

Quaker Social Action

Your Autumn Newsletter 2026

quakersocialaction.org.uk

This is a plain text version of our Autumn newsletter, formatted for screen readers and other assistive technology. Images, QR codes and decorative design elements have been removed. Where the printed version uses a QR code, the web address is given instead.

A thank you from our Director

As we enter the autumn months, I find myself reflecting on the outstanding work that has gone into supporting people affected by poverty, work that has been at the heart of QSA since the very beginning. That feeling only grows stronger as we approach our 160th year.

This transformation can't happen without you. Thank you, not just for this year, but for your support throughout our history, and your continued commitment to helping us achieve our mission.

There is so much to be excited about right now. As we step into our 160th year, we have also moved to Friends House, a warm, welcoming space that reflects our values. Co-locating with Quakers in Britain, in the heart of Camden's voluntary sector, opens the door to new partnerships and marks the start of a new era for QSA.

Your support reaches people at their hardest moments. It's there when someone is grieving and facing a funeral they cannot afford, through Down to Earth. It's there in a kitchen through Cook Up, where someone with no home of their own gets to choose their own ingredients and cook for their family again. It's there on the streets through Turn a Corner, in a conversation and a book handed to someone sleeping rough. It's there in the quiet, steady work of This Way Up, helping someone rebuild their confidence one step at a time. And it's there in the campaigning of 4in10, fighting to end child poverty across London for good.

As we step into this new chapter, we hope you'll continue to stand with us, so we can keep showing up for the people who need us most. Thank you.

Judith Moran, Director, Quaker Social Action

Let's celebrate our Cook Up service

This year, QSA celebrated five years of Cook Up, a project that started with a simple idea, to give people seeking asylum and people experiencing homelessness a dignified place to eat, and has grown into a vibrant, welcoming community, built by you.

What began as a way to give people access to kitchen space they didn't have of their own has become a place of connection, comfort and belonging. Through shared meals, familiar recipes and time spent together, Cook Up has helped hundreds of people create moments of home, even in the most challenging circumstances. None of that would exist without the supporters

who believed in it from the start.

Cook Up responds to a reality faced by thousands of people across London: living without adequate cooking facilities, often relying on unsuitable or expensive food. Your support has shown how something as simple as access to a kitchen can restore dignity, wellbeing and community.

This summer, our appeal shone a light on the particular challenges faced by people seeking asylum, many of whom live in hotel accommodation with no way to cook a meal of their own choosing. Cook Up is there for exactly this moment, giving people back a small but powerful piece of control over their own lives. The response to that appeal was extraordinary: your generosity funded real, transformational support for people who needed it most, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Here's to five incredible years of sharing food, stories and friendships, and to many more ahead, because you make them possible.

"I had been homeless for some time and was craving African food, then I discovered Cook Up. They provide me with ingredients and are so supportive, I wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise. It feels like a miracle to have found this place; people like me, like us, have finally found somewhere to cook the food we love. I love my home food and I love to cook the food I love, and what I make here lasts me days. I am so glad and so happy. I look forward to it every time. May God bless them."

Rose, Cook Up participant

QSA are doing the Big Give this December

Save the date: the Big Give Christmas Challenge is back.

QSA will be taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge again this year, running from midday on Tuesday 1 December to midday on Tuesday 8 December 2026.

For one week only, every donation made through the Big Give platform is doubled, meaning your support goes twice as far for the people who need it most. Your support in previous years has been absolutely incredible. Together, we've consistently hit our funding target, and that has made a real difference to our services and the people we exist to help.

Mark your calendar now, and keep an eye out for reminders in the run-up to the big week. One thing to remember: your donation can only be matched if it's made through the Big Give portal, so we'll make sure you have everything you need when the time comes.

Save the date: Tuesday 1 December to midday on Tuesday 8 December 2026.

You helped Down to Earth hit a huge milestone

In the 15 years since Quaker Social Action launched Down to Earth, our helpline has supported over 10,000 people. Down to Earth remains the only charity-run, UK-wide funeral costs information and support service, and that milestone belongs to you as much as it does to

US.

These numbers only tell part of the story. Behind every call, message and website visit is someone who has recently been bereaved, trying to navigate the process of arranging a funeral while worrying about how they'll pay for it.

Our helpline combines expert, practical advice with compassionate support. Our small team helps people understand their options, reduce funeral costs and raise money towards them, using that front-line experience to campaign for lasting change.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our team and volunteers and the trust of the people we support.

