

“Participation does not simply mean ‘taking part’ or ‘being present’. It is about people having involvement. It means that young people should be involved in shaping and making their Church.” (YPS Steering Group Report 2008).

The Youth Participation Strategy aims to equip young people both inside and outside the church. This strategy will develop the way young people are involved and engaged, thus creating the potential to reinvigorate and change the church at all levels.

1. Current Situation

1.1 During the initial recruitment exercise conducted throughout September, October and November 2008, it was not possible to appoint anyone to the Connexional Team positions of Youth Participation Development Officer or Regional Youth Participation Workers. As a direct consequence the implementation of the strategy had to be revised.

1.2 An external recruitment company was appointed to review and manage the appointment process for the Participation Development Officer. Adverts were placed in *Children and Young People Now* and the *Guardian* throughout January 2009, along with a process of directly contacting potential candidates. By the closing date of the 9th February 2009 a total of 49 formal applications had been received. Initial interviews were conducted by the recruitment agency and a shortlist of final candidates agreed. Interviews were held on the 16th March 2009 and Jude Levermore

was appointed to the post from the 1st June 2009.

This position is essential, as the officer will:

- ∞ Manage the recruitment process of Regional Participation Workers;
- ∞ Negotiate directly with Districts and regions about how the Youth Participation Strategy will operate – particularly in relation to role, line-management and employment arrangements;
- ∞ Direct the working groups focusing on the theological reflection and participation of children.

1.3 The absence of the Youth Participation Development Officer and the Regional Youth Participation Workers prompted revisions to the role and appointment processes for District Youth Enablers for the Connexional years 2008-09 and 2009-10.

2008-2009

Information relating to the Youth Participation Strategy and the employment opportunities was distributed to young people via Breakout 2008, the Conference of the Association of Black Methodist Youth, some District Synod Secretaries and Youth Conference 2008. Eight interim District Youth Enablers were appointed

46. Youth Participation Strategy

for the period 23rd January 2009 – 31st August 2009. It was decided that for this initial period these eight should work to a Connexional remit rather than in a District based role.

These young people assist with:

- ∞ Recruitment processes;
- ∞ Promotion of the Youth Participation Strategy;
- ∞ Development of District Youth Enabler role and support structures;
- ∞ Development of the Youth Participation Strategy, Youth Assembly and Breakout.

The Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District and the Wales Synod each appointed District Youth Enablers financed via District budgets. These young people have accessed connexional training and support where appropriate and have been a great addition to the Strategy in this initial stage.

2009 – 2010

The Youth Participation Development Officer was recruited and inducted into the post during June 2009 and the Regional Youth Participation Workers will be recruited and inducted into their posts by 1st January 2010. They will not have been able to work with Districts on the creation of District Youth Enabler placements. It is therefore recommended that additional interim arrangements be implemented, building on the experience to date. These include:

- ∞ The appointment of between six and

eight young people to develop the work on Connexional priorities. These appointments would be for the period 1st September 2009 – 31st August 2010 and;

- ∞ The appointment of between six and eight young people to work within specific projects within Districts (funded as part of the Youth Participation Strategy budget).

Young people who have already been part of the Strategy (working either within a District or in the Connexional Team) may reapply.

Districts wishing to appoint a District Youth Enabler will need to demonstrate that appropriate placement opportunities exist and that personnel able to offer support are in place.

This approach has significant benefits in that it:

- ∞ **Allows young people to advocate the strategy to their peers**
- ∞ **Ensures that young people are involved in all aspects of the development and implementation of the Youth Participation Strategy**
- ∞ **Allows proper consultations to be held with Districts**
- ∞ **Enables continuity of the Strategy**

1.4 A Children's Participation worker has been appointed to develop models that promote the participation of children. This has led to significant conversations with potential partners: Action for Children, The Children's Society and 11 million

(the organisation of the Children's Commissioner for England). Learning has been shared and proposals submitted for the creation of a children and youth friendly space/ room within Methodist Church House. Work is also under way to offer a training programme on participation to Connexional Team members.

2. Regional Participation Workers

2.1 It is the intention that Regional Participation Workers will be in post by 1st January 2010. The relationship between these staff members and the Regional Training Network Forums is critical and it is hoped that the Regional Participation Worker will be a recognised member of the Regional Training Network Forums. Consideration needs to be given to the line-management structures and the relationships with the Connexional Participation Development Officer and the Regional Training Network Forums.

Recruitment will be managed by the Participation Development Officer, ideally in partnership with a nominated person from the relevant Regional Training Network Forum. Additional assistance and support are being provided by the Connexional Team where required.

3. District Youth Enablers from September 2010

3.1 District Youth Enablers will be operating within Districts (a similar arrangement to that of District

Development Enablers). They will be employed for a maximum of 15 hours per week; 6 hours for connexional responsibilities, and 9 hours for district based work. This could be extended but funding would need to be provided by the District.

