

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Cheadle Hulme Quaker Meeting
91 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, SK8 7BG

Low Pay Commission,
6th Floor,
Victoria House,
Southampton Row,
London,
WC1 4AD

Email: emingram@talktalk.net
Tel: 0161 439 6088

8th August, 2012.

Dear Sir or Madam:

Consultation on National Minimum Wage: Accommodation Offset

We understand that the Low Pay Commission is carrying out a public consultation into the National Minimum Wage, and would like to submit our views on the accommodation offset as it has affected the Quaker Meeting in Cheadle Hulme, which is a charitable body.

Study of the web pages of the LPC indicates that the National Minimum Wage Act was concerned that employees should receive at least the statutory wage and that this should not be reduced by excessive amounts charged for accommodation or other deductions.

Details of our Meeting's employees and accommodation offset are attached. When the Act came into force we were very exercised as to which category applied to our Meeting. There was confusion locally and nationally, and in our case a member actually resigned.

We received advice from the Department of Trade and Industry and the Inland Revenue, some of it itself not clear, and consulted our national Quaker body. We were told that the situation would only be finally decided by having recourse to a court action, a procedure no one wanted to embark upon.

At Cheadle Hulme it was eventually decided that our wardens were "voluntary workers" not "volunteers" and so fell outside the compass of the Act. But the definitions of "worker", "volunteer" and "voluntary worker" urgently need to be better defined, as do the sections relating to subsistence, benefits and accommodation offset.

We trust that these points are helpful.

Yours faithfully,

Wendy Robinson
Evelyn M. Ingram,
Wendy K. Robinson,
Joint convenors, Premises Committee.

Evelyn M. Ingram

Consultation on National Minimum Wage and Accommodation Offset

Employer: East Cheshire Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

Employment: Joint Wardens of Cheadle Hulme Quaker Meeting.

Status of Employment: Voluntary Workers with Contract of Employment
In post since 1983.

Place of Work: Quaker Meeting House, 91 Station Road, Cheadle Hulme, SK8
7BG

Description of Work: As per Contract of Employment. (Security of the building. Presentation of the building, cleaning, gardening, maintenance of supplies, recycling, etc. Arranging lettings and dealing with hirers' problems and queries, receiving and accounting for cash payments, dealing with workmen, etc.)

Hours of Work: Variable.

Accommodation: Sole use of flat above the Meeting House; four rooms with kitchen and bathroom. (Professional valuation for rent part furnished on the open market 23rd July 2008, £500.00 per calendar month). Shared use of attic and cellar.

Rent paid: Nil.

Bills: The wardens pay all their own bills, (gas, electricity, etc.).
The Meeting pays rental for the telephone, which is situated in the flat so that hirers of rooms can contact the wardens; the wardens pay for all calls.

Evelyn Ingram and Wendy Robinson, co-convenors of the Premises Committee of Cheadle Hulme Quaker Meeting.

8 August 2012