

Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity MC/24/17

Date of meeting	29-30 January 2024
Contact name and details	Bevan Powell, Director of Inclusion PowellB@methodistchurch.org.uk
Action required	For approval
Resolution	17/1. The Council receives the report.

Summary of content

Subject of aims	To show how the Strategy is being taken forward in practice
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotations which show the value and the challenge of the work • A summary of progress on the different recommendations of the Strategy
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	The Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity was agreed by the 2021 Conference and can be found here Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Memorial M22 (2021), available at https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21971/conf-2021-61-memorials-to-the-conference.pdf

Quotes from people who are seeing change as a result of implementing the JDS Strategy

“That we should all be aware that often unconsciously we exclude people, and also be aware of the diversity in both our congregations and communities. Don’t make snap judgements about people before you know the facts”.

“I am pleased that the Methodist Church is addressing this issue because for too long it has been ‘shoved under the carpet’.”

Quotes from people who still see that there is much work to be done

“To be a more just/caring/representative church we need to show that God's love isn't just for the comfortable, and therefore some self-congratulatory social club, but also extends to the unemployed, the homeless, addicts, the people with dementia etc. Then, God willing, we may start to see a turnaround in our society”.

“While it is important to raise awareness, it’s more important to encourage action”.

“In our group we did wonder how this training could be passed on to those who wouldn’t volunteer to attend as they don’t think there’s a need for it – their church is fine! Hopefully, those who attend because they have to or actually choose to, will be able to gradually help change the culture”.

How has the Strategy been taken forward?

‘Our church is quite good at accepting all and as far as I can see visitors are welcomed irrespective of background - the challenge will be to maintain this approach’.

Milestones in brief

- **Committee Membership:** Interviews were held for additional members of the JDS Committee in early December 2023. The Council is asked to agree the appointments on the Appointments paper.
- **Solidarity Circles** for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women have met several times throughout this period and have engaged with members of the Connexional Team in regard to a number of strategic issues.
- **District EDI Officers** have been established for each District and, to ensure knowledge and awareness of Connexional strategies and procedures, a number of awareness events have been scheduled throughout the Connexional year for the group.
- **Susanna Wesley Foundation longitudinal study** into the impact of the strategy across the Connexion: A one day workshop has been scheduled for early January 2024 for members of the JDS Committee, Connexional Team Senior Management Group, representatives from Solidary Circles, members of the Learning Network, and District EDI Officers, to engage with the authors of the report to gain an understanding of the report and its findings and to consider the next steps.
- **The Discrimination and Abuse Response Service (DARS)** continues in pilot phase and has now been reviewed. As a result of one of the key recommendations, it has been decided that the 'Pastoral' support role will be undertaken as part of the 'Accompanist' role. Please see DARS review report **Appendix 'B'**.

While the number of request to the Service remain relatively low in general the cases received are complex and more sensitive in nature.

- **Mandatory EDI Training:** The stipulated period to undertake the training drew to a close at the end of 2023. However, a number of circuits has stated that some members still need to undertake the training. The JDS Committee will meet in January 2024 to consider the next steps for those who are still to undertake training.
- **JDS Committee - engagement with the Justice-seeking Church and God for All strategies:** The JDS committee has actively engaged with the Director of Social Justice and Social Action and the Director of Evangelism and Growth to emphasise the complementary nature and need for support and collaboration between the JDS, Justice-seeking Church and God for All strategies.
- **JDS committee supporting the wider work of the church:** As the Church starts to embed the JDS strategy across all aspects of church life, JDS Committee members have given support to various connexional initiatives. These include engaging with and supporting various connexional work, participation in on the review of Part 11 of CPD, the Stationing Review Group and Nominations Committee.

Substantive items

a. EDI training

Completion of EDI Mandatory Training: The Connexional Team has achieved near 100% completion rate. The co-Chair of the JDS Committee, the Revd Charity Nzegwu, will be writing to each District Chair to ascertain the completion rate for Circuits and Districts . Data for online delivery suggest at least 5000 people have undertaken the training; however, the figure may be higher as many Circuits have undertaken the training in groups, using only one online account.

b. Solidarity Circles

Solidarity Circles have been established for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women. Each group now has a full complement of volunteer members, however, the Solidarity Circle for Racial Justice is seeking additional members.

c. Truth and Reconciliation Process (TRP) Update

The Truth and Reconciliation work group – also referred to as the ‘Critical Yeast’ in the Truth and Reconciliation Process (TRP) Phase 1 recommendations – met on 19 October 2023 when it continued the conversation and discernment process it has been engaged in since spring 2023, regarding what the next steps are in Phase 2 of the design process for a TRP for the Methodist Church in Britain.

