

VIBRANCY IN MEETINGS PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Main report

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CHARITIES EVALUATION
SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Vibrancy in Meetings (Vibrancy) is a three-year pilot programme that forms part of the support structure offered to Quaker meetings. It is being provided jointly by the national body of Quakers (Britain Yearly Meeting, BYM¹) and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Woodbrooke) in four regions between March 2016 and December 2019. Vibrancy aims to support local and area meetings to become strong, connected, confident and sustainable and to contribute to a vibrant yearly meeting. This is delivered through support from four development workers, managed by a national programme co-ordinator, all part time. It is also hoped that Vibrancy will help improve the support offered by BYM and Woodbrooke.

In October 2016, BYM commissioned NCVO Charities Evaluation Services (NCVO CES) to conduct a three-year evaluation of the programme. This is the main report of this evaluation and is to be used primarily for internal decision making.

This report is based on: a survey of 141 Friends with whom the programme has worked; telephone interviews with 18 Friends; interviews with the Vibrancy team and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff; a review of Vibrancy monitoring data and central data from BYM and Woodbrooke.

What Vibrancy offers to Friends

1. Over the course of the programme, **the Vibrancy team have extended their reach to most meetings in their regions.**
 - Development workers have worked with at least 60% of local meetings in their regions, with one reaching almost 100%.
 - Workers have supported all area meetings in their regions. Contacts with area meetings make up between 23% and 43% of all logged contacts.
2. **The majority of worker contacts with Friends are relatively brief** (up to two hours). However, workers are also offering longer contacts (of more than three days, in total), some over months; this is a significant investment of time from workers with part-time roles.
3. **Vibrancy staff are now delivering much of the direct support work to Friends themselves**, rather than simply 'signposting' to BYM and Woodbrooke. Where needed, Vibrancy can involve the relevant part of BYM or Woodbrooke for additional – sometimes specialist – support.
4. While workers are offering support on all areas described in *Our faith in the future*,² **the themes of community and Quaker discipline comprise almost 40% of all presenting needs.**

¹ The term 'BYM' describes the whole organisation of Quakers in Britain. The term can refer to the whole organisation, but also to the teams of staff (mainly based at Friends House), and Friends who offer service (such as through the Quaker Life network, members of Quaker Stewardship Committee, Quaker Life clusters, Turning the Tide trainers). Where possible, the text indicates which use of the term is meant. Services delivered by Woodbrooke may be through staff, or the Woodbrooke tutors' network.

² <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future>

Satisfaction

Vibrancy is rated very highly by Friends: **96% of Friends in our survey rated support from Vibrancy as 'excellent' or 'good'**, and all said the Vibrancy worker was approachable. Almost all respondents felt the worker had a good level of knowledge around the issues they had offered Friends support on, and had met their meeting's needs.

In particular, Friends valued: the ability of workers to connect them with other people and meetings; the accessibility of the workers; their personal qualities and skills. They appreciated the workers' ability to listen to Friends, understand the issues they were facing and provide high-quality support.

I think the most helpful thing about the Vibrancy programme is that each of us knows that she is there for us, is easily contactable and is willing to do what we would like. That's a first for us and I think everyone appreciates that. (Friend interviewee)

Learning from support delivery

1. An important part of the development worker role is listening to and encouraging meetings. Increasingly, workers are involved in in-depth support projects.
2. Workers are often dealing with practical problems that may be hampering spiritual growth and preventing a meeting becoming more vibrant.
3. The development worker role is emerging as one that needs to be a topic generalist, to enable the correct identification of needs. But workers also need to have specialist skills in supporting meetings and encouraging spiritual growth.
4. Some effective joint work is being undertaken by Vibrancy with BYM and Woodbrooke. However, Vibrancy staff have sometimes had difficulties in referring Friends on to BYM and Woodbrooke because of lack of capacity in the two organisations or the nature of the support offered.
5. Workload continues to be a significant problem for Vibrancy staff. Several Friends were concerned that the development workers were spread too thinly across large regions; as a result they might wear themselves out in the role, or at the least be unable to provide in-depth support.

Outcomes for Friends

Outcomes for individuals

Friends report significant personal outcomes as a result of Vibrancy support.

- **Feeling supported:** Almost 90% of 130 survey respondents felt supported by their worker; 81% felt better able to support their local/area meeting or group.
- **Happier, more confident role holders:** 10 of 16 role holders we interviewed said Vibrancy had helped them enjoy their role more; a further four said their experience of their role had improved.

My role has become easier because the workload has reduced. That works out as being more enjoyable. The job was getting in the way of family life, so it's also eased situations at home for me. (Friend interviewee)
- **Changed thinking:** 79% of 129 survey respondents said the Vibrancy worker had helped their meeting or group generate ideas about its future direction. Some noted that the worker's skills in facilitation had helped, for example by gently drawing out Friends' own ideas.

Outcomes for meetings

Outcomes for meetings were reported across all the theory of change³ outcome areas of *community, Quaker discipline, active values, collaboration, visibility* and *meeting for worship*. Friends said they had had access to a wide range of support on these topics, from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke. All were thought to have contributed to the outcomes, although respondents felt that Vibrancy was the biggest contributor.

The largest number of reported changes, and those most directly linked to the effects of Vibrancy, were in the areas of community, Quaker discipline, and collaboration. Examples of changes reported⁴ include:

- The majority (26 of 32 meetings for which it was relevant) felt more confident in **making meetings more accessible to newcomers**; a third had implemented changes.

She has made us think about where we hold our meetings – are they on good public transport routes, and when we’re holding them. We usually hold meeting on Saturday, but one was on a Sunday. But Sunday is more difficult for public transport, but [our Vibrancy worker] has kept us alert to thinking about that. (Friend interviewee)
- About half (17 of 39 meetings) said they were now **spending more time together outside of meeting for worship**.

The Vibrancy project opens the possibilities for wider and different ways to relate through my spirituality, without having to go outside of Quakers. (Friend interviewee)
- Just over half (16 of 27 meetings for which this was relevant) had **improved their support for people in or considering roles**. Fifteen of 26 reported **better acknowledgement, and using, of Friends’ gifts**. One explained how, following Vibrancy support, they now try and fit the roles round Friends’ gifts, rather than the other way around.
- Just over half (14 of 26 meetings for which this was relevant) said they had become **better at handling conflict**.

We’ve appreciated the role of elders more – how they need to be more visible and active in their roles. They traditionally just shake hands at the end of the meeting but there’s also the question of their role in maintaining discipline in the meeting. Making sure that people give space and listen between contributions and avoid hurtful things. We had let that part of the role slip a bit and we’re focusing on it more now. (Friend interviewee)
- About three-quarters (14 of the 19 meetings for which this was relevant) reported **more shared projects with other meetings or organisations**.
- About half (8 of 17 meetings for which this was relevant) had taken **more action on social issues**. The same number reported running **more events or outreach activities to increase visibility**.
- About half (17 of 33 meetings) reported a **deeper quality of ministry** at their meetings.
- A small number of meetings worked with by Vibrancy have not yet experienced any outcomes.

³ The theory of change was developed by NCVO CES with the Vibrancy team and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff members in early 2017. It sets out the changes and benefits that may come about for Quaker meetings, and for BYM and Woodbrooke, through Vibrancy support. It is based around the themes set out in *Our faith in the future*. Note that as a pilot programme, Vibrancy was intended to be open and responsive to meetings’ needs, rather than seeking only achievement of these outcomes.

⁴ Our evaluation was not able to gather consensus from within meetings. Where an outcome was reported, it means one individual from that meeting has reported it. Other Friends from that meeting may not have reported the same thing.

According to BYM monitoring data, there is no evidence as yet that Vibrancy has affected overall statistics on diversity, member or attender numbers or meeting attendance levels. This could be due to these changes not having happened yet; some of them might be anticipated in the longer term. However, there is also concern that central monitoring is not able to capture changes adequately, perhaps because of limitations in systems or because the systems were not designed to collect this data.

What helps or hinders change

Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke were all thought to have contributed to these outcomes, although respondents felt that Vibrancy was the biggest contributor⁵ in all areas except active values, where BYM played a greater part. Vibrancy has the most effect on community and Quaker discipline outcomes, where most support has been given.

The nature of Vibrancy delivery enables outcomes. Some Friends said they were likely to act on suggestions made by their Vibrancy worker because they were credible and known. Support provided locally over time was also considered important for change, spurring Friends on 'through hiccups'.

Lack of resilience within meetings hampers change. For Friends, barriers to change included lack of time or energy, an ageing membership and a small number of people within the meeting being prepared to take action. Some Friends were continuing to struggle with accessibility issues, particularly for children and young people.

Work with BYM and Woodbrooke

The amount of joint work between Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke has been increasing, and relevant staff are meeting more frequently. Work with Woodbrooke has focused on supporting meetings through events, including some that have been co-created with the Vibrancy team. Vibrancy staff have also provided local intelligence to Woodbrooke prior to support provision. Joint work with BYM teams has included: shared planning; developing new resources; supporting meetings together, in particular on conflict; Vibrancy contributing to BYM events.

To date, partnership working has been limited by a lack of time, for both the Vibrancy team and other BYM and Woodbrooke staff. The nature of Vibrancy, in term of its presence in only a few regions and the relatively short-term nature of the pilot, have limited some options for joint working. Some BYM staff noted that the organisation hadn't fully been prepared for Vibrancy before it started, and that this had hampered its integration. BYM and Woodbrooke may not yet have fully adapted to the different and new way that Vibrancy works, in particular remote, regional working.

Some relationships between Vibrancy and central staff at both organisations are strong. However some members of the Vibrancy team felt that some BYM staff have been reluctant to work with

⁵ Note that this was a survey to people who had received Vibrancy support and chosen to engage with the survey. This sample might be more likely to describe Vibrancy as having more effect on their work. There may be other Friends who have had a different experience.

them, and felt that there was sometimes a divide between them and the central teams. One Vibrancy team member reported feeling undervalued by BYM.

Further work is needed to ensure the Vibrancy team becomes – and feels – more integrated within BYM and Woodbrooke teams, and that joint working with both BYM and Woodbrooke is undertaken where appropriate to best meet the needs of Friends. Despite this, a number of staff respondents from across Vibrancy, central BYM and Woodbrooke talked with excitement about the potential for more future working.

Outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke

As a result of Vibrancy, Friends are learning more about BYM and Woodbrooke; Vibrancy is also beginning to promote mutual understanding between Friends and the two central organisations, with BYM and Woodbrooke staff developing and building on their existing knowledge of Friends' needs through their Vibrancy colleagues.

There was strong evidence from the evaluation survey and interviews that Vibrancy is increasing Friends' use of BYM and Woodbrooke resources. However, central monitoring data does not show this yet, except for a small increase in Woodbrooke on-the-road course bookings; there is also no evidence in the geography of BYM/Woodbrooke delivery as a result of Vibrancy. Possible reasons include: Vibrancy is now doing more of the delivery itself; limitations to central monitoring; insufficient time for on-the-ground changes to be felt.

Evaluation data suggests Vibrancy workers are articulating meetings' needs and best practice to BYM and Woodbrooke on their behalf, rather than meetings doing this directly themselves, as had been initially suggested.

There are some promising indications of Vibrancy affecting Woodbrooke's events delivery. Several of the development workers have been working with BYM staff around conflict in meetings, and new approaches are being developed as a result. Vibrancy workers have a particular role to play in identifying a shared need across their area and bringing those Friends together to access BYM or Woodbrooke support. There is also early evidence that support from Vibrancy has enabled some Friends to get more out of BYM or Woodbrooke support, or access it more easily, than they might otherwise have done.

There is very limited evidence that Vibrancy has affected Friends' active engagement in wider Quaker society, although it would be very early for such changes to be seen. Joint working was already taking place between BYM and Woodbrooke and the data for this report does not indicate any effect from Vibrancy on the amount of this joint working.

What is important about Vibrancy?

Friends value the long-term support of someone who is accessible and knows the local context, and the ability to build personal, trusting relationships with the same individual over time. These relationships are felt important for Vibrancy workers to really understand the needs of meetings. Still significant, but of lesser importance to Friends are having a worker who is paid, and who is a skilled generalist. Topic specialisms are welcome, but not regarded as essential.

Overall, respondents found Vibrancy support very different from that available from BYM and Woodbrooke. This is to be expected given the very different nature of the two types of support, but there may be some positive learning from Vibrancy around accessibility and approachability.

This long-term personal support, delivered by a skilled worker and based on deep understanding of local meetings and the local context, has meant that rather than simply signposting to BYM and Woodbrooke, Vibrancy staff are now delivering much of the work themselves. However, Friends described using support from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke on the same issues, and reported that the three all contribute significantly to outcomes. Many Friends were clear that, although Vibrancy is different, the contrasting forms of support could also work together; it may be that acting together, they are more than the sum of their parts.

Summary and recommendations

Vibrancy is a successful programme, well received by the Friends it has supported, and bringing about significant outcomes for the meetings with which it has worked. This evaluation has found evidence that Vibrancy has contributed to outcomes for local and area meetings in all six of the outcome areas described in the programme theory of change.

Recommendations for the remainder of the pilot

1. Consider ways to engage with Friends about what Vibrancy might look like beyond the pilot, and/or exit planning, as appropriate.
2. Agree on what good integration of the Vibrancy team into BYM and Woodbrooke structures might look like, and what levels of joint working between Vibrancy and other BYM/Woodbrooke teams are desirable.
3. Nurture, support and promote the good joint working that has recently started between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke teams. Find ways to ensure the Vibrancy team are, and feel, valued by and integral to the two organisations.
4. Find ways to reduce development worker workload.
5. Consider ways to improve BYM and Woodbrooke monitoring to better track the longer-term outcomes of Vibrancy. This could include finding different ways to measure Vibrancy success, rather than, for example, uptake of BYM or Woodbrooke resources.
6. Consider a brief review of the theory of change, in particular the outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke. For a few of these, there is no evidence that they have occurred (for example that Vibrancy will increase joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke), and it may be that they are no longer relevant.

Recommendations for beyond the pilot

1. For staffing any future programme, BYM and Woodbrooke should consider:
 - The skills required for development workers and the definition of, and interplay between, specialist and generalist skills.
 - The ideal team size. The current Vibrancy team size appears to work well, given the nature of remote working. How would a larger team affect this?
 - Whether locally-based, skilled Friends offering unpaid service might appropriately complement the work of paid development staff.
2. The following aspects of a future programme's delivery would merit consideration:

- Whether workers' geographical boundaries could be flexible according to Friends' needs and workers' capacity.
 - Whether an alternative approach to day-to-day monitoring might be appropriate. The Vibrancy workers have sometimes struggled with the monitoring spreadsheet developed with NCVO CES.
3. The intended outputs and outcomes of any new programme should be considered carefully.
- The current theory of change would be a good starting point but needs a deep review. As Vibrancy has changed and evolved, the underlying theory may need to follow suit.
 - The Vibrancy pilot has shown there is considerable need around the basics of Quakerism, meetings and processes. A new programme should address this focus.
 - It might be helpful to consider the anticipated timescales of anticipated outcomes; the view of a number of respondents in this evaluation was that some of the outcomes were long term, some beyond the lifetime of the pilot.
4. Any new programme should have an extensive internal planning and communications phase prior to the work starting.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Vibrancy

Vibrancy in Meetings (Vibrancy) is a three-year pilot programme that forms part of the support structure offered to Quaker meetings. It is provided jointly by the national body of Quakers (Britain Yearly Meeting) and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Woodbrooke) between March 2016 and December 2019. The work is funded through legacies to BYM and resources and facilities from Woodbrooke.

Through Vibrancy, the two organisations hoped to learn whether having locally-based paid workers improves support provision for local Quakers. BYM and Woodbrooke want to understand if the programme enables local Quaker meetings to be strong, connected, confident, sustainable, and to contribute to a vibrant yearly meeting. Vibrancy would also act as a two-way conduit for communication and support between Friends, meetings and the wider work of Quakers in Britain.

To deliver the programme, four part-time development workers are located in four regions in different parts of Britain. They are managed by a national programme co-ordinator.

1.2 About the evaluation

In October 2016, BYM commissioned NCVO Charities Evaluation Services (NCVO CES) to act as the evaluation partner for the Vibrancy programme. Working closely with Vibrancy staff, NCVO CES is conducting a three-year evaluation of the programme to investigate whether it is making the difference it intends, to understand which elements of the programme have been helpful and less helpful in making a difference, and to explore the way in which it is managed and received.

The evaluation has three phases:

- Phase 1: November 2016 – May 2017: Set up and evaluation planning.
- Phase 2: June 2017 – December 2018: Early and mid-term data collection, and completion of a ‘taking stock’ report and a main evaluation report (this report).
- Phase 3: January 2019 – December 2019: Final data collection and completion of a shorter report with case studies, for publication.

The agreed primary purpose of this main evaluation report is for internal decision making, including enabling the steering group to make recommendations to the trustees of BYM and Woodbrooke about the future of the programme. As such, the report is written for an informed internal audience – Friends who know about Vibrancy and other BYM and Woodbrooke services.⁶

1.2.1 Data collection methods

Between July and October 2018, NCVO CES carried out the following data collection to inform this

⁶ The NCVO CES December 2019 report will be a shorter report for publication. It will summarise learning from the programme for a wider Quaker audience and other faith initiatives, and will primarily contain case study examples.

main evaluation report:

- A survey of 141 Friends from local meetings and area meetings with which the Vibrancy programme has worked.
- Telephone interviews with 18 Friends from local meetings and area meetings.
- Half-day face-to-face interviews with all four Vibrancy development workers in their regions and a telephone interview with the national co-ordinator of the programme.
- Five telephone interviews involving eight other BYM and Woodbrooke staff members based in departments the Vibrancy team has worked with.
- A review of development workers' monitoring spreadsheets recording work taking place between October 2016 (when support to meetings started) and September 2018.
- A review of other monitoring data from BYM and Woodbrooke.
- We held a workshop in November 2018 to check our findings with stakeholders – primarily the Vibrancy staff team, the steering group, staff representatives from both BYM and Woodbrooke. This workshop was used to test findings and co-create recommendations.

About our survey of Friends

The survey was sent to 281 Friends, including all Friends to whom Vibrancy workers had provided support since July 2017 and Friends who had received in-depth support finishing before July 2017. The survey was circulated by the Vibrancy development workers as an online link; a small number of surveys were sent by post. The large majority of responses (135) were received online.

We received 141 responses in total; the response rate was 50% overall, with a range across the four Vibrancy areas of 45% to 52%. Respondents came from all four Vibrancy regions. The largest group of respondents were from the North West of England (35%), followed by Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset (23%), Wales and the Southern Marches (23%) and Kent, Surrey and Sussex (19%).

The majority of respondents in our survey (n=131) first had support from their Vibrancy worker one to two years previously (44%, 57 people). Meanwhile 31% (40 people) first had this support within the previous six months, and 26% (34 people) within the previous six months to one year. Just under half of respondents (49%) had received support in connection with a local meeting, and a similar proportion (47%) in connection with an area meeting.⁷

We received responses from 16 of the 18 area meetings in Vibrancy areas, and 41 of the 96 local meetings worked with to date (out of a total of 132 in the areas).

- The size and attendance of meetings in our sample was broadly similar to the average meeting profile in Vibrancy regions.
- Larger meetings were slightly over-represented in our sample compared to all meetings in Vibrancy regions. Of the named local meetings in our survey, 78% self-reported an average attendance at meeting of worship of 25 or fewer, whereas Book of Meetings 2017 data shows 89% of all local meetings in Vibrancy regions with an average attendance of 25 or fewer.
- Local meeting respondents were more likely to attend meetings in towns (63%) than in rural areas (25%) or cities (12%). The large majority of respondents (87%) self-identified as a role

⁷ The remaining 5% of respondents had received support as part of a Quaker group not linked to a particular area or local meeting or were not currently connected to a meeting.

holder in their local or area meeting.

About our interviews with Friends

Our sample was self-selecting, consisting of 13 Friends who had completed the survey and expressed interest in an interview, two who had completed the survey and had also been interviewed for our previous report and three further Friends who had previously been interviewed for the evaluation and consented to a follow-up conversation (18 in total). Within this group we selected interviewees to ensure we included those who had experienced outcomes following Vibrancy support and Friends who were from: the four Vibrancy regions; different areas within each region; both area meetings and local meetings.

Considerations in data analysis and reporting

As is usual practice in non-statistical reporting, interview data is reported in qualitative terms. The number of responses is shown where this is helpful. However, in general we avoid reporting small samples in numerical terms, which might lead to inappropriate generalisations.

There are limitations to the data which have some effect on the conclusions that can be drawn:

- The data from the survey interviews with Friends may reflect some positive bias as respondents had both received Vibrancy support and expressed an interest in giving feedback on Vibrancy.
- We have reported findings related to BYM and Woodbrooke as they have emerged from our central focus on Vibrancy's work with meetings. While this has resulted in some useful observations and findings for central organisations, it will be recognised that it has not been our remit to evaluate the role of BYM and Woodbrooke as such.
- Interviews with Friends did not always cover all question areas. To ensure that we were mindful of Friends' time, some questions in our interview schedule were categorised as being of lower priority and were asked only if there was time.
- Data from the development worker monitoring sheets suggests that there were some differences in the way that these were being completed across areas, although inconsistencies were fewer than for the February 2018 report. These differences in what was being recorded (for example for signposting or other brief work) was confirmed during interviews. Some inconsistency is also likely to remain as a reflection of real differences in the work across the regions.
- Although development workers' monitoring spreadsheets contained some outcomes data and some further qualitative information, this was incomplete or inconsistent across regions. This data was therefore not included.
- Some survey respondents reported that they had sometimes struggled to complete the survey, in part as they hadn't been involved in all the work Vibrancy had done with the meeting.
- Our survey to Friends quite frequently had several individual responses from a single meeting, particularly from area meetings; this is at least in part because development workers may have worked with a number of people from one area meeting, each on separate pieces of work. Data on how Friends felt about Vibrancy and the support received was analysed by individual response. This method was also used for data on early outcomes, representing how individuals had benefited. This meant that several responses might be

- analysed separately per meeting.
- There are two ways in which our analysis and reporting of data may have introduced a positive bias:
 - Data on later outcomes was analysed by meeting and a decision was taken to record and count each positive reporting of an outcome, even where another response from the same meeting felt that an outcome had not been achieved. This is because we cannot know the reasons for someone saying an outcome did not occur.

Reporting outcomes

By outcomes we mean all the changes or benefits that result from the work of Vibrancy. Sometimes this may not be a change; it may rather be about maintenance, as in retaining attendance numbers for example.

One challenge to reporting and attributing positive outcomes to Vibrancy is that some of its work is through facilitation and signposting rather than through direct services. We would expect a range of other factors to also influence change and the achievement of outcomes, above all support and resources from BYM and Woodbrooke centrally, either given separately from Vibrancy, following from signposting or as part of joint work. Indeed, our data would support this and we discuss this question of attribution and contribution to outcomes in section 4.3.

Where possible, we have triangulated data from different sources to help understand the nature of Vibrancy's contribution to change.

A number of staff from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke, as well as Friends in interviews, mentioned that the three-year timescale of the pilot might not be long enough to fully judge its success. Several development workers noted that some of their longer-term activities would not be completed within the pilot. One development worker felt that after an initial period of building trust, more significant work to bring about change had happened only in the previous six months.

