

Purpose of this document

The Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity requires districts to appoint a district EDI Officer but districts have leeway to make their own decisions about how this role will work in their own context. Districts have the leeway to prioritise the work according to local need and structures. This connexional guidance is intended to support District Policy Meetings in setting the agenda and ethos of the work of their EDI Officers.

Background

1. Since the 2021 Conference adopted the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, districts have begun to appoint EDI Officers (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion), based on the draft Role Description which was given as part of the Conference report. All but five of the districts have a named EDI contact person (usually appointed as EDI Officer) and all of those districts are actively considering how to appoint somebody appropriate or to share this role with a neighbouring district where districts are already working together for future re-organisation purposes.
2. More recently, some circuits have also begun to appoint circuit EDI Officers.
3. Many districts already had District Disability Advisers (DDA) and some had District Racial Justice Secretaries (RJS). In these cases, DDA and RJS have been involved in the conversation about the way forward and are being encouraged to work with others as part of the work for JDS.
4. Many districts are developing EDI teams or ‘communities of practice’ around EDI issues, drawing on those who are Expert By Experience.
5. Regular ‘Open Sessions’ about the role of EDI Officer are held on-line.
6. In many districts and regions the Learning Network have provided EDI support for this role and work. The Learning Network have begun to identify LN staff with EDI expertise and two ‘JDS leads’ have been agreed. The Learning Network gathering has also given specific time to EDI issues and to the implementation of the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity
7. A connexional contact list of EDI Officers is held in the Conference Office and mailings have been sent out offering resources and updates.
8. The EDI Officers are invited to six gatherings each year, for networking, mutual support, updates and training. These gatherings have varied in attendance from six to 24 people.

From these gatherings it has been obvious that training for the role is needed and would be welcomed.

### Connexional Guidance

- a) Safer recruitment will apply as in all areas of church life.
- b) An open session about the role should be held by the district or attended (where connexional ones are on offer) and open recruitment should be used to appoint EDI Officers
- c) A Role Description and Person Specification should be provided (whether for paid or voluntary appointments). This should include agreement about accountabilities, length of appointment, supervision or line-management, the committees which the EDI Officer should relate to, and an explanation of how the EDI Officer will have an input to the work of the district/circuit.
- d) The Role Description can vary according to the needs of the district/circuit, and can be shared between EDI teams, but should include responsibility for the elements of the draft below
- e) The Person Specification needs to include the elements in the draft below.
- f) EDI Officers should only be appointed if they are willing to undertake training as appropriate in relation to their previous experience.

### DRAFT Role Description for the role of EDI Officer

1. To support churches/circuits/districts in the implementation of the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity, including keeping in touch with the EDI Officers' network for connexional information and guidance.
2. To assist the development of strategy and policy-making, and decision-making within their sphere of church life, particularly by listening to the people worst effected by any bad practice.
3. To encourage and share and develop good practice and local innovation.
4. To agree who will 'sign off' any assessment that has been carried out in relation to various pieces of work.
5. To be aware of, and familiar with, the processes, tools and resources for use in this strategy and to share knowledge of them around the churches/circuits/districts.
6. To help the circuits/districts ensure that the mandatory EDI training is carried out by those in the appropriate roles, and to encourage a spirit of life-long learning about the diversity of human experience

7. To monitor whether churches and circuits are living out this Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity and to offer support, or to find support, where it is needed.
8. To work with others within the circuits/districts to form networks or 'communities of practice' to encourage a breadth and depth of experience from which is learn across all the rich diversity of Methodist life.

#### DRAFT Person Specification for the role of EDI Officer

- 1) Commitment to the aims and principles of the Conference 2021 Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity and to ability to advocate for this strategy.
- 2) Ability to uphold the Conference 2021 adoption of the God in Love Unites Us report and to relate positively to people who hold the different theological perspectives within it.
- 3) Awareness of self in relation to others and ability to have an open cultural conversation with someone of another culture.
- 4) Awareness of own limitations and biases, and willingness to continue to learn and to develop cultural literacy.
- 5) The ability to identify when others are putting their own expectations onto people or are judgmental towards other people's sense of identity.
- 6) The ability to identify, and address, behaviours and practices that are exclusory and are barriers to sharing and accessing the gospel.