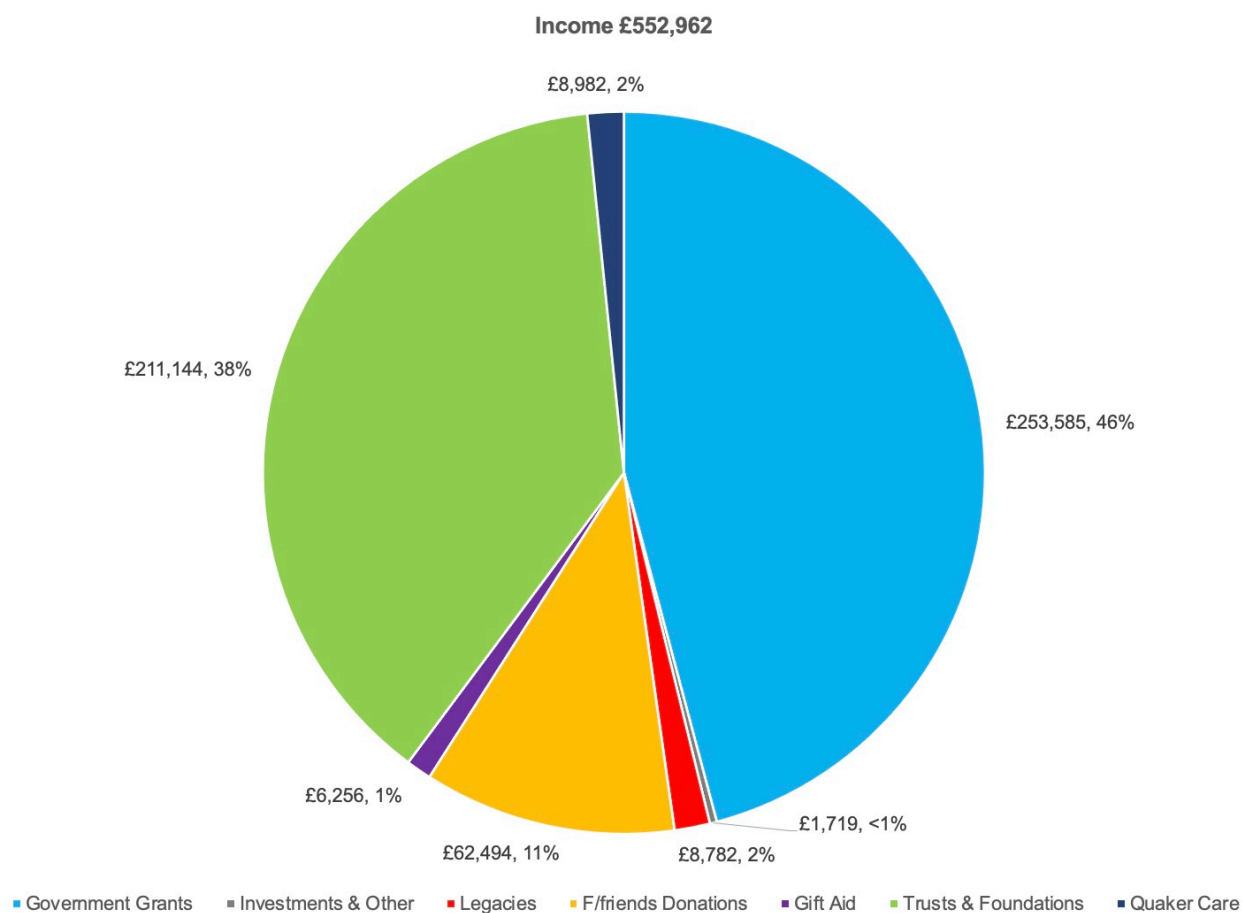
Whilst this is a brief report of the financial year 21/22 it is important for members to be aware that the year ahead will be very difficult with many difficult decisions required due to the loss of the BHSCCT contract and other funding. Your continued financial support especially in the financial year 22/23 is critical. To help us secure long-term funding, leaving a gift to Quaker Service in your will can make a real difference to the lives of those whom we support now and, in the future, and a gift of any size is greatly appreciated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Finance & Personnel Committee, our staff and volunteers for their hard work and support and we are very grateful to all those who continue to support us in any way.



Aidan Pearson
Treasurer
Quaker Service

Breakdown of income and expenditure 2021 - 2022



Organisations who donated £1k or more to the charity in 2021/22

Government:

Belfast City Council
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Dept. of Education Pathway Fund
The Executive Fund
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Reconciliation Fund
NI Prison Service
HM Revenue and Customs

Trusts, Corporates and Friends' Meetings:

BBC Children in Need
The Jessie Cairns Bequest
The Robert & Kezia Stanley Chapman Trust
Roger & Sarah Bancroft Clark Charitable Trust
Hilda & Alice Clark Charitable Settlement
Stephen Clark Charitable Settlement
Community Foundation for NI
Family Group Conference
Frederick Street Friends
A & E Harvey Charitable Trust
Irish Quaker Faith in Action
Lisburn Friends
Lurgan Friends
Moyallon Friends
Oliver Morland Trust
Sir James Reckitt Charity
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
South Belfast Friends
CB & HH Taylor Trust
UK Online Giving Foundation
Ulster Garden Villages
Waterford Meeting
Youth Action
Education Authority NI

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