

**MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS
CHURCH GOVERNMENT ADVISORY GROUP (CGAG)
(DRAFT) TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

Accountable to Meeting for Sufferings, the Church Government Advisory Group's role is to identify and draft any church government amendments required to the current Book of Christian Discipline of Britain Yearly Meeting (currently *Quaker faith and practice*) consulting as necessary. It provides advice and where necessary ~~to~~ initiates consideration about church government matters, and about the interpretation of passages in *Quaker faith and practice*, to Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) and the Recording Clerk.

The CGAG's role is distinct from that of the Yearly Meeting Publications Group (YMPG), which is accountable to YM and is responsible for editorial policy, and for the periodic revisions and availability of the current Book of Discipline in a variety of prints and other formats. The two Groups shall have a responsibility to liaise with each other on mutually relevant matters.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 The group shall consist of up to five members appointed by Meeting for Sufferings for a term of service of three years, after which a member is eligible for reappointment for a second term of service and, exceptionally, for a third.

2.2 The group will meet with the Recording Clerk or his/her designate in attendance.

2.3 The Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, the Clerk of BYM Trustees and the BYM Treasurer may attend its meetings.

2.4 The group shall appoint its own convener.

2.5 The Clerk and Assistant Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, the Clerk of BYM Trustees, the BYM Treasurer and the convenor of the YMPG shall receive the group's papers on request.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Group is responsible for proposing suitable wording in the church government text, at the most appropriate place in the current Book of Christian Discipline, to describe new elements in the organisation of Britain Yearly Meeting and new requirements which affect its Discipline.

3.2 The Group shall have regard to the overall balance and shape of the church government sections of the Book of Christian Discipline and add additional text only when reference to other more detailed, and perhaps more frequently amended documents, is not appropriate or is insufficient.

3.3 The Group is responsible for providing advice to Yearly Meeting, normally through Meeting for Sufferings and the Recording Clerk, on any church government matter brought to its attention, including the interpretation and clarification of passages in the Book of Christian Discipline.

3.4 The Group should liaise with the YMPG, exchanging minutes and communicating as necessary on points of mutual relevance and concern.

4. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

4.1 The Group shall meet as frequently as appropriate for discernment and accountability.

4.2 The Group may on occasion make use of telephone conferencing and email discussion to conduct necessary business between meetings.

5. AUTHORITY

5.1 The Group shall work within these Terms of Reference under the authority of Meeting for Sufferings minute xxxx.

5.2 The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed at least triennially and may, in the interim, be amended by minuted decisions of MfS.