

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Programme and Architecture

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolutions	71/1. The Council adopts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option1, or • Option2, or • Option3 and directs the Connexional Team to undertake further work on the oversight and implementation of the new EDI structure and to make a report to the April Council 2014.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This report is divided into two sections; first, to feed back to Council on the Methodist Conference 2013 EDI workshops where representatives were consulted on the draft EDI Programme and the oversight of future EDI work. Secondly, to offer to the Council options for the future oversight of EDI work.
Main Points	Introduction and Scope. Section 1: Feedback on the Methodist Conference 2013 EDI workshops: The workshops affirmed the EDI Programme and recommended establishing an EDI Committee. Section 2: Options for the oversight for future EDI work.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Towards an Inclusive Church: 2010 Conference Report. Towards an Inclusive Church: April 2013 Update [MC 13/42]
Consultations	EDI Stakeholder Fora, EDI Resource Group and the representatives attending the EDI Workshop at the Methodist Conference 2013.

Summary of Impact

Legal including impact on other jurisdictions	This work will support the work to ensure that the Methodist Church is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
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The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Programme and Architecture

1.0 Introduction and Scope

This report is a follow up to the 2010 Conference report entitled *Towards an Inclusive Church* and builds on a series of reports since then in particular the 2013 April Council report 'Towards an Inclusive Church Update 2013' [MC 13/42].

This report is divided into two sections; first, to feedback on the Methodist Conference 2013 EDI workshops where representatives were consulted on the draft EDI Programme and the oversight of future EDI work. Secondly, to offer to the Council options for the future oversight of EDI work.

Section 1

2.0 Feedback from the Methodist Conference 2013 EDI Workshops

2.1 Background

During the 2013 Conference EDI Workshops it was evident that representatives wished to broaden and further their understanding of the various issues involved in matters of equality, diversity and inclusion and to acknowledge, build and further develop the long, active and pioneering tradition of engaging with what are now called equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues which effectively started in 1928 when work on gender justice was brought to the Wesleyan Conference. Our history of our journey towards inclusivity is and always has been central to our understanding of what it means to be disciples witnessing to and sharing God's love.

2.2 The Process

There were three EDI works shops which discussed the draft EDI Programme and focused on the following questions:

- Does the vision capture our aspirations for equality, diversity and Inclusion?
- Are the 'priority actions' the right priorities?
- What structures and processes does the Church need to monitor and take forward in the EDI Programme?
- How can we include the voices of those who are not normally heard?

3.0 The Feedback - The EDI Programme

The Conference representatives discussed and engaged with the EDI Programme as the next step in the journey towards inclusion. The feedback affirmed the programme and emphasised the need to see the 'priority actions' be taken forward intentionally. Below are the 'priority actions' identified in the EDI Programme, comments from representatives are in italics:

Priority Actions

3.1 Vision:

- Continue the development of the EDI Theological Statement ensuring that it is 'lived' by the Church.
- Continue to develop the EDI self assessment framework to help the Church to map the journey from where we are through to an inclusive Church.
- To work on improving the representation of the main decision making bodies of the Methodist Church; the Methodist Council and the Conference to ensure that it represents the whole Church.
 - *'More inclusion of Theology from many backgrounds e.g. black, disabled.'*

3.2 Transformation Activities

- To develop a learning and development leadership programme for underrepresented groups on key committees and decision making bodies in the Church.
- Develop and pilot the EDI Toolkit which will be a learning and development tool and resource for local churches and circuits.
 - *'Urgent action is needed on the leadership programmes.'*
 - *'We need learning resources! Church level, e.g. sermons, small group work.'*
 - *'Resources needed for all white (Euro) congregations who have little or no experience being in relationship with people from other groupings.'*
 - *'There is a need for training, educating, informing congregations, local preacher and ministers of how ethnic minority groups/people should be addressed. Language is a barrier is not used appropriately.'*
 - *'EDI Toolkit would be greatly welcomed.'*
 - *'Need for education of church community on eg mental health issues.'*
 - *'Practicalities of learning styles and multisensory ideas – Learning resources.'*
 - *'In addition to a leadership programme an AWARENESS programme could be useful for churches.'*

3.3 The Connexion and the Connexional Team

- Develop and implement an EDI data monitoring template which can be used both for the Connexional Team, office holders, ordained and lay, key Methodist committees, Statistics for Mission and to collect data on the lay membership of the Church.
- To work with, develop and roll out EDI action plans for Clusters in the Connexional Team and Districts.
 - *'Is the Connexional team balanced? This should be a model for inclusive leadership.'*
 - *'Strongly affirm the leadership programme. This could be enhanced by the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data.'*
 - *'Church, circuit and district have different issues. E.g. District Grants com – mostly men. eg Circuit Synod reps – all women.'*
 - *'Participation monitoring of positions.'*

3.4 Belonging Together and the EDI Programme

Though the Belonging Together (BT) project has focused on racial and ethnic inclusion, as part of the development of the EDI Programme the learning and ethos of Belonging Together has already been embedded into the EDI Programme and the EDI Goals. Key BT recommendations

are central to the EDI Programme including equality mapping and the development of the EDI Theological Statement.

4.0 The Feedback – EDI Architecture and Infrastructure

The Conference representatives discussed the role of the EDI Resource Group and how, by honouring the fact that each equality stream, (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation) is unique, it has begun to discern issues of commonality both in terms of practice and theology moving the Church away from focusing on discrete particular single equality strands (ie race, gender and disability) to one in which inclusivity is more holistic.

4.1 The EDI Resource Group is a temporary structure initially put in place until 2012. The Council agreed to appoint it until 2015 and extended its membership. The group has developed both in terms of capacity and confidence and it was thought that the time is now right to build on this work. A key objective for the EDI Resource Group and a key area for the discussion in the EDI workshops was to discern the nature of a permanent EDI architecture.