The group consensus was that those next steps should be in ‘preparing the process’; in laying the foundations to be strong and ‘safe’ in all aspects – physically, theologically, spiritually, emotionally and psychologically – and in all contexts of Methodist Church life. In recognising the complexities of this starting point, the group invited the expertise of [Megan Seneque](#), a global leader in transformational change, systems’ organisation and leadership, to accompany the process; primarily to help to emerge the TRP’s framework; to concretise its initial stages, and to identify the key people, places and timescales for its rooting and development. Megan has worked with the Methodist Church for many years – and was a member of the JDS Recommendation 3a3b group – through her Honorary Fellowship with [The Susanna Wesley Foundation](#) (SWF). SWF recommended Megan for this work, and has generously committed to financially sponsoring her to it, for the foreseeable future.

Megan started accompanying the TRP work in November 2023, when she began conducting one-to-one dialogue interviews with each member of the Critical Yeast in order to discern patterns and links for bringing to the group. The group is delighted to share that in December 2023 [Carolyn Merry](#), director of [Place for Hope](#), joined them, bringing the Critical Yeast to a membership of seven. The group will meet again in late January 2024, to learn what knowledge Megan’s interview process emerged, and to continue to map the transformative journey for the Church and embark on implementing the recommendations from the first phase of the TRP research.

d. Reparations Group Update Report

The Reparations group continued to meet to consider the full scope of work required to address Memorial M22 brought to the 2021 Conference:

- 1) To report on the direct/indirect involvement of the Methodist Church in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- 2) To recommend the full breadth of reparations required for the injustices suffered by enslaved people, the scope of any public statements including and associated apology.
- 3) To explore the need for further education and training on the relationship between contemporary racism, identity, colonialism and the slave trade.

As stated in previous reports, a significant part of this work has focused on identifying potential financial links between the Methodist Church and profits from the enslaved people and the Transatlantic slave trade. Dr Clive Norris was commissioned under the auspices of the Heritage team to research the evidence of financial links between the Methodist movement, focusing on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

To ensure that the voices of those most impacted by the Transatlantic Slave Trade are heard and listened to during this exploration, the Revd Arlington Trotman has been in conversation with the University of the West Indies and the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas.

Update from the Revd Arlington Trotman:

The Reparations Committee Meeting (RCM) of the Methodist Church in Britain (MCiB) undertook to explore what Reparations mean for the MCiB, and collaboration with the MCCA on Reparations as contained in RCM's Terms of Reference.

My work to date has focused on four themes.

- 1) Theological reflection on which our work on reparations can reliably rest;
- 2) Steps towards collaboration with the MCCA considered essential to process and outcomes;
- 3) Data collection enabling exploration of any Methodists, Wesleyan Missions involvement with the enslavement of Africans in the Caribbean and the Americas, using qualitative, mainly primary research;
- 4) The evidential historical, psychological, economic, mental, and emotional trauma consequent on the rigours and blight of transatlantic enslavement, on the descendants of the enslaved and descendants of slave-owners and supporters.

Our approach to theology starts with a rendering of the creation narratives where God's dealings with Hebrew and Gentile peoples are intrinsic to just and unified principles and outcomes. These are based, for example, on the primordial presentation of creation as revealed, for example, in Genesis chapters 1-11. Shown by cursory reading, it is evident also by renowned Hebrew scholarship, representing unmistakable challenge to contemporary Euro-centric expressions of historical Christianity. The NT evangelists and the history of Christianity's expansion bear comparative corroborative evidence of unified being, in Christ.

Contact with MCCA has been positive and as the President of the Methodist Conference in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) said in correspondence: "We in the MCCA are happy to hear that the MCB has seen it fit to focus on reparations to the descendants of the enslaved Africans. This is a commendable move by the Church. The MCCA has also begun discussions on the subject. The MCCA, through our resource persons, is willing to assist the MCB in whatever way possible. I look forward to the conversations, findings, decisions and actions."

We have had important conversations with Bishop Oral Thomas, Principal of United Theological Colleges WI, who is keen to engage with the MCB on reparations, and has offered his recently published book on re-imaging Caribbean missions, with telling and unmistakably challenging conclusions. We are in the process of arranging further Zoom meetings with MCCA in the early New Year.

A qualitative data collection process is progressing with access to relevant Special Collections of Methodist, Wesleyan Mission history to date with two different Universities UWI, UCL. Excellent sources have so far revealed individual involvement, and in the possibility of Mission involvement in the Jamaican and Antiguan missions. Work on this series continues.

e. Solidarity Circle Reports

Solidarity Circle for Women 27/11/23:

- Nine women including the coordinator and JDS committee rep. Good diversity across the group.
- Four meetings so far. Agreed to meet every six weeks.
- Good attendance and engagement at all meetings, it is starting to become a self-supporting group.
- Discussions: At our first meeting we agreed areas that we might want to look at. The topic that the group chose to focus on initially is: How the culture of the Methodist Church affects

the experience of women. One member presented some research perspectives about culture which helped to give a framework for follow on discussions. This has proved a rich theme to explore and women have openly shared their experiences and suggested ideas for making the church better for women.

