



## SUPPORT FOR COs

COs supported each other, with networks passing on messages for those imprisoned or in military hands. There were also dedicated women and men, not liable for the military because of gender or age, working to support COs. [Women played key roles](#) in terms of logistics, campaigning and tracking activities, for example, and were also local and national leaders in terms of anti-war and peace activism.

Amongst organised support for COs was the No-Conscription Fellowship (NCF). This national organisation was set up in 1914 to resist the introduction of military compulsion. When conscription was introduced in 1916 it worked to support COs, with branches around the country and a headquarters in London. The NCF published a newspaper, *The Tribunal*, as well as advice for COs and information to tell the public about conscription and about COs – and it did so throughout the war despite official attempts to stop its activities.

The Independent Labour Party & British Socialist Party rejected conscription and sided with objectors. At grassroots level, there was support amongst the trade unions, although leadership sometimes took a different view.

The Society of Friends ([Quakers](#)) supported objectors, with some COs choosing a non-combatant role in the [Friends Ambulance Unit](#). And there were other religious groups and organisations which supported objectors.

In Bristol there was the Joint Advisory Committee for Conscientious Objectors which brought together the different CO supporters, providing help to COs as well as their families. For example, there are stories of food packages being delivered and the children of COs being taken on holiday. Mabel Tothill was a key local figure who worked for COs and for peace, she was secretary of the Committee. She watched and reported on the movements and treatment of local COs and assisted in the production and distribution of leaflets like [What Every Bristol Man Should Know](#).

See also the pdfs on this website relating to the NCF, *The Women Who Ran CO Support Activities in Bristol*, *Annie Chappell*, *Annie Townley* and *Elizabeth Hutchinson* and *Mabel Tothill*.