

Paper U1

Mission Council Advisory Group
Human Sexuality Task Group

United Reformed Church
2016



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Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The General Secretary john.proctor@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Recognising that the Human Sexuality Task Group appointed in 2012 has completed its work, Mission Council resolves to thank and discharge the members of the Group.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	As resolution.
Main points	The Group has fulfilled its remit, and helped the Church come to a decision on the largest specific matter within that remit
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council minute 12/35, of October 2012. General Assembly papers 2014, 2015 and 2016
Consultation has taken place with...	Convenor of HSTG

Summary of Impact

Financial	Minor saving
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Nil

Human Sexuality Task Group

1. The present group was set up by Mission Council in October 2012, in the context of a recent Assembly decision on civil partnerships and the prospect of new legislation on same-sex marriage.

2. The group's remit was as follows (quoting from Mission Council minute 12/35):

2.1 To raise awareness of the 2007 General Assembly Commitment, and to continue dialogue around the sensitive areas where members of the United Reformed Church acknowledge differences of view held in good faith.

2.2 To work together with the Law and Polity Advisory Group to ensure that advice and guidance is offered on the practical complexities that result from the present stance of General Assembly, not least in respect of its 2012 resolution on the registration of civil partnerships on religious premises.

2.3 To consider the issues arising from government proposals on 'marriage' between persons of the same gender and, in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee and the Law and Polity Advisory Group, to bring a report to Mission Council when appropriate.

3. The group reported to Mission Council in 2013, extensively and carefully to General Assembly in 2014, and again at length to General Assembly in 2015. The convenor advises that the group always saw its work in the context of recent and forthcoming legislation, and expected that its work would end, once the Church agreed a response to the 2014 legislation on same-sex marriage in England, Wales and Scotland.

4. The group's expectation for its life has therefore been fulfilled. It has done the three things it was set up to do. It is time for its members to be thanked and released. The resolution asks Mission Council to effect this.

5. In proposing the group's release, MCAG draws attention to the hard work, leadership, patience and care offered by members of the group, as they helped the Church come to terms with a number of important issues on which there are strongly-held and differing views. All of us are very deeply in their debt, and we name the members, in order that Mission Council may be aware of their contribution:

Elizabeth Caswell (convenor), Jacob Addo, Karen Campbell, John Hardaker, Val Morrison, Neil Riches, Justine Wyatt, and Alan Paterson (co-opted).