- A number of areas has been identified as something for the Methodist Church to look at. We are particularly excited by the possibility of a leadership programme to support younger women in church to explore their vocation (either inside or outside the church).
- We are working with the Safeguarding Committee as they develop their response and recommendations to the church following an independent review of safeguarding processes.
- Work on the recruitment process for new Solidarity Circle members (across all groups) will begin in January with the aim of having the adverts going out around Easter for a September start date.

Solidarity Circle Racial Justice

Participation in the reparations group

The Coordinator for the SC Racial Justice has been invited to join the Reparation Group meetings and has attended two meetings.

Black History Month

The circle actively participated in Black History Month. The coordinator of SC Racial Justice published an article entitled "Savage systems and their impact to the development of the Methodist Church in Britain", as a contribution to Black History Month. Future plans include developing worship material reflecting upon the contributions of members of the black community in the development of the Methodist Church.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

17/1. The Council receives the report.

APPENDIX A

Please note: the Director for Inclusion and the JDS Programme Coordinator, when in post, will work together but the named person will take responsibility for the progress of the particular piece of work.

Delays, where they have happened, have been due to staff shortage, sickness or compassionate leave or Connexional Team capacity issues.

RESOURCES			
Area of work	Update as of December 2023	Next Steps	Lead for area of work
User guide for the Strategy: for engagement across the Connexion	Published March 2022 COMPLETED	January 2024 Measure its use LOWER PRIORITY	JDS Programme Coordinator Comms team (for stats)
Inclusive Language Guide (Jointly with Publications Team)	Published March 2022 COMPLETED	Review content at least annually, involving Solidarity Circles Review use January 2024 LOWER PRIORITY	JDS Programme Coordinator Publications Team (content) Comms team (for stats)
Equality Impact Statement (Recommendation 6b for use by all Methodists, especially in key reviews and policy-making)	Published March 2022 COMPLETED	January 2024 Measure its use LOWER PRIORITY	JDS Programme Coordinator Comms team (for stats)
Personal Responsibility Commitment: To encourage an approach of life-long-learning about diversity across the Connexion (Recommendation 4b, see below)	Published March 2022 COMPLETED	January 2024 Measure its use, through stats of views and downloads. Begin to plan review process for longer-term measurements of its effectiveness LOWER PRIORITY	EDI Director for Inclusion
Guidance on establishing and responding to Support Needs produced with the Solidarity Circle for Disability	Published June 2023 https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-	By February 2024 Ensure the Council (March 2023) decision is followed: to issues this guidance to all appointing and employing bodies.	EDI Director for Inclusion

	church/accessibility/accessibility-support-needs-for-volunteers-and-employees/		
Guidance on “How to create accessible documents” Produced by the Learning Network, the Comms Team and the Solidarity Circle for Disability	Published June 2023 https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-church/the-inclusive-methodist-church/accessibility/how-to-create-accessible-resources/	By February 2024 Ensure the Council (March 2023) decision is followed: to issue this guidance to all appointing and employing bodies. Highlight this resource in the Comms ‘launch’ of the ‘accessibility resources’	JDS Programme Coordinator
New resources for ‘Making Buildings Accessible’ https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/making-buildings-accessible/ Produced by the Property Team with the Solidarity Circle for Disability	Published June 2023 https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/making-buildings-accessible/		JDS Programme Coordinator

RECOMMENDATIONS			
Area of work	Update as of December 2023	Next Steps	Lead
<u>Recommendation 1</u> Reviewing our stems and structures (p.768)	Equality Impact Assessment published so that every Methodist has a tool with which to review our EDI work. Connexional Team asked to use this tool, via the intranet. Council 2022 agreed to use the EIA for its own work by requesting a completed EIA for specific pieces of work. COMPLETED	Autumn Council 2023 to begin requiring and collecting EIAs for review groups, along with the Terms of Reference for each piece of work. HIGH PRIORITY	Council

<p><u>Recommendation 2a</u></p> <p>Celebrations and Festivals (p.768)</p>	<p>Making EDI Officers aware of this aim as we come out of 'lockdown'.</p> <p>Evangelism and Growth work on 'Methodists at Pride'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Work with Evangelism and Growth on 'Methodists at Carnival'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWER PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Programme Coordinator</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2b</u></p> <p>An Affirmation Scheme (p.768)</p>	<p>Affirmation Scheme: piloted Summer 2022.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Pilot to be worked into a developed scheme.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWER PRIORITY</p>	<p>Learning Network</p>
	<p>Resolution to Council proposing a Conference service of repentance, recommitment, thanksgiving and celebration to be used across the Conference following Conference 2022.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Plan this service to be shared for use around the Connexion.</p> <p>Milestones to be agreed by JDS Committee – January 2024.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HIGH PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Committee</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2c</u></p> <p>Review of Language (p. 769)</p>	<p>Inclusive Language Guide published</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Summer 2023 Further training resources for work including with Local Preachers and Worship Leaders</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWER PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Programme Coordinator</p>
	<p>An 'Inclusive Images Guide' has been agreed by the Publications team to accompany the Inclusive Language Guide, as it was asked for.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Text has been produced and the work is scheduled for design and publication.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWER PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Programme Coordinator</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 2d</u></p> <p>Narrative research project (p. 769)</p>	<p>Designed a process for 'capturing' some of the narratives around the Connexion and, in this way, 'taking the temperature' of this work for Justice.</p>	<p>Findings from this first round of research will be brought to the Council.</p>	<p>Sue Miller (Susana Wesley Foundation)</p>
<p>(with the Susanna Wesley Foundation)</p>	<p>Dignity and Solidarity Liaison with the Walking with Micah Project. The first round of research for this 'evaluative</p>	<p>It is intended that this will be a longitudinal study.</p>	<p>EDI Director of Inclusion</p>

