



Annual Report

25
26



LOVE IN ACTION



Quaker Service Management Board

- **Stephen Browne** (to November 2025)
- **Kate Campbell**
- **Elizabeth Dickson** (Chair)
- **Owen Fulton**
- **Margrit Grey**
- **Stan Houston**
- **Timothy Hunt** (to November 2025)
- **Jonathan Lamb**
- **Siobhan McElnea** (Vice Chair)
- **Aidan Pearson** (Treasurer)

Quaker Service Staff

- **Andy Boal**
Social Enterprise Development Manager
(to November 2025)
- **Gordon Campbell**
Facilities Manager (to March 2026)
- **Margaret Hastings**
Finance and Administration Officer
- **Alexey Janes**
Executive Director (from February 2026)
- **Bill Osborne**
Interim Manager
(September 2025 to February 2026)
- **Alex Rafferty-Reeve**
Community Development Worker
- **Kate Russell**
Quaker Connections Development Manager
- **Shane Whelehan**
Chief Executive (to August 2025)

Quaker Care Staff

- **Lisa McCormick**
Volunteer and Shop Manager
- **Mary McGinnity**
Retail Assistant (from May 2025)
- **Jean Morelli**
Retail Assistant

Charity registration number NIC102457
Company registration number NI063929

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Our Vision

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



Our Purpose

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



Quaker Service

Foreword



Alexey Janes
Executive Director

Elizabeth Dickson
Chair

Welcome to the Annual Report on the activities of Quaker Service over the 2025 to 2026 financial year. It covers a period of review and change for the charity which has brought both challenge and opportunity. It has been rewarding to see the progress made on a number of fronts and there is gratitude for the support from so many which has made that work possible.

The research carried out by our Community Development Worker, a 'Study of Unmet Community Need in North Belfast', completed in August 2025, identified priorities that are shaping our work at Frederick Street Meeting House. Moreover, relationships formed with local community groups through the process of that research are strengthening our outreach and creating wider networks of collaboration across all of our work. There is evidence too of the potential of the links being forged with students and staff at our close neighbour, Ulster University.

strengthening our outreach and creating wider networks of collaboration across all of our work

A key partnership is that with Frederick Street Friends and there is gratitude for the support of Frederick Street for our work. Quaker Service has been generously welcomed into the newly refurbished Meeting House, and we have worked closely with the Meeting in developing community use of its facilities and demonstrating a shared commitment to service.



Quaker Service is heavily dependent on the contribution of volunteers and the work detailed in this report speaks of their interest, initiative and dedication across all of our projects. There is appreciation too for the support that is given to Quaker Service by our funders, many of whom have

a long-term relationship with the charity that has proved crucial over the years. Likewise, great value is attached to the efforts of our fundraisers who put so much into events such as the plant sale and craft fair. This year it has been moving to receive significant legacies and donations that demonstrate the importance attached to our work.

October 2025 saw our Finance and Administration Officer, Margaret Hastings, mark 40 years with Quaker Service and we are grateful not only for her long service but for the dedication of each member of the staff team.



This year also saw a change in Quaker Service's leadership. We thank Chief Executive Shane Whelehan, who left in August 2025, and Bill Osborne, who served as interim Manager until Alexey Janes took up post as Executive Director in February 2026.

The Management Board and its sub-committees met regularly during the year. A review of the operations of the charity carried out by the Interim Manager led to the decision to subsume our trading arm, Quaker Care, into Quaker Service and this has been taken forward. Board members have worked with common purpose to promote the values of Quaker Service and we thank them for all that they do.

Quaker Service Strategic Priority 1

We will strengthen and invest in the Quaker Connections programme

The Quaker Connections initiative is made up of a number of different programmes and services. It is managed by Kate Russell, the Quaker Connections Development Manager and her team of committed volunteers.