3.2 Formal line-management responsibility will reside with the Regional Youth Participation Workers. In addition it is hoped that each District Youth Enabler will have a local supervisor/ mentor with expertise and experience of the field of work they are undertaking. The Connexional Team will work in tandem with Districts to help identify these individuals. Arrangements need to be made to ensure appropriate induction, supervision and training of the District Youth Enablers. It is intended that a proportion of the 6 hours per week of connexional allocation is used for this purpose and that it is allocated accordingly.

3.3 District Youth Enablers must be aged between sixteen and twenty three years of age on the first day of employment. There is potential to develop District Youth Enabler placements and training as an alternative stream for young people desiring to leave formal education at 16 years in favour of vocational opportunities.

3.4 Each District Youth Enabler has an allocation of funding towards additional vocational training. The expectation is that courses will have a formal validation and would act as

46. Youth Participation Strategy

a pathway into a career or further training – i.e. access level.

It is hoped that the Regional Participation Worker and the Regional Training Officer will work together to develop the training opportunities and to manage the bursaries.

- 3.5 Recruitment of District Youth Enablers will be managed by the District working in partnership with Youth Participation Strategy staff.

It is hoped that each District will appoint a **'Youth Enabler recruitment coordinator'** who is responsible for:

- ∞ Selecting an appointments panel
- ∞ Liaising with Regional Training Officer to arrange training for the panel
- ∞ Coordinating the logistical elements such as advertising the position. Advice will be offered via the Children and Youth team.

This would greatly enhance the local development of the Strategy.

The District appointment panel will shortlist, set dates for interviews and, when District Youth Enablers are appointed, notify Development and Personnel at Methodist Church House who will be responsible for issuing contracts.

- 3.6 In preparation for the start of the District Youth Enablers employment it is hoped that the Connexional Team can work in partnership with

the Districts to identify places where District Youth Enablers could be placed.

4. Youth President

- 4.1 The 2008 Youth Conference appointed Sarah Malik as Youth President from 1st December 2008 – 31st August 2009.
- 4.2 Future Youth Presidents will serve from 1st September to 31st August. Interim arrangements required for the next Connexional Year are:

Youth Assembly 2009 will elect a Youth President for 1st December 2009 – 31st August 2010
Youth Assembly 2009 will elect a Youth President for 1st September 2010 – 31st August 2011

The response to a full-time Youth President has been very positive.

5. Glimpse into the Future

- 5.1 Further priorities of the Youth Participation Development Officer will be to:
- ∞ Review the remit of the reference group and to determine if alternative and more integrated models exist and if so whether they should be adopted.
 - ∞ Consider the composition of the reference group to ensure the needs of the Youth Participation Strategy and the Conference are

met.

- ∞ Ensure the appointment of an Equalities and Diversity officer. A priority aspect of the Strategy is the development of understanding of Equality and Diversity issues and the need for discussions concerning the relationship of the Strategy to the Association of Black Methodist Youth.

5.2 A promotional DVD has been produced with young people during July and August 2008. Copies have been sent to all Ministers and Circuits. Where this has been used we have had a positive response and we look forward to this being used as an effective tool for promotion of the Youth Participation Strategy.

5.3 Monitoring and evaluation processes are vital and, as such, are being

developed to record the experiences of District Youth Enablers, Districts and the Connexional Team. These will contribute to the ongoing shape and direction of the Youth Participation Strategy.

5.4 The first Youth Assembly will be held from 13th – 15th November 2009 at Ushaw College, Durham.

5.5 Breakout will be held at Cliff College from 9th – 11th July 2010.

It has been a slower start for the Youth Participation Strategy than had been anticipated. However, although still in its early stages, considerable progress has been made in developing and implementing this Strategy. We pray that in the months that lie ahead, the Youth Participation Strategy will offer opportunities for the whole church to be invigorated.

***RESOLUTION

46/1. The Conference received the Report.

46. Youth Participation Strategy

Methodist Youth Assembly

The Conference of 2008 suspended Standing Order 250 to give effect to the Youth Participation Strategy which was adopted by the same Conference. In light of work undertaken as part of the Strategy the Youth Conference will, from September 2009 be replaced by the Methodist Youth Assembly. The purpose of the assembly is to provide an opportunity within the Methodist Church to hear from and be informed by young people. The method of election to membership of the Assembly remains similar to that used for election of membership of the Youth Conference. The Assembly will report to the Conference. This requires some alterations to Standing Order 250 and these appear below. Further amendments to Standing Orders are necessary and these will be shown on the Order Paper.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

46/2. The Conference received the Report and authorised the establishment of a Methodist Youth Assembly to replace the Methodist Youth Conference.