	<p>project' has begun.</p> <p>While this will collect some narratives we are no longer describing it in this way.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Report received, analysis currently taking place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HIGH PRIORITY</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 3a & 3b</u></p> <p>3a Symposia and gatherings 3b Partners for this work 9p. 770)</p>	<p>Racial justice event March 2022</p> <p>(task group with the Learning Network, Walking with Micah and Agents for Change)</p> <p>A series of conversations with Connexional Team members about transformational change theory. (Autumn 2022)</p> <p>Consideration about how cultural change comes about and how to enable transformational change is important to this work, with a paper to the JDS Committee about the future of this work.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>The offering of expertise about transformational change.</p> <p>Milestones to be agreed by JDS Committee – January 2024.</p>	<p>Ermal Kirby (Task Group Facilitator)</p> <p>JDS committee to oversee this work</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 4a</u></p> <p>Discrimination and Abuse Response Service (p. 770)</p>	<p>Design of the DARS (April – July 2022)</p> <p>Pilot of DARS in two districts. Extended to take in Connexional complaints enquiries with a discriminatory element (July 2022).</p> <p>Work with Complaints and Discipline and Safeguarding to consider how the Pilot extended to Methodist staff, students and families at Queen's.</p>	<p>Review March – April 2023</p> <p>Extended pilot dates because of delays</p> <p>Extend pilot to three more districts</p> <p>DARS due to launch across the Connexion in September 2024.</p> <p>Staffing requirements to be defined by the DARS group – Delyth Liddell, Donna Ely, Kate</p>	<p>EDI Director for Inclusion</p>

		<p>Little and Bevan Powell.</p> <p>DARS review by Stephanie Njeru, complete and discussion on next steps will continue into early January 2024.</p> <p>Consideration for the creation of common interface for reporting bullying/discrimination to safeguarding/complaints/systems.</p>	
	COMPLETED	HIGH PRIORITY	
<p><u>Recommendation 4b</u></p> <p>Personal Responsibility Commitment (p. 771)</p>	<p>This has become a 'voluntary' undertaking (except in DARS cases) alongside the mandatory training which we will encourage every Methodist to use.</p> <p>Summer 2022 Encouragement for us all to use this PRC, through the district EDI Officers.</p> <p>Rollout of the use of this for learning, beyond and additional to the EDI training materials.</p>	<p>Measure its use, through stats of views and downloads.</p> <p>Begin to plan review process for longer-term measurements of its effectiveness.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DELAYED</p> <p>Use as ongoing training, after mandatory EDI module.</p> <p>Delayed because of delays to training announcements (See Rec 5a below)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>EDI Director for Inclusion Implementation Officer</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 4c</u></p> <p>Tracking the rate of 'discrimination' (p. 771)</p>	<p>#agreement and planning with IT to develop a app which will help us track all cases which come into the p9ilot DARS with their outcomes (Rec 4a above).</p> <p>Delayed by time limitations for getting all the involved parties together</p>	<p>January 2023 forward</p> <p>Developing the use of this app in order to help with understanding of what is happening within our systems.</p> <p>Providing the DARS cases, for learning even if the app is not developed</p>	<p>EDI Director for Inclusion</p>

		Work to begin in January 2024 DELAYED	
<u>Recommendation 4d</u> Critical Incident Response System (p. 772)		COMPLETED This recommendation will be designed later during the implementation. This was not prioritised, due to time pressures on recommendations considered more urgent. Consider withdrawal as a Recommendation, as Mechanism already in place. LOWER PRIORITY	EDI Director for Inclusion
<u>Recommendation 4e</u> Truth and Reconciliation Process (p. 772)	A group was formed for careful consideration of how to design this process. A (pilot) Phase 1 has been commissioned and carried out by Katie Deadman-Vernall (at the University of Winchester). The report from this work came to the JDS Committee Jan 2023. COMPLETED	Develop a budgeting plan for the second phase of this work will be submitted to the April Council. HIGH PRIORITY	EDI Director for Inclusion
<u>Recommendation 4f</u> EDI Support Systems: Solidarity Circles (p. 772)	February 2023 – Four voluntary Coordinators have been recruited to run Solidarity Circles for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability - LGBT + - Racial Justice - Women COMPLETED	March 2023 – selection of 14 other members for each Solidarity Circle. April – June 2023 – First Solidarity Circle meetings take place. July 2023 – First review of how these Solidarity Circles are working.	EDI Director for Inclusion