1.2.2 This report

The rest of the report explores:

- what the programme has delivered
- Friends' perceptions of the programme
- outcomes for individual Friends and for meetings
- how the programme has worked with BYM and Woodbrooke, and outcomes for those organisations
- important aspects of Vibrancy
- recommendations.

2 PROGRAMME DELIVERY

This section describes what has been delivered through the Vibrancy programme, and to whom. Much is based on the monitoring spreadsheet completed by the development workers.

Key findings

1. Over the course of the programme to date, the Vibrancy team have **extended their reach** to most meetings in their areas; all area meetings have been worked with.
2. While the majority of contacts are relatively brief, development workers are offering a **significant number of longer contacts** to meetings.
3. While Vibrancy workers are offering support on all areas described in *Our faith in the future*, **community and Quaker discipline are the most common presenting needs**.
4. An important part of the development worker role is listening and encouraging and reassuring meetings. However, **increasingly development workers are involved in significant projects and in-depth support**.
5. The development worker role is emerging as one that is a **topic generalist but a skill specialist**.
6. It has become **easier to communicate the Vibrancy offer** to Friends, although a few Friends still need help to understand the offer.
7. Often **the role of Vibrancy may include dealing with practical problems that may be hampering spiritual growth** and preventing a meeting becoming more vibrant.
8. Some good joint work is being undertaken by Vibrancy with BYM and Woodbrooke (described in chapter 5). **However, Vibrancy staff noted there were sometimes difficulties in referring Friends on to the two organisations.**

2.1 Programme reach

Development workers have continued to extend their reach into their regions since our last report.

2.1.1 Local meetings

All development workers have increased the number of local meetings they have worked with since the *Taking Stock* report. Overall, the team have worked with 73% (96/132) of the local meeting in their area. They have all worked with around 60% or more of their local meetings; one has worked with almost 100% of them (see chart 1, below). Development workers report that they may be working just with one individual in a local meeting, with a larger group or with the meeting as a whole. Over 50% of all contacts are with individuals, while for one development worker, individual contacts represent up to about four-fifths of their work.⁸

It is unlikely that all development workers will work with all local meetings in their regions by the end of the pilot, for capacity reasons.

⁸ A precise number was not available.

2.1.2 Area meetings

All development workers have now worked with all of the area meetings in their regions. Work with an area meeting offers, as one development worker noted, a practical benefit of contact with several people from local meetings at the same time. Support for area meetings continues to make up a substantial proportion of the work delivered, making up between 23% and 43% of logged contacts.

2.1.3 Number of contacts

Since October 2016, the development workers have been recording the number of contacts made. A contact is defined as a significant interaction with a local or area meeting that is in itself intended to make a difference to a meeting or an individual.⁹ Differences in how contacts were recorded mean this data is indicative only.

The team have recorded around 600 contacts to date, of which about 60% are with local meetings, and about 40% are with area meetings (see chart 2, below).

Monitoring data shows differences across the team regarding number of contacts. The difference in number of contacts between regions may in part be accounted for by a parallel difference in the amount of time spent on each contact. The Wales and South East development workers are more likely to record longer contacts; those in the South West and North West are often shorter (see 2.1.4 below).

Reactive enquiries and proactive approaches

The majority of work across the programme continues to be reactive. Across the whole programme, the Wales development worker recorded the most proactive contacts (38%), followed by South East region (33%), North West region (23%) and South West (21%). Two regions (Wales and South West) have seen more proactive work over time. Development work in

Chart 1: Meetings worked with

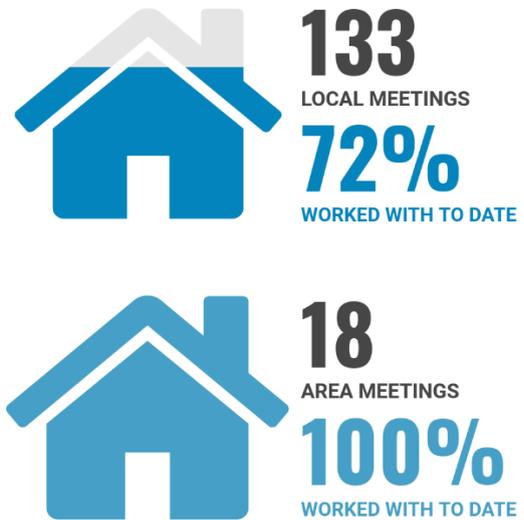
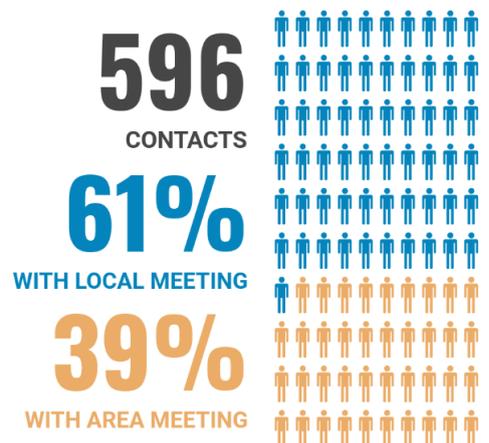


Chart 2: Number of contacts



⁹ As a guide, anything that takes more than 15 minutes of time could be recorded as a significant interaction; a brief chat or email to arrange logistics would be excluded from this. Any project (for example, working with a meeting on conflict) may involve multiple contacts over time. However, any project that is with the same individuals and covers the same content (such as support for a prison group) within a one-month period should be recorded as just one significant interaction.

the South East, by contrast, required more proactive work by the new development worker initially, with reactive work increasing as interest was raised.¹⁰ The North West has consistently reported around one in four proactive contacts over the course of the programme.

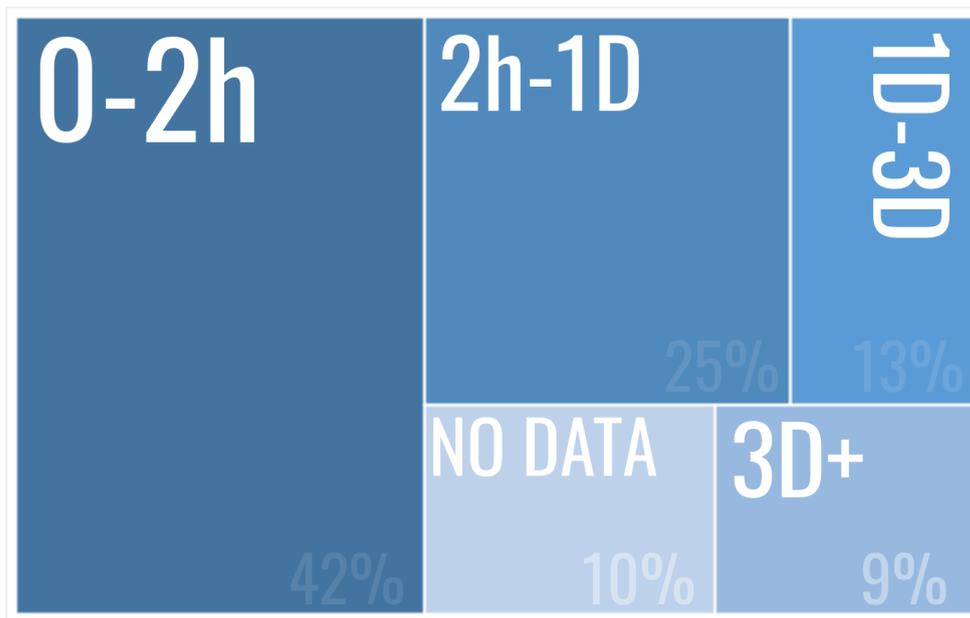
The proactive/reactive distinction may now be less relevant. As workers have become more embedded in the areas and have met most of their meetings, they have less need to be proactive and lack of capacity is also limiting. At the same time, a deeper understanding of meetings means that even with new contacts made reactively, the development worker is then able to proactively identify needs and suggest solutions.

2.1.4 The amount of support provided

From the data available (302 of 338 contacts recorded since September 2017) the majority of contacts are brief, lasting up to two hours, although a significant minority of contacts are longer than three days' worth of work (see chart 3, below).¹¹

There are regional differences. The Wales and South East regions are more likely to record longer contacts; those in the South West and North West are often shorter. These differences may be due to different working practices or recording differences, or both. We have noted that these differences appear to have resulted in a difference in numbers of contacts across regions. (See section 2.1.3 above.)

Chart 3: Time per contact



¹⁰ This was because the development worker did not attend a local meeting in the Vibrancy region she was covering and had to build up a contact base from scratch.

¹¹ Some data stems from September 2017 only, when the monitoring spreadsheet was updated. There is some inconsistency between this data and reports in development worker interviews; some differences may also derive from individual recording practices.

2.2 What work is delivered

2.2.1 Needs

The need for Vibrancy support is mapped against the areas listed in *Our Faith in the Future*.¹² 'Community' and 'Quaker discipline' were the most frequently noted presenting need: they were about half (343) of the 682 presenting needs logged (see chart 4 below). The frequency of need by topic (across the course of the programme) is as follows:

- *Community*,¹³ 202 instances. For example: making meetings accessible; finding ways to spend time together; attracting diverse members.
- *Quaker discipline*,¹⁴ 141 instances. For example: using Quaker processes, handling conflict, supporting and finding role holders.
- *Property*, 53 instances since 1 September 2017. For example on managing property. This is a subset of Quaker discipline.
- *Active values*,¹⁵ 90 instances. For example: becoming more confident in raising social action issues; taking action.
- *Meeting for worship*,¹⁶ 89 instances.
- *Visibility*,¹⁷ 68 instances. For example: becoming more confident to express Quaker beliefs externally; running outreach events.
- *Collaboration*¹⁸ with other Quaker or non-Quaker groups or meetings, 39 instances.
- Across the programme, presenting needs were reported as 'other' in 22% of cases.

The proportion of instances by topic has remained relatively consistent across the programme.

Chart 4: Presenting needs



¹² <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/our-faith-in-the-future#heading-1>

¹³ Our faith in the future theme: 'Quaker communities are loving, inclusive and all-age'

¹⁴ Our faith in the future theme: 'All Friends understand and live by Quaker discipline'

¹⁵ Our faith in the future theme: 'Quaker values are active in the world'

¹⁶ Our faith in the future theme: 'Meeting for worship is the bedrock of living as a Quaker'

¹⁷ Our faith in the future theme: 'Quakers are well known and widely understood'

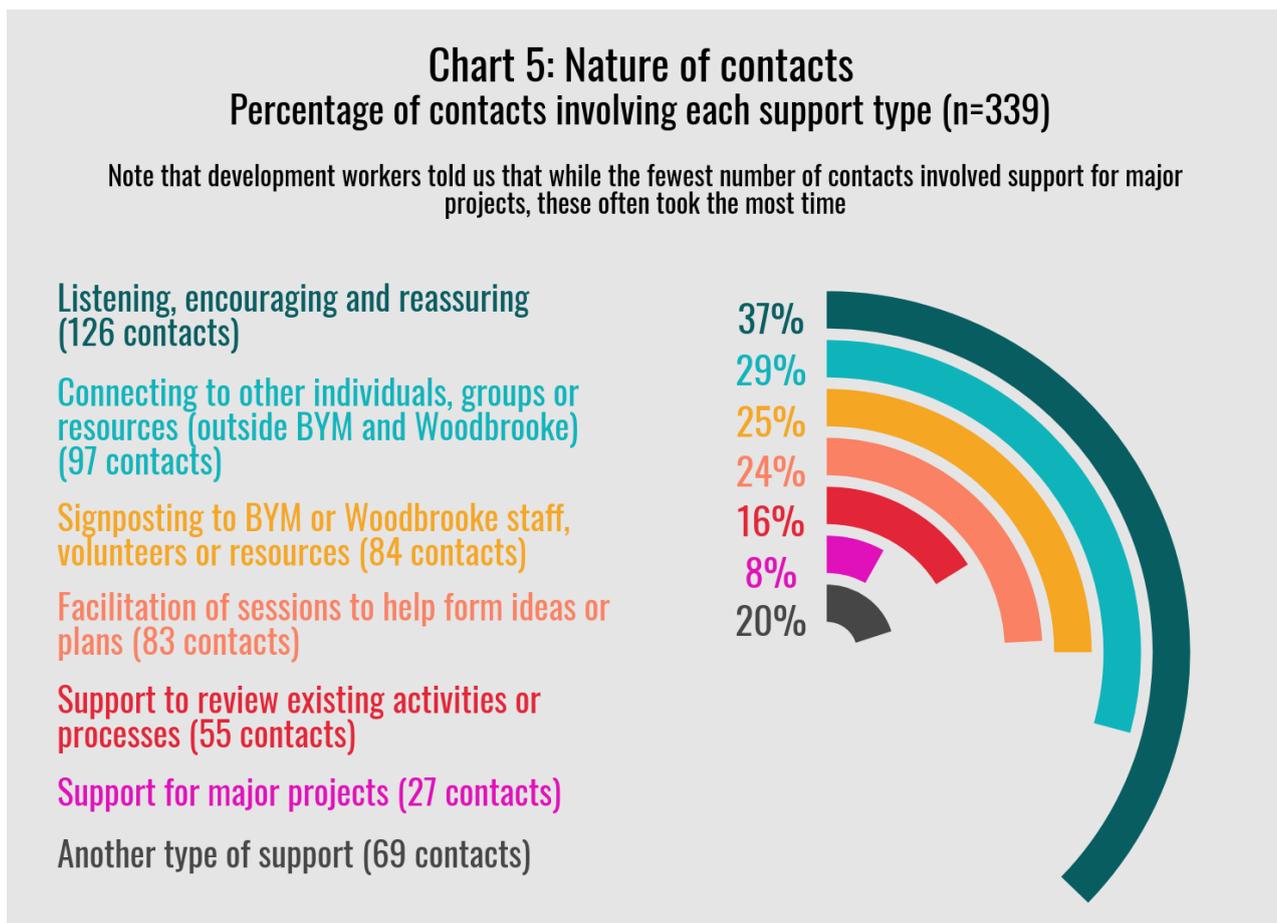
¹⁸ Our faith in the future theme: 'Quakers work collaboratively'

2.2.2 Nature of support

In the *Taking Stock* report, development workers were reported as providing a range of support to Friends, including listening, facilitating sessions to help form ideas or plans, signposting to BYM and Woodbrooke and connecting Friends to others (outside BYM and Woodbrooke). As one might expect with the early stages of a community development programme, the most common type of support provided in Autumn 2017 (when monitoring classifications were amended) was listening, encouraging and reassuring; this was usually provided alongside another form of support.

We collected data about type of support from both development workers (by contact)¹⁹ and from Friends (by type of contact, n=131). See chart 5 below for workers' assessment of the nature of contacts; note this chart shows how frequently contacts involve each type of support, not how much time is spent on each support type.

Nearly three-quarters of Friends reported being listened to, encouraged or reassured, while this was estimated by development workers as only just over one-third of their work (see chart 5 below). However, it is not possible to make full comparisons across this data as the categories do not correspond in the two sets.



¹⁹ Some data stems from September 2017 only, when the monitoring spreadsheet was updated. An increase in the 'other' category has arisen because of some inconsistencies in recording.

A comparison between findings in our last report and this one shows that there has been a slight increase in facilitation of sessions to help form ideas or plans and support for major projects, and a reduction in listening, encouraging and reassuring, and support to review existing activities or processes. Although based on limited data from the last report, this is perhaps to be expected, given the workers have now built up relationships with most of the meetings in their areas and have started work on some of the more immediate practical needs.

Type of support reported by Friends

In our survey, Friends reported higher levels of support being received in most areas than that recorded by development workers. This may be due to internal reporting practices, or those who have received support being more likely to respond to the survey.

- 73% said the Vibrancy worker had listened to them, encouraged or reassured them (96 people).
- 30% said the Vibrancy worker had told them about and/or gave help in accessing information or support outside of BYM or Woodbrooke (39 people)
- 65% said the Vibrancy worker had told them about information or support available from BYM or Woodbrooke, and/or gave help in accessing these (85 people)
- 72% reported that the Vibrancy worker had facilitated one or more sessions with the local/area meeting or group to help generate ideas (94 people).
- 60% reported help to the local/area meeting or groups to review what they were doing (78 people).
- 40% felt that Vibrancy workers helped the meeting or group to improve how things are done (53 people).
- 31% received support as part of a topic-related group, for example on social, economic, or environmental issues (41 people).

The importance of connecting people

One aim of Vibrancy, and an increasingly important part of the work, is the linking up of Friends across meetings and areas, encouraging people to connect with each other and share similar interests. This was a strong factor in satisfaction with Vibrancy, overlapping with work on collaboration and producing positive outcomes.

Like others in the team, the South West development worker described a range of connecting activities she had delivered, including:

- Organising the Devon and Cornwall regional gathering.
- Starting to support West Somerset area meeting in organising a day for Somerset Friends about worshipping differently.
- Connecting people across the region who had done the Woodbrooke Equipping for Ministry programme.

In-depth support

Development workers described where support was relatively brief and straightforward. Additionally, all described doing at least some in-depth work, and this was a significant and sometimes increasing part of their role. Two explained how, as meetings 'let them in more', and

needs were uncovered over time, in-depth work was an increasing focus.

It's seeing a thread and slightly pulling it and thinking, 'Ooh, what's this about?' ... It's knowing what to pull. You start with how the meeting feels it is but you may see it differently; if you start with what's useful for the meeting you may not agree; you ask a few more questions, reflect back other ways of seeing things, and then get between you to how things are. (Vibrancy interviewee)

One Friend reported on the value of the in-depth support by their development worker, given over time. The worker had:

- helped their area meeting find ways to better support a struggling local meeting in the area
- given the Friend confidence and helped them think of new ideas
- run a session on diversity at area meeting
- worked with committees, such as finance and properties, in the area meeting
- attended area meeting to listen and input (for example, on Quaker burials and right ordering)

She sees what the problem is, doesn't beat about the bush but looks at things from a different angle. So you might feel that you're up against a brick wall and don't know how to get through it and she'll show you a route around it ... She's willing to take risks, showing us at an area meeting that we can do things differently even if it might be breaking with precedent. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

One development worker described how her main focus was now in-depth work with area meetings to help them make changes. For example:

- She worked with a local meeting, starting with support around a property project, then moving on with support to set up task-focused groups, including a fundraising group and further support with a group reviewing the financial viability of the meeting house management and support as they developed the online/social media presence for the building.
- She worked with the clerking team of the North Wales area meeting. This started by joining calls discussing strategy. She then facilitated a workshop to explore spiritual nurture across the local meetings located close to each other geographically and wrote a report. Changes have since been made and the clerking team have asked her to do a review in 2019 (see case example 1).

Generalist and specialist support²⁰

It is becoming clearer that while development workers are by and large topic generalists – indeed, they need to be, to deliver their role effectively and assess needs – they are increasingly skill specialists.

The development workers generally described themselves as providing both generalist and

²⁰ In our surveys and interviews we asked Friends whether the support received was generalist or specialist, and the pros and cons of these. By 'generalist' we mean someone who can offer general support on a wide range of aspects of Quakerism, but who does not offer specialist support on particular topics, for example on property or diversity. However, further discussion with Vibrancy stakeholders has revealed that better descriptors relating to the skills of Vibrancy staff would be helpful in future.

specialist support, noting that some were developing topic specialisms, for example in working with conflict.

In both interviews and the survey, where the topic was mentioned, Friends by and large felt that they had received support from a generalist, and this was needed in order to be able to assess needs. However, a few felt that their work was always both generalist and specialist, at least in part due to the particular skills that the development worker had; sometimes the worker brought these specialisms to the role, or the role itself led to their development.

The support has been very focused and very helpful to the Clerk in dealing with a very problematic and complex matter that has been disruptive and hurt a number of Friends. I suspect it is not what was expected of our Vibrancy Friend. (Survey respondent)

If I consult Friends House about something it's a practical matter, not a complicated one. If I phoned up with a knotty problem about Quakers disagreeing I'd be talking to someone who knows nothing about it. [The development worker] knows about it and would be more helpful. She has a remit to keep an eye on us. In general I think [our development worker] is a real asset to my meeting and even more to smaller meetings. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

All Vibrancy workers were seen to have a special set of skills in terms of facilitating and supporting groups, and especially in nurturing a spiritual community. In our survey, 83% of Friends said the worker helped them feel that the leadings of the spirit are an important part of Vibrancy's work. A number of Vibrancy staff noted that they were developing a particular specialism in 'looking at meetings'. One development worker felt this development responded to the needs of their meetings:

Your region will make you a specialist ... There's something about we've spoken the project into life and the Friends in our areas have spoken us into life as workers; every time someone has a conversation with you it develops you because you think about it. They make you into the worker they need. (Vibrancy interviewee)

This topic is discussed further in section 7.6.

Working with area and local meetings

The Vibrancy team note that the work at local and area level can involve the same mechanisms (such as workshops, listening and encouraging, signposting), but often has a different focus. Area meetings are more likely to be involved with the Quaker central organisations and processes and support is more focused on structural issues and processes with role holders. The team described area meeting work as being 'bigger picture, bigger ship'; it often involves working with clerks and role holders, is focused on developing people and might involve looking at different solutions to problems being faced by meetings.

Local meetings may need an introduction to central structures and want support with simpler, more discrete tasks. Local meeting work often involves looking at what they can do, 'how they want their meeting to be,' and whether they are sustainable. However, the distinction may be more fluid than that; some of the work is 'more organic and connected,' the team initiating activity bringing

together Friends from across different meetings, and across local and area meetings.

One development worker described how area meeting work ‘sort of merges’ with work at local meeting level as issues feed up from local to area level. An example of this ‘merging’ is her work around eldership. She described how local meeting elders needed support from the whole group of elders in the area meeting but might not know who the other elders are.

2.2.3 Friends' understanding of Vibrancy

Communicating the Vibrancy offer is less of an issue than was noted in our February 2018 report. Development workers now report that they have grown in confidence and expertise, and have a range of practical examples of work done with other meetings which can be shared. The development worker role has also evolved and become clearer too. One development worker had created a cloth map showing where she had worked and what she had done, as a way of introducing Vibrancy to Friends.

There is limited evidence from qualitative responses in the survey that at least some Friends continued to need help to understand the Vibrancy offer. Six respondents suggested that Vibrancy could provide more information about, and examples of, its support provision to help meetings better understand how to use the support available. Four others noted that they, or other meetings in their area, currently lacked a clear understanding of how the programme could support them.

Our February 2018 report noted a slight concern from some in the Vibrancy team that Vibrancy might be seen as just for struggling meetings rather than to help meetings become vibrant. Development workers appear less concerned by the issue now. They recognise that while they do support some meetings with becoming vibrant, for many there are problems which need to be sorted before a meeting can become vibrant. One explained that she *did* want to be seen as there to help with problems—problems that might be preventing spiritual life from flourishing.

I know it's ended up as a problem-solving activity, which is maybe not what Vibrancy wanted to be about, but it's been incredibly helpful. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

In order for meetings to be vibrant they have to be healthy first ... Generally speaking, local meetings and area meetings need to feel like they're doing pretty well before they feel they can start experimenting with new things. And they are getting to the point where they are experimenting ... That's starting to come now. (Vibrancy interviewee)

3 SATISFACTION WITH VIBRANCY SUPPORT

This section explores the extent to which Friends have been satisfied with support from Vibrancy. It is based on our survey and interviews with Friends.

