

# Positive Working Together

MC/22/74

Date of meeting	17-18 October 2022
Contact name and details	Richard Armiger, Director of Learning and Development, <a href="mailto:armigerr@methodistchurch.org.uk">armigerr@methodistchurch.org.uk</a>
Action required	For approval
Resolutions	74/1. The Council receives the report. 74/2. The Council directs the Director of Learning and Development, working with others, to take the work forward as described within the report.
Any alternative options to consider	None proposed.

## Summary of content

Subject of aims	To agree how to take forward the work required for the Memorial to Conference 2022 M15 – Positive Working Together.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Background</b> The report details the contents, proposals and response to the Memorial to Conference 2022 M15 – Positive Working Together.</li> <li>• <b>Proposed way forward</b> The report outlines the way in which the various aspects of the work required following on from M15 – Positive Working Together can be taken forward.</li> </ul>
Background context and relevant documents (with function)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Working Together Guidelines (<a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21200/positive-working-together-long-report-0615.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/21200/positive-working-together-long-report-0615.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• Positive Working Together A Short Guide (<a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/4290/positive-working-together-short-report-0715.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/4290/positive-working-together-short-report-0715.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• Methodist Council Papers – Positive Working Together MC/15/37 (<a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1713/coun-mc15-37-positive-working-together-april-2015.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/1713/coun-mc15-37-positive-working-together-april-2015.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• Methodist Conference Reports 2015 – 40: Positive Working Together (<a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2015-40-Positive-Working-Together.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf-2015-40-Positive-Working-Together.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• Memorial to Conference 2022 – M15 Positive Working Together (<a href="https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/26074/conf-22-memorials-to-the-conference.pdf">https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/26074/conf-22-memorials-to-the-conference.pdf</a>)</li> </ul>
Consultations	This report directly follows up on M15 Positive Working Together, Memorial to Conference 2022

## Summary of impact

Standing Orders	There is work required to consider changes to Standing Orders within Section 11 – Complaints and Discipline. These are to be considered alongside the review of Section 11. Any such changes will be brought
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	back to the Methodist Council once the work required has been completed.
Wider connexional	Encouragement for churches and circuits to engage, re-engage with Positive Working Together
External, including ecumenical	Ongoing work with Place for Hope in support of Positive Working Together (and the Reconciliation and Mediation Team Pilot Project, which will report to Council, with a review of the project and recommendations on the future of the project, in March 2023)
Risk	The risks of the proposed action are minimal as the work involved is in many ways a progression of work already underway by members of the Connexional Team and wider church.

## 1. Background

1. The memorial M15 – Positive Working Together was presented at the 2022 Conference.
2. Memorial M15 – Positive Working Together:

The Birmingham (5/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 60; Voting: unanimous), draws the Conference's attention to both Positive Working Together and the 2015 Methodist Conference Report to Conference 40. Positive Working Together and asks the Conference to take the following action:

- a. To signpost people to the anti-bullying policy in the current Safeguarding policy.
- b. To ensure there is work done to include anti-harassment in Policy (as indicated in Positive Working Together and in the Conference 2015 Report).
- c. To revisit the layout of Positive Working Together and make clearer the Shared Commitment to ensure it is distinct and easy to access and use (it is currently among other text on pages 11-12 of the Positive Working Together booklet).
- d. To change the status of The Shared Commitment from being 'guidance' to being the expected behaviour of every person in Methodist Church life.
- e. To make accessible resources more easily available and for it to be clear that every person in church life can be enabled to use Positive Working Together to help create a safe and more inclusive church community.
- f. For the Shared Commitment to be recognised by every Church Council, to be part of Role Descriptions, and used alongside/integrated with Safeguarding training and documentation.
- g. To integrate the Shared Commitment from Positive Working Together into other Conflict Resolution courses being used in the Methodist Church.
- h. To include Positive Working Together in the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church.

## Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham Circuit Meeting for drawing attention to the work on Positive Working Together and the 2015 Methodist Conference Report Positive Working Together (Agenda Item 40).

The memorial highlights the need for ongoing work as the church continues to encourage and develop engagement with Positive Working Together so as to enable all those who are part of the church community to live well with difference.

The Birmingham Circuit is thanked for its support and its local implementation of Positive Working Together and in particular commends its work around The Shared Commitment.

The Conference is aware that work is already underway within the Learning Network to offer a regular pattern of Positive Working Together training opportunities, across the Connexion, through Growing through Change and Conflict, Responding to Bullying and Harassment and Spirituality, Scripture and Conflict alongside Faith in Change and Conflict, which is run in partnership with Place for Hope and Cliff College and offered as a Cliff Certificate course. It is believed that this approach will offer greater accessibility to resources. The Shared Commitment will be produced as a standalone document, from the full report, made available on the Methodist Church website and directly referred to within these training resources.

The Conference believes that the work of the group reviewing Section 11 Complaints and Discipline of CPD will be able to incorporate the inclusion of Positive Working Together within Standing Orders as part of its ongoing work. The Conference believes that the incorporation of Positive Working Together in Standing Orders together with the Commitments and Expectations proposed in Agenda Item 19 of the 2022 Conference, The Covenant Relationship between the Church and its Ministers: Commitments and Expectations, will change the status of The Shared Commitment from 'guidance' to being the expected behaviour of every person in Methodist Church life.

The Conference strongly encourages Churches and Circuits to adopt The Shared Commitment and to consider inclusion within Role Descriptions and its use alongside Safeguarding training and documentation.

The Conference recognises the existing work undertaken by the Safeguarding team to incorporate the anti-bullying policy within the overall Safeguarding Policy. The Safeguarding team is due to review the policy later this year and at that point will seek to include anti-harassment within the overall Policy.

The Conference recognises that further work is required to enable a greater engagement with Positive Working Together and therefore accepts the overall direction of the memorial and directs the Methodist Council to arrange how best to take this work forward.

3. The purpose of this report is to agree the way in which the work required in responding to M15 is to be taken forward.

## 2. Proposed way forward

1. As the reply to the memorial highlights, the work required is varied and involves a number of different parts of the Connexional Team to engage with this work. This report outlines how this work can be taken forward indicating the relevant part of the Connexional Team that will undertake the work if the Council so agrees.
2. The Learning Network is continuing to develop the work of Positive Working Together. It therefore is recommended that the Learning Network takes forward the following aspects for the memorial: M15 a, c, e, f (working with the Safeguarding team) and g. The Learning Network will update the Positive Working Together pages of the Methodist Church website to reflect the work undertaken.
3. The response to the memorial indicates that the Safeguarding team will be able to undertake the work involved to include 'anti-harassment policy' (M15 b) as part of the overall review of the Safeguarding Policy during 2022-23. The revised policy will be presented to the Safeguarding Committee, Methodist Council and Methodist Conference for approval.
4. M15 d and h will be taken forward by the Conference Office as part of the ongoing Part 11 review enabling the relevant aspects of Positive Working Together Guidelines to be incorporated into Standing Orders.
5. The Council is asked to consider this proposed way forward for this work to be completed.

### \*\*\*RESOLUTIONS

**74/1. The Council receives the report.**

**74/2. The Council directs the Director of Learning and Development, working with others, to take the work forward as described within the report.**