		Further progress reports will be submitted to April 2024 Council	
	COMPLETED	HIGH PRIORITY	
<u>Recommendation 5a</u> Mandatory EDI Training (p. 773)	Unconscious Bias Training now on MCBX. Mandatory EDI Training Module now available on MCBX. The period for completion of the mandatory training is now the end of 202.3.	May/June 2023 Review the completion rates of mandatory EDI training module. Progress update to follow Training Group meeting 13.12.23.	EDI Training Group
	COMPLETED	HIGH PRIORITY	
<u>Recommendation 5b</u> Positive Actions (p. 774)	Open Sessions for JDS Shadow Committee recruitment	Positive Actions to be implemented by the HR team in relation to Connexional Team Employment Director of HR and EDI Director for Inclusion to meeting early 2024 for a status report.	Director of HR (Sushila Jetha)
		HIGH PRIORITY	
<u>Recommendation 5c</u> Placements, mentoring and shadow-mentoring (p.774)		Resource produced with guidance on how to set up placements, mentoring and shadow-mentoring: for use in any area of Methodist life, including the Connexional Team and Connexional Committees. The text has been produced, the implementation of this to be carried forward by the JDS Programme Coordinator.	JDS Programme Coordinator
		LOWER PRIORITY	

<p><u>Recommendation 5d</u></p> <p>A 'Guide' to Methodism</p>	<p>A draft is ready in plain English as one of the Comms Team 'campaigns'.</p>	<p>Work with Publications to design how this can be made accessible for those who do not use the internet.</p> <p>Delay in this work as a new website design is being worked on. This principle will be incorporated into that design.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">LOWER PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Programme Coordinator</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6b</u></p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment (p. 775 and 781)</p>	<p>EIA published (see above) for use by all Methodists (either formally or informally) as a 'usual practice' (like risk assessments) in all of our work.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Methodist Council, JDS Committee and other Connexional Team members begin to use this work 'as usual' habit.</p> <p>Training with Council to commence</p> <p>JDS Committee Chair to contact District Chairs to check their usage of the EIA.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HIGH PRIORITY</p>	<p>JDS Committee</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 6c</u></p> <p>EDI toolkit (p. 776)</p>	<p>All modules updated</p> <p>New versions of some modules planned.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Council for Christians and Jews have advised they will use the toolkit, updating however they will update the document in relation to Anti-Semitism.</p>	<p>Learning Network</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 7</u></p> <p>EDI Officers (p.776)</p>	<p>Establishment of District EDI Officers network and gatherings online.</p> <p>Database of EDI Officers</p> <p>Regular 'open sessions' about the role to encourage these appointments.</p>	<p>Sept 2022 – July 2023</p> <p>Encouragement of circuits to recruit circuit EDI Officers</p> <p>Support for the district EDI Officers as they support the circuit EDI Officers.</p> <p>All EDI Officers to complete mandatory EDI training by summer 2023.</p>	<p>EDI Director for Inclusion</p>

		<p>Training sessions for all EDI Officers arranged for February, March, April, June and September 2024.</p> <p>EDI Officer support meetings arranged for February, May, August and November 2024.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p> <p style="text-align: right;">HIGH PRIORITY</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 8</u></p> <p>Review of Faith and Order Work in the light of the Strategy (p. 777)</p>	<p>Review of Faith and Order work carried out in the light of the JDS Strategy – 2021-2022</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>This now becomes a usual event as there is an annual F&O Committee review of F&O work which (like all committees) will now be undertaken in the light of the JDS strategy.</p> <p>It does not, therefore, need to be priorities by the EDI Director for Inclusion.</p> <p>An update on this area of work is currently being sought.</p>	<p>Faith and Order Secretary (Mark Rowland)</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 9</u></p> <p>JDS Committee</p>	<p>Open recruitment for additional members of the Committee.</p> <p>Adoption of Terms of Reference and 'Ways of Working' documents</p> <p>Confidentiality and Volunteer Agreements in place.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Four additional members successfully recruited to join the Committee</p>	<p>JDS Committee</p>
<p><u>Future Staffing</u></p>	<p>An initial estimate of future staff hours for this work has been drawn up.</p> <p>A first draft of Job Description and Person Spec for the role to replace the Implementation Officer has been drawn up.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">COMPLETED</p>	<p>Recruitment of a JDS Programme Coordinator has taken place, the post holder will join the Connexional Team in September 2024.</p>	<p>EDI Director for Inclusion</p>

Appendix B

Discrimination and Abuse Response System Review

The DARS system has been set up to address issues of discrimination in the Methodist Church as part of the JDS strategy. The hope is that the process will be helpful both in supporting the individuals who are being discriminated against, and aims to bring understanding through mediation and reconciliation.

This is separate to the current Disciplinary procedures and Safeguarding. It is instead, aiming to be a place where experience is shared openly, and listening is done well so that a positive outcome is reached.