By working together, another world is possible: one where everyone has access to an affordable, meaningful funeral.

Thank you for standing with us through all 10,000 of those calls, and for helping us reach this milestone. Here's to the next 10,000.

4in10: Giving a voice to London's children living in poverty

This year, 4in10 ran a local election campaign asking London's candidates to pledge support for a child poverty-free London, receiving 376 pledges, with 149 councillors elected having made that commitment, including two mayors and three council leaders.

4in10 also works closely with individual members. This year, it supported the Magpie Project in preparing their REACH Team for a meeting with local MPs, campaigning against proposed changes to earned settlement rules that could push thousands of children in temporary accommodation deeper into poverty. Working alongside fellow members Praxis and Project 17, the campaign made the case that reversing these changes could lift at least 90,000 children out of poverty by 2029.

None of this happens without a network behind it, and that network exists because people back it. This is what your support builds: a louder, harder-to-ignore voice for London's children.

"It's a brilliant organisation... This is an organisation worth supporting, that does superb work and really does make a difference to people's lives."

One external stakeholder

This Way Up: A way forward, when life feels stuck

This Way Up continues to make a real difference to people on low incomes facing challenging circumstances. To date, 614 participants have taken part in the programme, supported through 276 sessions of life coaching and mindfulness training.

To everyone who has taken part, supported, or funded This Way Up, this is the extraordinary impact you have.

“This course (This Way Up) is life changing. I'm feeling lighter and more confident now than before I started - I was changed, for the better, when I did the course last time, and so I have been again. I heard others express gratitude too - many shared how the course has improved their mental health and given them tools to continue that positive trajectory.”

One recent support person sharing what the experience meant to them

Word on the Water: a boat, a bookshop, and a beautiful partnership

We're thrilled to share news of our partnership with Word on the Water, London's iconic floating bookshop on a 100-year-old canal boat in King's Cross, and one of the UK's best-loved independent bookshops.

What started as a joint fundraising event, with musicians generously donating their time, has grown into an ongoing partnership supporting Turn a Corner, our mobile library that travels to where people experiencing homelessness are, offering books, essential items and genuine human connection, no fixed address or membership required. Both share a belief in what a good book can offer: connection, comfort, and a point of stability for people from all walks of life.

Partnerships like this matter to QSA. They remind us that reaching people who need us most doesn't always happen through a service or a helpline, sometimes it happens through a shared love of books and a place to belong.

Word on the Water continues to collect donations in support of Turn a Corner, and we'd encourage you to pay them a visit, browse the shelves, and see the difference a good book and a warm welcome can make.

You can now write your will for free with Quaker Social Action

We've recently partnered with the National Free Wills Network, so you can now write or update your will completely free of charge, with a solicitor near you.

To get started, visit: quakersocialaction.org.uk/get-involved/leave-legacy-qla

Fill out the short form to let us know who you are and where you live, and we'll pass your details on to the National Free Wills Network, who'll be in touch with information on participating solicitors in your area. You can then make an appointment with whichever solicitor you choose. It really is that simple.

You don't have to leave QSA a gift to use this service. However, after you have taken care of everything else, we hope you'll consider leaving us a legacy. Gifts in wills are critical to our work. Without them, we simply would not have been able to help the number of people we have, for as long as we have.

They are transformational: helping people arrange funerals they couldn't otherwise afford, cook a meal of their own choosing, and find warmth and connection on the streets. By leaving a gift, you'd help us continue this vital work long into the future. Your legacy can transform the

future for so many.

If you'd like to find out more, or let us know you've already included QSA in your will:

Email: fandc@qsa.org.uk

Phone: 020 8983 5030

Website: quakersocialaction.org.uk

Thank you for your support

Everything you've read in this newsletter, every life changed, every milestone reached, has been possible because of supporters like you. Thank you.

If you're able to, we'd love for you to consider making a donation today. Every gift, whatever the size, helps us keep showing up for people facing poverty across the UK.

To donate online, visit: quakersocialaction.org.uk

Alternatively, please donate today by:

- Sending a cheque or cash gift to our new home: Quaker Social Action, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ
- Donating via a CAF voucher online
- Bank transfer to Quaker Social Action: Account Number 65035078, Sort Code 08-92-50
- Donating over the phone on 020 8983 5030

Thank you, as ever, for standing with us.

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