

Who is Quaker Social Action?

Quaker Social Action (QSA) is an anti-poverty charity founded in 1867. We are based in east London and we support over 3,000 people each year directly, as well as reaching hundreds more professionals through our training and campaigning activities. Our award-winning projects meet practical needs:

- **Funerals – Down to Earth** supports people on low incomes struggling with funeral costs - this work inspired us to run the **Fair Funerals** campaign.
- **Furniture – Homestore** sells affordable, donated furniture to people on low incomes in east London.
- **Finances – Made of Money** offers a creative and reflective approach to financial wellbeing within families. A national training programme shares our approach with professionals across the UK.
- **Fulfilment – This Way Up** offers coaching and mindfulness to people on low incomes wanting to move on from a difficult experience and build up resilience for a more positive future.
- **Foundations – Move On Up** is a housing project for young adult carers supporting them to build their life skills and make positive moves into further education or work opportunities.
- **Food – Bags of Taste** is a new project, launching this spring, supporting people to tackle food poverty by gaining the skills to cook affordable and nutritious meals.

We are not a religious charity but Quaker values of equality, simplicity and compassion sit at the heart of our work.

What is Down to Earth?

Down to Earth is a project dedicated to supporting people on a low income who find themselves struggling to pay for a funeral. The costs of funerals are increasing year on year, with the limited state support not keeping pace and subject to complex eligibility criteria, leaving many on low incomes struggling to pay, in a situation that could be called “funeral poverty”.

Down to Earth delivers free support, explaining what is available and appropriate to each individual’s situation and personal beliefs, and ultimately helping clients to find a funeral that is both affordable and meaningful. Support is offered to people who are planning a funeral as well as those struggling with funeral debt after the funeral has taken place.

The project is the only one of its kind in the UK and, with people accessing the service from all over the country, the team effectively run a national helpline. Down to Earth’s reach is expanded by the provision of online tools and downloadable resources, as well as a new training programme designed for other professionals to learn the about delivering bereavement support and funeral advice.

What next for Down to Earth?

The project has grown each year since it began in 2010. More people have come to us for advice each year, with 978 using the service in the last financial year, compared to 769 the previous year.

The team is small – three development workers and a manager, so this increase in demand brings challenges. This is why we have invested heavily in expanding our reach using technology and our plan is to push hard on making more support available online in the future.

For the last four years, the team has also worked alongside another QSA project, the Fair Funerals campaign, but this is scheduled to end this year. The challenge for Down to Earth is how to take forward some of the legacy of the campaign, in essence to look carefully at what is possible to improve the situation of all bereaved people on low incomes. Plans are already emerging for what this could look like, and how this would complement existing work of the project.

The desire to work in partnership is strong, particularly in sharing our learning with other professionals, which is starting to happen more and more via the in-house training that we provide. We have big ambitions to grow this work, which not only spreads the word about what we do, but also provides a much valued source of funds.

What is the role of the Down to Earth manager?

These are exciting times, but change can be challenging, and involves taking risks and taking a team along with you. We are looking for a manager who is excited by the idea of building new activities on the existing firm foundations of the project: experimenting, reflecting, tweaking and ultimately moving Down to Earth from a period of development into a period of consolidation.

You will need to be willing to lead from the front, both diligent and creative, and able to take satisfaction from delivering work that makes a significant impact to bereaved people.

What is it like to work for QSA within the Down to Earth team?

The various teams at QSA undertake very different tasks but there is a strong sense of collaboration and of celebrating the successes of other teams with gusto and goodwill; as a small organisation, everyone has to work hard, and each person has their role to play. Our staff are enthusiastic and engaged with what they do, and there is both an openness and a solid commitment to social justice that is visible across the organisation..

Down to Earth talk to people every day who are living through one of the worst times of their lives, so the need for supportive colleagues is high.

This is a role – and an organisation – that will suit someone who is looking for a close-knit working environment, who has an inner resilience, who understands the need to be flexible and sometimes all-hands-on-deck, and is ambitious to lead a team with a reputation for delivering work of the very highest standard.

The role:

Responsible to: Director

Purpose of post: To manage and develop all aspects of Down to Earth, QSA's funeral poverty project

Main duties:

Management & oversight

1. To plan, monitor and review the progress of Down to Earth to ensure strategic development of the work.
2. To present a clear service "offer" to clients and referral agents about the service offered by Down to Earth.
3. To design, pilot and implement new initiatives within the project that will expand the reach of the service.
4. To provide leadership and management of the Down to Earth team to enable them to fulfil their roles to a high standard and with a high degree of motivation.
5. To lead on financial management for the project, contributing to financial management and budget development.
6. To oversee the impact reporting for Down to Earth and all associated data collection requirements of the team to ensure the learning and impact of the project is captured.
7. To oversee risk management for the project, particularly with regard to data protection and lone working.