DARS pilot project has been running Autumn 2022, initially in two Districts and then opened up to another 10 in Spring 2023. There have been a number of different experiences and feedback for this report was sought anonymously from all involved in the process itself: District Chairs, Superintendents, service users, pastoral supporters, responders and accompanists. Each group were asked different questions which fell into four main categories: Impact, process, learning points and training needs.

There were 22 invites for feedback sent out and 9 responses received this includes 4 of the 12 service users. At the time of the questionnaire being sent out, 12 people had used the service of varying ages and different roles within church life. The range of issues raised included racism, disability discrimination, gender discrimination, transphobia and homophobia.

The shortest case took six weeks whilst the longest case has been ongoing for over 10 months. Some cases are still ongoing but there have been a variety of outcomes from those which have concluded: Police involvement; informal mediation; Place for Hope – professional mediation; pastoral support and safeguarding support.

It must be noted that there were some responses given that were not applicable to DARS, and therefore have not been included here.

Impact:

For the majority of the participants it was a positive experience, but not everybody found it useful or helpful.

- It has brought to attention EDI issues and the need for self-awareness and others' needs.
- It has helped rebuild trust in relationships.
- Conversation and being listened to were important.
- Having a new way of looking at things and thinking about strategies was useful.
- The journey has brought more confidence in addressing similar situations and given new skills and coping strategies for the future.
- There has been a lack of closure where the outcome was not wholly positive.
- Hopes are that there are positive outcomes and that learning for both individuals and the Church (local and national).
- This, if successful, will help encourage a healing and hopeful environment, helping people to rebuild their lives.
- When one of the parties does not wish to engage in reconciliation, the person who was discriminated against can be left feeling frustrated and hurt even more than before.

This feedback gave the opportunity to reflect on what DARS has been initiated for. DARS is intended to be a secondary step in reconciliation and conversation between the parties involved. Not everybody has the same intentions and expectations and therefore if there is no willingness to enter into the journey offered, it is probable that expectations will not be fulfilled.

One of the intentions of DARS is that the participant(s) feel listened to and supported. There is an option for sanctions for those protagonists who are unwilling to engage, or it could be sent back to the District or Circuit.

On reflection, explanation of possible expectations and realisations of such, should be included at the conversations at the beginning, and perhaps also reminded during the journey. DARS was initiated to be support through a journey, having an accompanist to talk to whether the outcome be 'satisfactory' or not.

The journey of accompaniment:

Each person was asked a number of questions regarding the accompaniment journey itself, including feedback on its usefulness and length.

- An appointed person the support the complainant is helpful and appreciated.
- The journey can take a long time. This will inevitably be different for each story.
- Both parties must engage for it to attain the expected reconciliatory outcome.
- Separation between the DARS team and the people in supporting roles is seen as an important part of the process.
- The roles of Pastoral Supporter and Accompanist are similar and clarity would be appreciated.

Learning points:

Each person was asked to suggest ways in which the process can be improved and what wisdom and learning do they have to share.

- The volunteers who have been chosen can have heavy workloads to balance alongside this work.
- There does not seem to be a wider understanding of DARS, why it exists, and how it can be beneficial to the Church or individuals.
- It may be useful to explain the guidelines and have an agreement near the beginning of the process, subject to review depending upon information given.
- What happens when there is no opportunity for, or willingness for reconciliation? How can the Church help those who feel DARS has not worked or they have been left without justice? Or when they feel that all available lines within the Methodist Church have led to then thinking they are not cared for, undervalued or not listened to? *[See above notes for reflection on this area. DARS is part of a variety of pathways that the Methodist Church offers, and further conversation between the pathways may lead to a clearer understanding.]*
- Formal procedures may not fit every case well.
- The need to think about the roles of Pastoral Supporter and Accompanist.

Training needs / Skills:

- Key skills are listening and counselling ability. Listening well without judgement.
- Awareness in conflict resolution.
- Naming and maintaining boundaries.
- Neurodiversity training
- Knowledge of other sources of support
- The volunteers need supervision and pastoral support on a regular basis.
- Because of the type of role, and the intended distance from the DARS team, it is very apparent that pastoral support needs to be an integral part of the support for the volunteers. Bevan is currently working on this.
- Peer learning and staff development needs to be a part of this process.

DARS is an accompaniment. It is a journey of healing and reconciliation. It is intended to be a support for those embarking on the journey, a safe space for people who need to be listened to and supported by the Methodist Church. Expectations and outcomes will differ for each case.

Looking at the responses, the review group feel there are areas that need to be addressed in order to roll this out across the Connexion.

There has been feedback that the DARS can be long. It must be recognised that each case is different. Some will be more complex than others and therefore need more time and resources. This will have an impact on the capacity of time for both volunteers and service users.

Trust relies on confidentiality. The person using the system needs to be assured of the confidentiality guidelines and what the restrictions are. The volunteers who run the service will also need to make sure that they do not seek more background information from sources without first discussing with the person, or, if they have to, then to clearly explain why.