Volunteers

The active volunteer cohort has been maintained at 18 individuals, including two who have obtained Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) clearance to support programme delivery. Over the year four new volunteers were recruited and trained. In terms of training and development, five volunteers completed training in Healing Circles, and four undertook Vulnerable Adult and Safeguarding training. Additionally, five volunteers received training in an informed trauma approach. Volunteer recruitment pathways have included promotion through Volunteer Now and the Causeway Volunteer Centre in Coleraine.

Befriending, drop in visits and one to one sessions

Across Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood 226 Befriending visits were conducted. At Maghaberry 27 Drop-in sessions were held, providing a listening ear and signposting service to 81 inmates. Forty-five one to one sessions were provided in prison, providing tailored support to individuals.

Making the Correct Moves

This 16-week "Alternatives to Violence programme" continued to have a positive impact. It was delivered three times during the year engaging 26 inmates in total.



Brave Spaces

A new 8-week programme, “Brave Space” was piloted in Maghaberry with standard prisoners who typically did not engage with activities and spent a lot of time in cells. The programme is designed to support people in custody to heal from trauma, build self-awareness, and develop a stronger sense of identity and responsibility. It centres on three core ideas: Healing, Insight and Support. The programme uses facilitated circles with a strong emphasis on equality, trust, and confidentiality. Participants explore themes such as voice and silence, boundaries, shame and self-compassion, and personal responsibility. The final sessions focus on applying these insights to daily life in custody, relationships, and future planning, ending with reflection and closure. Overall, the aim is to move participants beyond compliance with programmes toward genuine internal change through connection, reflection, and shared learning. During the year the programme was also subsequently delivered at Magilligan.

Family Group Conferencing

Planning and preparation work was undertaken this year to establish Family Group Conferencing at Hydebank. This included meetings with Health Trust representatives. Further meetings have been arranged with Barnardo’s and Resettlement services to discuss the target group, referral pathways, and associated logistical considerations.



Outside of the prison environment

We have established strong working relationships with the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award team within the Probation Service. We supported delivery of two targeted initiatives for isolated prisoners within the Intensive Support Unit, most of whom have previous custodial experience. These projects have focused on horticulture and included time spent helping tend the Quaker Service Allotment plot near Carryduff. Many participants have subsequently secured employment or achieved significant personal milestones.

Working in Partnership

During the year we have maintained strong partnerships with other referral agencies including NIACRO, Extern, Barnardos, Start 360, Cruse, Relate, PAF, SVP, and the Health Service. These relationships help to ensure coordinated support and prevent duplication of services. We also remained active members of the Accessing Services for Offenders Network, participating in regular meetings as well as conducting frequent meetings with Prison ASK Him Mentors.

Quaker Service Strategic Priority 1

Case Studies

Case Study

Circles of Support programme for people leaving prison after lengthy sentences

A young man, previously identified as vulnerable and supported through our befriending service over several years, was approaching release from custody. Upon his release, he had no fixed abode. Due to the nature of his offences, securing accommodation proved extremely challenging, and he experienced homelessness, including periods of sofa surfing, for almost three months. During this time, Quaker volunteers provided consistent and coordinated support, ensuring his immediate needs were met. This included access to food, clothing, and assistance with collecting prescribed medication from his GP. Significant time and effort were dedicated to advocacy, partnership working, and signposting to appropriate services. Through this sustained support and collaborative approach, he was eventually able to secure a place in a hostel. The young man has remained out of custody ever since. This represents the longest period he has spent in the community to date.

Case Study

Making the Correct Moves Programme

One participant from the “Making the Correct Moves – Alternatives to Violence programme” programme was released from custody in July 2024 and re-engaged with his Quaker Connections volunteer for ongoing support. He also began volunteering with Start360, contributing to community-based activities focused on positive change and recovery.

For a time things went well, but a serious family crisis led to a setback and he returned to prison. This period back in custody was short, and on release he was clear that he did not want to return to prison again. With support, he rebuilt his confidence, continued volunteering, and shared his experience by speaking at VCSSE meetings and local health events.