4.2 Representatives who attended the workshops expressed the view that establishing an EDI Committee, which builds on the good practice of the EDI Resource Group, would proactively support and facilitate the Methodist Church in the next stage of its journey. They felt that an EDI Committee could achieve this by offering its services as a committee to the Methodist Council through providing advice, guidance and support to the Methodist Council and its work.

4.3 Taking the steer from the feedback from the EDI workshops at Conferences, the EDI Resource Group have identified **potential objectives** which the EDI Committee could include, to:

- Support the work of the Methodist Council in all matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by providing expert resources advice and guidance in this area.
- Assist the Methodist Council by scrutinising statements, reports, policies and papers which have regard to EDI prior to adoption at the Methodist Conference.
- Help the Methodist Council identify and target key areas of activities for local church and circuit to improve awareness and understanding of inclusion.
- Support the Methodist Council to actively promote and champion the EDI agenda across the Methodist Church of Great Britain.
- Facilitate the development of an EDI Theological Statement and scriptural understandings for the Church.
- Develop tool kits, learning and development programmes and other resources as directed by the Methodist Council to develop the full potential of The Methodist Church.

- Develop key targets for EDI for the Church in agreement with the Methodist Council, and provide an annual report to the Council on the monitoring and evaluation of these key targets and the progress of the Church.

4.4 Membership of the EDI Committee could include some of the following:

- Chairs of the former EDI Stakeholder Forums
- A representative from Faith and Order Committee
- A District Chair
- A member of the Connexional Team Senior Leadership Group
- A past President/vice President
- A member of the Methodist Council
- The Youth President
- The EDI Adviser

Section 2

5.0 Options for the oversight for future EDI work

However, in determining the nature of what is required as oversight for future EDI work. The Council is invited to discuss the following options:

5.1 Option 1

Affirm the EDI Resource Group as the permanent structure and the body charged by the Council with long term responsibility for EDI work and policy proposals. Currently, the EDI Resource Group is a transitional structure with a life span until 2015. Proposals to amend the Standing Orders to reflect this structure would be required.

Pros

In April 2013 the Council affirmed supplementing the EDI Resource Group, this option will give the supplemented group the opportunity and time to review existing arrangements in line with a agreed EDI Theological Statement, before identifying proposals. The new members include; a District Chair, a member of the Connexional Team Senior Leadership Group, a past President/Vice-President and two members of the Council. This option does not preclude an EDI Committee being established in the future.

Cons

In the 2010 'Towards an Inclusive Church' Council report it was affirmed as essential that that the following principles and perceptions be taken into an account in the new architecture. It should be a framework that will:

- include the aims and objectives previously contained within the various justice committees;
- consolidate and build upon the progress already achieved within those committees (notably the Committees for Racial Justice and Gender Justice);
- recognise current expertise already present within some committees and the need for work and action in some areas of equality which have not yet been developed.

As a transitional structure, with no committee status, the EDI Resource Group was never envisaged as the actual permanent structure for EDI as it could be perceived as a retrogressive

step and that the Church was back tracking on its commitment to this agenda as both the Racial Justice and the Gender Justice structures were constituted Committees of Council.

5.2 **Option 2**

To dispense with all EDI architecture and ensure that there is an EDI champion on key committees who will ensure that EDI is taken into account in discussions and decision making.

Pros

This option would ensure that EDI is mainstreamed into key functions of the church and that issues are raised appropriately and timely whilst committees are in the process of discernment. Former members of the EDI Resource Group could be allocated to sit on key committees. This would also free up the time of the EDI Adviser from supporting the current EDI architecture to working on the projects related to the EDI Programme.

Cons

This would prejudice the effectiveness of the newly enhanced EDI Resource Group agreed by Council. This is a sophisticated model of mainstreaming which is dependent on sufficient knowledge, commitment and expertise by the champions. The issues are twofold that the champion may be the minority voice in discussion and therefore even though they are around the table may feel sidelined and unheard. Also, with no reference architecture in place for the Champions there will be no steer and support for them in this role and they may feel out on a limb. Currently, this is the default model for District Disability Advisers who have recently completed a questionnaire identifying the issues above as key issues for them. Another issue is that, with the dismantlement of EDI architecture, the visibility of the agenda may be diminished. Perceptions and symbolism in this agenda are significant as it demonstrates commitment and that the Church cares.

5.3 **Option 3**

To support the recommendation made by those who attended the Conference EDI workshops and the subsequent discussion by the EDI Resource Group and affirm the establishment of an EDI Committee as a committee of the Methodist Council.

Pros

This option builds on both the current work and development of good practice by the EDI Resource Group and the Belonging Together Partnership Steering Group, but also ensures that EDI is given a positive and significant footing in the Methodist Church to support the Church in ensuring that inclusion and hospitality for all are central to the discipleship agenda and to help the Church grow and flourish in its diversity.

Cons

The key issue with this option is that by establishing an EDI Committee it is then believed that the Committee will take total responsibility for our journey towards inclusion. This has been the case in the past with the Gender and Racial Justice Committees. The journey towards inclusion is the responsibility of the whole Church and not just one committee. The role of the EDI Committee is to steer the agenda, ownership belongs to the Church.

5.4 **Budgetary Implications**

The budgetary implications of each option are the same, as the costs are for travel and hospitality. Clearly, there will be some increase to existing costs this with the addition of the new members. The total cost would rise from £950.00 to approximately £1,230, an increase of £280.00.

*****RESOLUTIONS:**

71/1. The Council adopts

- Option1, or
- Option2, or
- Option3

and directs the Connexional Team to undertake further work on the oversight and implementation of the new EDI structure and to make a report to the Council in April 2014.