

Paper B1

Children's and Youth Work Committee

Update November 2017

United Church 2017
Church 2017
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Church 2017

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Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Jenny Mills (committee convenor) revdjmill@btinternet.com
Action required	None
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To inform Mission Council of the appointment of a Head of Children's and Youth Work Development and the thinking of the Children's and Youth Work Committee on current and future developments.
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Dr Sam Richards. • Future of Review of Children's and Youth Work in the URC. • Possibilities and potential of Children's and Youth Work Committee.
Previous relevant documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Children's and Youth Work Development Review Report, December 2016. • Children's and Youth Work Committee Minutes February and June 2017. • Mission Council Report from May 2017 relating to Children's and Youth Work Committee resolution.
Consultation has taken place with...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The General Secretary. • The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship). • The Children's and Youth Work Committee. • Education and Learning (the Revd Fiona Thomas). • 20s-40s Task Group (Victoria Paulding).

Summary of Impact

Financial	Currently unknown as HCYWD to start in post on 1 November. Costs related to full review to be met from the CYWC budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Potential for improved ecumenical links, engagement with other partners possible depending on the outcome of Review and actions of HCYWD.

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Staffing

1. It is with delight that we are able to report that, following interviews on 19 July 2017, we were able to appoint Dr Sam Richards as Head of Children's and Youth Work Development. Dr Sam Richards is a founder of the Institute for Children Youth & Mission, and as director of Oxford Youth Works, and Oxford CYM has been involved in training Christian youth and children's workers for more than 25 years. She is a member of mayBe community (an all-age fresh expression of church), and lives near Oxford with her husband, daughter and two cats. Her ministry brings a passion for enabling children and young people to experience, explore and express the Way of Jesus. We look forward to welcoming Sam into the Church House staff team and to all that she will bring to ministry among children and young people within the United Reformed Church.
2. We are pleased for our current Programme Officer, Simon Peters, as he has been appointed to the role of Walking the Way Project Manager and will start in this role in January 2018. However, we are sad that he is moving on as this is another change in the CYW department.
3. Often times of great change bring opportunities for new ideas and thinking. We pray this will be so in the CYW department.
4. As we move into this next phase of change and we welcome Sam into her new role, her first priority is to get to know the URC and the CYW structures and people involved.

Review

5. Once she is settled into the post, the CYW committee are keen for Sam to begin the full review, as recommended by the review into the post of HCYWD from December 2017. This latest review, as agreed at Mission Council in May 2017, will be a wide ranging review and one that is regarded as necessary. The main reasons for the necessity of the review relate to the massive budget cuts agreed by Mission Council and the restructure of the CYW department which were implemented 2013. The CYW programme was not reviewed or altered as a response at that time. The effects of these things have had an impact on the CYW department since then and now we need to develop a clear process for moving forward with this vital area of work within the Church, aware of the limitations all these changes have had.

Future role of CYW committee

6. Children and youth have so much to offer the wider URC, and the CYW committee are concerned that there is not as effective communication between committees and departments as there could be. We will be encouraging Sam to identify ways we can optimise our engagement with others to enable the voices of children and young people to be heard throughout the URC and as an integral part of all the initiatives being developed within the structures of the Church.
7. The current Children's and Youth Work committee have expressed concern about the use of the word 'Work' and are looking at how we can emphasise that we are involved in Ministry to children and young people, not work, and changes we may

need to make in response to this. We believe that children and young people are equal partners in the church and have so much to offer and just seeing what we do as 'work' implies a one way process.

8. At the first ever joint committee meeting (with Ministries and Education and Learning) in June 2017, and following a presentation by Education and Learning, we were encouraged to undertake an audit of the skills and gifts of the current Children's and Youth Work committee members. This information will help us to develop Task and Finish groups in specific areas of CYW and to maximize our ability to work effectively as a committee and to ensure that the CYW department can continue to offer the breadth and depth of CYW plus develop new ideas and thinking in response to the challenge of the world in which we find ourselves as we speak of the kingdom and seek to be Christ to the world.
9. From October 2017, all CYW committee meetings will now follow the pattern of most other committees in that they will have 24 hour meetings (Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon). This means that agendas need to be very focused but it also means that volunteers and ministers do not have to be away from home or church for a whole weekend. We are grateful to all who serve on the CYW committee.
10. The CYW committee has developed themes for the next three years and offers these to the wider Church. 2018: Pilgrimage, 2019: One Body and 2020: Common Ground.
11. URC Youth are a real asset to the URC and their enthusiasm is infectious. They were great advocates for the URC at this year's Greenbelt and are planning the Youth Assembly for 2018. These young people, as so many before them, have lots to offer and to contribute to the church now and in the future and it is important that we do not let them drift away once they reach 26. The work of the 20-40 Task Group ties in with this and we are pleased that this work is being done.
12. When not planning Youth Assembly (YA), Youth Executive (YE) is working hard at implementing resolutions passed at previous assemblies. Most notably, at the moment, work on regional (or individual synod) summer camps for young people and how they can be of great benefit to children and young people in their faith development and community-building. Furthermore, initial contact has been made with Mission and Communications committees following Paper B2 from May's council meeting. URC Youth remain passionate about tackling climate change and believe the church should be leading the way on this and encouraging local churches to get involved, and would appreciate further support and expertise in making this happen.
13. Finally, as convenor, I would like to offer a huge thank you to the Revd Tim Meachin for all his hard work in the role of convenor over the past 4 years; and to Simon Peters and Heather Wilkinson and Carole Sired, the Children and Youth Work department, and to Soo Webster, Pilots Management, for all they have done to keep CYW active and supported since Karen's leaving. Their commitment in difficult circumstances has been amazing and we are truly grateful for their hard work and dedication.

Big day out

14. This was overall a success. The fact it became a joint event for all ages and interests (not just Pilots led, as at the beginning) was a positive and any future event needs to have its brief clearly communicated from the outset. There were issues relating to the venue which affected worship, but the feedback was predominantly positive. Concern was expressed at CYWC about 'saving the date' for any future BDOs so that synod events do not clash and therefore affect numbers. See link for more details: <http://www.urch.org.uk/discipleship/childrens-and-youth/good-news-stories/2371-urch-big-day-out-organised-by-pilots-a-grest-success.html>