

## Youth President Role Review – conclusions and recommendations

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<b>Resolutions</b>	18/1. The Council receives the report. 18/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed changes to the Youth President role outlined in paragraph 18 of this report.

### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aims</b>	A response to Notice of Motion 2019/201, recommending changes to the role of Youth President.
<b>Main points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• History of the Youth Presidency</li> <li>• Methodology and consultations</li> <li>• Themes and observations</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Future areas of work</li> </ul>
<b>Background documents</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notice of Motion 2019/201</li> <li>2. MC/19/67 Response to Notice of Motion 2019/201: Review of the Role of Youth President</li> <li>3. MC/21/40 Youth President Role Review – interim report</li> </ol>

### Introduction

1. The 2019 Conference passed Notice of Motion 2019/201 (see Appendix 1), directing the Methodist Council to appoint a task group to review the role of Methodist Youth President, and to report and bring recommendations to the Methodist Conference no later than 2021.
2. The October 2019 meeting of the Council appointed a task group and agreed terms of reference for the group.<sup>1</sup>
3. The March 2021 meeting of the Council approved extension to the review period, in order to complete the remaining consultations and allow more time to understand the impact of home-working on the role.<sup>2</sup>
4. This report outlines the research and consultation undertaken by the task group and the conclusions and recommendations that have arisen.

### History of the Youth Presidency

5. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of MAYC, 14 months were spent in discussion, prayer and consultation to catch the vision that young people in 1995 had for the Methodist Church. This process and vision was called Charter 95<sup>3</sup> and led to the creation of Methodist Youth Conference and the Youth Executive, including the role of Youth President.

<sup>1</sup> MC/19/67: [www.methodist.org.uk/media/15108/counc\\_mc19-67\\_youth-president-review\\_oct\\_2019.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/15108/counc_mc19-67_youth-president-review_oct_2019.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> MC/21/40: [www.methodist.org.uk/media/20759/counc\\_mar\\_21\\_mc21-40-youth-president-role-review-interim-report.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/20759/counc_mar_21_mc21-40-youth-president-role-review-interim-report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> A copy of Charter 95 is available on request from Ella Sibley-Ryan, Projects Officer, [Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk)

6. In 2004 it was decided to review the Youth Executive and Youth Conference. The review proposed that greater emphasis on youth participation in every area of Church life was needed. This led to the Youth Participation Strategy (YPS)<sup>4</sup>. The Youth President role became a year-long paid post.
7. The Methodist Conference in 2010 approved changing the Youth President role to part-time as part of YPS budget cuts<sup>5</sup>.
8. In 2011, a review of the role of the Youth President was undertaken.<sup>6</sup> The Methodist Council adopted seven recommendations, as follows:
  - i. the Youth President role be a full-time paid post
  - ii. a full-time office-holder be expected to engage more fully with the voices of younger children
  - iii. an overseas trip be offered to a Youth President
  - iv. a Youth President's Advisory Group be established
  - v. the Youth President Designate should be offered the opportunity to shadow the Youth President
  - vi. the Youth President role should be office-based, supported by the most appropriate managerial route that could be established by the Connexional Team, and integrated into formal leadership meetings where possible
  - vii. appropriate formal training be offered for the Youth President, which could be undertaken in their designate year if appropriate.
9. There have been no major reviews of or changes to the role of the Youth President since the 2011 review.

### **Methodology and consultations**

10. The task group considered the following reports in undertaking the review:
  - i. Charter 95<sup>3</sup>
  - ii. The report to the 2005 Conference, titled, "The Nature of Oversight: Leadership, Management and Governance in the Methodist Church in Great Britain"<sup>7</sup>
  - iii. The Youth Participation Strategy<sup>4</sup>
  - iv. MC/11/23 Youth Presidency Review report of Working Party for Council April 2011
  - v. The current job description, person specification and related recruitment documents for the Youth President<sup>6</sup>
  - vi. Standing Order 250, relating to the children and youth assembly and the role of the Youth President<sup>8</sup>
11. The task group undertook the following consultations to inform the review:
  - i. A questionnaire available online and via the 3Generate app to survey children and young people (see appendix 2 for a copy).
  - ii. A questionnaire sent to the past Youth Presidents who had served between connexional years 2010/2011 and 2018/2019
  - iii. A consultation meeting with the Youth Representatives
  - iv. Receiving a written reflection from the Head of Mission

<sup>4</sup> A copy of the Youth Participation Strategy is available on request from Ella Sibley-Ryan, Projects Officer, [Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk)

<sup>5</sup> 2010 Conference report 16: [www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf10a-16-yeps-160211.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf10a-16-yeps-160211.pdf) and 2010 Conference report 4: [www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf10a-4-conn-central-serv-budget-160211.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf10a-4-conn-central-serv-budget-160211.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> MC/11/23: [www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/council-papers-archive/methodist-council-papers-9-11-april-2011/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/the-methodist-conference/methodist-council/council-papers-archive/methodist-council-papers-9-11-april-2011/)