46/2A. The Conference amended clause 14(2) of the Deed of Union [Membership of the Representative Session of the Conference] as follows:

(xA) representatives, as prescribed by Standing Orders, of a Methodist Youth Conference **Assembly** to be established in accordance with Standing Orders;

46/3. The Conference made the following amendments to Standing Order 250

250 Methodist Youth Conference Assembly.

(1) There shall be an annual Methodist Youth Conference **Assembly**.

(2) The Youth Conference **Assembly** exists to provide an opportunity within the Methodist Church for **to hear from and be informed by** young people to

- ~~(i) inform individuals and bodies about young people's views;~~
- ~~(ii) comment on policy and practice of the Methodist Church;~~
- ~~(iii) consider and express its conclusions on such matters of interest or importance to the Methodist Church as it may choose, especially social issues;~~
- ~~(iv) discuss especially, although not exclusively, these issues as they affect young people.~~

(3) Membership of the Youth Conference **Assembly in any connexional year** is open to any young person involved in the life of the Methodist Church and aged 13 years or over, but under **26 24** on the 1st September in the connexional year in which **first day of the**

Youth Conference **Assembly** is to meet.

(4) Each home District shall elect **annually** in accordance with Standing Order 417A two persons to be members of the Youth Conference **Assembly** who are members in the District and are ~~aged 13 years or over, but under 26 on the 1st September in the connexional year in which the Youth Conference is to meet.~~ **eligible for membership of the Youth Assembly under clause (3) above.**

(5) The Youth Conference **Assembly** may adopt and submit to the Methodist Conference, as it may think fit, resolutions **a report (which may include resolutions)** on any connexional subject. ~~These~~ **This** shall be printed in the Agenda or otherwise circulated to the Conference and shall become part of its business.

(6)(a) The Youth Conference shall elect the Methodist Youth Executive. This shall consist of

- (i) the Chair of the executive, being the person who was Chair Designate in the previous year;
- (ii) the Chair Designate, who will work alongside the Chair, and will be appointed Chair in the following year;
- (iii) the Youth President, being the person who was Youth President Elect in the previous year;
- (iv) seven additional members elected for two years in accordance with an election procedure approved by the Youth Conference;
- (v) the Secretary of the executive, being the person who was Secretary Designate in the previous year;
- (vi) the Secretary Designate, who will work alongside the Secretary, and will be appointed Secretary in the following year.

(b) The Youth Conference **Assembly** shall also elect the Youth President Elect, **who will become the Youth President from the start of the next connexional year.** He or she shall have the right to attend and speak at meetings of the executive but not to vote.

(c) Where a person who has been elected under the above sub-clauses to take office the following year becomes unable or unwilling to do so, the Youth Conference shall determine its own procedures for making an immediate election to that office and shall further determine whether and, if so, how to fill any vacancies which thereby arise in the membership of the Executive.

(d) **(b)** The persons eligible to be elected under sub-clauses (a) to (c) above shall be those who have registered, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Youth Conference **Assembly**, their intention to attend the Youth Conference **Assembly** at which the election is to take place.

(7) The members of the Youth Conference **Assembly** appointed under clause (4) above shall elect four members of the next Methodist Conference who are members of the

46. Youth Participation Strategy

Methodist Church and are aged 13 years or over, but under 26 **24** on the ~~1st September~~ in the connexional year in which ~~first day of~~ the Youth Conference **Assembly** meets. **They shall also nominate two representatives, similarly qualified, to be appointed by the Conference as members of the Methodist Council.**

(8) The Youth Conference **Assembly** shall have the power to regulate its own procedures and to make arrangements for its own next meeting.

(9) The Connexional Team is responsible for assisting the Youth Executive in the arrangements for the meetings of the Youth Conference **Assembly** and for providing any administrative services required **ensuring that the work of the Assembly is grounded in such proposals for a curriculum for children and young people as are from time to time approved by the Methodist Council.**

46/4. The Conference further amended Standing Orders and Guidelines by:

a) substituting 'Youth Assembly' for 'Youth Conference' wherever that phrase appears in the following instances:

S.O. 102(5) [representatives to the Conference]

S.O. 210(1)(viii) [representatives to the Methodist Council]

S.O. 410(1)(viii) [membership of District Synod]

S.O. 417A [District representatives to Youth Conference]

S.O. 48A4 [Districts with modified constitution]

Guidelines for District Synod [District Representatives];

b) amending S.O. 417A additionally as follows:

(4A) The secretary of the Synod shall notify to the ~~Methodist Youth Executive~~ **Connexional Team** the names of those elected ...

46/5. The Conference directed that, until the amendment of the Deed of Union contained in Resolution 46/2A above is confirmed, the Methodist Youth Assembly shall, for the purposes of clause 14(2)(xA) of the Deed, be treated as the Methodist Youth Conference there referred to.