Key findings

1. As with our February 2018 report, **Vibrancy is rated very highly by Friends** who have received its support.
2. In particular, Friends valued: the ability of development workers to connect them with other people and meetings; the accessibility of the development workers; their personal qualities and skills. They also appreciated the development workers' ability to listen to Friends and to then understand the issues they were facing and provide high quality support.
3. Some minor areas for improvement in the support offered. Several Friends were concerned that the development workers were spread too thinly across large regions.

3.1 Overall satisfaction

As with the February 2018 report, Friends were very satisfied with the support received from Vibrancy. Almost all (96%, n=130) of survey respondents rated the support 'excellent' (68%) or 'good' (28%) with nobody rating it as 'very poor'. All respondents rated the worker as approachable, and the majority said the worker was knowledgeable and had met their needs (see chart 6, right). There was no significant difference between satisfaction from area or local meetings.

Only a handful of respondents made negative comments about support they had received. One felt that a session involving a Vibrancy worker had been 'rather run of the mill and shallow.' Another would have preferred 'more dynamism and proactive input', as opposed to the 'caring' approach they felt had been taken. A third wanted support around a particular concern and felt it had not been provided as the worker 'did not view it as we did within the agenda of the project'.

Chart 6: Satisfaction



3.2 Aspects of satisfaction

From the survey and interview data the following themes emerged as reasons for satisfaction with Vibrancy workers' support. See also section 7 for a discussion of what Friends consider important about Vibrancy.

3.2.1 Accessibility

Respondents commented that the workers were accessible and responsive to their questions or requests for support and were always 'willing to help', as in the following comments from Friend interviewees about individual development workers:

I felt it was much more personal and I do appreciate that. I feel that [the development worker is] there at the end of the phone or email and she will respond quickly and with knowledge of me and our meeting and I think that's worth a lot. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

When we first discussed her providing some support, she was immediately available. She came up on the train, she spent time with some of the attenders and myself, got to know the situation in the town and the meeting house very clearly. She was a very conscientious supporter. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

I'm based on the Isle of Man. It's relatively cut off, but she's been prepared to come over and talk to us and help us as a local meeting as well. She crossed 70 miles of sea to see us. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

I think the most helpful thing about the Vibrancy programme is that each of us knows that she is there for us, is easily contactable and is willing to do what we would like. That's a first for us and I think everyone appreciates that. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

Eight survey respondents also talked about their worker being accessible, as in the following example:

Having the Worker 'on our doorstep' has meant that the link between her and us was immediate and visible! Whilst recognising the value of the 'Woodbrooke-on-the-road' programme for example, we can only afford to make use of that occasionally for specific events. Our Vibrancy worker has been able to respond to individual local meeting requests for advice or support on an on-going basis, as well as informing and supporting area meetings to access other support such as the Property Project Manager. (Survey respondent)

A few Friends noted that they would have liked to have accessed more support but were aware that this could be difficult because of the size of the regions the workers are covering. See also section 4.5.1 for a discussion about sustainability.

3.2.2 Connecting people and meetings

We note in 2.2.2 above that increasingly Vibrancy is trying to connect Friends. Several survey respondents appreciated the Vibrancy workers' ability to share details about the situations and experiences of other meetings. They variously mentioned that they had found the information had reassured them about their own approach, usefully helped them to think differently – or both. Several survey respondents also liked being connected with Friends in different areas or meetings. One commented:

Our Vibrancy officer has ... been the main organiser for some excellent occasions. She has co-

ordinated local meetings and is establishing links between geographically close local meetings so they can come together and profit from social/learning/spiritual times. (Survey respondent)

Interviews with development workers indicated that 'connecting work' is becoming an important element in the work. Two Friends interviewed in the South West region commented on how much they valued being connected up:

Part of what such a person provides is an awareness of what's going on elsewhere. That counters your loneliness. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

[The development worker] will also be looking at helping us with the future of the Devon and Cornwall gathering ... She's been really helpful. She's from Devon but my feeling is that Cornwall is equally involved. Her work with it has helped bring us together and learn from each other. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

A small number of survey respondents felt that linking with others to look for solutions was not always an appropriate approach.

3.2.3 Personal qualities of the workers

Many respondents commented on the workers' character traits, variously noting that they were respectful, understanding, enthusiastic, confident, positive and approachable. One survey response illustrated some of these essential qualities.

[The development worker] is enormously positive and enthusiastic and in addition seems to have a practical and pragmatic approach which helps me personally and I know others feel the same. (Survey respondent)

Listening and being confident and energetic was also important. Being grounded in knowledge about the Society of Friends, 'not just speaking it' was also important to one Friend. One interviewee described themselves as 'cynical at first', but later impressed by way the Vibrancy worker drew attention to the good things they were doing, rather than just challenges.

Respondents appreciated that the workers were well informed, gave useful and constructive information, guidance and suggestions, brought focus to a meeting's ideas or activities or had prepared well before having contact with them. Two Friends interviewed explained:

Excellent. She's there when needed. When asked for things she's understood what's wanted and produced it quickly. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

She had knowledge of the difficulties but she brought me back to the mindset of 'everything is solvable', which I was losing touch with ... She let me come to some solutions but also she came up with a really fabulous idea ... At the time I was still a bit sceptical that it would achieve anything. But [development worker] nudged me towards following up around Sanctuary Meetings. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

What was important was a combination of drawing on their own skills and ideas and drawing out those already existing in the meeting.

3.2.4 Listening skills and understanding needs

Several respondents appreciated the worker's ability to listen effectively to Friends and understand the issues, with some commenting that the worker had been sensitive and patient while doing so. As one said: 'You're going to hear the word listening from me a lot.'

[The development worker] has a remarkable skill in hearing what people are trying to say and clarifying their purpose and effectiveness. (Survey respondent)

She's a good listener ... She was fairly sure-footed in talking to people in the meeting. She listened but she didn't press or push. She had a sense of what people would take. (Friend interviewee, local and area meeting)

Listening was seen as the prerequisite to understanding needs and providing effective support leading to solutions. One Friend interviewed told us about how they had received support from their development worker on conflict in a meeting, describing how the development worker had listened, made follow-up calls and suggested new ideas to try. She made connections with other local meetings for them.

3.2.5 Facilitation skills

Several respondents felt the workers were effective facilitators, mentioning for example, their ability to elicit useful comments, encourage Friends to open up, or to change the direction of a discussion where needed.

Our Vibrancy worker is an excellent non-threatening facilitator with whom we all feel comfortable. She was a catalyst enabling people to open up and express feelings that they had previously hidden. (Survey respondent)

She helped us to do things we wouldn't have done on our own. She had the personal skills to express things with graphics and other media, to bring out the creative aspects of people that wouldn't normally have emerged. (Friend interviewee, local and area meeting)

3.3 Areas for improvement

When asked about how Vibrancy support could be improved, many survey respondents commented simply that they would like to be able to access more programme support in the future.

Sixteen respondents felt that the programme resource available was limited because of the number of meetings covered by their worker and/or the geographical size of the worker's region. There were several comments that this limited the amount of contact meetings could have with their worker, could restrict the timing of that contact and limited the availability of in-depth support

when more would have been helpful. Some respondents suggested that each worker should cover fewer meetings or smaller regions, or that the amount of programme resource available in each region should be increased.

Where the Vibrancy worker has been involved with our meeting she has been of great assistance, but she has responsibilities for the whole of [region] and cannot provide detailed support constantly. (Survey respondent)

Our Vibrancy person is so busy and so overstretched – I think she is helping so many people and we think she is very helpful. I sometimes feel guilty contacting her – I wonder if she needs support? (Survey respondent)

For further discussion of how the levels of resourcing might affect outcomes, see section 4.5.

Six respondents suggested that Vibrancy could provide more information about, and examples of, its support provision to help meetings better understand how to use the support available. Four others noted that they, or other meetings in their area, currently lacked a clear understanding of how the programme could support them.

Comments from three survey respondents suggested that they saw an opportunity for some Vibrancy support to be more overtly focused on spiritual development: one felt that meetings should be careful to ensure they spend enough time on prayer and fellowship if they choose also to take on other activities; a second suggested Vibrancy could be improved if workers clarified and promoted basic core Quaker beliefs to form ‘a united basis of understanding’; a third was concerned about BYM’s focus in developing its work and felt that Vibrancy was ‘inspired by rather secular ideas of what the Society of Friends should be like, rather than a ministry of the spirit’.

Two respondents suggested that Vibrancy workers could agree specific action plans with the meetings they supported. Two wanted further access to information about, or contacts from, other meetings.

4 OUTCOMES FOR FRIENDS

This section explores the extent and nature of changes occurring for individuals and local and area meetings as a result of support received through Vibrancy. It is based on our survey and interviews with Friends and on our interviews with Vibrancy workers, and relates to the programme theory of change (appendix one).

Key findings

1. **Friends are reporting significant personal outcomes as a result of Vibrancy support.** The majority of survey respondents reported feeling supported by their Vibrancy worker. In interviews, most role holders reported feeling happier and more confident in their role as a result of Vibrancy.
2. **Outcomes for meetings were reported across all the theory of change outcomes.** Only a small number of meetings worked with by Vibrancy have not yet experienced any outcomes.
3. **Meetings told us about a lot of changes that they had made in their work, at least in part due to Vibrancy.** The largest number of the changes, and those most directly linked to the effects of Vibrancy, were in the areas of community, Quaker discipline, and collaboration.
4. **As yet, according to central BYM monitoring data, there is no evidence that Vibrancy has affected overall statistics on diversity, member or attender numbers or attendance levels.** This could be due to these changes not having happened yet; some of them might be anticipated in the longer term. It could also be due to limitations in systems or because they were not designed to collect this data.
5. **The nature of Vibrancy delivery enables outcomes.** Having a credible, known Vibrancy worker providing support over time helped Friends make changes.
6. **Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke were all thought to have contributed to outcomes, although respondents felt that Vibrancy was the biggest contributor.**
7. **Had Vibrancy not been available, respondents would have turned to other Friends, BYM or Woodbrooke for support.**
8. **For Friends, barriers to change included lack of time or energy, an ageing membership, and a small number of people within the meeting being prepared to take action.** Some Friends were continuing to struggle with accessibility issues, particularly for children and young people.
9. **Workload continues to be a significant problem for Vibrancy staff.** Some Friends report concern that the development workers may be working too hard and/or are spread too thin, and this may be a barrier to outcomes.

4.1 Outcomes for individual Friends

In the survey and interviews, Friends reported how contact with Vibrancy had made them feel supported and more able to support their meeting or group, echoing findings reported in the *Taking Stock* report. In interviews, many Friends who are role holders told us how Vibrancy was having a positive effect on the way they felt about their role.

Vibrancy workers are helping Friends think differently and generate new ideas. These early outcomes for individuals should have a wider importance for meeting outcomes that we have not seen yet. Vibrancy workers reflected on the time needed to bring about change in Quaker meetings, while work to bring about change has – in some cases – started quite recently.

Many survey respondents commented similarly that it was, as yet, too early for them to have experienced the outcomes asked about. Sometimes this was because they had accessed support recently and sometimes because they felt that changes would take time. Some mentioned that encouragement by Vibrancy to think about change was valuable in itself:

[These] are changes we would like to make and we are thinking about them. But as a small area meeting, these changes do not happen overnight. However, because of the Vibrancy work that has occurred, they are in our thinking both at local meeting level and at area meeting level.
(Survey respondent)

Vibrancy workers reflected that some of the theory of change outcomes might emerge in the final stages of the programme.

4.1.1 Feeling supported

Almost nine in ten (89%, n=130) of our survey respondents said the Vibrancy worker helped them to feel supported. Friends involved in the evaluation valued having access to someone they could talk to, who took an interest in them and provided them with encouragement. A few mentioned that they had appreciated the Vibrancy worker's follow-up contact with them.

4.1.2 Better able to support their meeting or group

The majority (81%, n=130) of survey respondents felt that the Vibrancy worker had helped them to better support their local or area meeting or group. Illustrating this, some Friends felt more able to play a part in their meeting because of their Vibrancy worker's support or encouragement, for example by engaging more freely in discussion with, or suggesting ideas to, other Friends, or by extending their role or involvement in their meeting.

Some 76% (n=130) felt reassured about the work they do with their meeting or group. For example, several of the Friends interviewed had felt reassured when the Vibrancy worker had drawn attention to the good things they (and their meeting) were doing or skills they had, rather than focusing solely on gaps or challenges:

The first time that we met, I was quite impressed by the way that she drew attention to the good things we were doing. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Role holders feeling more confident and able

Some role holders also felt their confidence had increased as a result of the development worker. One Friend interviewee reported that 'there's no question about that. [The development worker's] support has increased my confidence in clerking. I never felt alone once we'd had contact'. Another

explained how the support of the development worker had enabled them to do something different with their meeting:

It gives a legitimacy to the things we're trying to do. For example, if we were thinking of doing more experiential stuff, like in our workshops, if I as clerk tried to do that without [our development worker's] support, some members of the meeting would say they didn't like the touchy-feely stuff. The fact that [our development worker] was there and supported us helped a great deal ... Her support makes clerks and convenors who want to move in that direction more able to try. (Friend interviewee, local and area meeting)

Sixteen of our 18 Friend interviewees were role holders in their local or area meeting. Of these, 10 explained that the support of their Vibrancy worker had helped them enjoy their role more; a further four said although it had not made them enjoy their role more, in some way they felt better about their role. For some respondents, improvements were about making their role easier:

It has cut down on the frustration of not knowing where to look for information. The quick link-ups are very useful. For example, I was looking at our joint area meeting with Wirral and Chester. When they came to us, we had no suggestions of a speaker. We had been looking at the question of diversity, as raised by BYM ... I was able to email and say, 'Remind me, who should I get in touch with and how?' (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

My role has become easier because the workload has reduced. That works out as being more enjoyable. The job was getting in the way of family life, so it's also eased situations at home for me. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

4.1.3 Generating ideas about future direction

Over three-quarters (79%, n=129) of respondents said the Vibrancy worker had helped their meeting or group to generate ideas about its future direction. Vibrancy worker facilitation skills were part of what helped them do this.

Similarly, Friends commented that their workers had helped them consider how they could progress in specific areas, that Vibrancy-facilitated discussions had elicited useful responses from Friends and that workers had helped them understand, articulate and respond to issues their meeting was facing.

A number of Friends noted that their worker had helped them think differently and question how they did things, or had suggested alternative ways forward. The worker's external view and ability to share approaches taken by other Quakers had sometimes helped with this:

She has a good way of saying 'I'm from the outside, this is what I see.' ... She said that [my approach to a process] could take a lot of time. Looking from the outside, she was suggesting we were making it too complicated ... Someone from the edges, who is still committed, can see when things are getting more complicated than they need to be. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Several Friends appreciated that the Vibrancy worker had let their own or their meetings' ideas emerge and had not imposed their own view on what they should do next:

[She is] just excellent [at] going with my flow and recognising it as some kind of leading. (Survey respondent)

She is skilled in knowing when to step back and give space for us to determine our way forward. (Survey respondent)

4.2 Outcomes for meetings

4.2.1 Understanding this data

These later outcomes for meetings are based primarily on survey data:

- Survey responses were received from individuals from 16 of the 18 area meetings in Vibrancy regions, with 15 meetings reporting that they had received Vibrancy support in one or more of the *Our faith in the future* topic areas.
- Survey responses were received from individuals from 41 of the 132 local meetings in Vibrancy regions, with 35 meetings reporting that they had received Vibrancy support in one or more of the *Our faith in the future* topic areas.

Meetings most commonly described support received from Vibrancy being in the areas of *community* and *Quaker discipline*. Three local meetings worked with by Vibrancy have not yet experienced any outcomes (planned or made changes); all area meetings worked with reported outcomes. Area meetings were more likely to experience more outcomes, and outcomes in multiple topic areas, than local meetings. (10 of 15 area meetings reported 11 or more separate outcomes, in comparison to 12 of 35 local meetings reporting 11 or more outcomes.) This may be because, according to the survey data:

- Area meetings were more likely to have support in four or more topic areas than local meetings.
- Area meetings also got more support on these areas than local meetings and were more likely to have more support.

A number of points should be noted regarding these findings:

- The distinction between area and local meetings is helpful for the presentation of meeting-specific outcome findings; it is the meeting itself in which some outcomes are found. However, we realise the distinction is in some ways artificial; area meetings are, of course, made up of Friends from local meetings, and outcomes within one meeting type may affect the other.
- Responses on outcomes are analysed and reported by meeting. The survey data does not indicate the nature and depth of any change, which could be extensive or minimal. Similarly, when meetings report they are planning to make changes, these plans could be very early-stage.
- When we say an outcome is reported it means that one or more person has witnessed or experienced something that to them is evidence the outcome has occurred. Others in their meeting may not agree, or even be aware that changes have taken place. The development

workers note that sometimes they do separate pieces of work with the same meeting, and not all members would be aware of all the work done.

- There may also be some effect from the design of the survey, or the nature of the self-selecting sample, or the way data was analysed.²¹ Data issues are discussed in full in Appendix two: A note about monitoring and evaluating the pilot.

4.2.2 Community

Changes reported

Respondents from all the area meetings and almost all (24 of 26) of the local meetings who had received Vibrancy support in this area reported their meeting had experienced at least one *community* outcome (a change or a planned change). In the area and local meetings for which these outcomes were felt to be relevant and which had received Vibrancy support, many were addressing accessibility (see chart 6, below):

- The majority (26 of 32 meetings) reported **increased confidence in making their meetings more accessible** and welcoming. Nine of 30 meetings said their meeting had already **made a change to make their meeting** more accessible to newcomers; 16 planned to.
- Seventeen of 31 meetings said they had introduced **new ways for existing Friends and newcomers to engage** with them, such as worship opportunities or social events; 13 planned to.
- A small number (three area meetings; three local meetings) reported that they had **experienced greater diversity** among the people involved in their meeting or group (for example gender, ethnicity or disability) as a result of other changes they had introduced.
- Respondents from eight of 24 meetings reported making changes to **improve their provision for children and young people**; a further 10 planned to.

Many were also changing how they run meetings and were finding new ways to come together. In the meetings for which these outcomes were felt to be relevant and which had received Vibrancy support:

- Fourteen of 25 had tried out **new ways of running meeting for worship**; five planned to.
- Seventeen of 39 said that they were now **spending more time together** outside of meeting for worship.
- Nine of 21 said they had introduced **study groups**; five planned to.

In our 18 interviews, 14 Friends told us about 17 changes that happened for their meetings in terms of community. Four explained they were running meetings in different ways to make them more accessible; seven were working on ways to make their meetings more diverse, most commonly to attract children and young people. In most of these cases, respondents felt that Vibrancy had at least some effect on the change. In about half the cases, support or resources from BYM and Woodbrooke had also contributed to change.

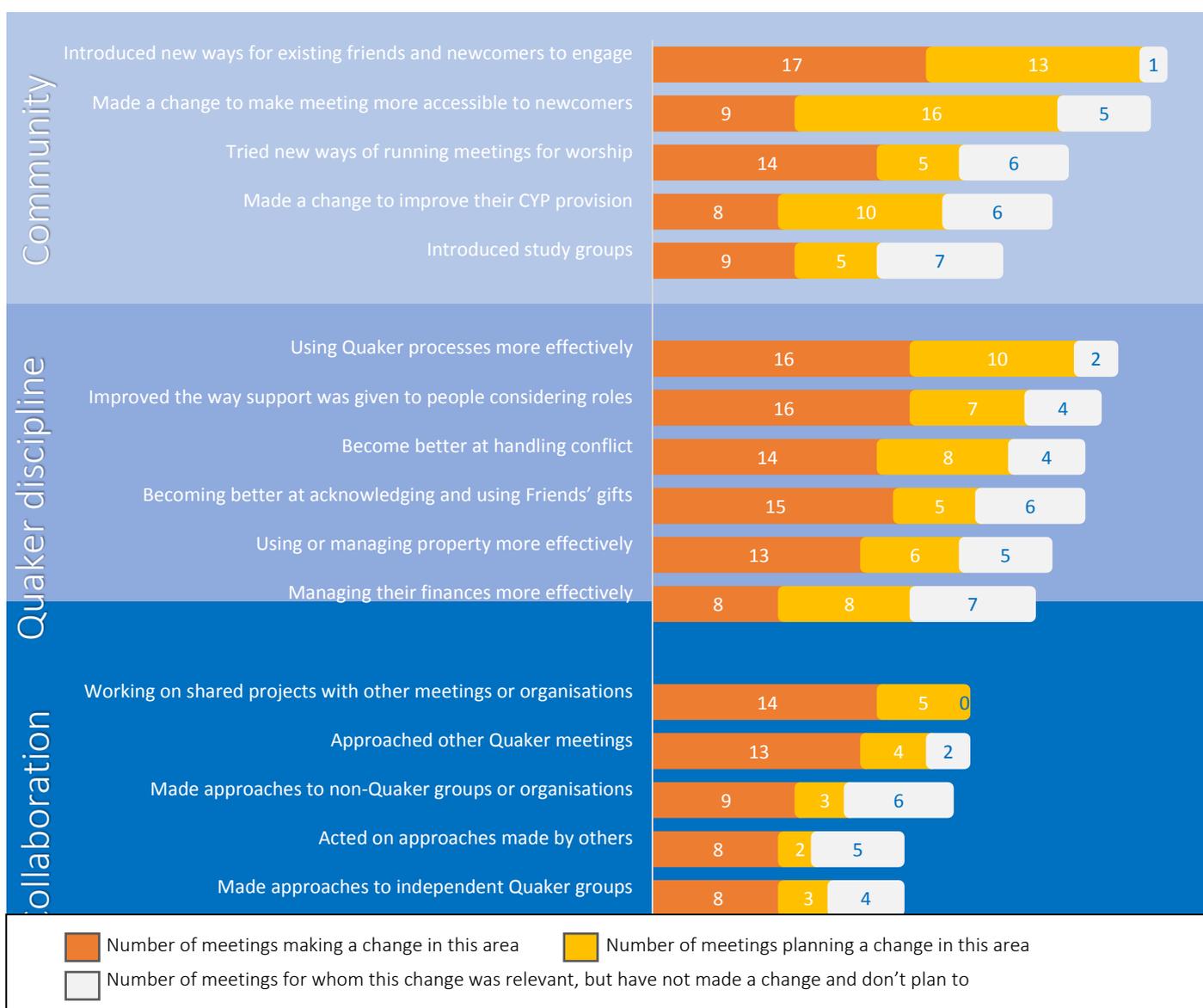
One Friend interviewed explained how their development worker had met with them and helped them devise new ways to run their meeting. The development worker had also helped this Friend

²¹ Where responses did not agree that an outcome occurred, we did not allow this to affect the count of outcomes. Data did not indicate whether the respondent was not aware of an outcome or whether they held concrete evidence that no relevant outcome had occurred.

access resources for their meetings, including Woodbrooke on-the-road:

We dropped from 10 to nine meetings a year, and we've organised it that there's three lots of three, and the middle of each of those three lots of three is a full day of spiritual nurture. What we were doing before was doing our business in the morning and then having a spiritual nurture session in the afternoon and it's often ended up that the spiritual nurture session got squeezed out a bit or had less time than we initially planned for it ... It will take till next year to see whether it changes the number of people who come ... Having [our development worker] on board to help us think about what kind of resources we could use was helpful. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Chart 7: Achievements in community, Quaker discipline and collaboration outcomes



In our interviews a few Friends told us how the support of their development worker was helping them think about making meetings more accessible:

She has made us think about where we hold our meetings—are they on good public transport routes, and when we’re holding them. We usually hold meeting on Saturday, but one was on a Sunday. But Sunday is more difficult for public transport, but [our development worker] has kept us alert to thinking about that. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

A local meeting responding to our survey described how they had changed the location of their ‘satellite’ meeting and increased its frequency, leading to engagement with Friends and attenders who the respondent felt would not have come to the main meeting.