In March 2026, he secured a role with the Public Health Service as a Drug and Alcohol Mentor, using his lived experience to support others on their recovery journey and to contribute to wider public health and prevention efforts. His story illustrates both the reality of setbacks and the impact that sustained relationships, voluntary work, and partnership with organisations like Quaker Connections, Start360, and public health services can have on long-term desistance from offending and personal recovery.

Quaker Service Strategic Priority 2

We will strengthen our relationship with Friends

During the 2025/2026 period, Quaker Service worked with members of the Frederick Street Quaker Meeting to promote and manage use of rooms and space by community groups, charities and other organisations.

By the end of March 2026 18 different organisations had used the Meeting House for their own activities. As well as generating income for the upkeep of the Meeting House and for the work of Quaker Service, some valuable new connections and working relationships have developed. Quaker Service has also started to use Frederick Street as a venue for some of its own service delivery activities. These activities, along with the new office base for Quaker Service on the first floor, have brought new life to the building throughout the week.

A working group of representatives from Quaker Service and from Frederick Street Meeting met regularly throughout the year to oversee the practical arrangements and to develop the relationship further.

Individual Friends and Quaker Meetings across Britain and Ireland continued to support Quaker Service financially and practically over the year. South Belfast and Frederick Street Friends worked together to hold a Plant Sale and a Christmas Craft Fair in aid of Quaker Service. Both these events were well attended by Friends from across Ulster Quarterly Meeting. A significant number of our volunteers are Quakers and they play an important role in helping to run our Charity Shop and deliver our charitable services and activities.

During his first month in post our new Executive Director visited local Quaker Meetings and attended Ulster Quarterly Meeting.

Rooms
Space
Community
Charities
Organisations
Generating Income
Britain and Ireland
Support
Plant Sale
Christmas Craft Fair

Quaker Service Strategic Priority 3

We will be responsive to community need



In August 2025, Alex Rafferty-Reeve – our Community Development Worker, completed a ‘Study of Unmet Community

Need in North Belfast’. A summary of findings and recommendations from the study was presented at the Quaker Service AGM in November 2025

Social Hub for International Students

In September 2025, work began planning and promoting a six-month pilot “Social Hub for International Students” as this was one of the recommendations of the scoping study. This involved engaging with Ulster University lecturers and students. The aim of the project was to provide a safe, welcoming and informal space where international students could meet others and build new friendships outside of university life, share their home countries’ foods and cultural heritage, enjoy leisure activities and ultimately to address isolation and loneliness. The weekly Social Hub for International Students pilot began in December 2025 and will run through to the end of May 2026. In a short space of time 26 students have already become regular attendees.

Our Community Development Worker carried out a survey to gain feedback and recommendations for improvement from the students. The response was overwhelmingly positive with 100% saying they felt welcomed and included. Student feedback highlighted the importance of the Hub in creating a sense of belonging:

“The hub is exciting, great and I love being here. I feel welcomed always, and I made new friends.”

“The hub is my new family here at Quakers.”



Feedback from hub volunteers has been equally positive:

“Volunteering at the International Student Hub has given me an insight in to learning about and meeting people from different cultures. It’s also broadened my culinary tastes”.





“The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others”.

Volunteering

In November–December 2025 work began strengthening volunteer recruitment, administration and support processes for the new community development activity. Volunteers have been central to the success of the pilot, contributing significant time to welcoming participants, preparing activities and food and creating a friendly atmosphere. The experience has demonstrated the value of investing in a structured volunteer pathway as Quaker Service continues to expand its community development work.

Building community connections

A strong theme throughout 2025–2026 has been the further development of relationships with community organisations who hire spaces at Frederick Street Meeting House. Since Quaker Service has been managing bookings on behalf of the Meeting, users have increased significantly. These partnerships have increased wider awareness of the Meeting and Quaker Service, helped reach new communities, responded to identified needs and created opportunities for people to connect across different cultures and backgrounds.

