

Youth Participation Strategy – Year 1

Basic Information

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	To approve
Draft Resolution	The Methodist Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. receives this report; b. notes that the difficulties in staff recruitment have required the amendment of the implementation of the Strategy as contained in the Conference 2008 report.
Alternative Options to Consider, if Any	

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	This report updates the Council on work undertaken on the Youth Participation Strategy since September 2008	
Main Points	This report summarises the progress made to date since the approval of the Youth Participation Strategy by Conference 2008, outlining the recruitment difficulties which have made it necessary for alteration to the initial implementation plan to be made.	
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	Youth Participation Strategy Report to Conference 2008	
Consultations	District Youth Enablers	

Summary of Impact

Standing Orders	None
Faith and Order	None – ongoing work will be taken forward in collaboration with the Faith & Order Committee
Financial	None
Personnel	None- ongoing work with Development & Personnel will result in the necessary appointments being made
Legal	None
Wider Connexional	Updates the wider Connexion on the work of the Strategy and explains the need there has been for alterations to the Year 1 implementation.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None
Risk	None

Conference Report – Youth Participation Strategy March 2009

“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, it was not possible to appoint anyone to the Connexional positions of Participation Development Officer or Regional Participation Workers. As a direct consequence the implementation of the strategy has needed to be revised.

1.2 An external recruitment company has been 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, along with a process of head hunting. By the closing date of the 9th February 49 formal applications had been received. Initial interviews were then conducted by the recruitment agency and a shortlist for final interviews has been agreed. Interviews will be held on the 16th March and 23rd March. Inevitably there will be a notice period to be served by the appointed person, thus the extent to which they will be able to provide an initial lead and direction remains unclear.

1.3 Eight Youth Enablers were recruited (interim Jan – Aug 2008) to assist with:

- Recruitment processes
- Promotion of the YPS
- Development of DYE role and support structures
- Development of the Youth Participation Strategy, Youth Assembly and Breakout.

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*. 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 underway to offer a training programme on participation to all Connexional Team members.

2. Regional Participation Workers

2.1 It is still our intention that Regional Participation Workers will be appointed before the summer. 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. Line-management will be through the Connexional Participation Development Officer with local support and direction offered via 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 being provided by the Connexional Team where required.

3. District Youth Enablers

3.1 District Youth Enablers will be operating within districts, (a similar arrangement to that of District Development Enablers). They will be employed 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. Arrangements need to be made to ensure appropriate induction, supervision and training of the District Youth Enablers. It is proposed that the 6 hours per week Connexional allocation is used for this purpose and is allocated accordingly.

3.2 Formal line-management responsibility will reside with the Regional 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 through the network of contacts.

3.3 District Youth Enablers must be of school leaving age to ensure compliance with current employment legislation. However school leaving age is due to be raised to 18 years. There is potential to develop DYE placements and training as an alternative stream for young people desiring to leave formal education at 16 years in favour of vocational opportunities. The age range is 16 – 23 years. District Youth Enablers must not be over the age of 23 on the 1st day of employment.

3.4 Each DYE has an allocation of funding towards additional vocational training. It could be arranged nationally or courses could also be identified locally. The expectation is that courses will have a formal validation and would act as 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 DYEs managed by the district working in partnership with Youth Participation Strategy staff. It is hoped that each district will appoint a **'recruitment coordinator'** who is responsible for:

- Selecting the 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 localisation of the strategy.

The district panel will shortlist, set dates for interviews and, when DYEs appointed, will notify development and personnel at MCH who will then send out contracts.

3.6 In preparation for the start of the DYE 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 (this could utilise the information gained from the research currently being conducted by the Connexional Youth Enablers).

4. Glimpse into the Future

- 4.1** The two initial priorities of the Participation Development Officer will be
- to review the remit of the reference group and to determine if alternative and more integrated models could be adopted. They will look at the make-up of the reference group to ensure that it meets the requirements of what conference agreed.
 - ensure an 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
- 4.2** A promotional DVD has been produced with young people during July and August 2008. Copies have been sent to all ministers and circuits in the last week. 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 strategy.
- 4.3** Monitoring and evaluation processes are vital and, as such, are being developed to record the experiences of DYE's, Districts and the Connexional Team. These will contribute to the ongoing shape and direction of the Youth Participation Strategy.

Although still in its early stages, considerable progress has been made in developing and implementing this strategy. In the months that lie ahead, the Youth Participation Strategy will offer opportunities which will invigorate the whole church.