Directly supporting people to obtain an affordable & meaningful funeral

1. To oversee the direct support offered to clients, including a significant time offering that support, usually over a phone helpline.
2. To work with the team to build up a strong level of knowledge about planning a funeral, paying for a funeral, dealing with debt arising from a funeral and managing money after a bereavement.
3. To build up awareness of Down to Earth among health professionals and others who are most likely to come into contact with a person who has been bereaved and needs to plan a funeral, to inform them about our service and enable a smooth referral process into the project.
4. To build up resources around funeral provision to support people planning a funeral, building up a repertoire of knowledge of providers and their prices (local, regional and national) as far as possible.
5. To build up knowledge of different funeral options, such as public health funerals, direct cremations, repatriations, as well as alternative funerals in terms of celebrants, venues, coffins, green burial sites etc to be able to provide people with options and choices when planning a funeral.
6. To develop knowledge about bereavement services and other relevant services to signpost once a funeral has taken place.
7. To oversee the decision making for the Stephen Lloyd funeral support fund, an internal benevolent fund operated by QSA, offering a small amount of financial support for a limited number of Down to Earth clients, who fit within defined eligibility criteria.
8. To ensure the development of a range of complementary online tools and downloadable resources, enabling people to access this information whenever needed.

Sharing the learning from Down to Earth

1. To develop ways of sharing our learning with other professionals to take back to their own workplaces, including the provision of training courses.
2. To promote and market these training courses, as a means of generating income for the project.
3. To oversee the delivery of training courses by the staff team and to directly deliver training.
4. To engage with key players in the relevant sectors (end of life, bereavement, palliative care, funeral directors, local authorities, DWP, relevant all party parliamentary groups), at local, regional and national level, to address deficiencies, gaps and inequalities in current provision.
5. To work closely with QSA's Fair Funerals campaign team, to ensure that their work (to advocate for national changes that would support people across the UK who find themselves unable to pay for a funeral) can be informed by the experience of Down to Earth's service users and the reflections of the Down to Earth team.

Communications & external liaison

1. To be a strong advocate for the work of Down to Earth, keeping up to date with relevant research, trends and opportunities within this field.
2. To develop a profile for Down to Earth, working with colleagues to promote the learning from the project through QSA's online platforms and by liaising with local and national networks as appropriate.

General

1. To work within, and actively promote, the policies and procedures of QSA.
2. To receive line management, supervision and appraisal from the QSA director.
3. Any other duties, as appropriate to role, as agreed by the QSA director.

Experience

1. Experience of delivering a community based service.
2. Experience of related sectors such as bereavement is highly desirable.
3. Experience of managing staff or volunteers.
4. Experience of designing and delivering training sessions is highly desirable.

Ability

1. Ability to engage with people who have experienced a bereavement, with empathy and tact.
2. Ability to manage own workload and to work flexibly.
3. Strong commitment to, and knowledge of, assessing impact.
4. Ability to build strong and effective local and national partnerships.
5. Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
6. Ability to promote and publicise Down to Earth enthusiastically and effectively to individuals and groups.

Knowledge

1. Knowledge of end of life issues, funerals, bereavement and debt are all desirable.
2. Knowledge of the funeral payments element of the Social Fund is desirable.
3. Knowledge of credit and debt as well as budgeting support is desirable.

Other

1. Commitment to equal opportunities and diversity, in the workplace and in service provision.
2. A willingness to work within a Quaker ethos, as clarified by the vision & values of QSA:

QSA's **vision** is:

"We want a just world, where people put people first".

We fulfil this through our **mission**:

"To enable people on low incomes in east London, and beyond, to seek solutions to the issues affecting their lives. To do this we will listen to and respond to the needs of the community, by running practical, sustainable and collaborative projects. We will share our work with others when it is clear that it has the potential to bring benefits to communities outside of our own".

Main terms and conditions of employment

1. QSA uses the local government pay scales for salaries. Your salary will be on **NJC scale point 33-36**, which starts at **£32,796**. All appointments are made at bottom of scale.
2. This is a **full-time post, 36 hours per week**. Fewer hours, such as four days a week/28 hours are possible and will be considered.
3. This is a permanent post.
4. Some evening and weekend work is possible, on occasion, but is not a regular part of the role.
5. This post will be based at the QSA office, in Bethnal Green.
6. The period of notice either way will be one week during the probationary period and six weeks on its successful completion.
7. QSA has a union recognition agreement with Unite although staff are welcome to join any trade union.
8. This post is subject to a 6 month probation period.
9. QSA contributes 6% of salary into a pension scheme. Contributions from the employee are possible, but not compulsory.
10. A full-time worker is entitled to 25 days holiday per year with the leave year running from January to December, plus bank holidays.
11. Further staff benefits include access to childcare vouchers, an employee assistance programme and an interest free season ticket loan.

How to apply

If you have any questions about the role, call us on 020 8983 5030 and ask to speak to our director, Judith Moran.

If you decide to apply, please send the following to **info@qsa.org.uk**:

- **a copy of your CV**, highlighting the areas of your experience pertinent to this role
- **a supporting statement**, of no more than 3 sides of A4, outlining how you meet our person specification

We also invite you to complete our online equality and diversity monitoring form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2GT67V3>

Closing date is **9.00am Monday 12 March 2018**.

If you do not hear from us by the end of that day, please assume we have not shortlisted your application.

Interviews will be held on **Thursday 15 March 2018**.

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to your application.