Digital Inclusion Buddying scheme

During the year Quaker Service began a process of collaborating with Belfast Unemployment Resource Centre to deliver a Digital Inclusion Buddying scheme. This will bring together local housebound individuals and member of newcomer communities. The aim of this work is to help combat isolation and loneliness, via virtual meetings. It represents a mutually beneficial partnership in the exchange of culture, history and IT skills. Other desired outcomes will be improving spoken English and understanding of the local dialect and forging of new friendships and community integration.



Christmas Hamper Appeal

The traditional Christmas Hamper appeal was again held this year. Our Community Development Worker liaised with local community groups to identify families and individuals experiencing increased pressure at Christmas and the hampers were tailored to their needs. As ever, there was an overwhelmingly generous response from local Meetings and from the pupils of Friends' School Lisburn in the form of foodstuffs and small gifts for the mothers and children. Many Meetings also made financial donations and over £1500 was raised in this way.

Friends gathered at Frederick Street to pack up some 84 hampers which were then distributed by Quaker Service staff, making a difference to over 300 people at Christmas.

Beneficiaries commented:

“Receiving the hamper helped to lift us at a difficult time of year. The kindness shown by the Quakers and Friends' School Lisburn truly warmed our hearts. Thank you for thinking of our family.”



“Small acts of kindness can mean a lot, and this was not small to us. Thank you for helping make Christmas brighter for Sailortown families.”

Quaker Service Strategic Priority 4

We will be a sustainable charity

Generating income to meet the cost of our charitable works was an ongoing task during the year.



The Quaker Shop

It has been another rewarding and busy year in the Quaker Shop, where much of the work has focused on developing our volunteers, improving stock presentation, strengthening community partnerships and finding new ways to maximise the value and impact of what we do.

Volunteers continue to be at the heart of the shop as we recruit and welcome new volunteers and support existing team members in a friendly, inclusive environment where people can develop confidence and practical skills.

Our Shop Manager Lisa McCormick made good use of her expertise in Vintage, Antiques and collectibles when preparing stock for sale, ensuring that distinctive pieces were recognised, displayed and priced appropriately. Researching provenance and looking beyond the obvious has enabled us to add extra value to sale items.

This year saw us develop a partnership with another local charity called Life Change Changes Lived. They specialise in supporting individuals with addiction, mental health problems and isolation. Their hand painted furniture has added a new instore offering, whilst creating an extra source of income for both parties. We feel this a great example of how charities can work together to reduce waste, extend the life of furniture and generate much needed funds to support the work we both do.

In September the shop collaborated with our Community Development Team to create a Pop-Up event at Frederick St Meeting House. By engaging students during 'Fresher Week' at the nearby Ulster University, we were able to promote our social hub for international students, show off Frederick Street as a unique venue in the area and again generate extra revenue for the shop.

Towards the end of the year we renewed our focus on providing Community Service volunteering opportunities in the Shop. We applied for funding from the Probation Board for Northern Ireland and hope to be able to feedback positive results in next year's report.

As the shop sells mostly second hand/preloved items this activity helped to promote the environmental objectives of reduce, reuse and recycle. Such environmental concerns are important to us in our desire to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

Looking ahead, the charity retail sector faces several challenges; from the much-documented falling standard of donations, to competition from online second hand selling or 'Thrifting'. The biggest challenges concern the downturn in revenue from the Recycled Textiles Industry and the questions regarding how we deal with our waste from donations in an ethical and sustainable way moving forward. Our aim is to ensure that the Quaker Shop meets these challenges, continues to grow financially and remains a welcoming and community focused space. Our thanks go to the customers, all those who donate, our generous supporters and the shop volunteers for their time and energy.

