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QUAKER
SOCIAL
ACTION
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A woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a vibrant orange and yellow patterned jacket, is captured in profile, speaking with an open mouth and an enthusiastic expression. She is in a meeting room with other people blurred in the background. The image is partially overlaid by a dark blue circular graphic on the left side.

**IMPACT
REPORT
2022-2023**



Quaker Social Action is an independent charity founded by Quakers 150 years ago. We support people on low incomes in east London and across the UK, and use our learnings to create change.

OUR SERVICES (2022–23)

Cook Up provides a provides kitchen space and support for people experiencing homelessness to prepare their own meals and to improve their health and wellbeing through cooking.

Down to Earth runs the only UK-wide funeral costs helpline and campaigns for change within the funeral industry and government.

Made of Money provides a creative and reflective approach to financial well-being for individuals and families on low incomes.

Money Guiders England Network supports and equips frontline practitioners and volunteers who provide money guidance.

Move on Up provided affordable and supported housing for young adult carers to help them transition to independent living. It came to its scheduled close in the summer of 2023 after seven years.

This Way Up provides life-coaching and mindfulness training to help people move on with their lives and to make plans for the future.

Turn a Corner is a mobile library and a community space for people affected by homelessness in London.

We also support several **Big Local** organisations to create positive, resident-led change in their communities.

INTRODUCTION

JUDITH MORAN, DIRECTOR



Quaker Social Action is 156 years old. To survive, and indeed to thrive, for so long requires two very different attributes. One is solidity and stability, to remain grounded and connected. The other, and the theme of this year's annual impact report, pulls in the opposite direction. It is about change, growth and indeed about transformation.

Sometimes transformations are forced upon you, by circumstance. This is indeed the case with big transformations like the pandemic, which didn't so much as nudge us more towards a digital mindset but hurtled us there. Changes to our services that were made in the urgency of lockdown are now part and parcel of how we do things. Other times transformations are initiated from within. Every time we welcome a new project into QSA, or close one, it transforms us as an organisation. QSA is an evolving organisation and most years we are doing a beginning or an ending, or both. Applying a learning mindset is critical to ensure that such

changes are transformative to us and deepen our understanding of what works well.

Within our work around equity, diversity and inclusion, where the world really is changing fast, we've been both "learning and unlearning". This means letting go of old certainties and being willing to transform how we do things. To ensure that the working culture at QSA supports this, we redesigned our code of conduct, and a working group of QSA colleagues, transformed it into a staff charter. Being willing to admit you've made mistakes is one of the attributes we think is critical and is now embedded within this charter. Yes, we hope to get things right, but individually and corporately, sometimes we will get things wrong. This is a liberating idea and one which paves the way for further transformations down the line.

We hope you enjoy reading further stories of transformations, from across our services, within the pages of this report.

Move On Up
co-managers
Elizabeth Oyeledun
and Lois Gallagher
at the closing event,
August 16th 2023



MOVE ON UP YOUNG ADULT CARERS MOVE ON UP

“Should more organisations offer housing and support to young adult carers? One hundred per cent. It gets them away from all that stress, and they have their own space. It gives them a boost.”

Running from 2017 to 2023, Move on Up was a housing project for young adult carers, aged 18–25, delivered by QSA in partnership with Commonweal Housing.

Based across four homes in London, it tested a shared housing pathway to independent living, alongside tailored support, in securing positive outcomes for young adult carers who deal with enormous pressures and miss out on life opportunities because of their caring roles.

An event on August 16th 2023, held at the Museum of the Home, marked the end of our unique housing project. We heard from QSA's co-managers for Move on Up, Elizabeth Oyeledun and Lois Gallagher, on the project's outcomes. QSA's head of services, Claire Brandon, reminded attendees of the key policy recommendations from the final Move on Up evaluation report. QSA director Judith Moran recalled the beginnings of Move on Up: "We decided to do this because innovation is at the heart of QSA. We wanted to set up a demonstration project to showcase that small charities can have big ideas, and that they can come to fruition."

At the heart of the event was a video featuring the voice of Tim*, one of

Move on Up's former tenants. Tim, in conversation with Lois, recounted his challenging experience as a young carer to his parents, and his four years with Move on Up.

Tim has come a long way from his early days struggling with a low-paid job, rent arrears and managing his personal finances. He has moved on to a new shared flat and is learning to get along with other housemates outside the circle of other young adult carers. He has embarked on a training course at work and has grown confident enough to aim for a manager role.

He would have been homeless, he says, had it not been for Move on Up. Asked if more organisations should offer housing and support to young adult carers, he answered: "One hundred per cent. It gets them away from all that stress, and they have their own space. It gives them a boost."