One Friend reported that their development worker's support had enabled their meeting to move 'out of their comfort zone' when it came to welcoming newcomers:

The meeting is composed of largely elderly people with a few people of middle age and no young people attending regularly. The meeting has a strong sense of friendship between Friends, who have been together for a long time. My perception of the meeting is one in which people value the fellowship greatly. But there’s not much opportunity for people to look outwards. I felt that we needed a spur to start looking outside ... We ran the event in conjunction with [the development worker] but she didn’t do it all. We had a couple of sessions when she came to talk to us about it ... We split responsibility for the gathering between us. (Friend interviewee, local and area meeting)

Addressing diversity

In the *Taking Stock* report, we reported the recognition by the Vibrancy team that meetings are concerned about their relative lack of diversity. Development workers continued to address this issue.

The Vibrancy worker designed an exercise for us on inclusion and diversity and this helped us see how we were an exclusive community. (Survey respondent)

More involvement of children, young people and young adults in meetings

Vibrancy workers reported that some local meetings were doing more thinking and talking about how to involve children and young people, but there had been little actual change. One Vibrancy worker suggested that the focus by the Children and Young People (CYP) team at BYM on helping meetings set up their own children and young people’s meetings might be too soon for some meetings, and that it would be useful for Vibrancy and the CYP team to work together on this.

There were some positive examples of changes to provision for children and young people reported by survey and interview respondents:

- A local meeting had moved their children’s meeting to a location with better facilities.
- An area meeting had run its first all-age activity involving six children. Inspiration for this had come from BYM’s Engaging Families conference, with the encouragement and support of the Vibrancy worker.
- A third meeting held specific events with activities at lunchtime which had brought in children not usually attending children's meetings.

Diversity data from BYM central systems

From central monitoring data, an increase in the number of children's meetings offered in Vibrancy regions²² may be noted as against a slight drop in non-Vibrancy regions. However, numbers involved are small.

- In Vibrancy regions in 2016, 43% of local meetings (53 out of 123 recorded) had children's meetings, while in 2017, this had gone up to 46% (60 of 131 recorded). (In 2017, one local meeting did not provide information.)
- In non-Vibrancy regions in 2016, 60% of local meetings (211 of 350 recorded) had children's meetings (with two local meetings not providing information). In 2017, the figure was at 59% (200 of 337 recorded, with one local meeting not providing relevant information).

There are also small fluctuations in the gender balance in Vibrancy areas over the two years for which this data is available. It is difficult to draw any other conclusions from the diversity data in BYM central systems in part because of the relatively small number of meetings involved, and because some of this data is only available for one full year of Vibrancy activity (2017). (See also Appendix two on monitoring and evaluation.)

Spending more time together

All Vibrancy workers reported some progress in the amount of time Friends spent with each other in their regions. In some cases, that time together was at occasions that they (the Vibrancy workers) had organised (for example, the Devon and Cornwall regional gathering). In other cases, workers' encouragement and suggestions had prompted Friends to set up worship and social opportunities themselves. One worker suggested that Vibrancy support in other areas (particularly around Quaker discipline) had indirectly contributed to Friends' ability to meet socially because it had freed up time for them to do so.

Survey respondents provided further examples, for example:

- A local meeting had run a successful weekday evening worship, with more events planned.
- A local meeting had arranged lunches and social activities with others in their meeting.
- An area meeting respondent said their Vibrancy worker had encouraged Friends who were already running worship groups in local meetings, and supported other meetings to develop groups.

A greater sense of belonging in their local Quaker community

Respondents from 14 of 16 area meetings responding to the survey felt that the outcome of a greater sense of belonging in their local Quaker community was relevant for them.²³ Of these, respondents in 11 area meetings reported experiencing this outcome a lot or a little.

Twenty of 39 local meetings felt this outcome was relevant; of these, respondents in 12 local meetings reported experiencing the outcome a lot or a little.²⁴

²² Note that where meetings for children are offered, it doesn't always mean that children actually attend these.

²³ People were able to skip this survey question entirely.

²⁴ Some other respondents in the area and local meetings where respondents reported experiencing this outcome said they had not experienced it.

4.2.3 Quaker discipline

Changes reported

Respondents from all of the area meetings and almost all (21 of 26) of the local meetings who had received Vibrancy support in this area reported that their meeting had experienced at least one *Quaker discipline* outcome (a change or a planned change). In the area and local meetings for which Quaker discipline outcomes were felt to be relevant and which had received Vibrancy support, many were addressing issues related to role holders:

- Sixteen of 27 meetings said their meeting had **improved the way support was given to people in or considering roles**; a further seven were planning to.
- Fifteen of 38 meetings said that since having Vibrancy support their meeting had got **new people in roles, and a more diverse group** (eight of 38). However, all area meetings and all but one of the local meetings in this group reported **it still remains difficult to fill roles**.
- Just over half of meetings (15 of 26) said they were **becoming better at acknowledging and using Friends gifts**; a further five planned to.

Many respondents told us that their meetings were also addressing other issues:

- Fourteen of 26 meetings had become **better at handling conflict**; a further eight planned to.
- Sixteen of 28 meetings felt they were **using Quaker processes more effectively**; a further 10 planned to.
- Thirteen of 24 meetings were using or **managing property more effectively**; a further six planned to.
- Eight of 23 meetings felt they were **managing their finances more effectively**; a further eight planned to.

In our interviews, Friends told us about 19 changes made relating to Quaker discipline in 13 area and local meetings. About one-third of these were about running meetings better or more effectively; another one-third were about better support for people in roles. Two concerned more effective property management. Survey respondents also shared examples of developments in these areas.

Running more effective meetings

Some survey respondents described changes that had happened for their meetings:

- A local meeting noted that attending the 'Patterns and Examples' event for role holders (jointly run by BYM and Woodbrooke), and receiving follow-up guidance from a Vibrancy worker, had 'transformed' their meeting for business.
- A local meeting was able to ensure right ordering was followed in business meetings following help from a Vibrancy worker.
- Two respondents from an area meeting felt their Vibrancy worker had helped them develop ways to improve their business meeting and make connections with local Friends. One explained:

[Our area meeting group] has reflected on the activities and organisation of area meeting and considered ways in which its business could more effectively connect with local Friends. Our Vibrancy worker has been a member of that group and has added greatly to its deliberations and actions.

Considering, trying and reviewing different area meeting patterns

The Vibrancy team reported in the *Taking Stock* report that area meeting structures were sometimes ineffective and not working for everyone. For this report, the team cited some early evidence of change to area meeting patterns. Changes included one area meeting having problems with low attendance and recruiting a clerk and which is now considering reducing the number of meetings it runs to make it more sustainable. Other changes mentioned were broader. For example, one worker noted that new clusters in an area meeting were bringing local meetings together socially.

Changes around roles

Support to potential role holders

Although development workers noted that they were doing more work in this area, they felt change remained limited. Activity included a day for outgoing and current role holders at Claridge House and an area meeting 'clerk swap' where clerks observed business meetings in other areas for their own learning (a relatively small initiative so far). Two workers mentioned that they were supporting Friends to think about roles and processes, about aspects of these that were essential and those that might no longer be necessary; also about how they might review roles and processes to make them more manageable. One worker considered that her developing relationships with role holders had facilitated changes in how Friends thought about roles. She noted that Friends phoned her to talk about their roles. In one region the Vibrancy worker had noticed some change in Friends' acceptance that role holders needed support.

At the time of our data collection for this report, specific regional events for role holders were being planned by workers in two regions. There is also some evidence of meetings asking Vibrancy workers for help around initiatives enabling them to support role holders better – for example, in one region a local meeting had asked the Vibrancy worker to work with them on an initiative to encourage elders and overseers in a sub-section of their area meeting to support each other.

In our interviews, two Friends told us how they felt better supported in their roles as a result of Vibrancy support. One treasurer explained:

I ended up being the coordinator for all the lettings. In combination with Treasurer duties, it was all getting too much. We couldn't see how things could be split. I was reluctant to let someone else take over from me on part of the job ... [The development worker] helped us to see that it could be done, because she was aware of other meetings that had separated lettings from Treasurer duties and encouraged us to think about things seriously. My workload has reduced as someone took over the lettings side. It's working well. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

Filling roles

Among meetings that had received *Quaker discipline* support, all area meetings and all but one local meeting involved in our survey reported that it was still difficult to fill roles. However five meetings noted that, while filling roles was problematic, they were better able to identify ways in which Friends who do not hold roles could undertake necessary tasks and/or had seen more Friends step forward to help with tasks:

[It's] still hard to fill roles but [we're] starting to see ways to draw people in to assist in organising one-off tasks or feel more part of things. Vibrancy support has helped support [an] ongoing process of main role holders finding ways to share tasks but [there is an] ongoing problem of having keen and interested attenders/enquirers who [are] happy to help but few who can be identified as having time or experience or willingness to take on roles needing continuity. Vibrancy assists us in my resolve to find a way to sustain ourselves as we try to see how this can be done and cover roles that can't be filled on a temporary basis. It is something I have found hard in recent years and I welcome the outside perspective that has pointed out that meetings all over the country are not 'doing' roles according to Quaker book. (Survey respondent)

Better at acknowledging and using Friends' gifts

In interviews, two Friends told us how they better acknowledged and used Friends' gifts in their meeting, as a result of Vibrancy support. One explained how, following Vibrancy support, they are trying to fit roles round the gifts of Friends, rather than the other way round; this is improving the way roles work within their meeting.

Better property management, maintenance or use

Vibrancy workers had observed a number of instances of better property management. These included: some area meetings being more forward thinking in planning for maintenance and use; local meetings which had made changes in their letting and managing of meeting houses. In one case, a local meeting set up a steering group for a property project following a suggestion from the Vibrancy worker and their subsequent involvement.

Better at handling conflict

Vibrancy workers reported that conflict was a common issue for meetings. They told us about a number of pieces of work to improve meetings' ability to handle conflict and which might contribute to this outcome. However, they also reported that they had not yet observed many changes in meetings' ability to handle conflict. One worker said that some Friends were talking more openly about conflict and how to manage it, particularly when issues arising might be associated with mental health difficulties experienced by Friends.

However, in our survey, 14 meetings reported some improvements in this area. Some Friends described improvements in their ability to handle conflict:

- An area meeting had had help from a Vibrancy worker to address a conflict in ones of its local meetings. The survey respondent also reported encouragement from the worker to take part in setting up a conflict group to deal with future problems.
- A respondent from a local meeting reported feeling 'far more Quakerly and confident that our actions were spirit-led and as inclusive as they could have been' following support around a conflict from a Vibrancy worker.

One Friend interviewed told us that their development worker had encouraged them to review the role of elders in their meeting, and how they were reinvigorating that role to enable them to better handle conflict:

We've appreciated the role of elders more—how they need to be more visible and active in their roles. They traditionally just shake hands at the end of the meeting but there's also the question of their role in maintaining discipline in the meeting. Making sure that people give space and listen between contributions and avoid hurtful things. We had let that part of the role slip a bit and we're focusing on it more now. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

4.2.4 Collaboration

Changes reported

Respondents from all 12 area meetings and 12 of 14 local meetings who had received Vibrancy support in this area said their meeting had experienced at least one *collaboration* outcome (a change or a planned change). In the area and local meetings for which collaboration outcomes were felt to be relevant and in which there had been Vibrancy support:

- Twenty of 25 meetings felt **more confident to approach others** about working together.
- Thirteen of 19 meetings had **approached other Quaker meetings**; four planned to.
- Eight of 15 meetings had **made approaches to independent Quaker groups** or organisations; three planned to.
- Nine of 18 meetings had **made approaches to non-Quaker groups or organisations**; three planned to.
- Eight of 15 meetings had **acted on approaches** made by others; two planned to.
- Fourteen of 19 meetings were **working on shared projects with other meetings or organisations**; five planned to.

Connecting with other Friends

In our survey, Friends described some of the ways they had connected with other Friends:

- A few area meeting respondents described how the South West Vibrancy worker had brought together Friends from across the region who had completed the two-year 'Equipping for Ministry' programme to share ideas. One elaborated:

We were a disparate group of Friends across Devon, Cornwall and part of Somerset, who have completed Equipping for Ministry at different times over the past few years and we had never thought of getting together to share our experiences. Our Vibrancy worker has facilitated this and it has given a whole new perspective on our course and enlivened me to be more proactive and I feel more supported to do this.
- A local meeting had invited members from other local meetings to join a study series they were running. This followed their Vibrancy worker facilitating a meeting of elders and overseers from the meetings.

In interviews, Friends told us about nine changes that had happened for them around the area of collaboration. Generally, this was about more contact with other Quaker groups, including shared events. In all cases, Vibrancy contributed to the change; in around half of cases support resources from BYM and Woodbrooke had also helped.

Through [the development worker] I've been making links with other local meetings. At area meeting last Saturday, when we were talking about nominations, one of the things I said was: 'Why don't local meeting clerks once or twice a year meet up and talk about issues in their local

meeting?’ I suggested we could talk about what’s made clerking more comfortable, little tricks people have to help us along. Lots of people thought that’s a good idea and why didn’t we think of that before! So we’ll be doing more collaboration in future. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

The Devon and Cornwall Gathering committee hadn't met for about four years. It had lapsed for various reasons (distances, busyness, different aims of group etc) so the co-ordination and framing of what we were trying to achieve really relied on [the development worker]. This shows the need to have person-power at local level because the capacity of Friends to do it all as a voluntary activity in addition to local meeting/family/community/work demands is somewhat constrained. (Friend interviewee, local, area and regional meetings)

Connecting with non-Quaker groups

Survey respondents shared several examples of connecting with non-Quaker groups:

- An area meeting had planned three talks with another local faith group.
- Another had developed relationships with other community groups as part of an effort to offer activities at a meeting house without an active local meeting.
- A local meeting had interacted with several non-Quaker community organisations as part of an effort to increase the use of its meeting house, turning it into a ‘community hub’.

Sharing best practice with each other

An intended outcome of Vibrancy is that meetings will share best practice and good news stories with each other; there is some early evidence that this is starting to happen. Vibrancy workers described some instances in which their actions had encouraged and enabled information sharing or collaboration. For example, they had:

- put Friends in touch with other Friends to share experiences
- helped to share best practice by linking meetings up with each other or coordinating events at which Friends from different meetings could come together
- shared examples or written case studies of how meetings had managed situations or dealt with problems, with a view to informing others in a similar situation
- encouraged Friends to collaborate with Friends from other local meetings or areas – for example, when participating in social action.

Two development workers reported early signs of more contact between meetings happening independently. However, a third felt that Friends were often reluctant to approach new people and there was likely to be a continued need for Vibrancy to support the sharing of information on other meetings’ approaches.

One interviewee told us about sharing of good practice she had heard about:

I know that one local meeting has drawn up a process for dealing with fire strategy. I know that Horsham were helped by hearing from Dorking. That sharing came about as a result of the day the development worker organised. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

4.2.5 Active values

Changes reported

Respondents from all the area meetings and nine of 14 local meetings who had received Vibrancy support in this area said their meeting had experienced at least one *active values* outcome (a change or a planned change). In the area and local meetings for which these outcomes were felt to be relevant and in which Vibrancy had provided support:

- Thirteen of 20 meetings felt more confident to raise social issues and act on them.
- Eight of 17 meetings said they had started a group on social action; a further three planned to.
- Eight of 17 meetings said they had taken more action on social issues; a further two planned to.

Four Friends told us in interview that they were taking action with Vibrancy support. For example, one meeting had applied to become a 'Sanctuary Meeting'; another had recently run an event on sustainability.

Some survey respondents described the social action they had engaged with, for example:

- Four respondents from local and area meetings had worked closely with other local groups to support refugee families. Three linked this to their status as 'Sanctuary Meetings', while a third had felt supported by their Vibrancy worker who had 'embodied and localised the energy and social/spiritual awareness of the main thrust of BYM's work'.
- Two respondents from the same area meeting separately reported more active engagement with peace programmes.
- An area and a local meeting reported taking action against fracking. One had felt supported by their Vibrancy worker in this, while another had been connected with QPSW staff (who also offered support) through the Vibrancy worker.
- A local meeting had developed plans for a 'faith in action' morning to exchange news.
- An area meeting had been supported by their Vibrancy worker in a session at which they asked local meetings to produce sustainability plans.

Development workers also reported some improvements in terms of Friends taking action, and in particular examples of Friends linking up with other Friends for particular initiatives.

4.2.6 Visibility

Changes reported

Respondents from six of seven area meetings and 13 of 16 local meetings who had received Vibrancy support in this area said their meeting had experienced at least one *visibility* outcome (a change or a planned change). In the area and local meetings for which these outcomes were felt to be relevant and in which Vibrancy had provided support:

- Fifteen of 20 meetings reported feeling **more confident to express Quaker values and beliefs** externally.
- Eight of 17 meetings reported **running more events or outreach activities** to help visibility or increase membership; 6 planned to.
- Seven of 16 meetings reported **participating in more non-Quaker events or activities**; five

- planned to.
- Six of 19 meetings reported doing **more to promote their meeting** and what they do; nine planned to.

In interviews, Friends told us about five changes that had happened in their meetings around visibility. This ranged from more confidence in expressing Quaker values externally to starting to run community outreach events.

A refugee support organisation took on some office space in the meeting house, until offered alternative space by their funder. We are also hosting a community refugee support group. It is my hope that Syrian refugees will see the meeting house as a resource, but also because of the prayer space other Muslim groups will use and get to know the meeting house also. This we feel is a very positive move. The Vibrancy worker was very helpful in getting us to think about who was available in the town and making approaches to those people. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

4.2.7 Meeting for worship

The Vibrancy theory of change shows early work on practicalities like community and Quaker discipline leading to later outcomes in terms of *meeting for worship*.²⁵ To date, although less work has been done directly in this area, there is some evidence that outcomes for meeting for worship may have started to occur.

Survey respondents told us about changes²⁶ they had seen in their meetings:²⁷

- Twenty-seven of 35 meetings said people in their meeting were taking more responsibility for wider and deeper personal and spiritual nurture.
- Seventeen of 33 meetings reported a deeper quality of ministry at their meetings.
- Twenty of 33 meetings reported people feeling more enriched from their meeting for worship.

The development workers reported not having done much specifically-tailored work in this area, although there were some exceptions; for example, one development worker organised a regional day of spiritual reflection and refreshment for Friends in roles at Claridge House in partnership with Woodbrooke, with several area meeting contacts attending.

Some development workers did not think there was evidence of much change; others felt that they were not in a position to know. However, as also noted in the last report, they suggested that achievement of earlier outcomes, for example around community and Quaker discipline, were likely

²⁵ It has been helpfully noted by a steering group member that cause and effect here may be iterative, not linear.

²⁶ It is not possible to know from the survey how respondents interpret these changes; what they mean by 'deeper spiritual nurture' for example.

²⁷ Because 'meeting for worship' outcomes are less relevant for groups not linked to area or local meetings, we designed the survey so that respondents were able to skip the questions about these outcomes if they had received support as part of a group. However, because some other respondents also chose to skip the questions, we cannot be sure if these outcomes were relevant or not for the meetings those respondents attended. The number of meetings included in our sample base (eg 20 of 33 meetings) when reporting on these outcomes should therefore be treated with caution – it may be that the outcome was relevant for more than 33 meetings.

to lead in future to later meeting for worship outcomes.

Some survey respondents described what changes had occurred for their meetings:

- A local meeting had started a new group for Friends to 'share their spiritual lives'.
- An area meeting respondent commented that Friends felt more able to express their Quakerism as a result of being more informed. Their Vibrancy worker had given them 'a sense of spiritual agency' and helped them to prioritise the fact that they are a spirit-led community.
- An area meeting felt their Vibrancy worker had helped them generate ideas about how they could make the meeting work better spiritually.
- An area meeting had set up dedicated area meetings for worship.
- A local meeting respondent had found communication with their Vibrancy worker about spiritual topics useful in clarifying their understanding. This had given them 'a firmer basis' for their faith and increased their confidence in talking to others.

A couple of interviewees also mentioned changes. One explained how their pattern of meetings was changed to allow more time for spiritual nurture. Another felt that the Vibrancy programme had opened 'outlets to realise my spiritual nurture comes in different ways.'

4.2.8 Membership and attender levels

It is hoped that early changes, for example in community and Quaker discipline, will lead to stronger meetings, and that this in turn may increase first attender and then membership levels. It may be too early for this to have happened to any great extent, and there is no evidence of it from central BYM monitoring data. However survey data provides some evidence of change.

Survey responses showed that, as a result of changes made, some meetings were reporting changes in numbers connecting to a meeting:

- Two area meetings and four local meetings said that more children and young people were now connected to their meeting.
- Four area meetings and six local meetings said their average attendance had increased.

Development workers reported that in some areas, they had built relationships between estranged Friends that might lead them to re-join the meeting or another meeting.

Membership figures

The overall Quaker membership figures from central systems show that between 2016 and 2017 fewer local meetings in Vibrancy regions had an increase in membership than local meetings in non-Vibrancy regions:

- 24% (31 of 130) local meetings in Vibrancy regions had more members in 2017 than in 2016; 43% (56 out of 130) had fewer; and 32% (41 out of 130) remained the same. There was no data available for these years for two Vibrancy local meetings.
- In non-Vibrancy regions, 32% (105 of 327) local meetings had more members in 2017 than in 2016; 38% (123 of 327) had fewer; and 30% (99 out of 327) remained the same.

These figures may reflect on the nature of the regions chosen for Vibrancy. It may also be that

Vibrancy is unlikely to have effected change so soon after starting in 2016. In Appendix two: *A note about monitoring and evaluating the pilot* we discuss the limitations of available data and a resulting problem relating to confidence in the membership and attendance figures.

Attender numbers

Attender figures are available from central systems for 2016 and 2017. These show a slightly larger increase in attender numbers in Vibrancy areas between these two years than in the non-Vibrancy regions. However, there was no significant difference in average attender levels between Vibrancy and non-Vibrancy areas in 2016 and 2017.

- 51% (64 out of 125) of local meetings in Vibrancy regions had more attenders in 2017 than in 2016, while 34% (43 of 125) had fewer and 14% (18 of 125) remained the same. There was no data available for two Vibrancy local meetings.
- In non-Vibrancy regions, 47% (159 of 335) of local meetings had more attenders in 2017 than in 2016, while 34% (115 of 335) had fewer and 18% (61 of 335) remained the same.

4.3 Attribution and contribution to outcomes

4.3.1 How to attribute change

We have discussed in section 1.2.1 the challenge in reporting outcomes when attempting to attribute change to Vibrancy's work. Sample sizes are small for reaching meaningful findings. In the survey we have also relied on Friends' memory of support provided and its effect on change; BYM and Woodbrooke support in particular could have been received a long time ago. The evaluation focus and resultant questions have related primarily to Vibrancy and this will itself introduce a bias. In addition, meetings have received support from a wide range of sources.