Community Event Space Project

During the year further consideration was given to redevelopment options for the former caretaker's apartment at the back of the Frederick Street Quaker Meeting House. Initial plans for a social enterprise café changed and evolved into plans for a vibrant multipurpose community event space. New Architect's drawings were produced in line with these ideas and relevant planning permission applied for. Once completed this space will provide Quaker Service with a new purpose-built city centre venue for service development and delivery. It will also provide a further venue option for local community groups, charities and other organisations to access within the Frederick Street location. Income generated from such lettings will further increase our charity's sustainability.

Funding and Grant Applications

Several new grant applications were made during the year. A full cost recovery approach to costing project work and service delivery proposals was introduced to increase organisational sustainability. A three-year grant from the Dormant Accounts Fund was reprofiled during the year to focus resources and attention on a number of key sustainability issues facing the charity.



Room Hire at Frederick Street Meeting House

Income from the letting of space at Frederick Street Meeting House grew slowly but steadily over the year. This income helps support Frederick Street Friends Meeting with the costs of maintaining the building as well as covering Quaker Service's time in administering lettings.

Quaker Care

One of the issues requiring attention during the year was organisational efficiency and a decision was made to work towards closing our trading arm Quaker Care and to bring its activities within its parent charity, i.e. Quaker Service. This process was initiated during the year and should conclude in 2026/2027. This development will generate important savings in terms of time and money through streamlining administration, audit and governance arrangements.

Quaker Cottage

Another sustainability issue addressed during the year was further consideration of options for our Quaker Cottage and Family Centre facilities on Black Mountain in Belfast. New ideas regarding future use of the location by Quaker Service and other local community organisations started to be explored. These ideas will be given further thought and exploration in the 2026/2027 period.

Quaker Service

Treasurer's Report

Overall income and expenditure were up this year compared with last year. Income was up to just under £356,000 compared with just under £270,000 in 2024/2025. We continued to be fortunate in the percentage of unrestricted income we receive via both donations and grants. We were especially grateful for very generous legacy donations during the year which contributed significantly to Quaker Service being able to end the financial year with a healthy surplus thereby boosting our reserves. Expenditure was up to £332,500 compared with £301,000 the previous year. Like most organisations staffing costs continue to represent our largest area of expenditure. The higher income and expenditure figures for 2025/2026 reflect the increased activity that took place.

Significant sums of approximately £214,000 are designated in reserves for future capital and service expenditure needs. Use of these reserves may mean planned deficits in the coming and subsequent financial years.

The Finance & Personnel Committee met six times during the year reviewing fundraising, risk management, and recruitment, as well as monitoring investments, cash flow and income and expenditure. Reserves were reviewed and ringfenced during the year

and continue to reflect emerging service development. Our portfolio of investments remained relatively stable.

On 31st March 2026, I can report a surplus of £23,073 at the year-end. This compares with a deficit of £30,836 the previous year.

An important decision taken during the year was to enact the incorporation of our trading arm Quaker Care into the main parent charity Quaker Service. This move is designed to streamline our financial and governance structures. The benefits of this decision will become evident next financial year when savings in staff time, administration and accounting costs as well as auditing expenditure are generated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Board and Finance & Personnel Committee, staff and volunteers for their hard work and support. We are very grateful to F/friends who continue to support our work financially, in kind and in voluntary endeavour.

Aidan Pearson
Treasurer

Quaker Service

Thank you to our supporters and volunteers!



Contributions of £500 or more in 2025/26

- Northern Ireland Prison Service
- Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
- Sir James Reckitt Charity
- CB & HH Taylor Trust
- The Oliver Moreland Trust
- AE Harvey Charitable Trust
- R&S Bancroft Clark Trust
- TW Greeves Trust
- BE Rodmell Trust
- South Belfast Meeting
- Ireland Yearly Meeting
- Lisburn Meeting
- Frederick Street Meeting
- Waterford Monthly Meeting
- Lurgan Meeting
- Dormant Accounts Fund
- Friends' School Lisburn
- Jessie Cairns Bursary Fund
- Penzance Quaker Meeting
- Western Regional monthly Meeting
- Lurgan Monthly Meeting
- IQFA



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

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