

Paper B1

Children's and Youth Work Committee
URC Youth Structures
and Guidelines

United Church 2015
Church 2015
Reformed Church 2015
Church 2015



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Children's and Youth Work Committee URC Youth Structures and Guidelines

Basic Information

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Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council agrees that all references to FURY in the Structure, and any other constitutional documents, shall henceforth be deemed to refer to 'URC Youth', and authorises that the name be formally updated in the documents next time they are changed.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	New structures and guidelines for the URC's work among young people.
Main points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) New structures and guidelines for the United Reformed Church Youth have been adopted by FURY Advisory Board (acting on behalf of the URC Youth Assembly) and accepted by the Children's and Youth Work committee. 2) The name 'FURY' is now superseded by 'United Reformed Church Youth' (or URC Youth) at an Assembly and synod level. 3) The FURY Advisory Board is re-formed as the URC Youth Executive, made up of members elected at Youth Assembly, members appointed by each synod, and co-opted members. 4) The Children's and Youth Work committee has accepted the URC Youth framework, which sets out topline information on the structures and guidelines, including the context behind the name change. The FURY Advisory Board has adopted the URC Youth Handbook, which sets out in much greater detail the operational structures and guidelines for the URC Youth, including the Youth Assembly and Youth Executive.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council October 2012 Papers F & F1.
Consultation has taken place with...	Youth Assembly 2015 FURY Advisory Board Children's and Youth Work committee Consultation via URC and URC Youth social media channels.

Summary of Impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

URC Youth Structures and Guidelines

1. The youth of The United Reformed Church, formerly termed 'FURY' (Fellowship of the United Reformed Youth), has a long and precious history. Following the restructuring of the Children's and Youth department (from 2012 to 2013), the opportunity to review the FURY structures arose. The Children's and Youth Work committee set up a task group in order to complete this work. It consisted of four committee members: Matthew Barkley (FURY Moderator 2014-15), Andrew Weston (FURY Moderator 2015-16), Stewart Cutler (Children's and Youth Development Officer) and Karen Morrison (Head of Children's and Youth Work Development). Philip Ray (Children's and Youth Work Development Officer) later joined this task group.
2. The task group began by researching the existing and historical structures and guidelines of FURY. Since the 2005 restructuring, however, there was little written policy to be found. An over reliance on an assumed knowledge of 'how things are always done' had been a major factor in the committee's decision to undertake a restructuring of FURY. It became apparent that the time was ripe for an intentional consideration of the FURY structures.
3. The term 'FURY' was used for around forty years, and it is no wonder that in time it has gained many positive associations – community, fellowship, the collective term for the young people of the URC. However, notwithstanding the emotional tie to the term felt by many of those historically involved, the consensus among those working at a Synod or Assembly level was that this term has become increasingly less well known among the young people currently aged 11-25 who are associated with the URC. It has also become associated with a small group of individuals, and has not included all young people connected to our churches (e.g. Pilots, Brigades, Guides, Scouts, youth groups etc.). Sadly, this has meant that the term 'FURY' has ceased to fulfil its purpose.
4. It is because of this exclusivity, perceived or otherwise, that the committee has decided that 'URC Youth' shall be used instead of 'FURY' as the collective term for young people connected to the URC and for the Assembly and synod level programmes for young people aged 11-25. This is not to undermine the very many positive things that have come from FURY at an Assembly and synod level over so many years, but to pave the way for future generations to develop meaningful relationships with Jesus Christ, one another, and the United Reformed Church.
5. The committee has been aware of the need for this name change for some time. It was first announced in our report to Mission Council in October 2012. For instance, since the renaming of FURY Assembly to Youth Assembly in the same year, the attendance of young people has grown considerably, both in numerical terms and in the diversity of backgrounds from around the denomination.
6. The first draft of these new structures and guidelines, which had been worked on by the committee and FURY Advisory Board, was presented to Youth Assembly 2015. It was subject to close scrutiny, and these proposals were subsequently shared widely via the URC Youth and URC social media channels/FURY website. Responses were invited. The task group continued its work, working closely with both FURY Advisory Board and the full committee, and drawing on the professional expertise of others.

7. The URC Youth Structures and Guidelines are now contained in three documents, which are available online as Mission Council papers and should be read together. The Committee has accepted the framework, and FURY Advisory Board have adopted the Handbook.
8. **Document 1: The URC Youth Framework**
This is the top line document which will act as a guide to the Youth Assembly and Youth Executive as to what is within their remit and authority. It will be owned by the Children's and Youth Work committee, to whom the Youth Assembly and Youth Executive are accountable. It's also this committee which is tasked by the General Assembly to be responsible for all things Children's and Youth in the URC, hence the fact the framework will be owned by them.
9. **Document 2: The URC Youth Handbook**
This is where the structures and guidelines are contained – the meat of what the URC Youth is and how it operates – which will be owned by the URC Youth Assembly. FURY Advisory Board scrutinised the Handbook and, acting on behalf of the Youth Assembly, unanimously agreed to adopt it in its entirety at its September 2015 meeting. It was agreed on the understanding that the November Mission Council and Youth Assembly 2016 will be informed of the newly adopted structures and guidelines, and it will be up to Youth Assembly from 2017 onwards to propose or agree any subsequent changes to the Handbook.
10. **Document 3: The URC Youth Assembly Standing Orders**
The Youth Assembly Standing Orders had been included in the Handbook, but it is now clear that they will serve us better in a separate document. They will be adopted at the beginning of each Youth Assembly.
11. The committee recognises there is still some important work to be done:
 - To formulate the new visual identity and website of URC Youth
 - To work with all synods in appointing and supporting new or current synod youth representatives to serve from Youth Assembly 2016 on the new Youth Executive
 - To communicate these changes with the wider church.
12. Although the pace of change has felt too slow for some, any process of change will involve some element of loss. The committee is confident in the benefits of these changes, and the potential which they seek to unlock but recognise that for some, this change will not be easy. Nonetheless, these changes:
 - Acknowledge that the common identity of URC Youth can be stronger, wider, and more inclusive
 - Acknowledge the privilege of experiencing community together as the URC Youth, and how incredibly important it is
 - Acknowledge that URC Youth recognises that it needs structures that enable and release, rather than disabling some and restricting others
 - Acknowledge that the URC youth are serious about being a powerful, passionate, prophetic part of the wider URC for many years to come: 'we are not the church of tomorrow - we are a crucial part of the body of Christ today'.