<sup>7</sup> 2005 Conference report 8: [www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/co\\_05\\_natureofoversight\\_0805.doc](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/co_05_natureofoversight_0805.doc)

<sup>8</sup> The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church Volume 2, Book III Standing Orders, Part 2 The Methodist Council and Connexional Committees, Section 25 Methodist Children and Youth Assembly: [www.methodist.org.uk/media/22811/conf-2021-cpd-vol-2.pdf](http://www.methodist.org.uk/media/22811/conf-2021-cpd-vol-2.pdf)

- v. Receiving a written reflection on the term “presidency” from the then-Vice President of the Conference, Professor Clive Marsh
  - vi. Receiving a written reflection from the Faith and Order Committee
  - vii. Interviews with past Youth Presidents, Connexional Team staff members who work closely with the Youth President, and ecumenical partners in the Church of England and United Reformed Church.
  - viii. A consultation with the children and young people at 3Generate 2021.
12. The task group did not undertake a consultation with children and young people (under 23) not affiliated to 3Generate, nor with individuals who have hosted visits by the Youth President in the last three years. This was due to increased workload and reduced capacity following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the decision to focus research with those who have interacted most with the post-holders.
  13. In addition, this report has been reviewed by and has the support of the following individuals and groups prior to its submission to the Council:
    - i. The Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt, Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee
    - ii. The current Youth Representatives
    - iii. Current and past Youth Presidents since at least 2017

### **Themes and observations**

14. Early research highlighted seven key areas of interest for review, namely: purpose of the role and responsibilities, title of the post, location and base, support and training, recruitment, length of service and terms and conditions, and key relationships and partnerships. This was reported in the interim review.
15. Further research and consultations explored these seven areas and concluded that there were only four areas in which significant changes may be warranted. These were:
  - i. Purpose of the role – what is the most important part of the role of the Youth President? Is it their advocacy on behalf of children and young people with the decision-makers of MCB, or their on-the-ground encouragement of children and young people, or their position as a role model to/ spokesperson of young Methodists, or something else?
  - ii. Location and base – should the role continue to be London-based, or could future Youth Presidents work from home? Should they travel physically to visit children and young people, or virtually (in order to reduce carbon emissions)? Should they visit one of our Global Partners?
  - iii. Length of service – should the role continue to be a fixed-term one-year post, or should it be of longer duration? Should post-holders be able to stand for re-election?
  - iv. Terms and conditions – should the post-holder be appointed or elected? Could the role be divided so that a permanent full-time Secretary supports an elected fixed-term President (as with the Secretariat and Presidency of the Conference)?
16. These four areas were brought to 3Generate 2021 for a final consultation to enable a decision.
17. At 3Generate 2021, four static boards were available all weekend, which young people could interact with in a creative manner. There was also a 45-minute discussion session around the boards, engaging with young people and their youth workers. The four boards asked the following questions:
  - i. (A) What do you think the role should do? (B) What title should the role have?
  - ii. How long should the role be in post?
  - iii. Should the role be voted for by 3Gen or is there a better method?
  - iv. Is the Youth President visiting Youth Groups in person important to the role? Or do the visits becoming virtual make more sense?

Each board had some suggested answers, but young people were also encouraged to make their own suggestions. Engagement over the weekend was good, particularly during the discussion session. Those who engaged at 3Generate represented a range of ages, ethnicities, locations, and understandings of Church.

### Recommendations

18. Based on the consultations and evidence laid out above, the following recommendations are proposed:
- i. The role should continue to be called “Youth President”, as there is good awareness and understanding of the role across the Connexion.
  - ii. The role should be refocused around two core purposes: advocacy and involvement in decision-making.
    - Advocacy – the Youth President should act as a conduit (amongst other conduits) for the voices of the children and young people of the Methodist Church and should also challenge and inspire others to advocate for children and young people. The Youth President should work alongside the other young people, especially the Youth Representatives, and the District Ambassadors in order to hear a wide range of voices within the life of the Church.
    - Involvement in decision-making – the Youth President should attend the Council (see below for more on Council attendance), the Conference and the Connexional Leaders’ Forum to represent the voices of children and young people and take part in conferring and decision-making. The continued reaffirmation of *Our Calling* has led to work being undertaken to review the existing structures of the Methodist Church, and the Council should ensure that the Youth President is invited to similar decision-making fora within the new structures.
  - iii. It is proposed that the Youth President should be permitted to send one of the Youth Representatives to deputise for them at the Council if they so choose.
  - iv. The role of the Youth President should be offered as either an office-based (at Methodist Church House, London) or home-based role, as patterns of working since the COVID-19 pandemic have changed to enable this option.
  - v. The Youth President should adopt a hybrid approach to visiting local youth groups, in order to balance the benefits of in-person interaction with the cost (in terms of travel fares, working hours and environmental impact) of travel.
  - vi. The role of Youth President should continue to be offered as a one-year post. This recommendation is proposed in order to maintain the current budget, ensure a diversity of new candidates bringing different skills and vision each year into the post and to safeguard the wellbeing of the post holder.
  - vii. The role of the Youth President should continue to be recruited in the same manner. Specifically, with a written application and interview, followed by an election at the same time as 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly. The task group notes the imperfect system of electing a paid employee of the Council, but this is still felt to be the best recruitment method for this role. The Connexional Team should amend the interview process to ensure that there is consultation with under 12s, under-18s and under-23s.
  - viii. Standing Order 250 should be amended so that all children and young people within the life of the Methodist Church are eligible to vote in all 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, elections, including but not limited to the election of the Youth President.