*We changed names to protect privacy.

MONEY GUIDERS ENGLAND NETWORK

Money Guiders England Network held its first in-person events this year after switching to online formats during the pandemic. At the first event on February 28th 2023, around 35 money guidance practitioners from over 20 organisations came together in Birmingham to network and collaborate on their response to the challenges brought on by the cost of living crisis. The second event, in London on March 28th,

focused on supporting people struggling with deficit budgets. Money guidance practitioners from housing groups, food banks, homelessness charities and other community groups, representatives from the Department of Work and Pensions and local authorities attended. MGEN is planning more in-person events in the coming year for members to share the most current approaches to the challenge of providing money guidance.



THIS WAY UP

This Way up started in 2012 as a pilot course by volunteer Tim Segaller using life-coaching and mindfulness training to help people on low incomes build resilience and well-being. In March 2023, This Way Up celebrated 10 years as a QSA service. Previous participants came together and shared how

This Way Up helped them deal with the challenges they faced and to come up with their own steps and solutions to move forward in their lives. Today, over 500 people have benefitted from This Way Up's two courses running yearly in spring and autumn.

BIG LOCALS

As the local trusted organisation, QSA supports Big Locals in community initiatives:

Aberfeldy Big Local piloted youth activities and relaunched the annual celebration day as AberFest23. They continue to work alongside local women supporting them to engage more in community and with each other. **Barnfield Big Local's** remaining year of funding is focused on youth activities and a supplementary Saturday school, a resident-led gardening and mini-allotment scheme. **Plaistow South Big Local** continued its

work supporting people through digital inclusion, mental health and wellbeing, youth and schools. **Pimlico Million** is planning to work with local organisations and groups to deliver a programme supporting youth, children and families, older people, building inclusive communities, safer neighbourhoods, small grants, green and open spaces and the local economy.



JOHN BULLOCH FROM TURN A CORNER VISITOR TO VOLUNTEER



In 2004, John was homeless, supported and encouraged by staff and volunteers of the Turn a Corner mobile library. (At that time, the mobile library was run by Quaker Homeless Action, which subsequently became part of Quaker Social Action in 2020).

Several people working or volunteering for the mobile library were instrumental in helping John to get back on his feet at that time. These same people told John that they would be honoured if he would become a volunteer for the library himself. Although unsure at first, he agreed, and over the first two years of volunteering he established himself as a much-valued member of the team.

John completed an exceptional 15 years of service in total. He volunteered regularly and with great dedication, providing compassionate and companionable support to people affected by homelessness, as he once was.

During a typical session, John supported visitors with friendly conversation, passing on wisdom and sometimes survival tips about living on the streets. He assisted our readers to choose books based on what they are looking for, as well as following up with them on how they found the book. His lived experience proved invaluable in advising the staff team on the types of essential items that are most needed by people living on the street.

During Volunteers' Week in June 2023, we nominated John for a Volunteer of the Year award with Third Sector magazine. John was shortlisted as a finalist in this prestigious awards scheme – a tremendous achievement and a recognition of his inspiring commitment and compassion.

COOK UP COOKING & BELONGING

“Our participants tell us how Cook Up has been instrumental for them as they go through the gruelling, and often dehumanising, asylum process.”



Around 47,500 people receiving asylum support were in hotel accommodation at the end of March 2023, compared to 9,500 in October 2020.

These staggering numbers are from a House of Commons research briefing published in July 2023.

There are usually no cooking facilities in such accommodations provided by the Home Office, leaving people with little choice but to eat food delivered by contractors.

Three quarters of people surveyed by Refugee Action described food served to them as being inedible and reported that their children showed signs of malnutrition.

(Refugee Action report on *Hostile Accommodation*, March 2023.)

Cook Up provides kitchen space, ingredients and support to people experiencing homelessness, among them, people seeking asylum. Our participants tell us how Cook Up has been instrumental for them as they go through the gruelling, and often dehumanising, asylum process.

Almost all participants we spoke to said that they relied on food they prepared at Cook Up sessions for all their meals and that they were convinced that they were making healthy choices. We have also seen their confidence grow as they learn

new skills such as organisation, teamwork, confidence, food hygiene and leadership. We have heard them describe how their well-being has improved vastly because they know they can look forward to being in an environment where they feel comfortable and welcome.

These learnings have inspired us to think of ways to expand Cook Up's reach.

