



# Area and general meeting compliance reporting

## Introduction

Every year Britain Yearly Meeting asks all area meetings plus Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales, General Meeting for Scotland and Young Friends General Meeting to report on key governance issues. Responsibility for monitoring compliance lies with Quaker Life Central Committee (QLCC), who report to Meeting for Sufferings, who then report to Yearly Meeting.

The timing of the process for 2024 means that QLCC has only seen the responses that were received on time (less than half of the total) and neither QLCC nor Meeting for Sufferings have yet been able to consider the information in any depth. They will do so in the coming months.

## Summary of findings

BYM requested information from a total of 73 meetings (area meetings and others, as above).

28 meetings met the deadline for responses of 31 January 2025. Many more meetings responded after the deadline and by 12 May 2025 we had 62 responses. The Recording Clerk will contact those meetings that have not responded.

This response rate is slightly lower than the one recorded at the time of Yearly Meeting 2024 (2025: 85%; 2024: 89%). Most of the meetings that had not responded by the time of YM 2024 are also late this year.

Some key findings from the responses received are:

- Compliance: two meetings that are registered charities reported not submitting their annual report to their regulator within the required deadline.
- Sustainability: reporting on sustainability seems incomplete, with a number of meetings leaving most or all sections unanswered. 20 local meetings across nine area meetings are reported to have achieved some level of Ecochurch accreditation.
- Role holding: five meetings reported having had a vacancy or shared responsibility for either their clerk of Trustees, Treasurer or Safeguarding Coordinator role during 2024.
- Safeguarding:
  - Two meetings reported not having a safeguarding policy. One of these was a general meeting that reported managing safeguarding through the constituent area meetings. One of these was an area meeting that apparently had a policy in place last year, which may suggest an error in reporting (Quaker Life staff will follow this up).

- Not all meetings responded to the question about when trustees had last reviewed the safeguarding policy and some reported the last review as being several years ago.
- At the time of reporting, all responding meetings had a Safeguarding Coordinator in post.
- Four meetings are not registered with a third-party safeguarding advisory body such as thirtyone:eight.
- 22 meetings reported having had safeguarding issues or concerns during 2024.
- Other policies:
  - Only three meetings reported that they do not have a health and safety policy. 14 meetings reported that health and safety policy is handled locally.
  - Ten meetings reported that they do not have a data protection policy.
  - Around half of meetings reported having a complaints procedure (28) or a code of conduct for their employees and volunteers (18, with another 13 reporting that this is handled locally).
- Risk:
  - 38 meetings reported that they regularly consider their key risks and manage them using a risk register or similar system.
  - No meetings said they had reported serious incidents to a charity regulator in 2024, although the wording of the question may have been such as to lead respondents to exclude any reports relating to safeguarding.
  - Five meetings reported concerns about record keeping, including in relation to the security of their records.

### Planned follow-up work

QLCC will consider the up-to-date information provided by meetings and will monitor any plans for resulting action. It will report a summary of this to Meeting for Sufferings so that it can exercise its oversight responsibility on behalf of Yearly Meeting.

Britain Yearly Meeting staff will consider the reported information as they plan work to support meetings. There is already a plan to create and share templates for all the policies that we ask about in the annual return document.

Advice and guidance for meetings on compliance or good governance more generally is available from staff at [supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk](mailto:supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk).

Yearly Meeting 2025