

Paper A5

Mediation and Reconciliation Resource

Business Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	John Bradbury john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 10 General Assembly Instructs the Business Committee to consult widely and bring costed proposals for a URC-wide Mediation and Reconciliation Service to Assembly Executive 2023.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To initiate a process exploring a possibility of a URC-wide mediation and reconciliation service.
Main points	<p>It has become obvious recently that across the Church there are an increasing number of conflicts that arise. In the context of a more litigious society, and in the light of the trauma of the pandemic, the Church is dealing with an ever-increasing number of complaints rooted in conflicts. These are affecting local churches, Synods and the General Assembly.</p> <p>The complaints process (Section Q) works on the basis that initially mediation is used, where at all possible, to try to resolve conflicts before moving to formal investigation. However, those operating the policy have to seek individuals willing to take on mediation. We have no standing panel that either Synods or the General Assembly can draw upon, to bring expertise in this area.</p> <p>The Business Committee believes this is something which could be of service to the whole church, and therefore invites General Assembly to initiate a process of consultation to test this, and if appropriate, to bring costed proposals to Assembly Executive in 2023.</p> <p>There will be good experience to draw upon from the Northerly Synods who have worked with a 'Listening and Reconciliation' service. There will also be expertise and experience to draw upon from ecumenical partners (the Church of Scotland and Methodist Churches have developed similar services in places)</p>

	<p>and from expert organisations in the field, such as Place for Hope and Bridge Builders.</p> <p>We envisage a process of consultation with Synods, as well as partners with expertise in this area, to test the feasibility, and costs, of developing a mediation and reconciliation service to assist the flourishing of the whole United Reformed Church.</p>
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of impact

Financial	No cost at present, consultation would be necessary about any cost and funding implications.
External (eg ecumenical)	