

Letter to the Commissioner about Quaker Meeting House

Key information

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Dear Commissioner,

27 March Youth Demand arrests at the Westminster Quaker Meeting House

I am writing to you about concerns raised with me by constituents following the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) raid of the Youth Demand Welcome Talk at the Westminster Quaker Meeting House on the evening of 27 March.

It has taken time to get this letter to you as I attended the Quaker Worship outside New Scotland Yard where I spoke directly with Quakers and I also wanted to meet with Youth Demand to hear their experience before writing to you, which I have now done.

I agree with the Quakers in Britain that: “The police raid on Westminster Quaker meeting house last Thursday [27 March] was a massively disproportionate response to the legitimate concerns of UK citizens.”[1]

Youth Demand have commented that the police did not ring the bell but instead “crashed”² into the welcome talk taking place at the Westminster Quaker House. Welcome talks are public meetings, open to all. Youth Demand commented to me that they would have been happy for the police officers to have joined the meeting to hear the discussion.

One Quaker I spoke with said: “We respect your [police] institution, why don’t you respect ours?”.

Youth Demand arrestees were taken to two police stations and were not allowed to phone anyone. The arrestees were interviewed around midnight, then one reported being woken up again at 1am to check their address. Their houses were then raided in the early hours of the morning – in some cases young student housemates were woken up by the police coming into their homes.

The bail conditions differed depending on the police station the young people were sent to. The inconsistency of these and other protest related bail conditions increases mistrust of the police as conditions can vary depending on the officer.

I have heard a lot of anger about the way this police raid was conducted and the way it undermines people’s right to protest by creating a chilling effect. This raid also undermined the faith and trust that protesters and Londoners more generally place in the MPS.

My questions about the operation on the day:

1. Who signed off on the police raid?
2. Why was the raid considered an appropriate and proportionate response to the situation?
3. What law was being used to conduct these raids?
4. What was the aim of the operation?

My question about the treatment of young people:

5. Why weren’t arrestees given their phone call as is their right under the PACE Code C 2023 guidance?

My questions about powers and scrutiny:

6. What scrutiny is MOPAC undertaking regarding the Met’s use of the new powers related to public order – and specifically the conspiracy to cause a public nuisance?
7. How does this action fit with the police’s duty to refrain from preventing, hindering or applying unreasonable indirect restrictions upon the right to peaceful assembly and take reasonable measures to protect peaceful public processions and assemblies?

As I said in my letter on 29 January, regarding the 18 January 2025 Palestine Solidarity Campaign protest, the actions of the Metropolitan Police are a clear attempt to intimidate and suppress lawful protest.

I urge you and MOPAC to investigate these incidents thoroughly.

Yours sincerely,

Zoë Garbett
Green Party Member of the London Assembly

[1] [Quakers call for rights to be restored after police raid on Westminster Meeting House | Quakers in Britain](#)

[2] [NINE ARRESTED IN UNPRECEDENTED CRACKDOWN ON YOUTH DEMAND - Youth Demand](#)

[3] [Layout 1](#)

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