By October this year, Cook Up will have hosted 100 sessions in two community kitchens in London. With two new development workers on our team, we hope to run more sessions in additional locations within London. We are working with referral partners such as the NHS, Care4Calais and St Mungo's to increase our reach. We aim to promote the Cook Up model and advocate for people seeking asylum to be located within local communities and have access to facilities where they can prepare healthy and culturally appropriate food for themselves and their families; and to develop a sense of belonging as they build new lives.



**MADE
OF MONEY**
FOCUS ON
CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE IN
CARE

Over many years, Made of Money has built expertise delivering financial capability trainings and resources for parents and families.

This year it is partnering up with St Christopher's Fellowship to develop learning resources for adults supporting children and young people (from pre-school up to 19 years) in care. The resources will then be shared throughout the sector, with both practitioner and train-the-trainer trainings.

The project, called Building the Money Springboard, funded by the Money and Pensions Service, will produce a suite of online tools intended for St Christopher's support staff to introduce budgeting, saving and other aspects of financial know-how to children from different age groups.

What makes this project different from general financial learning for young people?

It seeks to replicate the informal style of learning that takes place in families who are doing financial education as they go about everyday life. We've learnt that being brought up by staff in homes means young people in care lose out on a kind of 'background learning' many young

people pick up automatically at home. This includes topics such as borrowing money or managing utility costs – topics that are not typically part of routines in a care setting.

We have identified some small and simple learnings that could potentially have a big impact because they are closer to the informal money learning that happens in families, and because the resources draw on the distinctive Made of Money approach that managing money is about life as much as money. For example, one of the key learnings in our resources for primary aged children is being able to identify things that make them feel better when they are sad or angry, that don't cost money. This supports financial learning on real-world dangers such as uncontrollable impulse-spending and gambling.

“Our new resources draw on the distinctive Made of Money approach that managing money is about life as much as money.”

**DOWN
TO EARTH**
GROWING A
COLLECTIVE
VOICE



Down to Earth's helpline for people struggling with funeral costs remains in high demand. Halfway through this financial year, we have already supported 26% more clients than in the same period last year. We also have many people getting help through our online guides, which can be accessed at any time.

But there is another aspect of Down to Earth's work that is essential to tackling funeral poverty: building on our advocacy for policy and regulatory reform in the funeral industry.

During Dying Matters Awareness Week in May, we launched a campaign with the hashtag #ShowFuneralPrices, calling on the public to report funeral directors without a Standardised Price List in their window as required by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Order of 2021.

The campaign asks people to take photos of funeral directors' front windows, and has yielded over 30 photos from all over the country. As most bereaved people do not shop around online in advance, not having a price list in the window increases the chance of them walking into funeral directors' offices with

little or no information about the potentially massive costs they face.

We continue to appeal for more photos to be sent via our online form and showcase them on our social media platforms. We forward these photos on to the CMA, with accompanying details supplied by the (anonymised) senders. The campaign will push through until Grief Awareness Week in December.

We know that government agencies like the CMA have limited resources, which is why engaging the public is essential to bring about change. The Show Funeral Prices campaign is just one element of Down to Earth's influencing strategy to strengthen our collective voice in fighting funeral poverty. We also work with people with lived experience, and other organisations in the bereavement sector through the Funeral Poverty Alliance.

FINANCES

In the previous financial year ending 31 March 2022 QSA achieved a surplus of £67,870. A very significant factor in QSA's positive financial result for 2021-22 was an unusually high level of income from legacies, totalling £484,460.

For the financial year ending 31 March 2023, QSA's trustees agreed a 'deficit budget' at the start of the year. This was mainly due to the planned expenditure of funds restricted for homelessness work that QSA had acquired through the merger with Quaker Homeless Action in December 2020 – these funds were used for Turn a Corner and Cook Up.

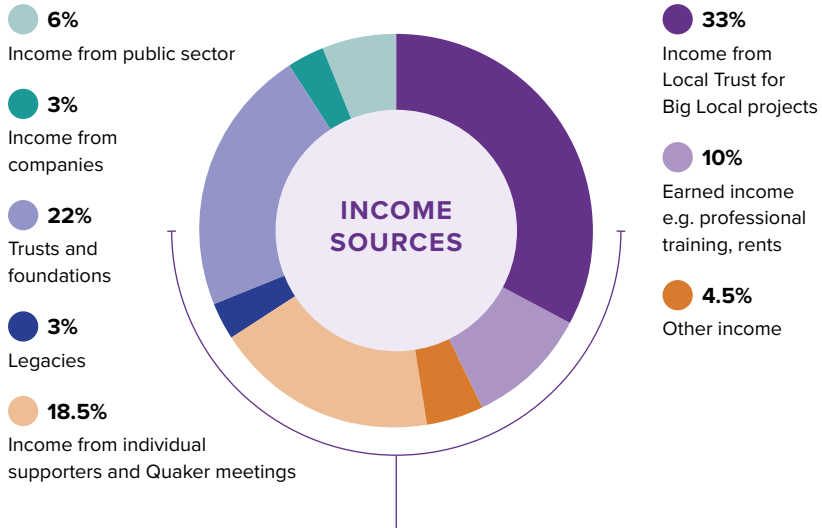
During financial year 2022-23 QSA's income of £1,685,812 was exceeded by expenditure of £1,924,888 giving a deficit (after net gains on investments) of £171,571. This is made up of a deficit on restricted funds of £249,332, together with a surplus of £32,903 on Big Local funds (see below) and a surplus of £44,858 on unrestricted funds.