This then asks the question about true independence from the Circuit and District. In order for this to work to its full potential, DARS must be, and must be seen to be independent from Circuit and District.

There is an imperative need for training and ongoing support for the volunteers within DARS. Would this be able to be done within existing structures or will new training and support for the supporters need to be a new resource? What financial and personnel costs would that mean? The review group suggest that core pastoral volunteer training is given for all the different Circuit, District and Connexional roles together (ie Chaplains, Accompanists, Pastoral supporters for Safeguarding, Interview panels, Complaints, DARS etc) and then any specific training be led by the particular group for their potential volunteers.

There are discussions already taking place regarding the need for both a pastoral supporter and an accompanist. As the roles are easily confused, and there is currently only a small group of appropriately trained people, is it better to keep with just the accompanist role?

How are people going to be recruited to be part of the team? What is the discernment process going to look like? Could this be a part of vocations looked at with the new candidating process alongside an

interview programme? It would be good to have a Connexional database with possible volunteers for pastoral work which can be drawn upon when there are new cases. However, a substantial vetting process would need to take place.

What happens when people are unwilling to engage with the complainant, and therefore unwilling to engage in DARS? DARS is intended to be a journey of self-awareness and listening well to others. The journey is about reconciliation and that needs two parties willing to engage. When reviewing DARS, the working group will also need to think about whether there should be consequences for non-engagement, and how to care for the complainant if that happens.

The last point is how this will be rolled out across the Connexion.

Action points for the original working group:

- Work with Bevan Powell and the incoming JDS Programme Co-ordinator to see how this can fit in with other training and personnel resources. This must include defining the terms of confidentiality.
- Outline possible forms of recruitment or vocational routes for volunteering and meet with appropriate people to discuss.
- Discuss with Bevan the joining up of the three procedures; Safeguarding, Disciplinary and DARS.
- Think about how the timing may be able to be reduced.
- Ensure the process is, and is seen to be, independent from Circuit and District.
- Think about after care for those where the process wasn't what they had hoped for.
- Outline the support network for the volunteers.
- Report back to JDS Committee early 2024.

Appendix C: The Methodist Conference and Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Report 2019 – 2023

Background:

JDS Strategy

In 2021 the Methodist Conference adopted the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity strategy, with the following aims:

- a. for the rich diversity of people within the Methodist Church to be recognised as a cause for thanksgiving, celebration and praise;
- b. to eradicate all discrimination and coercive control within the Methodist Church, and for all people to be treated justly and with dignity across the breadth of the Methodist Church;
- c. for a paradigm shift (a profound change) in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church so that all Methodists are able to be full participants in the Church's life

To achieve the above aims is recommendation 6, which states:

The following processes should be developed for measuring progress of the implementation of this strategy:

- a) The collection and use of EDI data to understand where we are starting from and to begin to measure progress.

EDI monitoring data at the local church, circuit, district and connexional level is essential to establish a baseline for understanding representation and participation. Without such data, meaningful commentary on proportionality and statistical measurement of progress is impossible. Furthermore, this data would be indispensable for identifying areas where performance can be enhanced to align with our commitment to being a justice seeking church, and one which is truly inclusive. This data would serve as a critical benchmark against which to evaluate progress and identify necessary changes.

Conference and Council EDI Data Monitoring

The following analysis has been compiled from data collated during Methodist Conference and Council between 2019 - 2023. Whilst data has been collected for each of the last five years of Conference and Council, this report represents the first analysis of that data, providing an insight into the demography and makeup of Conference and Council representatives.

As we embark on regular analysis of Conference and Council data, the process will further inform our journey to becoming a truly inclusive Church. The data collected not only provides an opportunity to celebrate the richness of diversity of our membership but also to engage meaningful consideration and reflection of assumptions, culture and practise.

Ongoing data monitoring and analysis presents an opportunity to identify issues of representation, participation and opportunities for improvement. In future reports there will be commentary in regard to the intersectionality of the data, unfortunately it is not possible to make any retrospective analysis in terms of intersectionality as only the summary data is available, nevertheless, this will not be an issue for future reports. However, it is important to note that benchmarking against our membership at church and circuit level is not currently possible, as stated earlier in this document.

I would encourage the Council to consider how this data might better serve as a mechanism to guide and inform future decision and policy making.

Methodist Council EDI Data Trends (2019-2023)

Data Source: EDI Data Monitoring Summary Reports.

Gender Representation

2019-2020: 63.27% Male, 36.73% Female.

2020-2021: 54.17% Male, 45.83% Female.

2021-2022: 48.89% Male, 51.11% Female.

2022-2023: 50% Male, 50% Female.

Trend: A continual move towards gender parity for those self-identifying as male or female, achieving a 50-50 representation in 2022-2023.

