Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee Annual Report for 2014-2015

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	For information
Draft Resolutions	104/1. The Council receives the report.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	The annual report of the EDI Committee to the Methodist Council.
Main Points	The report covers the following areas: • EDI Theological Underpinning • Guidance on Homophobia • EDI Toolkit • EDI Monitoring Report
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	The Council report 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and Architecture' (April 2014 MC/14/51) Report to the 2014 Conference, *Working Party on Marriage and Civil Partnerships*. (Conference Agenda item 40) *A lamp to my feet a light to my path – The nature of authority and the place of the Bible in the Methodist Church*. 1998 Report to the 2014 Conference, *Statistics for Mission*. (Conference Agenda item 37)
Consultations	EDI Committee, Faith and Order scrutiny, District pilot areas, DMLN.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee Annual Report for 2014-2015

1.0 Introduction and Scope

This is the first annual report from the EDI Committee to the Methodist Council for the 2014-2015 connexional year. The report will update the Council on the EDI Committee's key activities.

2.0 EDI Theological Underpinning

2.1 A draft of the EDI Theological Underpinning is being discussed. It will be finalised and agreed by the EDI Committee and the Faith and Order Committee.

3.0 Guidance on Homophobia

3.1 The 2014 Conference report on Marriage and Civil Partnerships (resolution 40/3) directed the EDI Committee, in consultation with the Conference-appointed Marriage and Relationships (M and R) Task Group to work as a matter of priority on the production and dissemination of clear guidance on what is or is not to be regarded as homophobia and, if thought appropriate, on a formal statement for the Conference to adopt on this matter.

3.2 The EDI Committee established a working group comprising members of the Committee and the M and R Task group, together with co-opted members who have experience relevant to the production of the guidance.

3.3 Given the different views on Biblical Authority as set out in the study guide *A lamp to my feet a light to my path – The nature of authority and the place of the Bible in the Methodist Church*, the guidance on homophobia draws a distinction between 'beliefs and values' and 'attitudes, language and behaviours', focusing on the latter. It defines homophobia as:

'Any statement, policy or action which denies the image of God in another person due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation; which is, treating someone in a discriminatory manner because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.'

The guidance recognises that the context of a situation is important, therefore, good judgement will be needed when considering what is and is not homophobia.

4.0 EDI Toolkit

4.1 The EDI Toolkit is a learning and development tool for the Church, the Toolkit draws extensively from existing Methodist Church resources including Conference reports, study guides and published resources. It sets EDI in the context of the theology and practice of the Methodist Church.

4.2 The Toolkit is organised in modules, each of which includes: introductory information and activities; case studies; and resources that extend learning. The principal modules of the toolkit are; an introduction to EDI, social class/poverty, age, disability and impairment, gender, race and sexual orientation. Enrichment resources that have been added are Equality Law and

'Welcoming Same Sex Couples' (a resource that has arisen from a resolution of the 2014 Conference).

5.0   EDI Monitoring Report

5.1   As part of the EDI Committee action plan, the EDI Adviser has worked across the Connexional Team to collate EDI monitoring data. The report is divided into the following sections; Lay People, Methodist Conference, Presbyters, Deacons and the candidating process and the Connexional Team's lay employees. The purpose of this report is to support the calling of the Methodist Church to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. The Church exists to make more followers of Jesus Christ, the Committee believes that in order to do this we need to know who we are and identify our missing groups. Further discussion will take place with the EDI Committee as to next steps.

6.0   The EDI Stakeholder Fora

6.1   The 2010 Conference report *Towards an Inclusive Church* made provision for the development of EDI architecture and a phased approach was agreed. In phase one the EDI Resource Group was set up, its initial task was to establish EDI Stakeholder Fora for the following streams: age, disability and impairment, gender, race, sexual orientation and wealth and access. The purpose of the fora was to provide an environment where groups and individuals could articulate goals and issues of concerns, support the development of the EDI theological underpinning and toolkit and help shape the phase two permanent structure. In 2014 Methodist Conference affirmed the establishment of the EDI Committee as the permanent EDI architecture.

6.2   As part of the June 2015 EDI Committee meeting, fora members were invited to attend and have their closing meetings to discuss achievements, challenges and key issues (see appendix 1). There was also a thanksgiving service to thank formally and close the EDI Stakeholder Fora. The EDI Committee would like to take the opportunity in this report again formally to thank the members of the EDI Stakeholder Fora who have generously supported this work and have ensured that it has grown and thrived.

***RESOLUTION

104/1. The Council receives the report.

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Past and Recent Members of the EDI Stakeholder Fora

Disability and Impairment E and D Stakeholder Forum
Ms Irene McKay – Chair
Ms Gail Bourne
The Revd Karen Bell
The Revd Sue Male
Ms Noreen Metcalf
The Revd Una McLean
The Revd Stephen Radford
Mr Mark Westhead

Gender E and D Stakeholder Forum
The Revd Anne Ellis - Chair
Ms Claire Bell – Past Chair
Ms Janet Arthur
The Revd Peter Baffoe
The Revd David Butterworth
Ms Blossom Jackson
Mr Alister McClure
The Revd Jennifer Smith
The Revd Dr Elizabeth Smith

Race E and D Stakeholder Forum
The Revd Olufemi Cole-Njie – Chair
Marc Verlot – Past Chair
The Revd Peter Brown
The Revd Rachel Deigh
Ms Nwabueze Nwokolo
Ms Pam Reid
The Revd Dr Joseph Suray
The Revd Freddy Takavarasha
Ms Carol Troupe

Sexual Orientation E and D Stakeholder Forum
The Revd Barbara Routley – Chair
The Revd Francesca Rhys
The Revd Paul Wilson

Wealth and Access E and D Stakeholder Forum
The Revd Kerry Smith – Past Chair
The Revd Richard Iball
The Revd Michael Faulkner

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