

## Review of Part 11 (Complaints and Discipline)

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	Information
<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To update the Council on progress being made with this project.

### 1. Recommendation

- 1.1 To note this report and receive the update that will be provided after the stakeholder event on 14 January 2021.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1 This paper outlines the progress being made with the Review of Part 11 (Complaints and Discipline). No decisions are required from the Methodist Council at this stage and the report is provided to ensure the Council has continuing oversight over the process. A further report will be provided to the Methodist Council in March.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Conference is committed to a Review of Part 11 of the Standing Orders further to having agreed to a Notice of Motion at the 2019 Conference (NoM 2019/202 refers):

Notice of Motion 2019/202: Reviewing Part 11 of Standing Orders: In the light of the significant changes, both in UK society and for the Methodist Church of Great Britain since our Standing Orders regarding complaints and discipline were drawn up, the Conference directs the Methodist Council to set the terms of reference for, and facilitate the work of a thorough review of Part 11 of our Standing Orders. This review should include and address how processes of Safeguarding, Complaints and Discipline, and Connexional Team Grievances, can best relate to each other.

The Conference seeks a set of processes that are able to be enacted in timescales that are fair for all concerned and that are appropriate to the capacity, resources and size of the Methodist Church of Great Britain as it is today.

- 3.2 Subsequently, the Methodist Council in October 2019 agreed the Terms of Reference for the Review and a brief was produced. This was informed partly by a consultation undertaken with the Connexional Leaders' Forum (CLF) who completed questionnaires. The Law and Polity Committee has oversight of this Review as this falls under their purview and, whilst some preliminary work had been done, work on this Review had not been able to progress far.
- 3.3 Our participation in the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) last year also focused a spotlight on our complaints and discipline processes, which were criticised in evidence given to the Inquiry.
- 3.4 Work on this Review is now progressing and Richard Hood (formerly Interim General Counsel & Company Secretary) has remained engaged in the work of the Church to help project manage this work, on a part-time basis, to ensure that we have capacity to make good progress.

#### **4. Analysis**

- 4.1 This is a significant piece of work that needs to be done well (or not at all). It is integral to the functioning of the Church and the conduct of its members. There is a need to deliver a Review that will strengthen the Part 11 Process and address the practical issues that are being recognised to exist.
- 4.2 The original Notice of Motion is relatively vague and potentially nebulous about what would fall within the scope of such a Review. Subsequent work done in consulting the CLF, producing a terms of reference and brief has provided more detail and this all serves as good preparatory work for the Review.
- 4.3 However, to take this work forward as a (formal) project that can be properly managed, there needs to be a clear business case and description of the outcome we are looking to reach. This will address the fundamental questions of:
- What the issues are that we are looking to address (ie, what are the current problems?); and
  - What we are looking to achieve (ie, what the solution (our ideal complaints scheme) looks like).
- 4.4 Without this, we would be in danger of embarking on a project that is not focused on reaching a desired outcome.

#### **5. Progress Update**

- 5.1 All the preliminary work done over the last 18 months has been carefully reviewed.
- 5.2 An open forum of key stakeholders will be held on 14 January to enable a facilitated discussion about Part 11, exploring the issues and clarifying what is to be delivered. The key stakeholders have been carefully selected to ensure that there is good representation of a range of viewpoints and to ensure diversity. All participants in the event have been asked to provide preliminary comments.
- 5.3 Facilitation of the event is being provided by Katie Bradley of Place for Hope. Her work on introducing mediation overlaps significantly with the Review that we are doing.
- 5.4 Separately, input from survivors' groups and in complaints' teams is being obtained to feed into the 14 January event.
- 5.5 In addition, a much wider group of people involved in the Part 11 process has been consulted to increase the research evidence base.
- 5.6 The outcome of all of this will be a project business case that will provide clarity on those fundamental questions around what actually are issues that we are looking to address and what we are looking to achieve (see also 4.3 above). The resultant business case then underlines the sense of purpose and any compelling case for change.
- 5.7 The intention is then to break the resulting tasks coming out of the 14 January event into separate work-streams that can be taken forward by individual groups of people and then brought back together to form a collective set of recommendations for the 2021 Conference to consider. A further progress report will be made to the March Council.

#### **6. Governance**

- 6.1 A steering group, including the Revds Stephen Lindridge (a signatory to Notice of Motion 2019/202) and Helen Cameron, has been established to provide oversight and impetus for this project, which is being carefully project managed.
- 6.2 Care has been taken to engage with key stakeholders in the process and the help of Prof Diane Rowland and the Revd Andrew Goodhead of the Complaints and Discipline Sub-Committee has been greatly appreciated.

- 6.3 Once this business case is agreed, the project can be broken down into separate tasks (or work streams) for different sub-groups to work on. These tasks would be readily identifiable from the business case and allow groups to go away and do work that then forms part of a whole project. This has the dual advantage of dividing the project into manageable portions that can be progressed in parallel to other tasks and, secondly, of involving and engaging with a wide group of people who will feel that they have ownership of this work.
- 6.4 Finally, we are aware that other faith groups, most notably the Church of England, are undertaking their own, similar reviews and so we will embrace any opportunities to learn from others' work.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**14/1. The Council receives the report.**