Of the total income, £556,453 was income from Local Trust

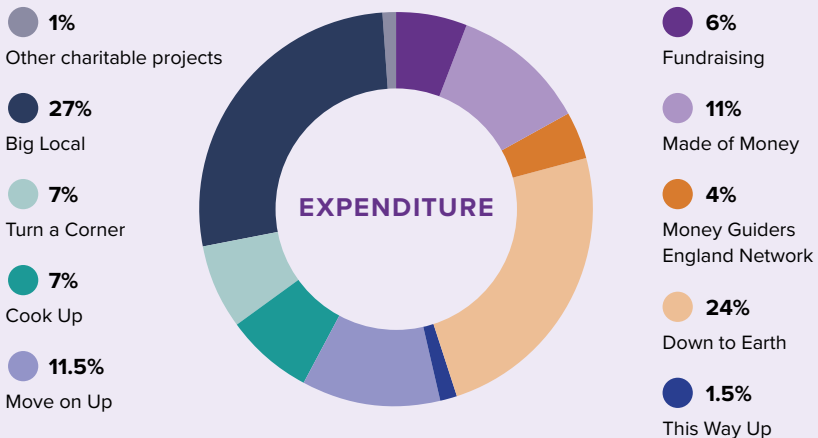
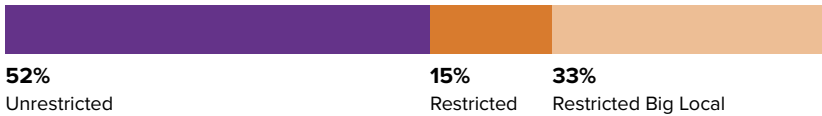
which QSA receives on behalf of the Big Local projects for which it is the Local Trusted Organisation (LTO).

QSA's reserves on 31 March 2023 sat at £1,735,862, consisting of £805,855 in restricted funds and £930,007 in unrestricted funds. The latter figure is composed of £822,169 in designated funds and a general fund of £107,838.

The reserves are managed by QSA's finance and fundraising sub-committee, which uses a risk-based approach to identify key financial risks and designate reserves to offset these risks. Accordingly, £247,508 is held for emergency or wind down scenarios, and £487,470 for operational contingencies given that we fundraise in-year. The remainder of the designated fund is £87,191 in fixed assets.



INCOME: RESTRICTED/UNRESTRICTED SPLIT



THANK YOU

The work of QSA is made possible thanks to our supporters, trustees, funders, staff, volunteers, service participants and partner organisations. Thank you to everyone who has played a part in our practical action against poverty.

Here are some ways to get involved:

DONATE

Give online by visiting quakersocialaction.org.uk/get-involved/ways-donate.

Join us in this year's Big Give Christmas Challenge and double your donation from November 28th to December 5th. Please visit quakersocialaction.org.uk/get-involved/big-give-christmas-2 for more information.

VOLUNTEER

Your time and skills can help us deliver our services better with more people. For current opportunities, please visit quakersocialaction.org.uk/volunteer.

FUNDRAISE

Create your own fundraiser or hold a collection to support QSA. Please visit quakersocialaction.org.uk/fundraise.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Make a lasting impact to QSA's innovative responses to poverty and inequality. For information, please visit quakersocialaction.org.uk/legacy.

2022–2023 AT A GLANCE



2,237

people supported
directly by our staff



124,332

(83,639 last year) users
visited the QSA website



417

other professionals
trained by us



89,078

(34,439) users accessed
“we can help” pages



3,104

hours of volunteer time
contributed


Stay connected and receive the latest news from QSA. Just scan the image on the right with your smartphone camera and you will go straight to our sign-up page at quakersocialaction.org.uk/newsletter.



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