

# Paper B1

	<p><b>councils of the church (local church meeting, Synod and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations. To enable this, all councils of the church are encouraged to review how they are able to hear and respond to children.</b></p>
--	---

## Summary of content

**Subject and aim(s)** Report of the work of Children's and Youth Work Committee

## Pilots

Pilots were supported with online gatherings for Synod Pilots Officers and FOFA@home resources sent directly to Pilots Captains during lockdown. A recorded Pilots Sunday service was created in 2020. An online training session was offered to Pilots Officers in 2021. A special badge for all Pilots, bunting, and a video of the prayer was created to mark the 85th anniversary of Pilots in 2021. During 2020-2021, Children's and Youth Work Committee (CYWC) conducted a review of Pilots, resulting in the paper to General Assembly in 2021 and resolutions 8 and 9, reducing staff and financial support for Pilots, and creating capacity to launch URC Children (see below). Pilots continues to be supported through provision of resources (although these are no longer exclusive to Pilots), and staff support for managing merchandise, record-keeping and accessing funds. The Pilots Subcommittee has not been able to recruit new members. The Pilots community held a summit residential and hybrid meeting in October 2021 supported by staff, and its first online gathering in 2022, as it finds new ways to operate going forward without the formal structures it is unable to sustain.

Children's and Youth Work Committee asks General Assembly to dissolve the Pilots Subcommittee as a formal structure in recognition of the changes within Pilots following General Assembly 2021. Children's and Youth Work Committee will continue to engage with and support Pilots through their network of Companies and informal Gathering, alongside other such networks for children's and youth work.

## CYWC strategy update

Mission Council November 2018 approved the CYWC strategy (originally 2019-2023, now extended to 2024 because of the pandemic).

Vision: **children and young people playing their part in the mission of God** – experiencing, exploring and expressing the way of Jesus in, through and beyond the church.

Strategy: support and strengthen local congregations in five key areas:

- Faith – sharing spiritual resources
- Community – sharing relational resources
- Identity – sharing stories, events, connections
- Engagement – sharing in the life of the local context
- Growth – sharing new, creative, risky change (to develop potential).

The focus for 2020 was 0-5s, with a series of resources produced to signpost local churches to ways to engage with and support families with 0-5 year olds. Families on Faith Adventures@home (FOFA@home) began as a weekly resource for churches to send to families during the first lockdown, and we have now passed the milestone of more than two years of this weekly resource, which is widely used by churches in a variety of ways to support groups and families. We ran 'TRialogue', a regular broadcast online discussion for 16-25s. We created pre-recorded services for Pentecost, and we ran an online 'fringe event' after the summer Mission Council. We ran an online conference 'Faith with under-fives' with ROOTS over three evenings. We created the URC Infant Feeding Policy, which was approved at November 2020 Mission Council. The Children and Youth Friendly Church scheme was launched to replace the Child Friendly Church award. We created an Advent resource, 'Hope and Joy' boxes, for churches buy to give to families during lockdown, and 2,000 were distributed. We created accessible versions of the safeguarding posters for local churches.

The focus for 2021 was 5-11s. The annual themed resource was Heroes and Villains. We ran an online conference 'Living Faith with 5-11s' over three evenings with ROOTS. We created an intergenerational Lent resource, 'Walking towards Easter Together', for churches to buy to give away during lockdown, and 3,500 were distributed. We created a Holiday Club resource 'Supersleuths' for local churches, and offered small grants to support children's work over the holidays. We created a new resource with Commitment for Life, 'Go with Greta' (for 5-11s) / #connect2 (for 11-14s) on Nicaragua. We ran an online 'fringe event' after General Assembly. We created a recorded service for Environment Sunday. We created an Advent resource, 'Come and See' boxes, for churches buy to give to families during lockdown, and 5,000 were distributed. We launched URC Training with Education and Learning, offering online workshops to help churches build skills in social media, video editing, sharing good news stories, and hybrid church. We launched 'Let's talk about' online sessions for children's and youth workers. We hosted an online gathering around neurodiversity. We introduced the Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme.

Throughout the pandemic, we produced guidance for local churches in relation to children's and youth work, and more recently for church activities in private dwellings.

So far in 2022, we have supported URC Youth Assembly, and ran a URC Youth Leaders' Gathering event alongside it for the first time in January. We contributed to the



they followed a series of themes (picking up on things that would normally have been discussed at Youth Assembly) such as vocation, Israel and Palestine, hostile environments, Pride, world church, anti-racism and mental health. This was supported by the TRialogue online discussion programme. They issued statements on Black Lives Matter, free school meals, and conversion therapy.

Online preparation events were held for URC Youth representatives going to Mission Council in 2021, and What Do You Think was held as a hybrid in-person and online event ahead of the online General Assembly 2021.

Youth Assembly 2022 was held in person, in line with the Covid-19 guidance at the time, and many valued the opportunity to gather together and consider the theme of jubilee through commemorating the past, celebrating the present and creating the future. Following the struggles of the past couple of years, URC Youth Executive will be conducting a review of URC Youth and Youth Executive, including racial diversity, reporting progress to the next Youth Assembly. URC Youth reaffirmed its condemnation of conversion therapy. Philippa Osei became the first BAME Youth Moderator Elect. URC Youth brings three resolutions to General Assembly from Youth Assembly. The two are a response to their reflection on the lack of diversity among key office holders in general, and the Moderator of General Assembly in particular, as highlighted in the discussions at General Assembly 2021, and seek to address this by enabling Youth Assembly to nominate directly:

,



4. **Theology of children** – revisiting and promoting the URC’s theology of children to underpin all our work in this area.

We will review all previous theological material pertaining to children, including the Charter for Children in the Church and the series of theological reflection booklets, and seek to work with URC theologians to develop an accessible resource to inform practice across the URC.

CYWC are excited to be launching URC Children at General Assembly in the URC’s jubilee year:

To mark the launch of URC Children at General Assembly this year, the United Reformed Church resolves afresh to ensure that all structures and councils of the church (local church meeting, Synod and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations. To enable this, all councils of the church are encouraged to review how they are able to hear and respond to children.