4.3.2 Who made the change?

The wide range of support received

For all outcome areas, most respondents told us they had also received support from other BYM staff and Woodbrooke. For example, in addition to Vibrancy support, respondents told us about the support they had received around community outcomes:

- 59% had accessed a BYM printed leaflet/pack or online information and 44% had received support from BYM staff or volunteers.²⁸
- 34% had attended a Woodbrooke course and 25% had received other support from Woodbrooke staff or volunteers.

To assess Vibrancy's broader effect, Friends were asked in the survey to assess the contribution of Vibrancy support in any of the six main outcome areas; some had also accessed both local support (Vibrancy) and central support (BYM and Woodbrooke). It must be noted that this data is based on small samples. It is also hard for respondents to assess relative contribution accurately, so results must be taken as indicative only.

²⁸ We use 'volunteer' in this report as shorthand, meaning Friends offering unpaid service in the life of meetings.

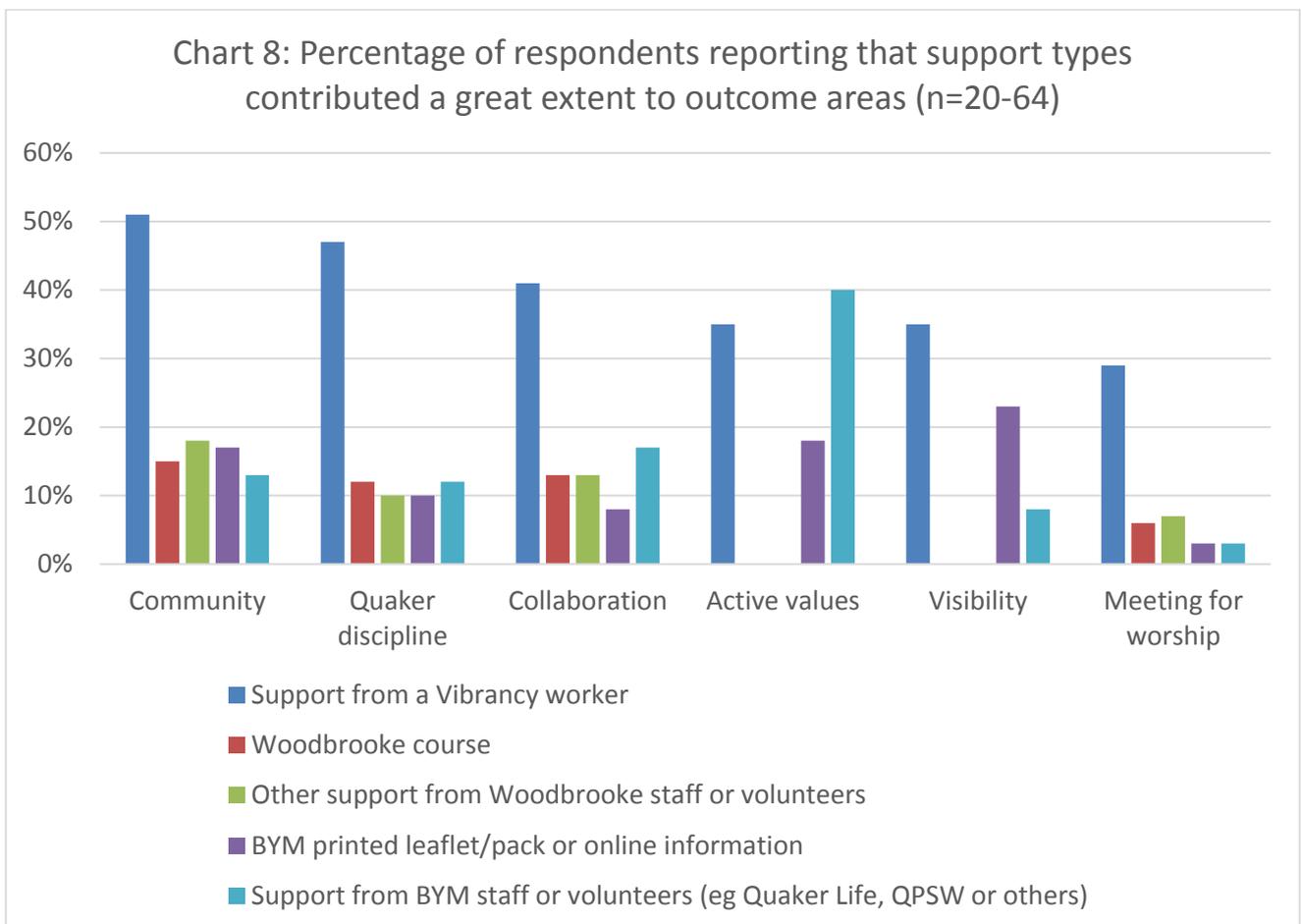
The contribution of Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke

According to survey respondents, Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke have all affected the changes made. Although numbers reporting on each outcome area are small for clear analysis, Vibrancy was reported more often as contributing to a great extent than any other support received, except in the case of active values, where support from BYM staff was reported to have made a bigger contribution. Survey responses suggest that Vibrancy workers had the most effect on community outcomes, followed by Quaker discipline and collaboration. This result might be expected as Vibrancy staff report that most work was in the areas of community and Quaker discipline. The team's contribution to the other areas was also significant.

The extent to which Vibrancy support was rated as contributing to change can be seen across all six outcomes areas:

- *Community*: 51% (29 of 57) to a great extent; 42% (24 of 57) to some extent.
- *Quaker discipline*: 47% (28 of 60) to a great extent; 54% (32 of 60) to some extent.
- *Collaboration*: 41% (17 of 41) to a great extent; 56% (23 of 41) to some extent.
- *Active values*: 35% (12 of 34) to a great extent; 62% (21 of 34) to some extent.
- *Visibility*: 35% (7 of 20) to a great extent; 65% (13 of 20) to some extent.
- *Meeting for worship*: 29% (16 of 55) to a great extent; 58% (32 of 55) to some extent.

The chart below shows the contribution made by different support types to each outcome area.



In interviews, there were some occasions where a direct link was made between Vibrancy work and an outcome. For example, one Friend said that the development worker support had helped them remain both with their meeting and with the Quakers:

It's given me outlets to realise my spiritual nurture comes in different ways ... This kind of work gives me a place to stay with Quakers. The Vibrancy project opens the possibilities for wider and different ways to relate through my spirituality, without having to go outside of Quakers. (Friend, local, area and regional meetings)

The effect of individual Friends

Friends themselves are of course also helping to bring about outcomes. Nine survey respondents mentioned that the existing skills and activities in their meeting had contributed to outcomes achieved. One Friend interviewee explained how outcomes were achieved through different enablers: the development worker was the initial catalyst, providing support and encouragement to the Friend's 'small flicker of inner prompting'. The development worker then provided direct support themselves, as well as linking them into BYM. At BYM there was a staff member from Quaker Peace and Social Witness who wrote a blog, the press office gave advice on a press release, and others gave coverage at events.

Another interviewee described this varied contribution in change related to visibility outcomes:

With the Peace stall we had at the War and Peace event [the development worker] was hands-on in coming and bringing a banner and spent the day on the stall, but also put me in touch with the right people [centrally] who could help with materials ... Six Friends helped on the days but each one has gone back and talked to their meeting about it and if we did it next year there would be more support and more energy put into it. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

In interviews for this report, two development workers reported some contact beginning to be made between Friends without Vibrancy input. In Totnes, for example the meeting was 'opening up', offering an invite for surrounding meetings to attend discussion groups.

4.3.3 If Vibrancy had not been available

Our *Taking Stock* report discussed that some changes following Vibrancy support might have occurred anyway. We asked survey respondents (n=129) what support they would have accessed if support from Vibrancy had not been available. They would have turned to:

- other Friends in area meetings (60%, 77 people)
- other Friends in local meetings (43%, 55 people)
- staff and volunteers from BYM (43%, 55 people).

Those receiving support through area meetings would turn to BYM printed leaflets/packs and online information (46%, 28 people) in a larger proportion than those receiving support through local meetings (22%, 14 people). This is consistent with the development workers' view that area meetings are more linked in to BYM and Woodbrooke than local meetings (see also section 2.2.2).

Some Friends were clear about the value they attributed to Vibrancy and the role that development

workers played. One area meeting clerk told us how Vibrancy support had helped her in her role, and how she wouldn't want others to be without it:

I didn't know my role as area meeting clerk without it. One of the things that worries me is that a new clerk might be taking it on without Vibrancy support. I do find it invaluable. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

4.4 Barriers and enablers to change

4.4.1 Enablers

Two development workers identified the following as enabling change at meeting level:

- a meeting that had enough people to share the work but not so many that there was a reduced sense of personal responsibility
- a good knowledge of Quakerism
- energetic, well supported role holders
- the presence of individuals prepared to try new things and be flexible.

They also cited contributors to specific outcomes. For example, for one collaboration outcome, *The Friend* was mentioned as well as existing structures, such as regional meetings, which brought multiple meetings together.

Some interviewees indicated factors that enabled change to take place. Friends emphasised the importance of a locally-based worker to prompt or support change. People felt more accountable to a local worker and said the personal support 'spurs us on'. Change was more likely if they knew the worker and found them credible:

She was someone we trusted and held in high regard ... I don't think that someone who didn't know us as well as [the development worker] does would have been able to get away with the sort of things she encourages us to do. She's quite challenging. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

The importance of these personal qualities is discussed in greater detail in section 3.2.3.

4.4.2 Development worker views on barriers

We have seen that meetings' outcomes, while separately identified, at the same time are interrelated. Similarly, barriers related to outcomes are themselves interrelated. In interviews, development workers identified the following as barriers to change:

- a large proportion of Friends being less involved in the meeting
- handing responsibility to role holders
- tiredness among those Friends with responsibility if work is not shared
- high expectations, a lack of interest in change or a lack of agreement around how to change
- conflict.

Barriers relating to BYM and Woodbrooke support

Development workers noted a number of barriers relating to BYM and Woodbrooke services which might have a negative effect on their support provision:

- BYM and Woodbrooke did not always have the time to meet Friends' requests or there may be a time lag in their response.
- The cost of Woodbrooke services. That pricing was changed following Vibrancy feedback (see section 6.3.4) should help, but will not completely remove that barrier.
- Most BYM and Woodbrooke staff support is usually available only between Monday and Friday, although events and workshops are at weekends.
- A few Friends were 'technically challenged' and are put off by the prospect of seeking information online.
- People might be embarrassed to go to Friends House staff but feel it is easier to ask the development workers.

4.4.3 Friends' views on barriers²⁹

Friends noted a number of barriers to making changes in their meetings.

Barriers to diversity

Five interviewees reported that they had struggled to find ways to encourage the participation of children and young people.

The only young people who come to our meeting ... don't see themselves as anything other than going with their grandparents and doing what their grandparents do, rather than owning it themselves ... If young people are going to be involved, then it needs a lot of organisation and responsibility from their parents and that isn't happening. Parents need to be proactive in making it happen. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

Lack of energy

Twenty interviewees reported lack of energy within the meeting or a conflict or tension. One respondent described internal resistance to change, and tension between wanting to change and the practicalities of persuading people to let go.

In qualitative responses, twenty survey respondents identified lack of an appetite for change or lack of energy as barriers. Those who elaborated further linked this to a fear of change, 'conservative' or 'entrenched' attitudes and a reluctance to accept the challenge of change. Lack of energy was also sometimes linked to the small number of Friends being actively involved in their meetings feeling overstretched.

Eight survey respondents said that conflict within meetings or a difference of opinion around how to make changes had been barriers.

²⁹ Fifty-one survey respondents listed barriers to making changes following Vibrancy support in response to qualitative questions on this topic. Responses were combined across outcomes as the same themes emerged in each area. Where a type of barrier was mentioned in relation to more than one outcome by the same respondent, it was counted only once.

Small number of Friends actively involved

In our survey, the most commonly noted barrier (21 respondents) was the active involvement of only a small number of Friends in a meeting – either as role holders or engaged in implementing change in another capacity:

The core group of Friends able to support these developments both practically and administratively is small and we have felt quite stretched at times. We are aware of improvements/developments we could be making but time and energy don't always run to it!
(Survey respondent)

Seven additional respondents cited the fact that their meeting was small as a barrier to change. It is likely that this was connected to lack of capacity. One Friend explained further that their meeting was mainly concerned with 'survival', while a second said that the lack of continuity of attendance in a small meeting was problematic.

Time challenges

In interviews, a lack of time was commonly mentioned by Friends. Some noted that it simply just takes time for changes to come about:

What you're doing is making people aware of Quakers and the way of thinking and the fact that there is a great body of people waiting to be called. It's a long process to get them to think differently. It's a very long process which may not show outcomes in the accepted ways immediately. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

In the survey, 17 respondents talked about challenges associated with time, mentioning constraints of small numbers of active Friends, busy personal lives or priority in meetings given to other areas of work. Ten Friends cited the difficulty of finding the amount of time needed to identify problems, and to implement and embed complex changes.

Age of Friends

Fourteen survey respondents and several interviewees specified that the age of Friends in their meeting was a barrier to change. Several specified that it could be difficult for older Friends to continue to hold roles or take action to implement change.

Other barriers

Other barriers mentioned by a smaller number of survey respondents were:

- Geographical challenges, such as large distances that Friends needed to travel or long travel times, in order to come together.
- Poor public transport provision.
- Cost of Woodbrooke services, or time and cost of travel to BYM and Woodbrooke.
- Challenges related to the meeting's premises, such as planning restrictions, a limited number of rooms or not having a meeting house at all.
- A lack of confidence to make changes.

A number of survey respondents noted that some of their issues were things that that they felt

Vibrancy could not help directly with:

I walked into the meeting house one day and someone in their 20s came in and said she'd heard about Quakers and wanted to know more. She got the leaflets, came in and sat down. About 15 minutes after the meeting started, she left. I feel that it was because she couldn't see anyone anywhere near her age group. There's nothing [the development worker] can do about that. (Survey respondent)

4.5 The Vibrancy model and sustainability

4.5.1 Concerns about sustainability

Five interviewees expressed a general concern that the development workers might be working too hard and/or were spread too thin, covering wide areas with part-time working. Ultimately this might have an effect on the ability to carry out in-depth work and affect outcomes, as well as having negative implications for development workers themselves. The concern was that ultimately this might not be sustainable.

The role is limited a bit by the huge geographical area and working 3.5 days a week. Her email response often says that she's out of office. But she always gets back to emails and she says that if things are urgent she can be contacted. It's not 24/7 support and it shouldn't be. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meetings)

In the long term, so much is expected, because she can be so useful. It's hard to know how she can balance that without wearing herself out. It's hard for her to draw boundaries ... It's important to look at how to support staff to look after themselves. Meetings want Vibrancy workers to attend on a Sunday, for example, but they can't work all the weekends. (Friend interviewee, local, area and regional meetings)

See more on this in section 3.3 on Friends' suggestions for improvements to Vibrancy.

4.5.2 Workload

The concern about workload and stress was raised in the *Taking Stock* report. This issue – the stress of managing the workload – has not improved at all since the last report. All the development workers enjoyed and valued their work, and were willing to do 'over the odds', but they found the hours problematic. One explained how the job 'rampages over seven days a week' at a cost to her and her personal life; another that she could work long stretches – for example ten days in a row – without a break.

Support from each other, and on occasion from other Friends, had been really helpful in coping with workload. It is a testament to the Vibrancy workers that workload challenges have not always been seen by Friends. Indeed, one survey respondent described their development worker as 'someone without lots of other duties, who can really focus on our concerns' and another valued how their worker was always available to them.

Clarification of what constitutes core Vibrancy work might potentially reduce workload a little. One of the development workers felt that on occasion they were experiencing ‘scope creep’, delivering things for BYM and Woodbrooke that were not core Vibrancy tasks. Being involved in anything other than core work, even when it was important – like the ‘beyond the pilot’³⁰ work – can be time consuming for them.

³⁰ This refers to the process of developing, modelling and consulting on a range of options for how BYM and Woodbrooke might act on learnings from Vibrancy after the pilot phase, mainly designed round versions of the existing programme. The aim is to ensure that decisions about what happens next (to be made by BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees) are well-informed and based on good consultation.

Case example 1: The benefits of cross-meeting connections

North Wales area meeting was 'thirsting for change', including in their arrangement for clerking. A clerking team of four people was created and sought support from Vibrancy:

Just as the team were saying to each other 'how do we initiate spirit-led change?' there was this offer of something we could draw on.

The clerking team invited the Vibrancy development worker for Wales and the Southern Marches to be involved in their internal discussions about how they support change in their area meeting. The Vibrancy worker attended area meeting and facilitated a creative activity to help people to reflect on the strengths of the local meetings within it, that they could build on. She was then invited to join the clerking team's meetings to listen, support discussions, offer reflections and take minutes. It was felt that the Vibrancy worker's presence helped to bring out the team's contributions:

She's facilitated the team and helped us come together ... Her quiet strength has allowed the positive capacities that exist in the team to be brought to the fore.

The ten local meetings within North Wales area meeting are geographically dispersed, making it hard for Friends from across the area to connect and spend time together. The clerks saw that more spiritual nurture could happen across the meetings that were geographically close to each other, five in the east of the area and five in the west. The Vibrancy worker facilitated a workshop to explore how connections between meetings might work best in practice and wrote a report summarising the group's ideas.

We're trying out a system of cluster groups, working as east and west clusters. [The Vibrancy worker] has helped us to think about how we might plan events for that and what we might want from it, from both a personal and spiritual point of view.

Local meeting clerks in the west of the area (west cluster) started liaising with each other and intend to put on a special event once a quarter for all five local meetings. Friends in the east of the area (east cluster) were equally enthusiastic, but came across some obstacles, so the Vibrancy worker facilitated another session for them to help them to come up with ideas and put them into place. The east cluster now takes a different approach to the west cluster. They have one coordinator who manages a shared calendar of all of the existing activities run by the local meetings and opens up invitations to others across the cluster. Local meetings within both clusters are now spending more time together in a way that suits them and would value the input of the Vibrancy worker in continuing to support that:

In the west cluster there has been a meeting arranged by Colwyn Bay Meeting, an enjoyable social event with singing and circle dancing. We remain hopeful that momentum will pick up in 2019, but recognise that more positive input may be needed, perhaps drawing on the support of the Vibrancy worker.

In the next stage of change, the clerking team is reviewing the structure of North Wales area meeting, with a view to simplifying it in 2020. The team has put together a paper for discussion at

area meeting, which the Vibrancy worker has offered support on:

She has been very helpful to me in giving various references on stuff I was looking for ... and in telling me what other area meetings are thinking about.

As well as working at area meeting level, the Vibrancy worker has had a connection with every local meeting within North Wales. For some she has supported them on issues individual to the meeting such as using resources from Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke or on organising events or topic-related groups. For example, she encouraged Friends from Bangor Meeting to organise the summer gathering for the North Wales area meeting including a creative all-age activity in the afternoon. This initiative in involving children was then continued into an area meeting with morning activities planned for the children and an all-age meeting in the afternoon.

Having an overall view of what is happening in local meetings across the area means that the Vibrancy worker can help to make connections between meetings and initiatives. The Vibrancy worker reflects that, although she has been able to make a contribution to North Wales area meeting, her role is very much about 'facilitating and supporting' their own ideas to come out and be brought to fruition. In North Wales they have valued having a worker available in that way:

As far as we're concerned, [the Vibrancy worker] has empowered us to do something. We haven't asked her to run the cluster groups, we felt that we should do that ourselves... It's her presence which is important ... I don't think we need her at our side all the time, but the fact that we can turn to her is important.

5 WORK WITH BYM AND WOODBROOKE

In this section we describe the work that Vibrancy has done with BYM and Woodbrooke. This section is based on interviews with Friends, with Woodbrooke and central BYM staff and the Vibrancy team.

Key findings

1. Recently the amount of joint work between Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke has been increasing, and includes shared event delivery, shared planning, resource development and jointly supporting meetings.
2. Vibrancy staff are now delivering much of the direct support work to Friends themselves, rather than simply 'signposting'. Where needed, Vibrancy can involve the relevant part of BYM or Woodbrooke for additional – sometimes specialist – support.
3. As the programme has evolved, joint working has been promoted by better mutual understanding. Respective roles are clearer. Some relationships between Vibrancy staff and central staff are strong.
4. Some BYM respondents noted that the organisation hadn't fully been prepared for Vibrancy before it started, and that this had hampered its integration.
5. Partnership working has been hampered by lack of time on both sides. That Vibrancy involves a new way of working for both BYM and Woodbrooke has sometimes created challenges.
6. Some members of the Vibrancy team felt that some BYM staff have been reluctant to work with them, and that there was a divide between them and the central teams. One Vibrancy team member reported feeling undervalued by BYM.
7. Despite good progress, work is still needed to ensure that the team is more integrated within the organisations – BYM in particular – and that joint working with both BYM and Woodbrooke is undertaken where appropriate to best meet the needs of Friends.
8. A number of respondents from across Vibrancy, central BYM and Woodbrooke talked with excitement about potential future joint working.

5.1 How Vibrancy has worked with BYM and Woodbrooke

The Vibrancy team regularly links Friends to BYM and Woodbrooke; more joint working is also developing.

5.1.1 Linking friends to BYM and Woodbrooke

Vibrancy staff work indirectly with BYM and Woodbrooke fairly regularly, as part of their role to link Friends into central structures. Development workers explained how they sometimes signpost to BYM and Woodbrooke if there is a clear need – usually for specialist help or 'the big stuff' – and can feel confident that they have the capacity to meet the need.

If the best support is from Woodbrooke that's great, if it's from BYM and they can provide it great, if no one else is able to do what Friends need, I'll see how I can best help them myself. You have to be prepared to pitch in. (Vibrancy interviewee)

A Friend interviewed spoke of being:

... dusted down and pointed in the right direction: there's a lot a meeting can do for itself, but it might not ever get dusted down and pointed in the right direction without Vibrancy. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

In the past, an overemphasis on the role of Vibrancy in 'signposting' may have undersold the work done by the team. Initially the Vibrancy role was conceived as having a big signposting element; now the role is very much about the Vibrancy staff engaging with meetings and delivering a lot of the work themselves, sometimes working with BYM and Woodbrooke staff. When they do engage in signposting, this can involve considerable efforts to help someone access BYM or Woodbrooke support. One Vibrancy worker described a number of ways of supporting Friends through signposting:

- telling them which bit of a resource would be useful to them
- liaising with staff herself
- giving Friends a named staff contact
- going through the website with them
- sending email introductions copying in the staff member she thought the Friend needed to speak to.

This development worker explained why she did this:

I spend a lot of time making things easier for other people [Friends] because that's what you have to do to make it work, otherwise you are just throwing something towards them and hoping they catch it. (Vibrancy interviewee)

For further discussion of how Vibrancy enables access to BYM and Woodbrooke, see section 6.2.2.

5.1.2 Joint work

Levels of joint working

The *Taking Stock* report noted that the amount of contact between Vibrancy and central teams was increasing. Central staff reported their contact with Vibrancy as helpful, but that joint working had been slower than expected; greater clarity was needed around respective roles and establishing processes to support joint working.