### Future areas of work

19. The task group commends the way that young people continue to be involved in the development of this role, and notes the following as potential areas for future work:
- i. Work around the relationship between the Youth President and the Global Church, particularly in light of the Global Church Youth Representative roles.

- ii. Work around the role of the Youth Representatives, in particular their relationship to the Youth President.
- iii. Work to review Standing Order 250 in its entirety, in light of this report, the development of the role of District Ambassador, and the development of the Youth Representatives.
- iv. Work to consider how to enable Ex-Youth Presidents to have a role within the life of the Church and 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**18/1. The Council receives the report.**

**18/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed changes to the Youth President role outlined in paragraph 18 of this report.**

## **Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion 2019/201**

### **Notice of Motion 2019/201: Review of the role of Youth President**

The Conference notes the positive impact of the 2008 Youth Participation Strategy, especially the position of the Youth President. The Methodist Church, 3Generate and the Connexional Team have gone through an enormous amount of change in the past 11 years.

Recognising these changes, the Conference directs the Methodist Council to appoint a task group (to include at least 1 past Youth President, 1 past President or Vice-President of the Conference, 1 local youth worker, 1 former youth representative, 1 current youth representative and 2 other persons):

1. in consultation with 3Generate and former Youth Presidents to review the job description, person specification and other relevant aspects of the role of Methodist Youth President, and to present recommendations on how to develop the role for the next decade.
2. to report and bring recommendations to the Methodist Conference no later than 2021.

## **Appendix 2 – a copy of the questionnaire available online and via the 3Generate app to survey children and young people**

An introductory video preceded the questionnaire, featuring current Youth President Phoebe Parkin explaining briefly the role of the Youth President and that a review was being undertaken. A copy of the video is available on request from Ella Sibley-Ryan, Projects Officer, [Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:Sibley-RyanE@methodistchurch.org.uk)

1. How old are you?
  - a. under 8 years old
  - b. 8-11
  - c. 12-15
  - d. 16-17
  - e. 18-23
  - f. 23+
2. Did you know what the current job of the Methodist Youth President was before watching that video?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Mostly
  - c. A little
  - d. No
3. Was there anything in that video that surprised you?
  - a. [comment box]
4. Which of these past Youth Presidents have you met with outside of a 3Generate gathering? (For example, they might have visited your church or district, or you might have seen them at another event.) [a photo of the person accompanied each option]
  - a. Michael
  - b. Jasmine
  - c. Thelma
5. How important are the following tasks for the Youth President? [respondents could rate the following from 1-10, with 1 representing “not at all important” and 10 representing “very important”]
  - a. Being the voice for young Methodists both within and outside of the Church.
  - b. Representing children and young people at official church meetings.
  - c. Travelling around the country meeting with, listening to, and encouraging children and young people.
  - d. Hosting the 3Generate gathering each year.
  - e. Having a theme for the year or running a project.
6. What’s the best thing about having a Methodist Youth President?
  - a. [comment box]
7. What would you like to change about the job of the Methodist Youth President?
  - a. [comment box]
8. Do you have anything else to say about the Youth President’s job?
  - a. [comment box]
9. We are thinking of changing the name of this job. Do you have any suggestions about what we should call the elected representative of 3Generate?
  - a. [comment box]
10. Do you think Methodist children and young people should get to vote for the Youth President or should it be an appointed role decided by an interview panel?
  - a. children and young people vote in an election
  - b. interview panel appoint the Youth President
11. The Youth President is currently based in London, do you think this is the best place for them?
  - a. Yes
  - b. Not sure / maybe

c. No

12. Considering all that you know about the role of Youth President, what would interest you in applying and standing as a candidate for Youth President?

a. [comment box]

13. Considering all that you know about the role of Youth President, what would prevent you from applying and standing as a candidate for Youth President?

a. [comment box]