

Friends House Local Quaker Meeting

Children's Worker: invitation for applications, January 2019

About Quakers

Quakers are a faith group committed to working for equality and peace.

Quakerism is almost 400 years old. It's the common name for the Religious Society of Friends. It grew out of Christianity and today we also find meaning and value in other faiths and traditions. We recognise that there's something transcendent and precious in every person. Different Quakers use different words to describe this, but we all believe we can be in contact with it and encounter something beyond our individual selves.

Quakers don't use traditional religious structures or paid ministers. We share responsibility for what we do because everyone has a valuable contribution to make.

Quaker meetings for worship can be held anywhere, at any time. Every meeting begins in silence. We use it to open ourselves to the wisdom that comes out of stillness. It enriches us and shapes us, individually and collectively. This is what we mean by 'worship'.

To find about more, visit www.quaker.org.uk, though the only way to understand fully is to go to a Quaker meeting.

About Friends House Local Quaker Meeting

Friends House Local Quaker Meeting (FHLQM) is a long-established community of Quakers who meet for worship every Sunday morning in Friends House, opposite Euston Station. Friends House itself is the administrative base of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) – the national body that supports Quaker meetings across the country and Quaker work around the world. FHLQM is simply the local Quaker meeting that happens to take place in the building: we are part of North West London Area Quaker Meeting.

Our Meeting for Worship takes place every Sunday from 11am to 12 noon in the George Fox Room, a conference room on the second floor (accessible by lift). We are open to all people and typically have around 40 to 50 worshippers each week. These always include newcomers to Quakerism and Quakers who are visiting from other parts of the world. Our regular members come from across London and from a diverse range of communities and identities, though our largest group is probably older single people. Our Meeting for Worship is often entirely silent. After Meeting for Worship, we have social time over tea and coffee, and often a business meeting or discussion group takes place from 12.30 to 1.30.

Children at FHLQM at present

Adjacent to the room where we hold our worship is the Margaret Fell Room, a smaller meeting room where we hold our Children's Meeting. This is an informal session that we try to offer to children on Sundays during worship, though in fact on many Sundays there are no children present. From a pool of 5 volunteers from the Meeting, two run each session. We have one 6-year-old Quaker who attends regularly two Sundays a month, with occasional attendance by others. Typical activities include board games, painting

and reading a story. The room includes a storage cupboard with a small collection of toys, books and play materials.

Parents and carers are welcome to remain with their children during the sessions, or to go into the main Meeting for Worship. At around 11.50am, the children are brought in for the last 10 minutes of the main Meeting for Worship. At the end of Meeting, the Meeting's clerk greets everyone and invites the children say what they have been doing in Children's Meeting, eg by showing the pictures they have drawn.

Children at FHLQM: our plan for development

During 2018, Friends House Local Quaker Meeting has for the first time made a firm commitment to offer a full Children's Meeting every Sunday. We have appointed a new committee of 6 volunteers from the Meeting to lead, support and undertake this development, but we have come to realise that we cannot achieve our aspirations by relying on these volunteers alone. Hence we have decided to invite applications for a freelance Children's Worker – to provide the necessary consistency and quality for the children, and to invest time and energy in outreach and growth.

The Meeting has allocated a budget for this work for an initial 18 months. Assuming that at the end of that time we have a flourishing Children's Meeting – with perhaps at least half a dozen children most Sundays, ideally more – we aim to secure the funds to make the Worker role permanent.

The Children's Worker will be managed and paid through a freelance contract (we are not in a position to be a direct employer). This will happen through FHLQM's Children's Committee, acting on behalf of North West London Area Quaker Meeting, registered charity no. 1134529.

Children's Worker role description

Aims of the role

1. To engage more children and families in the life of Friends House Local Quaker Meeting, by:
 - (a) developing and delivering vibrant, welcoming, age-appropriate activities during Meeting for Worship on Sunday mornings, and
 - (b) promoting these activities to attract more participants.
2. To ensure that these activities are joyfully grounded in the Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, simplicity, truth and environmental concern, enabling the children to gain experience of Quaker worship.
3. To work in friendly, constructive collaboration with other adults from the Meeting, and to help ensure that children are involved as fully and equally as possible in the Meeting as a whole.

Tasks and responsibilities

- To plan and deliver activities for a Children's Quaker Meeting in the Margaret Fell Room from at least 10.45am to 12 noon every Sunday morning.
- Twice a month to offer an additional hour or 90 minutes of activities after Meeting, so that parents and carers can participate in Business Meeting or other groups.

