

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee's recommendation for amending Standing Order 210(1)(iv) and (ix) and (2)(a)

Contact name and details	The Revd Stephen Poxon – Chair of the EDI Committee stephen.poxon@btopenworld.com
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>46/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>46/2. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 210(1)(iv) be amended as follows: one representative of each home District, being either a lay person or a minister (other than a district Chair), appointed nominated in accordance with clause (2)(a) below;</p> <p>46/3. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 210(1)(ix) be amended as follows: two representatives, not being members of the Connexional Team, representing the concerns of racial justice equality, diversity and inclusion;</p> <p>46/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 210(2)(a) be amended as follows: The persons appointed under head (iv) of clause (1) above shall be nominated by their respective Synods for a period of four years, having regard to age, sex and ethnic origin, and being in each case a person who would be entitled under Standing Order 417(1) to be a representative of that District to the Conference...</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To amend Standing Order 210(1)(iv) and (ix) and (2)(a)
Main Points	The report covers considerations in reviewing the Standing Order
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	The 2017 Council report to the Methodist Conference; Methodist Council, part 1, Section H EDI representation at the Conference MC/14/51 – 'The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and Architecture'

Summary of Impact

Legal including impact on other jurisdictions	The Methodist Church needs to be alert to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
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The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee's recommendation for amending Standing Order 210(1)(iv) and (ix) and (2)(a)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Since 2015, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has had the responsibility for making nominations to the Council for persons to fulfil SO 102(1)(i)(g) and 210(1)(ix) and analysing and monitoring the impact of both these Standing Orders. The 2017 Conference affirmed the EDI Committee's recommendation to amend SO 102(1)(i)(g) as follows:

Six persons representing the concerns of ~~racial justice~~ **equality, diversity and inclusion, at least two of whom shall represent the concerns of racial justice and** at least two of whom shall be under the age of 26 **at the date fixed for the commencement of the Conference.**

- 1.2 SO 210(1)(ix) is the equivalent SO for the Council and currently reads:

two representatives, not being members of the Connexional Team, representing the concerns of racial justice;

2.0 Considerations

- 2.1 The rationale for amending SO 210(1)(ix) is the same as that for the amendment to SO 102(1)(i)(g). Though not formally designated as such, the appointment of two persons representing the concerns of racial justice could be seen as a 'positive action' initiative under the Equality Act 2010. In practice, apart from since 2016, only individuals who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) have served in these roles and their presence has helped to ensure the diversity of the representatives at the Methodist Council.
- 2.2 At the time of its inception this may have been seen as a good start in beginning to tackle the thorny issue of diversity and inclusion at the Methodist Council. However, the EDI Committee now believes that this sole focus on ethnicity skews the ethnicity data for the Methodist Council hiding the challenges it faces with regard to inclusivity.
- 2.3 In reaching its conclusion the EDI Committee considered the following information: apart from since the 2016 Council, over the past twelve years most of those representing the concerns of racial justice at the Methodist Council came from the same pool of people (see Appendix 1). So to some extent if this was a positive action initiative then the impact for BAME individuals has been limited. Also, the focus on racial justice as a connexional process may have inadvertently hindered some Districts from identifying BAME individuals through the process for nominated district representatives.
- 2.4 The EDI Committee concludes that rather than the current focus on targeting single protected characteristics, the focus needs to shift to the wider question of; what needs to change so that the Methodist Council becomes diverse and inclusive and hence truly representative of the Church's composition? The EDI Committee will continue to support the Methodist Council in progressing

this. However, the EDI Committee recognises the importance of racial justice in its own right and is working on the action plan identified in the 2017 Conference report 'The Unfinished Agenda',¹.

2.5 SO 417/(2), which pertains to the district representatives to the Conference reads as follows:

Subject to clause (2B) below the election shall be made by the Synod by ballot vote after nomination. In electing such representatives members of the Synod shall have regard for the composition of the membership of the District as a whole with regard to age, sex and ethnic origin.

The EDI Committee recommends that the SO relating to the Council is brought into line with this and that a similar amendment should be made to SO 210(1)(iv) and (2)(a) to encourage Districts to have regard to age, sex and ethnic origin when nominating representatives to the Council.

2.6 In recommending these amendments, the EDI Committee is signaling that the issue of diversity and inclusion at the Council is a mainstream issue rather than an issue that is only pertinent for protected groups. This revision will ensure that the Council is in concordance with the current EDI architecture and the EDI Theological Underpinning. For further information see:
<http://www.methodist.org.uk/for-ministers-and-office-holders/guidance-for-churches/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

***RESOLUTIONS

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one representative of each home District, being either a lay person or a minister (other than a district Chair), ~~appointed~~ **nominated** in accordance with clause (2)(a) below;

46/3. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 210(1)(ix) be amended as follows:

two representatives, not being members of the Connexional Team, representing the concerns of ~~racial justice~~ **equality, diversity and inclusion**;

46/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that Standing Order 210(2)(a) be amended as follows:

The persons appointed under head (iv) of clause (1) above shall be nominated by their respective Synods for a period of four years, **having regard to age, sex and ethnic origin, and** being in each case a person who would be entitled under Standing Order 417(1) to be a representative of that District to the Conference...

¹ The 2017 Conference report 27 Methodist Council, section N.

Appendix 1.

Those representing the concerns of racial justice at the Methodist Council

2006-2007

- 57. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo (2005-2007)
- 58. The Revd Paul Nzacahayo (2005-2007)

2007-2008

- 56. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo
- 57. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2008-2009

- 55. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo
- 56. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2009-2010

- 55. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo
- 56. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2010-2011

- 55. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo
- 56. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2011-2012

- 56. Mrs Nwabueze Nwokolo
- 57. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2012-2013

- 54. The Revd Olufemi Cole-Njie
- 55. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2013-2014

- 54. The Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie
- 55. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2014-2015

- 54. The Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie
- 55. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2015-2016

- 54. The Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie
- 55. The Revd Dr Joseph Basappa Suray

2016-2017

- 55. The Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie
- 56. The Revd Stephen J Poxon

2017-2018

- 54. The Revd Olufemi R W Cole-Njie
- 55. The Revd Stephen J Poxon