

The remits and meeting frequency of the Assembly committees

Introduction

This document outlines the remits of the United Reformed Church's 11 standing committees and tells you how often they meet and how they communicate between meetings.

If you have names of those who might be suitable potential members for the Assembly committees, please contact the secretary of the nominations committee at nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk

Business

Remit:

- a. address such logistical questions as arise which the General Secretariat cannot resolve
- b. supervise the practical and business arrangements for the General Assembly and the Mission Council/Assembly Executive
- c. prepare an order of business embracing all the business known to be arising
- d. to advise the Moderator(s) on their official duties where required.

Communications

Remit: The communications department exists to promote effective communication and celebration of the Gospel in and beyond the URC by:

- Giving voice to good news
- Facilitating regional/national communications
- Supporting the communications of Church House departments and General Assembly
- Resourcing the local churches.

The committee meets twice a year – once in the spring and once in the autumn. Every second year the spring meeting is a 24-hour residential; that aside all meetings are held in Church House.

Children's and youth work

Children, young people and young adults are central to God's mission and Christ's church (Matt 18:1-14; 19:13-14).

Remit: the children's and youth work committee (CYWC) aims to support, encourage and promote work with children, young people and young adults (0-25 years old) at all levels of the Church.

At our meetings we focus on children's and youth work (CYW) in the URC through the work of the Head of CYW, the Children and Youth Development Officers (CYDOs), Youth Executive and Assembly, the ongoing work in local churches and collaborative work with other URC committees. We seek to provide opportunities for conversations, the sharing of good practice, opportunities to meet up and information sharing about improving current practice and our need to adhere to any legislation (e.g. safeguarding). More recently we have begun to meet with other committees in a bid to encourage more joined up thinking. As a committee we seek to grow our own understanding of the issues related to CYW and so have a session within our meeting that is focused on informing/teaching us. Between meetings we assign specific tasks to groups to report back at the following meeting. We also have a skills analysis that enables us to use our gifts and talents best as we work together to support CYW in the URC.

The CYWC meets three times a year, on each occasion for 24 hours (Friday afternoon-Saturday afternoon).

Education and learning

Remit: The education and learning committee maintains strategic oversight of adult learning in the United Reformed Church by liaison with relevant officers in synods and other Assembly committees; supporting Resource Centres for Learning; providing programmes such as Stepwise; and maintaining positive relationships with ecumenical partners. The committee supports the initial and ongoing professional development of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, Assembly-Accredited Lay Preachers, and other lay ministries including eldership.

The committee meets two-three times per year, sometimes residentially.

Equalities

Remit: The committee exists to develop detailed equalities policies and monitor their implementation, reporting to each General Assembly. It also has oversight of training programmes in equalities. Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolved that the remit of the equalities committee shall be to remind the United Reformed Church that equality is enshrined in its theology, life and work and to challenge the practice of the United Reformed Church where appropriate. This shall include:

1. Acting to assist in the development of equalities throughout the United Reformed Church within the context of a diverse society.
2. The monitoring of the Assembly's equal opportunities policy and proposing updates when appropriate
3. The promoting of training programmes in equality and diversity.
4. Promoting, supporting and encouraging the United Reformed Church's contribution to equality in the wider life of our society
5. Reporting to General Assembly.

The equalities committee does not expect to do all this on their own but will collaborate with others doing inclusion monitoring and working on equality and diversity.

The committee usually meet three times a year at Church House, plus virtual meetings by arrangement/as necessary.

Faith and order

Remit:

- To address issues of faith and order on behalf of the United Reformed Church.
- To participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on faith and order issues.
- To advise the Assembly, its officers and committees, on questions of faith and order.
- To listen to concerns raised by local churches, synods and individuals and to advise as appropriate.
- To publish and disseminate occasional materials relating to questions of faith and order.

The committee meets three times a year.

Finance

The finance committee is responsible for the general financial oversight of funds administered for the benefit of the United Reformed Church, its long-term financial planning, and the preparation and control of its budget under the authority of Mission Council and the trustees.

The committee will ensure that proper procedures are in place for the maintenance of accounting records, controlling and monitoring the budgetary process, and the preparation of financial statements in compliance with applicable United Kingdom law and accounting standards. To this end the committee should expect to liaise with auditors at least once per annum.

The committee may take such decisions regarding the finances of the Church as are necessary within the policies set by General Assembly.

The committee meets three times per year – in February, May and September –although there may be a need for communication by email between those dates.

Ministries

The committee is responsible for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work, lay preaching and eldership. It is concerned with central care and conditions of service, chaplaincies in industry, higher and further education, prisons and in the armed forces and ‘special category’ ministry. It has concern for the pastoral support of ministers, church related community workers and lay preachers, including supervision, appraisal, self-evaluation and counselling. It oversees the work of the Assessment Board and is assisted by four subcommittees.

Mission

The central task of the mission committee is to focus on mission, working with the whole of the Church to formulate and give expression to our mission and faith in ways which bring alive our vision of ‘being Christ’s people, transformed by the Gospel, making a difference to the world’ (General Assembly, 2007). The committee seeks to encourage growth in discipleship, evangelism and witness by:

- reflecting on the Church’s mission practice and theology;
- formulating policy, strategies and programme (action) priorities;
- reading the signs of the times and speaking prophetically;
- working with partners and;
- continuously evaluating the place of mission and evangelism within the work of General Assembly.

The mission committee meets 3 times a year, on each occasion for 24 hours (lunchtime to lunchtime).

Nominations

This committee nominates to General Assembly the names of people to serve as convenors, secretaries (where not a staff secretary) and members of all Assembly committees. It also suggests names of United Reformed Church representatives on other bodies. It recommends people to make up appointment and review groups for synod moderators and Assembly-appointed staff. Each synod is represented on the nominations committee: some by their synod clerk or moderator, others by

individuals with a good knowledge of their own people. One of the former Assembly Moderators and the General Secretary are also committee members.

The committee meets 3 times a year.

Pastoral reference and welfare

This committee considers the cases of ministers who are referred to it, usually by synods, often at times of difficulty. It also deals with welfare and emergency matters including the use of welfare funds. Its work is necessarily confidential and is reported in general terms only, directly to the General Assembly.

The committee meets 3 times a year and consults by email and telephone as required.

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