- To plan, develop, run and review these activities directly, in close partnership with the Children's Committee of Quakers appointed by the Meeting.
- To co-ordinate the rota of volunteers from the Children's Committee to ensure that at least two DBS-verified adults are always present – including cover by these volunteers when the Children's Worker takes holidays.
- To ensure that all sessions are appropriate for younger children, and when necessary to provide or facilitate activities for older children and young people, potentially using other rooms in the building.
- To ensure that all activities are thoroughly enjoyable, led as actively as possible by the children themselves, and always in harmony with Quaker values.
- To keep abreast of guidance and ideas provided by Britain Yearly Meeting's national Children and Young People's Team, including subscribing to the monthly "Journeys Through the Spirit" bulletin.
- Working closely with the Children's Committee, to ensure that the activities give the children an experience of Quaker testimonies and worship, always respecting the views and choices of the children and their families.
- To provide a warm welcome for all newcomers, and to work in close partnership with parents and carers.
- To obtain information about individual children as appropriate , eg. about any health or other specific needs, and to seek permission from parents around eating and toileting.
- To bring the children and young in to join the main Meeting for Worship for at least its last 10 minutes (at around 11.50am).
- Potentially on planned occasions to facilitate children's participation throughout the main Meeting for Worship.
- To ensure excellent safeguarding and health & safety practice at all times.
- To reach out to bring more families into the Meeting, eg. by producing online and other promotional materials, by following Quaker networks to reach Quaker families, and by contacting and visiting children's services in the neighbourhoods near Friends House to reach local families. We envisage that this will take approximately 2 days a month.
- To keep appropriate records about the Children's Meeting, e.g. of numbers attending, and to produce occasional brief written reports and plans.
- To report to and be guided by the Children's Committee, meeting on a weekday evening up to 6 times a year.

Children's Worker specification

We welcome proposals from Quakers and non-Quakers, people of any faith or none. Whatever your background, we hope you will enjoy becoming part of our social community, learning and growing along with us.

To be considered for the role, you will need to demonstrate:

1. Substantial paid or voluntary experience of running group activities with children, including under 5s.
2. A passionate commitment to the wellbeing of children, and skill in planning age-appropriate activities with a blend of energetic creativity, warm care, and safe boundaries.
3. Strong sympathy with Quaker values, including a deeply held commitment to equality and inclusion.
4. Experience of working thoughtfully and effectively with parents and carers.
5. Experience of outreach or promotional activities to increase the number of people using a service.
6. Good organisational skills, eg. for keeping the room tidy and keeping records.
7. Sound understanding of safeguarding and health & safety.

8. Consistent availability on Sunday mornings; sufficient availability on weekdays; and a reasonable number of holidays, planned in advance.
9. Ability to work from home, eg. for planning and outreach.
10. Ability to work legally on a freelance basis, eg. self-employed or sole trader status, with appropriate insurance.
11. Value for money in your proposed hours and price. We envisage costs in the region of £15 an hour for up to an average of 28 hours a month, including:
 - 2 hours on Sundays with Meeting for Worship only,
 - up to 4 hours on Sundays with post-Meeting groups,
 - around 16 hours a month for outreach, planning and meetings with the Children's Committee.

Application process

- Please submit a full CV and a covering letter, addressed to the Children's Committee at FHLQM.
- In your covering letter, tell us why you would like the role, and itemise how you meet each of the 11 points of the specification, including your proposed fees, likely hours per month, and proposed number of holidays per year.
- Email these **by 5pm on Monday 4 February 2019** to friendshouseclerk@icloud.com
- Initial interviews will take place on Friday 15 February 2019.
- If successful at interview, two references will be taken up, and an enhanced DBS check will be required.
- Before confirming the appointment, we will ask (and pay) you to run one or more trial sessions on Sunday mornings, especially so that we can ask the views of the children.
- If confirmed in post, we will make a contract with you for an initial 6 months' probationary period, with a view to extending it annually from then on.

Enquiries

If you have any questions, or for an informal conversation about the role, you are welcome to contact either of the following members of the FHLQM Children's Committee. To get an impression of our community, you are also welcome to attend our Meeting for Worship any Sunday morning. Any such informal contact won't form part of the appointment decision: we are following an equal opportunities approach, which means we will assess all applications only through the Application Process set out above.

Elize Sakamoto, parent: eikoelizesakamoto@hotmail.com 07969 040780

Tim Robertson, elder: tim.robertson@me.com 07949 170828