In our current interviews, most respondents felt that levels of joint working were still lower than hoped, but the situation was improving. Vibrancy team members and staff at central BYM and Woodbrooke all gave us examples of how they had worked more actively together to meet the needs of the meetings. They provided many examples of joint working between the Vibrancy team and BYM and Woodbrooke

- Joint work with BYM teams has included: shared planning; developing new resources; supporting meetings together, in particular on conflict; Vibrancy contributing to BYM events.

- Joint work with Woodbrooke has focused on supporting meetings through events. Vibrancy staff have also provided local intelligence to Woodbrooke prior to support provision.

Many of these developments were relatively recent. One Vibrancy staff member felt that in the last three to six months Vibrancy had become better integrated. She noted that they were suddenly a 'big thing on the agenda' at trustee meetings, attributing this to the 'beyond the pilot' programme. A Woodbrooke staff member explained:

We have a day planned together with [Woodbrooke, Vibrancy and] Quaker Life Ministry and Outreach to think about how are we supporting Friends and what are our medium term plans ... It's interesting that it was automatic that [the Vibrancy worker] was included ... whereas possibly a year ago we might have had the meeting and thought [afterwards]: 'Oh, we should have invited Vibrancy!' (Woodbrooke interviewee)

Nature of joint working

Work with BYM

A range of initiatives have been undertaken between Vibrancy and BYM teams, including:

- Regular meetings between team leads.
- Developing new resources together, for example the simpler meetings project³¹ is adapting – for a wider audience – a paper written by a development worker on how area meetings could respond to difficulties in finding trustees. It is also using one of the development worker's diagrams on how smaller meetings can fulfil governance requirements. (For more on new resources, see section 6.3.3.)
- Jointly offering support to local meetings, for example:
 - Development workers and BYM staff worked together to support several meetings engaged in social action.
 - A development worker jointly organised a Vibrancy/Quaker Life/Woodbrooke weekend for the area, on considering life together as a worshipping Quaker community.
 - Development workers have worked alongside BYM's property support officer to support meetings on a handful of projects.
- Work on conflict: Several of the development workers have worked with BYM staff members to jointly support meetings around conflict. This is leading to a new approach in support around conflict, which is described in more detail in section 6.3.4.
- Vibrancy contributing to BYM events, including:
 - 'Engaging Families' days held in London and Lancaster to launch the *All Are Welcome* resource (Quaker Life & Woodbrooke)
 - to Quaker Life Representative Council events
 - an event on all age activism at Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2017.
- Working on joint planning, including for 'beyond the pilot' and the simpler meetings project (more in section 6.3.2).
- Inputting to other BYM team planning, including contributing to the Quaker Life strategy,

³¹ The Simpler Meetings project (Quaker Life) aims to reduce the administrative burden on role holders in area meetings, to free up their time and energy. It involves a programme of support and resources primarily for role holders in area meetings; it also aims to develop and share good practice.

the 'Support for Meetings' strategy and the operational plan for the children and young people's team.

- Support for other BYM regional work, such as working with and encouraging the BYM hospitality company around proposed redevelopment at Swarthmore Hall.

Work with Woodbrooke

Vibrancy joint work with Woodbrooke has included:

- Sharing learning.
- Vibrancy contributing to Woodbrooke programme planning activities.
- Development workers asking Woodbrooke into their area to deliver events, for example a day on eldership.
- Attending/contributing to each other's events, for example:
 - Vibrancy team members were an integral part of Woodbrooke's presence at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 and contributed to the welcoming environment of spiritual hospitality in the Woodbrooke tent.
- Co-creating new events, for example:
 - Leading a retreat at Claridge House (in the South East region) for Friends who had recently stood down from significant roles or wished for refreshment in them. This initiative, which was co-created with the development worker is now offered as a Woodbrooke on-the-road resource.
 - Working together on three possible events in the West Somerset, Devon & Cornwall Vibrancy Area, including possibilities for drawing on the gifts and experience of an Equipping for Ministry group in the South West.
- Consulting Vibrancy staff prior to working in a Vibrancy area, to ensure they understood the local context. For example:
 - Consulting with the development worker before a Woodbrooke on-the-road for a meeting in the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Vibrancy region.

Working relationships

Working relationships between Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke teams are growing; respondents from all three groups described strong and positive relationships between some individuals. For at least some in the Vibrancy team, relationships feel stronger between Vibrancy and Woodbrooke; Vibrancy staff talked about a 'real openness' on the part of at least some Woodbrooke staff to working with the Vibrancy team, a preparedness to take risks and try new things.

Some central team members are looking for better relationships with Vibrancy. For example, one Woodbrooke staff member would welcome development workers sitting in on team days.

5.1.3 Future plans

Staff from Vibrancy, central BYM and Woodbrooke were all excited about the prospect of future partnership working with Vibrancy.

The more the relationship deepens, I can see it being an increasing priority because what they

offer is so useful to our work. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

For us there is a real clarity that the heart of our work is about renewal and flourishing of meetings. That's clearly what's emerged for Vibrancy, and it also lies at the heart of Woodbrooke. It feels like we can now get together as colleagues to encourage and enable Friends to talk about their faith and feel confident. (BYM interviewee)

If I was looking forward ... there's something about a more co-creative response to things – whether it's responding to particular need working with a small group of meetings, whether it's a project with a group including the Vibrancy worker, the topic specialist and Friends. (Vibrancy interviewee)

5.2 Why joint working has improved

5.2.1 Mutual understanding

Respective roles are clearer

In the *Taking Stock* report we reported some lack of clarity as to when Vibrancy staff should signpost to BYM and Woodbrooke. From interviews, this appears less of an issue now, although two development workers felt there was still some lack of clarity.³² In general, development workers were clear as to when they should refer on, and one interviewee felt less under pressure to 'get it right'.

Central BYM and Woodbrooke staff also felt this was no longer a problem:

I don't think it's clearer but I'm not sure it's still an issue. What has evolved is that the work of the local workers has changed so actually ... they're doing a lot more hands on community development work. My sense is that that's what they need to be doing. When it gets to a stage where they're doing too much or it gets beyond a particular stage or the nature of the work is such that they need to bring people in from Woodbrooke or BYM then I think they do. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

Initially, some central staff had understood that Vibrancy was primarily about signposting. As it became clear that their work was more in-depth, this had promoted joint working and led to a greater sense of potential from both BYM and Woodbrooke.

It's not just that Vibrancy workers might signpost to what we might offer, but when stuff arises for us that we think of those workers as part of how we might respond. (BYM interviewee)

As the pilot goes on there is a greater sense of how the work of local development workers and Woodbrooke tutors is connected on a day-to-day level ... There is now much more linking and liaison on what I would call a 'colleagueship' basis rather than a 'referral' basis – so members of the Vibrancy team and the Programmes Team are increasingly talking about particular pieces of work, situations in meetings, learning from the programme, co-creation of events and future

³² No one raised this issue in our interviews without being asked.

possibilities rather than local development workers referring meetings to Woodbrooke who might then parachute in, run a one-day workshop and leave. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

5.2.2 'Beyond the pilot' has helped

Much of the improvements in joint working were seen in better individual relationships, and in working on specific events. Organisational strategic joint working remained still fairly limited, although work on 'beyond the pilot' shows the promise of such joint working.

Vibrancy staff have had to find additional time for work that was not focused directly on supporting Friends, such as 'beyond the pilot'. However, two development workers commented that it had been helpful in encouraging further integration. One Vibrancy worker said that 'beyond the pilot' had added 'a whole new dimension' and had 'brought [Vibrancy] back into the centre of Quaker work'.

5.2.3 Are formal processes for joint working necessary?

Structural or formal arrangements for joint working remain embryonic; this was mentioned in our last report. Some Vibrancy staff felt that a more formal process for Vibrancy to feed intelligence into BYM and Woodbrooke might still be helpful, although two BYM and Woodbrooke staff expressed a different view:

It feels like the conversation is becoming less about what process might we have in place to help our teams work, and more about how together we are building this relationship and working together. (BYM interviewee)

5.3 Issues with joint working

A number of issues have hampered joint working to date.

5.3.1 Communication

A few instances were reported of communication difficulties during joint working, and sometimes challenges have arisen in working out responsibilities and roles between different colleagues. Some Vibrancy staff talked about BYM staff not always involving Vibrancy from the start in pieces of work affecting their regions. One recounted a recent instance when a meeting in her area had been in touch with BYM about something sensitive and BYM staff had contacted a range of other staff to discuss potential next steps, but not the Vibrancy worker.

5.3.2 Lack of time

On both sides, finding the time for sustaining relationships and delivering joint work was an issue. This was exacerbated by the remote working of the development workers and the huge regions and remits they were covering. That Vibrancy workers are very flexible in their hours, often spreading those hours over a full week, may mean there is less time for overlap during traditional office hours.

Development workers were also aware of the time constraints for BYM and Woodbrooke teams centrally and there was some evidence that on occasions this might hold them back from signposting Friends to them.

5.3.3 Not being fully prepared for Vibrancy

We didn't specifically ask about this, but two BYM respondents noted that BYM had initially not been prepared for Vibrancy and there were lost opportunities to set up systems or develop cross-organisational communications in advance of the programme starting. This had also been captured in the *Taking Stock* report, with some central staff members at the time still not feeling Vibrancy as 'part of their daily lives'. A Vibrancy worker felt that this lack of preparedness meant that some central staff may not have been given sufficient time or resources to engage with Vibrancy.

The nature of Vibrancy itself had sometimes created challenges. To a certain extent a cultural shift may have been required from some BYM and Woodbrooke staff. One explained: 'We've had to get our heads around working in a different way'. For some Vibrancy staff, this may include things like not always having meetings at Friends house.

It was also more difficult to remember to contact a Vibrancy worker because they are only in a few areas: 'That makes it hard to keep it consistently a high priority.' The relative short timescales of the Vibrancy pilot programme also meant that there had been some reticence in involving them in long-term projects.

Our interviews for this report indicated that this was now changing and central organisation staff were now feeling more optimistic:

There's a general feeling that space wasn't made for Vibrancy; we weren't prepared and ready for what it might mean for us ... It would have been logical for Vibrancy to sit in [the Quaker Life] department and I think there was concern it wasn't embedded in that department – that might have given it a good home. I think we have a slight habit of employing people to go and sort things out – it's good to sort things out but there was some more preliminary work we could have done ... I feel optimistic now though [about more linking]. (BYM interviewee)

Openness to joint working

While relationships between Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke are improving, some Vibrancy workers felt that this was more the case with newer members of staff who were perhaps more flexible in their roles and were at times more open to new ways of working. Some of the team felt that other individuals were at times unwilling to engage with Vibrancy:

All the new people who don't have experience of working in any other way want to work with us. But established departments have more set patterns, so it's hard to accommodate us. For the new people we're adding something. We might seem like a burden to the people who have been there for a while. (Vibrancy interviewee)

5.3.4 Still work to be done

There have been recent very positive improvements to joint working between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke teams that can be built upon. However, there is still work to be done to ensure the Vibrancy team are well integrated into the work of BYM and Woodbrooke and feel part of the organisations and valued by them.

Much joint working to date between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke staff has relied on individual relationships and individuals being proactive; this might mean that some meeting needs are being missed.

One member of the Vibrancy team reported feeling their work is undervalued by a number of BYM staff, mainly due to a lack of understanding of the value Vibrancy brings to BYM, and a lack of understanding that Vibrancy is more than just signposting.

Some members of the Vibrancy team expressed frustration that some new ways of working being developed by their team were not being taken up more quickly by BYM and Woodbrooke. One also worker felt that although the pilot had found an alternative way of bringing the service to local meetings, 'there is still a divide - it's just the gap is between us and the central teams.'

6 OUTCOMES FOR BYM AND WOODBROOKE

This section describes the outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke as a result of the Vibrancy pilot.

Key findings

1. As a result of Vibrancy Friends are learning more about BYM and Woodbrooke and report using their resources more.
2. Vibrancy is beginning to promote mutual understanding between Friends and central BYM and Woodbrooke, with BYM/Woodbrooke respondents confirming that they were starting to learn more about the needs of Friends through their Vibrancy colleagues.
3. There was strong evidence from the survey and interviews that Vibrancy was increasing Friends' use of BYM and Woodbrooke resources. However, data from central monitoring does not support this, except for a small increase in Woodbrooke on-the-road courses. This may be due to a number of reasons: that Vibrancy is now doing more of the delivery itself; limitations to central monitoring; insufficient time for such on-the-ground changes to be felt.
4. Interview and survey data suggest that Vibrancy workers are articulating meetings' needs and best practice to BYM and Woodbrooke on their behalf, rather than meetings doing this directly for themselves.
5. There are some promising indications of Vibrancy affecting Woodbrooke's events delivery. This included Vibrancy workers being able to identify a shared need across a region.
6. Several of the development workers have been working with BYM teams around conflict in meetings, and new approaches are being developed as a result.
7. There very limited evidence that Vibrancy has affected Friends active engagement in wider Quaker society to date, and no effect on donations as yet.
8. Woodbrooke and BYM work together on many projects and are continually working to strengthen their relationship. However respondents reported no evidence of improved joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke specifically as a result of Vibrancy.
9. Some of the outcomes in the theory of change relating to changes for BYM and Woodbrooke may no longer be relevant; as Vibrancy has changed, so the theory itself may need to adapt.

6.1 Better engagement of Friends with BYM and Woodbrooke

Vibrancy is helping at least some Friends better understand BYM and Woodbrooke and feel more connected to the organisations. In turn, it is helping BYM and Woodbrooke to better understand the needs of Friends. There was anecdotal evidence that some new Friends are being brought to BYM and Woodbrooke by Vibrancy:

Through our engagement with the Vibrancy workers we've gained a knowledge of and met Quakers who would never come to Woodbrooke. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

There is yet, however, little evidence that Vibrancy has had much effect on Friends' wider engagement with Quaker society.

6.1.1 Understanding of BYM and Woodbrooke among Friends

In our last report, around half of the Friends we interviewed reported improved understanding of BYM and Woodbrooke structures and services as a result of Vibrancy (with most others feeling they already had a good understanding). Around half of our interviewees reported some additional contact with BYM and Woodbrooke staff or resources as a result of support from a Vibrancy worker.

There is good evidence that Vibrancy staff are helping Friends feel closer to BYM and Woodbrooke and/or to understand it better, an effect also reported in our last report. Development workers are also helping Friends articulate their needs to BYM and Woodbrooke, or to share more good practice with them. However there is no evidence yet that Friends are doing this for themselves more following from Vibrancy support. Some of the development workers noted that modesty among Friends is a barrier, which 'sits in opposition to the great interest they have in each other's stories'.

A small number of Friends described feeling that, as a result of Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke and the wider Quaker world felt less 'remote' or that the relationship felt 'closer'.

In this area it's the work that [our development worker's] done at local meeting level that's had most impact in terms of making people feel better connected to the wider Quaker body. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

I don't think we feel quite as remote now. The fact that [our development worker] has visited is connecting us with that wider Quaker world. It makes the link less amorphous. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

The headquarters can feel very remote. That remains very important. That someone who has a role centrally and officially for Quakers is in your area and shows up to your meeting. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

[The event to which the Vibrancy worker contributed] renewed my faith in the Society. This was at least in part due to [the Vibrancy worker's] work. (Survey respondent)

Six interviewees told us that Vibrancy had improved their understanding of both BYM and Woodbrooke:

[The development worker] explains to me the role of Friends house. As Quakers we don't have a hierarchy, but Friends house can still seem like this mystical beast ... [The development worker has] demystified it for me. (Friend interviewee, local meetings)

Since I've started engaging with Vibrancy, I've become more familiar with what's going on with BYM and some of the people there. Vibrancy has been at the heart of my relationship with BYM. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

[Our development worker] continually makes us aware of what's available from Friends House and Woodbrooke and we're not afraid of asking for help or advice or making use of Woodbrooke courses where needed. Our development worker's] role is to keep reminding us of what's available and don't forget. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

6.1.2 Understanding of Friends by BYM and Woodbrooke

All respondents from BYM and Woodbrooke said they had learnt more about Friends' needs as a result of Vibrancy. For some this was something specific about meetings:

She reinforced that Quakers feel isolated in meetings with their particular concern. And that some meetings can't afford to send people to BYM conferences. (BYM interviewee)

There have been quite a number of cases where we've been thinking about or preparing to go in and do an event in a meeting and talking to the Vibrancy worker about that area meeting or local meeting has been so informative. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

A staff member from both BYM and Woodbrooke reported that they had learnt from local and area meetings that the level of need was more basic than they had realised. One of them commented:

We've been assuming local and area meetings' basic capacity ... in terms of spiritual groundedness and community, and we've been offering to add to that through our support, but the Vibrancy staff are telling us that we need to start from that first place and build those basics. (BYM staff member)

Vibrancy staff and central teams appear to appreciate that the time spent with Friends helped the Vibrancy workers find out what meetings need in a way not available to BYM and Woodbrooke: Vibrancy information often complemented or provided evidence about issues that central teams were already aware of 'anecdotally', bringing 'more detail and life to what we knew in a broad-brush stroke.'

The Vibrancy workers, especially where they're working with meetings over a period of time, I think they get an insight [whereas] when someone comes to a course at Woodbrooke or a tutor runs a course for a day, you get a snapshot. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

6.1.3 More active engagement of Friends in wider Quaker society

Taking on roles

There is no substantial evidence that Vibrancy has been able to affect Friends active engagement in wider Quaker society, although it is still very early for such changes to be seen. However, two Friends told us in interview how their contact with Vibrancy had, at least in part, prompted them to take roles at BYM and Woodbrooke:

Now I'm going to be on the QPSW economics and sustainability sub-group. I agreed to say yes to that because I'd come back from the Devon and Cornwall gathering weekend and had been

inspired by connecting with people. (Friend interviewee, local, area and regional meetings)

Donations

The total amount of donations from Friends in Vibrancy areas has increased during the life of the programme although the number of people donating has gone down slightly; the number of direct donations to Friends House have gone up (see table 1 below).³³ The increase in overall donations seen in the first year of the programme did not continue into the second year. It is not possible to estimate any significance of these findings as we do not have comparable data from other regions.

Table 1: Donations and donating

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Overall donations from Vibrancy areas	£241,291	£370,641	£342,313
Member donations from meetings in Vibrancy regions direct to Friends House	£98,610	£159,476	£118,577
Number of members in Vibrancy areas donating directly to Friends House, not via their meeting	303	305	284

6.2 Friends' use of BYM and Woodbrooke support

6.2.1 Overall use

Survey respondents clearly reported that Vibrancy was increasing their accessing of BYM and Woodbrooke support in around a third of instances; a similar finding was found in interviews, albeit with small samples.

Despite this, there was no good evidence of an overall increase in the use of support and resources by Friends in Vibrancy areas according to central monitoring data. One exception was evidence that Vibrancy areas were disproportionately receiving Woodbrooke on-the-road courses.

Survey data

Vibrancy is helping some Friends access BYM and Woodbrooke. In our survey, we asked respondents whether they had used BYM and Woodbrooke resources to help them in various areas of their meeting life. We also asked them whether Vibrancy staff had told them about those resources, or whether they had accessed them independently of Vibrancy. Across 398 instances where respondents reported having used BYM and Woodbrooke support or resources to help them, Vibrancy workers had told them about those resources, or supported them to access them, 37% of the time (see table below).

³³ The donation years are not completely compatible with the Vibrancy years. For donations, year 1 = 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2016, year 2 = 1 September 2016 – 31 August 2017, year 3 = 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018.

Table 2: Number of instances where Vibrancy supported access to BYM and Woodbrooke

Outcome area	Number of instances where Friends used BYM and Woodbrooke to help	How many instances Vibrancy told them about it/helped support to access	% of time
Community	133	50	38%
Discipline	111	41	37%
Active values	53	19	36%
Collaboration	58	25	43%
Visibility	43	13	30%
Totals	398	148	37%

Survey responses indicated that Friends from Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset accessed support from BYM and Woodbrooke more frequently than respondents from other Vibrancy regions. Those respondents receiving Vibrancy support in connection with a local meeting were less likely to access central support than those receiving support in connection with an area meeting.

Interview data

In the 18 interviews we undertook with Friends, there were contrasting views as to the extent Vibrancy had helped them access BYM or Woodbrooke support:

- Five interviewees (representing four area meetings, one local) told us that contact with Vibrancy had changed how much their meeting accessed other information or support from BYM and Woodbrooke. One explained how their development worker had ‘encouraged us to view Friends House as a resource rather than as HQ, so to speak’.
- Six interviewees (representing two area meetings, three local meetings and one representing both) told us that contact with Vibrancy had *not* changed how much their meeting accessed other information or support from BYM and Woodbrooke. Some reported already having a good relationship or understanding; one interviewee said that members of their meeting still felt that ‘Friends House has absolutely nothing to do with them.’

Central monitoring data

Central monitoring data as yet shows no significant difference in the uptake of BYM or Woodbrooke support from Vibrancy areas, except for Woodbrooke on-the-road courses (for more detail, see appendix 3).

- *Woodbrooke on-the-road courses.* As had been expected, over the three years there has been an increase in total bookings for Woodbrooke on-the-road courses in Vibrancy areas, despite a drop in 2017.³⁴ Although numbers are small, this appears to show a disproportionate increase in relation to all other areas, which had also seen an increase.
- *Meetings visited by BYM staff.* It was expected that Vibrancy would be able to link up area and local meeting with BYM speakers. However, BYM monitoring data to August 2018

³⁴ The 2017 drop in bookings may have been because of other events, such as the triennial residential Yearly Meeting Gathering and a ‘Reading Quaker faith & practice’ programme.

instead shows an overall decrease in the percentage of area and local meetings visited by BYM staff in Vibrancy as well as non-Vibrancy areas.

- *Use of BYM CYP resources.* There is no discernible pattern of change in use of resources about children and young people since the Vibrancy pilot started, although it had been expected that Vibrancy areas would request them more.
- *Woodbrooke Being Friends Together resource.* Data on the use of Woodbrooke's Being Friends Together resource is problematic partly because of the small numbers involved, but also because of the lack of baseline data; this makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the slightly lower use of this resource in Vibrancy regions than in other regions.³⁵

Considerations with this data

Central monitoring data appears to challenge the Vibrancy theory of change in its hypothesis that development workers, with their signposting role, would increase uptake of central resources. This could simply be that it will take longer for such changes to become apparent if they do occur. However, Vibrancy workers now engage in much more active development work than had originally been envisaged, which may cause less of a demand for central resources than anticipated. It may also be considered whether there is any priority given by BYM and Woodbrooke in their services to non-Vibrancy areas, in order to spread resources more widely.

More importantly, central monitoring data may not provide the full picture for a number of reasons. For example, all instances of access to resources may not have been inputted to data systems; resources might be accessed through bookshops; download of online resources may not have been included; data would be unlikely to capture instances where materials were passed on directly to Friends by the development worker or from other Friends.

