

# Paper B1

## Update and Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme

### Children's and Youth Work Committee

#### Basic information

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<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive commends the new Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme as an award to be made by children's and youth work committee on behalf of the denomination to synods completing the approval process.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update and creation of Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme.
<b>Main points</b>	Messy church research update, Pilots affiliation update, proposal for new Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	B1 Mission Council November 2019 CYWC Update B1 Mission Council March 2020 Children and Youth Friendly Church Scheme B1 General Assembly 2021 URC Children and the future of Pilots.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	CYDO+ team Clerk to General Assembly Synod Moderators.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Consultation required with the Congregational Federation.

## 1. Messy Church research update

A two year research project to discover 'how can we enable local churches to enhance Messy Church practice for discipleship development' was approved in November 2019, to involve the CYDO+ team supporting local churches through appreciative inquiry and action research to develop, capture and disseminate innovation and effective practice. This was to run parallel to a larger study being undertaken by the Church of England. £36,000 funding over two years was approved by Mission Council to cover the costs of Lucy Moore's time, gatherings for the Messy Church teams, publishing findings with a launch event, plus additional team costs incurred conducting the research.

After a very positive start, with 18 Messy Church groups engaging with the process, the pandemic brought the work to a halt. The CYDO+ team, who were conducting the action-research with Messy Church groups, shifted their focus to supporting churches throughout the pandemic. This included some specific sessions for Messy Church group leaders over zoom, for which Lucy Moore kindly recorded a short video. Now that groups are starting to meet in person, their focus is very much on re-engaging with families and rebuilding volunteer teams, and so we have taken the decision not to resume the research process, as this would place an extra burden on groups at a difficult time.

None of the extra funding was used as we were able to fund the initial work from our normal budget.

The Church of England, who had started earlier and gave Messy Church groups initiatives to try out, have produced a report ([www.messychurch.org.uk/deepening-discipleship](http://www.messychurch.org.uk/deepening-discipleship)). The URC research was smaller scale and about facilitating Messy Church groups to identify their own local approaches to deepening discipleship. A brief report will be produced, summarising the learning from the initial phase of the research before the end of 2021. There are currently no plans to resume this research.

## 2. Pilots companies – clarifying relationship to URC

It was identified in the recent Pilots Review that a couple of companies had continued after their local URC had closed. Children's and Youth Work Committee (CYWC) undertook at General Assembly 2021 to clarify potential issues around accountability and liability. After consultation with the Clerk to General Assembly, the CYWC agreed that ideally a Pilots company should have the oversight of a local URC church meeting and eldership. Where there is no obvious local URC church offering oversight, the company should approach the Synod Pilots Officer, or CYDO+, to see if oversight may be offered by another local URC church in the synod, or to explore if the synod is able to provide this oversight.

We are also aware that there is one remaining Pilots company based in a Congregational Federation member church. Issues of accountability for this group will be reviewed with the Congregational Federation. Pilots companies cannot affiliate without providing this information, and cannot be run by individuals independently.

We believe this should bring clarity to the concerns raised in the Review, and we will continue to reflect on best practice as a new future emerges for Pilots following the resolutions passed by General Assembly 2021.

## 3. Children and Youth Friendly Synod proposal

Following the replacement of the Child Friendly Church Award with the new Children's and Youth Friendly Church scheme in March 2020, this is being successfully rolled out by the CYDO+ team. Despite the pandemic, the first church was awarded their plaque earlier this year, and over 20 are now in process.

As a further development, CYWC are proposing a parallel Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme. In the same way that the Eco Church and Eco Congregation scheme offer the opportunity for synods to engage in environmental issues at a strategic level, the Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme would recognise and celebrate significant steps taken to include all ages in the life of the synod.

A synod can apply to join the scheme through their CYDO+ or directly to Church House. A CYDO+ from another synod will then be appointed to take the role of accompanier. They would meet with the synod and provide a booklet outlining the reflective process to journey through, before meeting with a group from the synod to reflect together on their engagement with children and young people and agree an action plan. The completed booklet, along with the action plan, and an outline 'pen portrait' of the synod's engagement with children and young people completed by the accompanier, would be submitted for approval by the Children's and Youth Work team.

A plaque stating 'This is a Children and Youth Friendly Synod' will be presented to the synod on behalf of CYWC. A record shall be kept of all synods approved by the scheme. The CYDO+ would keep in contact with the synod to review progress in relation to the action plan, and to prepare them for re-approval is appropriate after five years.