Age Distribution

The age category data from 2019-2023 shows a gradual increase in representation for people from a younger demographic. Initially, the majority of council members were aged between 50-69. Over the 4 periods, there has been a slight increase in representation from the 30-49 age group, while the under-30 age groups remain minimally represented. In 2022-2023, the method of recording age changed to the year of birth, providing a more detailed age distribution. This again indicated a continued trend toward a more diverse age range within the Methodist Council.

Trend: A slow and gradual increase in youth representation.

Disability

2019-2020: 2 Physical, 2 Long-term Condition, 1 Other.

2020-2021: 2 Physical, 4 Long-term Conditions.

2021-2022: Similar to 2020-2021.

2022-2023: 1 Physical impairment, 1 Mental Health,

2 Learning Disability/ or difficulty, 2 Long term Medical Condition

Trend: Increasing openness in declaring disabilities.

Ethnicity:

2019-2020: White British 44, Other White 1, Asian 1, Black/African/Caribbean 3.

2020-2021: White British 39, Other White 3, Asian 2, Black/African/Caribbean 3.

2021-2022: White British 37, Other White 3, Asian 1, Black/African/Caribbean 4.

2022-2023: White British 34, Other White 3, Asian 2, Black/African/Caribbean 3.

Trend: A gradual increase in representation from people from non-white ethnicities, indicating an increase in diverse representation.

Sexual Orientation:

2019-2020: Data regarding sexual orientation was not recorded.

2020-2021: Data regarding sexual orientation was not recorded.

2021-2022: 3 council members identified as Gay/Lesbian, 39 as Heterosexual/Straight, and 3 either preferred not to say or did not answer.

2022-2023: Among 42 council members, 2 reported being Gay/Lesbian, 1 as Bisexual, 37 as Heterosexual/Straight, and 2 either preferred not to say or did not answer.

Trend: Sexual Orientation started to be recorded from 2021 – 2022 onward.

Summary:

The Methodist Council EDI data from 2019-2023 reveals a Council increasingly embracing diversity and inclusion. There's a clear shift towards gender balance, with a notable increase in female representation.

MC/24/17 Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity

In regards to Age the Council is gradually incorporating younger members, though the majority remains in the 50-69 age bracket. Disability declarations show an upward trend, indicating a more inclusive environment. Ethnic diversity is slowly increasing, particularly in the Black/African/Caribbean category.

Methodist Conference EDI Data Trends (2020-2023)

Introduction

The following EDI data trends have been collated for the period 2020 to 2023, providing insights into the makeup of the Methodist Conference over the period. The report describes trends across a number of demographic characteristics, including gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and marital status.

Gender

The data collated for 2020 reflected a female majority with 140 Conference representatives compared to 106 male representatives. This pattern continued throughout the period, concluding with 134 female and 99 male in 2023. The inclusion of non-binary category began in 2021 with 1 Conference representative self-identifying as non-binary, increasing to 4 Conference representatives in 2022, and then decreasing to 2 by 2023.

Age Distribution

Throughout the period, the most significant age group was among those aged 55-64, starting at 90 in 2020 and slightly decreasing to 86 by 2023. The oldest age group, 75 and over, showed an increase in representation, from 10 responses in 2020 to 17 in 2023.

Disability and Impairment

Responses from Conference representatives living with a disability recorded, 35 representatives in 2020 and remained the same in 2021, followed by a decrease to 33 in 2022 and a further decrease to 18 in 2023.

Ethnicity

In 2020 - 2023, while White British remained dominant (218 Conference representatives in 2020, decreasing to 191 by 2023), there has been a gradual increase in representation from various non-White ethnic groups.

Sexual Orientation (2022-2023)

The recording of Sexual Orientation commenced in 2022, the majority of Conference representatives identified as heterosexual/straight, 188 in 2022 and 197 in 2023, 13 Conference representatives identified as bisexual in 2022 and 12 in 2023, 12 Conference representatives identified as gay or lesbian in 2022 and 9 in 2023.

Gender Identity same as Sex Registered at Birth (2022-2023)

In the years 2022 and 2023, the data captured a broad spectrum of gender identities, reflecting the diverse nature of Conference. A majority of Conference representatives identified their gender identity as the same as their sex registered at birth, with 223 individuals in 2022 and 229 in 2023, in 2022 & 2023, 2 Conference representatives recorded their gender identity as being different from the sex registered at birth. Several respondents opted not to disclose their gender identity.

Marital Status (2022-2023)

In 2022 - 2023, marital status varied, with the majority of Conference representatives identified as married (157 in 2022, increasing to 166 in 2023). Conference representatives who identified as never married numbered 34 in 2022, decreasing to 29 in 2023. Conference representatives who identified as being in a Civil partnership numbered 3 in 2022 and 1 in 2023. A small increase was observed in individuals separated but still legally married, from 1 in 2022 to 6 in 2023.

Conclusion

Over the period 2020 – 2023, the data reveals a consistent female majority and a prominent representation from the 55 - 64 to older adults, primarily identifying as British/UK in nationality. There is evidence of slow and increasing ethnic diversity, however, the vast majority of Conference representatives remain White British.