6.2.2 How Vibrancy supports access

In section 5.1.1 we noted that Vibrancy workers are often doing a lot more than simply signposting Friends to BYM and Woodbrooke. There is good evidence that Development workers are supporting access, too. In interviews, some Friends provided information on how the worker had helped them to access BYM and Woodbrooke resources:

We have a conflict at the moment and she's been tremendously helpful in signposting and linking with Friends House. Checking procedures and being supportive, without breaking confidence in any way ... We've been having multiway teleconferences. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

Vibrancy gives you personal contact, so if you know the person who's going to be there and the person who sends out the emails you're more likely to engage with it. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

³⁵ Please note that it was also not possible to identify the Vibrancy status of 25 entries, which are therefore not included in the analysis

Vibrancy staff said that they thought they helped Friends access central resources more quickly and more easily, and/or get more out of the support from BYM and Woodbrooke, and some Friends commented on this:

For example, the Being Friends Together material. Without [the development worker's] influence I'd have found it impenetrable. There's a lot of material there, it's not easy to access and find your way through. (Friend interviewee, local and area meeting)

There's a big world out there that we don't know, particularly the Woodbrooke world. She was able to guide us through Being Friends Together in a way we couldn't have penetrated on our own. (Friend interviewee, local and area meetings)

[The Woodbrooke Patterns and Examples event for role holders] was brilliant, keep doing them! Having the Vibrancy worker was helpful to me as a sounding board for me to get the most out of the event leading to me taking the right information back ... has transformed our Meeting for Worship for Business. (Survey respondent)

6.3 Changes to support provision at BYM and Woodbrooke

6.3.1 Changed thinking and planning

BYM and Woodbrooke staff members explained some aspects of changed thinking and planning in key areas of provision as a result of Vibrancy:

- **The ideal balance between responsive and proactive support.** 'At some point we may need to say to meetings: "We can offer this but can't do that." I find I get drawn into being more responsive which pushes out what I can do in preparing stuff.' (BYM interviewee)
- **The benefits of regionally-based staff.**
The very existence of the Vibrancy project has shifted the way we think about people being based in Friends House or not ... The thing we're much more open to is people being based outside Friends House to do their job. It's not the same as Vibrancy but the possibility has opened up more. (BYM interviewee).
- **In planning and strategy:** Learning from Vibrancy was instrumental in setting up the simpler meetings project then in helping the project officer think through and plan the work once he was appointed. Resources for this project are being developed with Vibrancy input (see below). One BYM member felt that, without Vibrancy, the new Quaker Life strategy might not have used Our Faith in the Future or the outcomes Vibrancy included in their theory. 'It's not just picking up the words but a way of thinking. They're thinking about how meetings might look and how can we support that to happen.' (Vibrancy interviewee)

6.3.2 Development of new resources

As described in 5.1.2, Vibrancy is working with BYM staff to develop new resources, for use internally and externally:

- The simpler meetings project is adapting – for a wider audience – a paper written by a

development worker on how area meetings could respond to difficulties in finding trustees. It is also using one of the development worker's diagrams on how smaller meetings can fulfil governance requirements.

- A development worker identified a need for information on meeting house signage and subsequently developed a document with Quaker Life.
- Some managers at BYM are now using a development worker's graphic, of how different parts of BYM fit together, in staff/committee inductions.

6.3.3 Better support

It had been hoped that in the long term Vibrancy would bring about changes to Woodbrooke's and BYM's support provision. Some respondents felt it was too early to expect a change. Reinforcing this, a BYM respondent indicated that BYM staff may be waiting to change some services until they had the results of the pilot and the evaluation.

Despite this, by early 2018, as reported in the Taking Stock report, Vibrancy had started to influence the nature of service provision at BYM and Woodbrooke, including changes to Woodbrooke and Quaker Life training. There continues to be some relatively small but promising indications of the effect Vibrancy is beginning to have on support provision at BYM and Woodbrooke, particularly around the running of events.

Two of the development workers have undertaken some pieces of support with Friends focusing on conflict, and in both cases BYM staff have had at least some involvement. In the North West region the joint working resulted in the development of a new and successful three-pronged approach to working with a meeting. The development worker offered reassurance and pastoral support, while BYM and Woodbrooke carried out safeguarding and supported the role holders. They hope this new approach will be sustained, and BYM staff have now changed the way they work on conflict so that all the central meetings involve the Vibrancy worker.

Changes due to co-working with Vibrancy have been particularly significant for Woodbrooke in a number of ways:

- **Vibrancy workers helping to establish a shared need across a region, for example:**
 - The Claridge House event (see 5.1.2): 'The request wouldn't have come [in the first place] as the [area] meeting wouldn't have thought there were enough people to justify a request.'
 - The Maidstone event (see 5.1.2) to which a number of Quakers came from further afield. 'That's an example of a sort of event that wouldn't normally happen through the normal Woodbrooke channels.'
- **More flexible events bookings leading to reaching a wider audience:** Working with Vibrancy had made Woodbrooke think about different ways of delivering their services, for example:
 - With the Claridge House event, bringing in a wider group of people.
 - With the Maidstone event, bringing in people who were fairly new to Quakerism and who might not have accessed the event had it not been for the development worker's connections.
- **Changed pricing:** Following feedback from the Vibrancy team, Woodbrooke changed the pricing for Woodbrooke on-the-road from a per-person rate to a flat fee per meeting (with

variations depending on the size of meeting), which might have played a part in the rise in the number of events from 29 in 2017 to an anticipated 46 in 2018.

- **Changing programmes:**

- Woodbrooke developed an on-the-road workshop on funerals which had only previously been offered on-site. This and the event for role holders at Claridge House have been incorporated into the wider offer to meetings.
- The North West development officer worked with Woodbrooke to improve role holder training:

The planning that we did for that was quite influenced by what I've been hearing from Vibrancy workers and in particular what I'd heard from them about people who are not new role holders, been in post for a while but need a bit more support ... That's a place where we can point to a decision where information from Vibrancy workers made a difference. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

6.3.4 Changes to joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke

Joint working was already taking place between BYM and Woodbrooke and the data for this report does not indicate any effect from Vibrancy on the amount of this joint working; similarly, resources have been delivered on request to Vibrancy areas but this does not translate into any wider influence on the geography of where services are delivered. Outcomes relating to joint work between these central organisations and flexibility in the geography of service delivery may no longer be appropriate for the programme and may be revisited as part of a review of the theory of change (see Recommendation 5, first report and Appendix two: *A note about monitoring and evaluating the pilot*).

7 IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF VIBRANCY

This section explores what it is about Vibrancy that works: what is important to Friends who have received support from the programme. Survey data is reported by individual in this section.

Key findings

1. The most important aspects of Vibrancy to the people it supports are all interlinked: Friends value the long-term support of someone who is accessible and knows the local context, and the ability to build personal, trusting relationships with the same individual over time. These relationships are felt important for Vibrancy workers to really understand the needs of meetings.
2. Still significant, but of lesser importance, are having a worker who is paid and who is a skilled generalist. Topic specialisms are developing over time and are welcome, but they are not regarded as essential.
3. Overall, respondents found Vibrancy support very different from that received from BYM/Woodbrooke. Many of these differences are to be expected given the very different nature of the two types of support, but there may be some positive learning from Vibrancy around accessibility and approachability.
4. That respondents described using support from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke, and that the three all contribute significantly to outcomes, suggests strongly that the three sources of support are complementary; it may be that acting together, they are more than the sum of their parts.
5. That Vibrancy is centrally managed was felt to be crucial by Vibrancy staff.

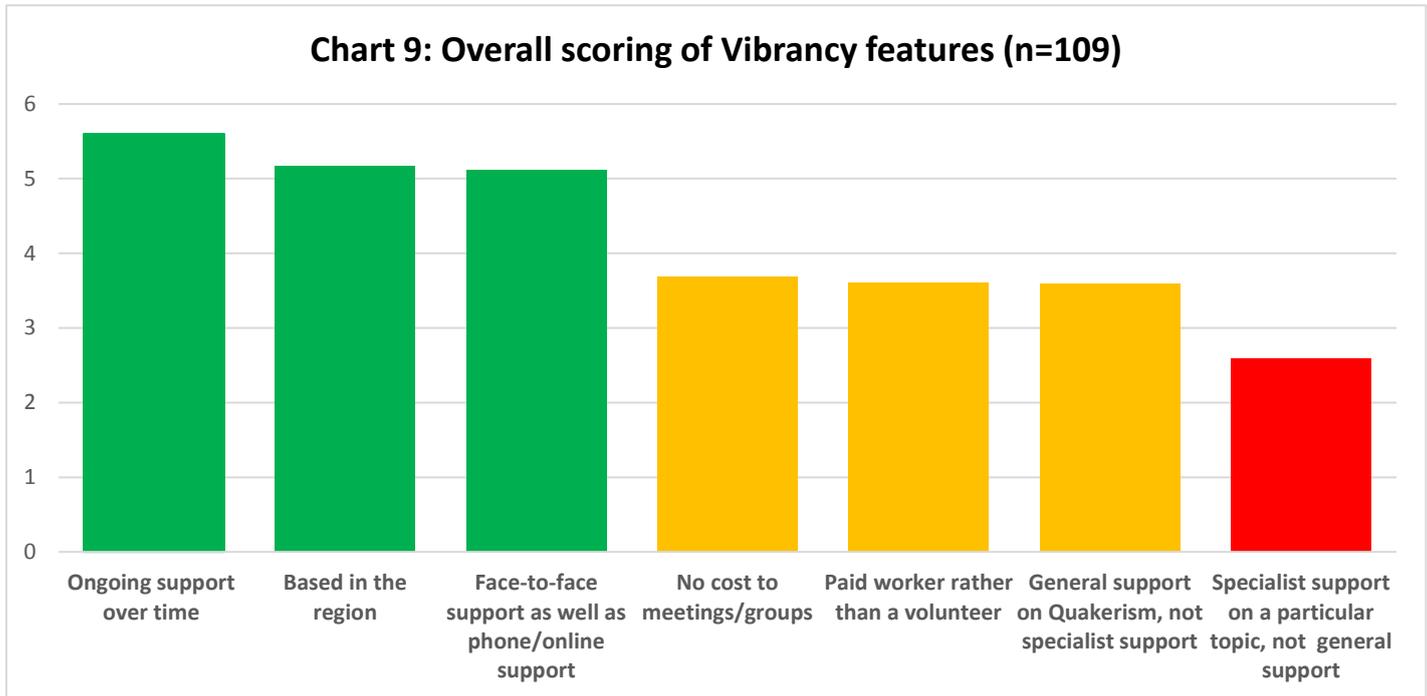
7.1 What people value overall

The *Taking Stock* report found that Friends felt that three aspects of the Vibrancy delivery model were important: the use of staff based in regions; the use of staff who are paid; and the use of staff who are Quakers. The data for this report provides further clarification of what Friends value in the Vibrancy model and what they think helps enable outcomes.

Survey respondents (n=106) were asked to tell us which of seven features of Vibrancy were most important to them. Chart 9 below shows that ongoing support received the highest overall score, based on all rankings given by respondents. Regionally-based support and face-to-face support were also ranked very highly.

1. Ongoing support over time, rather than one-off or short-term support was most important. Overwhelmingly the largest proportion of respondents, 33%, chose this as their top priority (29 of 87) followed by delivery by regional workers, which 24% placed as their top choice.
2. 83% (72 people) placed long term support in their top choices. Providing a worker based in the region in which they provide support was also a high priority, with 69% (61 of 88) people placing it among their top three priorities.
3. The third highest-ranked feature was the provision by Vibrancy of face-to-face support as

well as phone/online support; 70% of respondents (64 of 90) placed this among their top three.

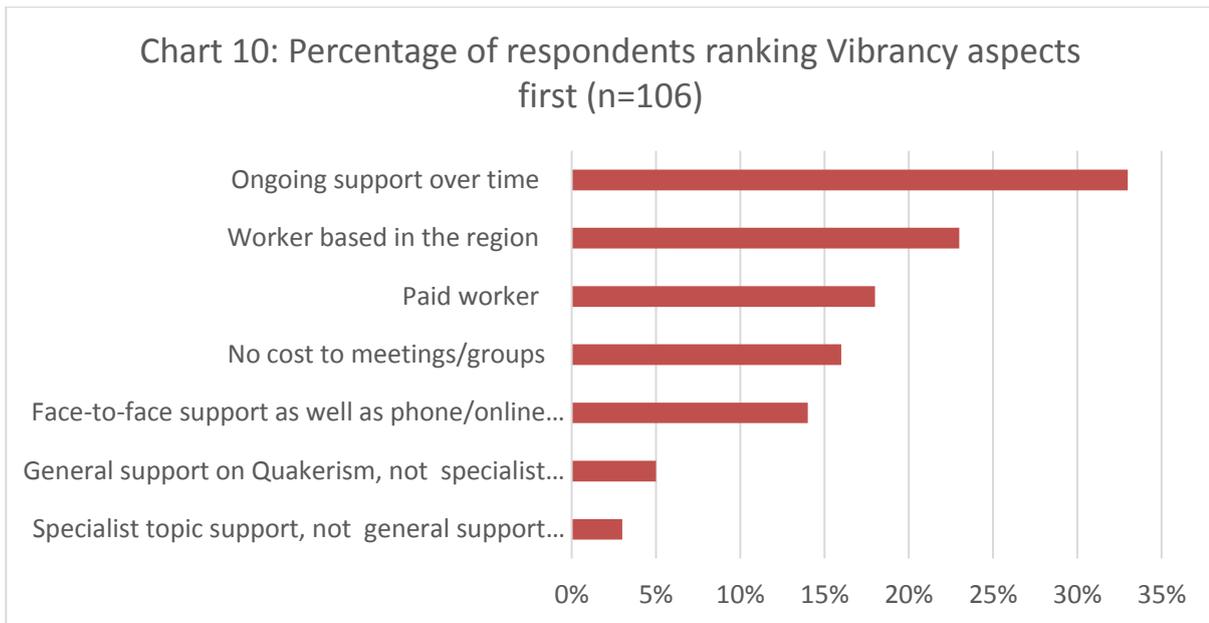


The three top priorities above stand out in importance from the other chosen options, which were:

4. The fourth ranked feature was support provided at no cost to meetings and groups. This was ranked as a top three feature by 33% (29 of 89 respondents)
5. A third (31%) ranked provision of the service by a paid worker rather than a volunteer in their top three (31 of 100).
6. Provision by a worker offering general support on different aspects of Quakerism, but not specialist support on particular topics (directing Friends to others for this) was chosen as a top three feature by 28% (26 of 94 respondents).
7. Provision by a worker offering specialist support on particular topics, but not offering general support on different aspects of Quakerism was ranked among their top three priorities by only 14% (14 of 100 respondents). Three-quarters (73%) of respondents placed it in their bottom three.

Note: This data was analysed based on average rankings. Not all respondents ranked all seven options, having an effect of skewing the proportions. Nevertheless, these figures show clearly the most highly appreciated features and those considered the least valuable, that is, the provision of specialist support on its own.

Chart 9 above is based on overall ranking choices, and in effect represents the ‘proportional representation’ results. Chart 10 below shows only those options chosen as first choice (these are the ‘first past the post’ results) and demonstrates clearly the differences between the options. It can be seen that a third of all respondents to the question (n=106) put ongoing support as the most important feature of Vibrancy; 24% chose regional support and 14% face-to-face support.



7.2 Long-term support over time

Most evaluation respondents considered long-term support by the same development worker to be vital, and essential for:

- building up trust, allowing meetings to feel able to share difficulties
- allowing the development worker to gain a deep knowledge of the meetings and their needs
- allowing Friends to feel able to contact the development worker for a range of issues at any time, already knowing background details.

The largest proportion of survey respondents chose the provision of ongoing support over time as being their top priority in terms of support features (29 people, 33%). Respondents variously described their development workers as: ‘on call’, ‘willing and able to respond to our needs when they arise’ and a ‘hands-on continuous presence’. The majority of interviewees also backed up this view:

Having someone to whom I can say, ‘This occurred, what do I do with this?’ or ‘How do I move it forward?’ or ‘We’ve got this far, what now?’ can help us to grow and develop within a project. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

Two Friends expressed concern about the timescale of the project. Both survey and interview respondents overwhelmingly thought that long-term support was needed. Friends explained that sometimes one-off support (‘a little nudge, suggestion or informal information’) could be helpful and sufficient for stronger meetings to make changes. However:

Meetings need more than that. It’s almost a travelling ministry role, helping to bind us as a community in a region and get to know each other.’ (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

I think maybe they can do some making changes with one-off support. But someone who has the knowledge of who’s coming up in different areas with time, resources, gifts to share and

who's monitoring what's happening at Woodbrooke and Friends House is really invaluable.'
(Friend interviewee, area meeting)

7.2.1 Building trust

Development workers also expressed the importance of long-term work to building trust. Friends 'want to know and understand you before they invite you to do sensitive things'. For one Friend the relationship with the Vibrancy worker was the distinctive element of Vibrancy support, feeling that they could 'know and trust' the workers, who were not just 'parachuting in'.

7.2.2 Needs

Long-term work was also important to understanding what were often complex needs. Many Friends described the support they had received as tailored or customised, based on knowledge of the context in which they were functioning. One interviewee said that the development worker's support was useful because, as a result of attending meetings, she was aware of issues and would suggest things herself, rather than having to be approached. She could also liaise with BYM staff and explain what was troubling the meeting.

BYM and Woodbrooke staff were also positive about the potential for Vibrancy to get to know meetings and uncover their needs. One Woodbrooke interviewee talked about understanding the underlying needs of struggling meetings:

Local meetings aren't always able to articulate their learning needs, especially if there's conflict in the meeting. Vibrancy workers are much better placed to do this. They're outsiders but know the area well, so they are able to say what the meeting needs and name that need explicitly.
(Woodbrooke interviewee)

Another development worker felt that more significant work to bring about change had started only in the previous six months, after an initial period of building trust. She explained how long-term involvement made a difference to the level of understanding and helped them to become proactive:

I now have a number of area meetings where I've visited all or almost all of the local meetings. Often the area meeting clerk may not have been able to do that recently, possibly they may not have been able to do it ever. There's a point where you hit a critical mass and it's like flicking a switch and turning on a UV light and lots of things start jumping out at you! (Vibrancy interviewee)

7.3 Personal relationships

In our survey, having a worker providing face-to-face as well as phone or online support was ranked third, based on average rankings by n=106 respondents³⁶ (63 of 90 people, or 70%).

³⁶ Note that not everyone ranked all seven features, so totals may differ.

This echoed the survey response to a question about how Vibrancy support was different from that provided by BYM and Woodbrooke. Answering the question, 82 of the 112 people responding said that support provided by Vibrancy was very or quite different to that provided by BYM and Woodbrooke. Of the 62 providing further explanation, almost half (30) said that providing a personal service was part of the difference. Explanations included:

Identification of a real person at local level who is knowledgeable and personally known to many Friends in the area. (Survey respondent)

The resources are out there for anyone to access already but with one individual bringing the human element, building up a relationship with the group & bringing a wider vision that is invaluable. (Survey respondent)

I think that the level of personal involvement and willingness to adapt to the requirements of the meeting asking for help is what has made the difference in the case of our Vibrancy worker. (Survey respondent)

7.3.1 Face-to-face support

Six interviewees, 10 survey respondents, and two development workers all specifically mentioned the importance of 'face-to-face' support; several BYM and Woodbrooke staff members also felt it was key.

We [in our team] can go so far in the conversations ... You can't always get nuances when you don't meet face-to-face. But in some situations Vibrancy workers can be present and make judgements during a conversation in a way we can't over the phone or by email – they might say to a meeting: 'This is wrong'. It can be much more difficult for us to act on judgements that we might reasonably make. (BYM interviewee)

A few Friends felt that, certainly after the initial relationship had been built, it was less about face-to-face contact and more about ongoing support, which could be by phone or email. One explained:

It's not the face-to-face support that is important in itself – it's the fact that the worker gets to know and understand the meeting, and the meeting her, by being physically among us at intervals (they can be long), in a sort of mentoring relationship. (Survey respondent)

7.3.2 Being known

For three survey respondents the relationship with their development worker was personal in the sense of being known, 'coming from the inside' and living with the outcomes of the work.

I felt she was really grounded in knowledge about the Society of Friends. She had a real depth, she was living her life properly as a Quaker, she wasn't just speaking it. What she gave me was a sense that there was something in me that was relevant and I could give something in myself when I was feeling doubtful about things. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

This was not an expert coming in to tell us how to do things better; this was a Friend, visiting to listen. (Survey respondent)

Even in the area where the development worker was new to the area and relatively unknown, Friends rated her personal involvement highly.

You feel she cares about the same sort of issues as we do and puts herself out there and takes part. You don't feel she's an officer outside looking at us. She is part of the area meeting. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Two development workers felt that they were themselves personally supported in their work by Friends.

Being a Quaker

The need for Vibrancy staff to be Quakers was raised in the *Taking Stock* evaluation; this question was not asked again and only a few Friends raised the issue in their responses. A small number of survey respondents mentioned that they had been particularly satisfied by the Vibrancy workers' knowledge of Quakerism or by the workers' display of Quaker values. For example, one felt that the worker's 'confidence and enthusiasm' as a Quaker had had a positive effect on their meeting, while another had been inspired by their worker to begin a qualification in Quaker studies. It was also clear that many Friends valued the depth knowledge of meetings and of local Quaker structures and resources; this would be hard for a non-Quaker to provide:

We treat her as a Friend and not an expert. She's one of us with a particular role. She shares the quest. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

7.4 Support provided locally

A Vibrancy worker based in the region in which they were providing support was a high priority for survey respondents, with almost 70% placing it among their top three priorities (n= 88).

All 18 Friends interviewed who had received Vibrancy support said that having more local support, based in the regions, was important, and this marked Vibrancy out as different. Someone working locally had practical advantages:

For us it's been essential that [our development worker's] been based regionally because she's come to meetings, she's been on the spot. We can say 'come to us for 9am and have a meeting with us'. We feel that she's part of our community. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Feeling that someone doesn't 'come from London' who we then need to worry about hosting and providing hospitality. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

Interviewees also noted that local workers also had an advantage in their understanding of the local context, including the environment, economy, transport, language and culture:

She knows the difficulties in our area and the strengths. People at Friends House don't know

that. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

In Cornwall we aren't a multicultural area and it's quite a conservative society. That might be difficult for someone working in London to deal with. With the advice on immigration for example, it isn't a visible issue for people in the South West. It's not that people don't care, but they're not aware of the extent of the issues. Having someone understand the local economic climate, fishing industry, level of unemployment and transport difficulties is important. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

7.4.1 Local knowledge

For a number of respondents, their development worker's local knowledge meant they were better able to link members up with each other, making connections between conversations in different places, and to provide particularly tailored solutions:

It has absolutely been helpful because she knows people in the area, so I can ask her, as I did, what the local resources are and who's got the skills in our area. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

She works by linking people. She spots your talents. She drew me into the Devon and Cornwall gathering committee to use my talents. There are quite a few individuals in area meeting who care about taking action on things and she's been thinking of ways to get people together to spark support for each other. This helps you to feel you're not alone in tackling an issue. (Friend interviewee, local, area and regional meetings)

All of the development workers themselves felt that being a regionally-based worker was important for the same reasons. BYM and Woodbrooke respondents could also see the logic of being based regionally:

To Friends in local meetings, Friends House and Woodbrooke can seem distant in terms of relationship as well as geography, whereas if you have someone who is plugged into those networks but also knows you and knows your meeting then I think that's an invaluable role. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

I think the fact that it's local, that's been kind of symbolic and a really important part of the project ... It has been an affirmation that it's Friends everywhere who are important and able to access the resources that Friends House and Woodbrooke have got. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

7.5 Paid staff, free service

Survey respondents found the provision of a free service considerably less important than the worker providing face-to-face, regional, ongoing support. Provision by a paid worker rather than a volunteer was also less important. However, in both interviews and survey, some Friends explained why they felt a paid worker was essential. Cited reasons included:

- A paid worker has access to support.

- Paying for the role gives it value and shows the commitment of BYM and Woodbrooke to local meetings.
- It would be unrealistic to ask a volunteer to give the level of support provided by Vibrancy and meetings would not feel they could ask for it from a volunteer.
- A volunteer might not be able to provide the consistent, long-term support.

I am aware of the time and energy that our Vibrancy Worker has put in to the project in terms of face-to-face meetings with Friends, planning and preparing for events, researching and travel. To expect someone to do that level of work voluntarily is not realistic. (Survey respondent)

Paying staff to work in the regions as well as 'centrally' at Friends House and Woodbrooke sends an important message to 'the Friend on the bench,' which is that we are all part of a whole, all the time, day-to-day and week-to-week and not only at times such as Yearly Meeting. (Survey respondent)

Although no specific question was asked, a small number mentioned that they would be happy to pay, in part or in full, for the Vibrancy service.

7.6 Generalists or specialists

The lowest ranked feature in the survey, based on average rankings (n=106) was the provision of support by a worker able to offer specialist support on particular topics, but not offering general support on different aspects of Quakerism. Only 14% (14 of 100) ranked this in their top three priorities, while 73% of respondents placed this in their bottom three.

In interviews, all Friends said they would prefer a generalist rather than specialist worker. Three felt that a generalist was best placed to identify needs. Many noted that a generalist was needed initially to identify needs that could then be referred to specialists at BYM or Woodbrooke; others noted that it might not be feasible for a development worker to keep up with large amount of specialist knowledge. One person argued that a specialist might try to fit the needs of the meeting into their own specialism.

You can't anticipate what aspect will be needed within a particular place. The value is that the generalist can direct to the specialist and can respond to a range of needs more effectively. I've nothing against members of Vibrancy team having a strength. Eg, a development worker having a strength in mediation. They could also be feeding in their knowledge to the Friends House structure. But that's a bonus, an addition. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

A generalist approach means that the needs of the local meeting will come before the interests of the Vibrancy worker. If your enthusiasm is for Myers Briggs then you'll want to put everyone through that. If you have an enthusiasm for a Bible study you might want to get a meeting to look at that. But it might not be what's really needed. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

7.7 Vibrancy and BYM and Woodbrooke

7.7.1 Making comparisons

In our survey to Friends, about three-quarters of respondents (73%, n=112) described Vibrancy as very or quite different to the support provided by BYM or Woodbrooke. A relatively small number (11%, 12 people) described Vibrancy as very or quite similar to BYM or Woodbrooke support; 16% (18 people) were unsure. These comparisons were made, not from a critical viewpoint, but rather to make a point of the separate value of Vibrancy, particularly in delivering a locally-based service and the different nature of the support.

Of the 35 survey respondents who described Vibrancy as very different to BYM and Woodbrooke, two survey respondents explained that they found BYM and Woodbrooke less accessible. This view was echoed in some interviews, for example citing the anonymity of telephone support.³⁷ One Friend explained in an interview that Vibrancy is: 'much more accessible and with a human face. It's more flexible. Also knowing the background to our meeting and what our difficulties and strengths are is helpful.'

In our survey to Friends who had received Vibrancy support, just over 10% described Vibrancy as very or quite similar to BYM and Woodbrooke. One respondent felt that 'an intermediary hardly seems necessary', and another that the support was 'similar in ethos despite the differences in form'. One interviewee noted that the support was so integrated it could not be separated out:

Sometimes they've been integrated. It's quite difficult to separate out the effects. Our Vibrancy worker is so accessible and present and she's made it clear all along that one of her key roles is signposting to BYM or Woodbrooke. (Friend interviewee, area and regional meeting)

One view was that having a better-known, named contact at BYM would reduce differences between Vibrancy and central support services.

7.7.2 Complementary support

That respondents described using support from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke, and that the three all contribute significantly to outcomes suggests strongly that the three sources of support are complementary; it may be that acting together, they are more than the sum of their parts.

Four interview respondents described how the support from Vibrancy, BYM and Woodbrooke were both helpful. One respondent found Vibrancy support more immediately helpful, but acknowledged that the 'the back-up of the courses and training available at Woodbrooke is excellent and couldn't be done at a local level,' and that:

Part of the joy and usefulness of getting together on those courses is learning from the experience of others and how others doing it and then feeling that you're not alone. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

³⁷ Those reporting this view in interviews may be among those survey respondents raising the issue rather than additional instances.

Some respondents also explained how both central and local services might complement each other:

I see Woodbrooke's support as more generally role related (and excellent for that) whereas Vibrancy is about connections within a usually more accessible area, and is much more meeting specific. (Survey respondent)

There are people who function at Friends House who are weighty Friends whose presence in any context would also be welcome. They're the people who do the underlying thinking. They can function alongside Vibrancy. Vibrancy is about keeping the wheels going round. (Friend interviewee, local meeting)

Follow up

One Vibrancy worker noted the importance of being able to follow up with Friends following support provided centrally, as BYM or Woodbrooke would not be able to provide this. Vibrancy workers were able to build on trusted relationships to provide this periodic checking in and long-term support. It was emphasised in interviews that this was important for achieving outcomes.

She's been proactive enough to contact us to see how things are going. Her interest is a big part of the support we've had. (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

Indeed, in one case, a Friend reported having had a workshop with a Vibrancy worker, which was described as excellent. However, the lack of follow-up meant impact had not been as long-lasting as they'd hoped.

Acting as a conduit

We have seen in 6.2.2 above how Vibrancy goes beyond simple signposting, and is often facilitating access to BYM and Woodbrooke support. A number of respondents (Friends in survey and interview; BYM staff) described how Vibrancy sometimes acted as a bridge to BYM and Woodbrooke:

I do think that this Vibrancy project is a brilliant bridge – it translates what's happening at a distance to you as a locality and that's brilliant. It brings those places closer to us.' (Friend interviewee, area meeting)

She is a vital bridge between Friends nationally and the local meeting, making the material we are sent come alive and have relevance. (Survey respondent)

What for me has been most relevant about the Vibrancy worker is that she has embodied, and localised, the energy and social/spiritual awareness of the main thrust of BYM's work, so I feel there is someone, not from our meeting but available to our meeting, locally who will support and endorse the direction of travel. (Survey respondent)

Making things easier

Some BYM and Woodbrooke staff felt that Vibrancy would make their work easier or more effective:

A lot of what Vibrancy workers do is listening to what people want and then working out should this go to Quaker Life, Woodbrooke, a request for a ... speaker or something else. From some areas we get quite a lot of requests for the 'wrong thing' – that should have gone to Quaker Life – and vice versa. A Vibrancy worker can sort that out and point people in the right direction in a really useful way. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

[The development worker] was good at identifying enough people with this very niche need to identify [the need for] a course. That's the value of having someone on the ground. (Woodbrooke interviewee)

Given their own lack of capacity and more limited on-the-ground connections, it was seen that Vibrancy could help test out the value of their services, to 'learn how Quakers experience what we do – like our action alerts and resources, workshops etc that we offer.' In one example of this, a development worker helped QPSW staff to scope the appetite for climate and anti-fracking work in one of the regions.

7.7.3 Centrally or locally managed?

All four development workers felt that it was 'essential' that they be part of a centrally-managed, national programme. One felt that it 'would have been a disaster' if this had not been the case.

They felt central management:

- Ensured good management and quality control and gave Friends confidence in Vibrancy.
- Ensured Vibrancy workers' independence.
- Ensured the team was accountable to a national staff without a specific local agenda.
- Meant that development workers could challenge constructively where needed; it might be harder to challenge the activities of an area meetings if the latter were directly managing the worker.
- Linked Vibrancy into national structures and processes, enabling them to better meet the needs of meetings and to connect them with the centre.
- Raised the profile of Vibrancy and of the evaluation of their work.

Case example 2: The importance of an ongoing, personal service

The Vibrancy worker for Kent, Surrey and Sussex began visiting Maidstone local meeting in 2016. At one of these visits the meeting invited her to facilitate some exercises for the meeting to reflect on their individual and collective ministry, which the clerk feels helped bring people together. An unexpected value in the external view that the Vibrancy worker can bring is that it enabled those within the meeting to recognise and celebrate what is already happening:

I think it was a great help at the time. People really appreciated what she did ... She has made us feel that we're already doing a lot when we might feel we're not.

After this initial time of getting to know each other, the clerk sought some specific support from the Vibrancy worker to help her to draft a sustainability policy for the area meeting. This policy is being taken up by the local meetings, all of whom are trying to become carbon neutral, and links in with sustainability research from Friends House.

In the summer of 2018 the clerk worked with a group of Friends from across the area meeting who wanted to run a peace stall at a War and Peace Fair in Kent. The Vibrancy worker encouraged them to go, connected them to people who could discuss and send the materials and helped on the stall on the day.

She pointed me in the right direction when I was floundering. She was hands-on with helping with the peace stall and put me in touch with the right people who could help.

It is not known yet if the peace stall generated direct change in the attitudes of those at the event. However, the opportunity gave Friends more confidence to come together and express Quaker values and beliefs externally in a new way. It was a chance for Friends to feel more supported in the ways of their service:

We didn't have a huge amount of interest [in the stall] which was expected ... but we made some good contacts, thought it was worthwhile and most people would like to do it again next year. It was the first time ever we've done it ... six Friends helped on the days but each one has gone back and talked to their meeting about it and if we did it next year there would be more support and more energy put into it.

For Maidstone local meeting, the Vibrancy worker has acted as a personal contact between them and Friends House or Woodbrooke when they want to access information and resources. For example, at her instigation, they hosted a Woodbrooke-on-the-road event for their attendees. The clerk knows that the support is there from Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke and has accessed it in the past. However, she finds the Vibrancy worker's knowledge of their situation and the approach that she takes means that they can have support that is personalised for their own meeting:

The fact [the Vibrancy worker] knows us is important. Speaking to someone you know is easier and quicker than trying to explain the whole thing to someone new ... She seeks to find ways forward that suit us. She doesn't try to impose anything. She asks what we need and works from there.

8 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Summary

Vibrancy is a successful programme, well received by the Friends it has supported, and bringing about significant outcomes for the meetings with which it has worked.

At the start of the Vibrancy programme, a theory of change for its work was developed collaboratively by NCVO CES, BYM and Woodbrooke.³⁸ This theory of change outlines the activities Vibrancy will undertake and the outcomes this may bring about as a result, for meetings and for BYM and Woodbrooke (see appendix 1). Note that as a pilot programme, Vibrancy was intended to be open and responsive to meetings' needs, rather than seeking only achievement of these outcomes.

The activities undertaken by Vibrancy have evolved since the start of the programme. In particular, more in-depth support has been delivered; more connecting up of meetings is also taking place.

The theory of change describes outcomes for meetings in six areas, drawn from Our faith in the future; community, Quaker discipline, active values, collaboration, visibility, and meetings for worship. This evaluation has found evidence that Vibrancy has contributed to outcomes for local and area meetings in all six of these areas. Outcomes for meetings are also brought about by the support of BYM and Woodbrooke; many Friends are accessing multiple forms of support. There is very little evidence of Vibrancy having an effect yet on membership and attendance levels; it is likely to be too early for this to be seen.

Evidence for the outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke is more mixed. There is good evidence from respondents of two outcomes: More understanding among Quakers about the services and structures of BYM and Woodbrooke; Better use of the services of BYM and Woodbrooke. However, some of these reported changes are not well supported by central monitoring data; this may be due to timescale or the nature of central data.

While we do not have evidence that BYM and Woodbrooke are offering more innovative and diverse services as a result of Vibrancy, we do have good evidence that Vibrancy is beginning to positively affect service provision at both organisations.

There is some evidence that meetings can better articulate their collective needs and vision to BYM and Woodbrooke and they can share more best practice and good news stories with BYM and Woodbrooke. To date this articulation of needs is happening primarily via Vibrancy workers. However, meetings are beginning to share and a best practice and good news stories directly with each other through the connecting activities undertaken by the development workers.

There is a very small amount of evidence of more active engagement of Friends in wider Quaker society (eg, taking national roles), although it would be early for such changes to take place. There is no evidence as yet of the following outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke: More and better joint

³⁸ The full theory of change map and narrative is available here: www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/about/vibrancy-in-meetings/ A list of outcomes is in appendix one.

working between BYM and Woodbrooke, including a reduction in duplication; More flexibility on the geography of delivery of BYM and Woodbrooke.

Possible reasons for non-achievement of a small number of outcomes include: the outcomes were wrongly chosen from the start; the changing nature of Vibrancy means that some outcomes are no longer relevant; there hasn't been sufficient time for outcomes to be achieved.

It would be unusual for any pilot programme like Vibrancy to achieve all the outcomes within its initial theory of change. Non-achievement of a few outcomes should not detract from the considerable achievements of this programme to date.

8.2 Recommendations for the pilot

1. Consider ways to engage with Friends about what Vibrancy might look like beyond the pilot, and/or exit planning, as appropriate.
2. Agree on what good integration of the Vibrancy team into BYM and Woodbrooke structures might look like, and what levels of joint working between Vibrancy and other BYM/Woodbrooke teams are desirable.
3. Nurture, support and promote the good joint working that has recently started between Vibrancy and BYM/Woodbrooke teams. Find ways to ensure the Vibrancy team are, and feel, valued by and integral to the two organisations.
4. Find ways to reduce development worker workload.
5. Improve use of the development worker spreadsheet:
 - Review use across the team, to try and ensure as much consistency in recording approach as possible, particularly in terms of number and length of contacts
 - Review and amend the 'presenting need' and 'type of support' categories, to try to reduce the number of work types being recorded as 'other'.
6. Consider ways to improve BYM and Woodbrooke monitoring to better track the longer-term outcomes of Vibrancy. This could include finding different ways to measure Vibrancy success, rather than, for example, uptake of BYM or Woodbrooke resources.
7. Consider a brief review of the theory of change, in particular the outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke. For a few of these, there is no evidence that they have occurred (for example that Vibrancy will increase joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke), and it may be that they are no longer relevant.

8.3 Recommendations for beyond the pilot

1. For staffing any future programme, BYM and Woodbrooke should consider:
 - The skills required for development workers and the definition of, and interplay between, specialist and generalist skills.
 - The ideal team size. The current Vibrancy team size appears to work well, given the nature of remote working. How would a larger team affect this?
 - Whether locally-based, skilled volunteers might appropriately complement the work of paid development staff.
2. The following aspects of a future programme's delivery would merit consideration:

- Whether workers' geographical boundaries could be flexible according to Friends' needs and workers' capacity.
 - Whether an alternative approach to day-to-day monitoring might be appropriate. The Vibrancy workers have sometimes struggled with the monitoring spreadsheet developed with NCVO CES.
3. The intended outputs and outcomes of any new programme should be considered carefully.
- The current theory of change would be a good starting point but needs a deep review. As Vibrancy has changed and evolved, the underlying theory may need to follow suit.
 - The Vibrancy pilot has shown there is considerable need around the basics of Quakerism, meetings and processes. A new programme should address this focus.
 - It might be helpful to consider the anticipated timescales of anticipated outcomes; the view of a number of respondents in this evaluation was that some of the outcomes were long term, some beyond the lifetime of the pilot.
4. Any new programme should have an extensive internal planning and communications phase prior to the work starting.

APPENDIX ONE: Vibrancy theory of change

It is not possible to reproduce the visual map in this document; this appendix lists the outcomes and outcome areas in the map. The full map, plus accompanying narrative, is available on request.

Outcomes for local meetings

Meeting for worship

1. People take responsibility for wider and deeper personal, spiritual nurture.
2. Deeper quality of ministry.
3. People feel more enriched from Meeting for Worship.

Community

1. Increased confidence within local meetings to break established patterns to become more accessible, such as in welcoming newcomers.
2. A greater range of ways to meet and engage with the Quaker community.
3. Meetings that are more inclusive learning communities, with a thirst for learning that includes everyone.
4. More fellowship (sense of belonging together) and fun.
5. More involvement of children, young people and young adults in meetings.
6. Meetings are more diverse in terms of gender & ethnicity
7. Increased engagement of people in meetings (more members, attenders and regular attendance).

Quaker discipline

1. More and better support is provided for people in or considering roles (support from a local or national level).
2. More people know where to go for support around roles, enjoy them and feel supported in their roles throughout the role journey.
3. More people and a more diverse range of people take roles or accept nominations (local, national, international).
4. Friends' gifts are better acknowledged and used.
5. Meetings are more resilient (including able to handle conflict better).
6. Better use of Quaker structures, traditions and processes.

Active values

1. More confidence within meeting to raise social issues and to act on them.
2. Friends are better equipped with skills and tools for action.
3. More action to be taken on social issues as a meeting.

Collaboration

1. More confidence within meetings to approach others about working together.
2. More openness within meetings to collaboration approaches from others.
3. More shared projects with other meetings and other organisations.

Visibility

1. More confidence in meetings to express Quaker values and beliefs externally.
2. More outreach activities.
3. Local meetings have a broader visibility as a presence in the community.

Outcomes for BYM and Woodbrooke

1. More and better joint working between BYM and Woodbrooke, including a reduction in duplication.
2. BYM and Woodbrooke offer more innovative and diverse services.
3. More flexibility on the geography of delivery of BYM and Woodbrooke.
4. More understanding among Quakers about the services and structures of BYM and Woodbrooke.
5. Better use of the services of BYM and Woodbrooke (for the benefit of the individuals and the meeting(s)).
6. Meetings can better articulate their collective needs and vision to BYM and Woodbrooke.
7. More active engagement of Friends in wider Quaker society (eg, taking national roles).
8. Meetings can share more best practice and good news stories (with each other and with BYM and Woodbrooke).

APPENDIX TWO: Vibrancy monitoring and evaluation

We have collected some good data for the evaluation, particularly through interviews. Development workers have found some of the data they collect helpful, and we have some anecdotal feedback that at least some interviewees found the process of being interviewed helpful.

Tools

As might be expected with a complex, long-term project, some of the tools might be modified in the future.

- The monitoring spreadsheet used by development workers to capture their work has not always suited the team and has not always been well used. Sometimes this has been due to development workers not fully understanding the use of the spreadsheet, which may indicate that we need to look at its design. However, it was also in part due to both the evolving nature of the role (which was therefore hard to track). The 'other' code for work type is now being used 20% of the time, which means the categories need some attention.
- If the monitoring spreadsheet is to be used after the pilot, it will need reviewing and updating for relevance to the work as it is now.
- The survey to Friends produced some strong data. However, a significant minority struggled to complete the survey, finding it variously hard to use; sensitive; too long; not relevant.
- It will be helpful to review the systems for collecting data centrally; this is important for future evaluation. This is discussed further below.

The evaluation needs to collect as much data as possible, often quantitatively, from a wide range of people, within budget. Data needs to be strong to form the basis for decisions on the future of the programme. This can be in tension with some aspects of Vibrancy and Quaker meetings that do not lend themselves easily to ongoing monitoring, but rather to more qualitative approaches. The use of the survey collected very useful data, but some Friends found it hard to complete.

Overall BYM and Woodbrooke data

For some numerical data (for example on attendance at meetings and use of resources, both in Vibrancy regions and elsewhere) the evaluation has relied on central data collection and systems. This data has not always been complete or consistent. It would be helpful if these data collection and management systems could be reviewed to provide a data source that is as complete as possible. The following issues hampered our use of centrally-held data:

- Some data, for example on membership, appeared inconsistent; this suggests an inconsistent use of databases.
- Data on total numbers of local meetings and area meetings are not consistent in different parts of the database and therefore is inaccurate in parts. Data needs cleaning for consistency.
- Data is recorded inconsistently: for example, sometimes area meetings and local meetings are inputted in the same column.
- A more streamlined system is needed. Currently there are a vast number of spreadsheets which need to be consulted in order to get some overview data; this means that data has to

be aggregated manually across these sources. This was a huge task, even for the Vibrancy areas alone.

- The evaluation was unable to use data on the extent to which roles are filled within meetings as we had access to a partial dataset only. BYM might consider how to monitor and record this data in a way that will facilitate access to it and easy analysis.

Theory of change

We have noted some outcomes mapped in the Vibrancy theory of change that no longer appear appropriate for the pilot. It does not seem necessary to review and revise the theory of change at this stage of the pilot, but this will be necessary for beyond the pilot.

Having a two-stage approach to evaluation

Creating a theory of change and associated evaluation tools so early in the pilot meant we were trying to track elements of a programme that had not yet been developed. One unwanted result of this was the collection of unnecessary data from the outset. In future, with such developmental programmes, BYM and Woodbrooke might consider a more exploratory style of evaluation for the first year, formalising systems and theory of change at the end of that period.

APPENDIX THREE: Findings from central monitoring data on Friends' use of BYM and Woodbrooke

Woodbrooke on-the-road courses

As had been expected, over the three years there has been an increase in total bookings for Woodbrooke on-the-road courses in Vibrancy areas, despite a drop in 2017.³⁹ Although numbers are small, this appears to show a disproportionate increase in relation to all other areas, which had also seen an increase.

Table 3: Woodbrooke on-the-road bookings

	2016	2017	To Aug 2018	2018 full year (extrapolated)
Vibrancy area	9	4	9	14
Non-Vibrancy area	24	24	20	30

Meetings visited by BYM staff

It was expected that Vibrancy would be able to link up area and local meeting with BYM speakers. However, BYM monitoring data to August 2018 instead shows an overall decrease in the percentage of area and local meetings visited by BYM staff in Vibrancy as well as non-Vibrancy areas.

Table 4: Percentage of area meeting and local meetings visited by BYM

	2016		2017		To Aug 2018		Total meetings	
	AM	LM	AM	LM	AM	LM	AM	LM
Vibrancy area	61%	11%	50%	8%	22%	2%	18	131
Non-Vibrancy area	42%	12%	46%	9%	6%	2%	52	346

Use of BYM CYP resources

There is no discernible pattern of change in use of resources about children and young people since the Vibrancy pilot started, although it had been expected that Vibrancy areas would request them more.

³⁹ The 2017 drop in bookings may have been because of other events, such as the triennial residential Yearly Meeting Gathering and a 'Reading Quaker faith & practice' programme.

Table 5: Percentage of area meetings and local meetings asking for CYP resources

	2016		2017		To Aug 2018		Total meetings	
	AM	LM	AM	LM	AM	LM	AM	LM
Vibrancy area	0%	49%	6%	26%	6%	42%	18	137
Non-Vibrancy area	4%	37%	15%	34%	27%	38%	52	333

Woodbrooke Being Friends Together resource

Data on the use of Woodbrooke's Being Friends Together resource is problematic partly because of the small numbers involved, but also because of the lack of baseline data; this makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the slightly lower use of this resource in Vibrancy regions than in other regions.⁴⁰

- In Vibrancy regions, since Vibrancy started, 6% (1 of 18) of area meetings and 24% (33 of 140) of local meetings had accessed Being Friends Together resources.
- In non-Vibrancy regions, since Vibrancy started, 13% (7 of 52) of area meetings and 26% (89 of 346) of local meetings had accessed Being Friends Together resources.

⁴⁰ Please note that it was also not possible to identify the Vibrancy status of 25 entries, which are therefore not included in the analysis

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