Paper A1

Terms of Reference for the Faith in Action Committee (Discipleship and Mission)

Business Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Mark Robinson, Convenor **mark.robinson@urc.org.uk** John Bradbury, General Secretary **john.bradbury@urc.org.uk**
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	**Resolution 1** **General Assembly adopts the terms of reference for the Faith in Action Committee (Discipleship and Mission) as contained in Paper A1 of the July 2025 General Assembly.** **Resolution 2** **General Assembly delegates authority to take any necessary urgent decisions on behalf of the Faith in Action Committee to the three previous Committee Convenors (Children's and Youth Work, Education and Learning and Mission) along with the DGS (FiA), supported by the new Faith in Action staff team, until the new Faith in Action Committee is established in late autumn 2025.**

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Terms of Reference for the Faith in Action Committee.
Main points	Terms of Reference.
Previous relevant documents	Paper A2, The future of the General Assembly Committee Structure, General Secretariat and the staff team of the Assembly Office, Resolution 1, February 2025 Assembly Executive; Paper B2 URC Committees and online meeting, Resolutions 10-12, July 2021 General Assembly.
Consultation has taken place with...	The Mission Committee, the Education and Learning Committee, the Children's and Youth Committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	The impact of combining Discipleship and Mission will result in net cost savings.

External (eg ecumenical)	None.

Introduction

The February 2025 Assembly Executive mandated the Business Committee to draw up terms of reference and composition for the formation of a 'Mission and Discipleship' joint committee. The proposal in this paper is that this should be called the 'Faith in Action' Committee working to the Terms of Reference provided in this paper.

The Faith in Action Committee Terms of Reference

Convenor and Deputy Convenor	Appointed by General Assembly following the nominations safer recruitment process (to be included in the numbers below in committee make-up).
Members	Appointed by General Assembly following the nominations safer recruitment process, constituted as below: The Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action) Members: Four with a missional focus Two with a Children and Youth/Intergenerational focus Two with a lay learning/Education and Learning focus Two youth representatives To cover the transitional period (up to two years), the existing convenors of the committees (see below) which have now combined into the new Faith in Action Committee will be included in the numbers above: Mission Committee Education and Learning Committee Children's and Youth Committee.
In attendance (according to agenda)	Relevant staff members The DGS Ministries.
Length of term	Four years renewable once.
Minute Secretary	PA to the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action).
Accountability and reporting duties	To General Assembly.
Frequency of meetings	Three times a year, twice online and once in person plus annual Forum with connected networks.
Terms of Reference review	Four years or more frequently if required.

Responsibilities
The Faith in Action Committee supports the United Reformed Church's outreach in terms of evangelism and witness; public issues; community engagement; pioneering; ecumenical and interfaith relations; intergenerational worship; global and intercultural ministries; racial justice and legacies of slavery; as well as ministry among children, young people and young adults, intentionally listening to their voices; net zero advocacy; lay learning; and world justice through the URC's Commitment for Life programme.
The role of the committee is to support and guide the Faith in Action staff team in implementing the work agreed by Assembly through the Mission Strategy created to reflect the focus areas vital to the life of the URC.

The Faith in Action team supports and enables the URC to live out the Gospel in society, helping people to develop in faith as they learn and grow, finding new ways of being church and becoming more faithful disciples. They work alongside people in the Synods and local churches on resourcing and enabling the whole people of God. As part of this work, the team also oversees the networks in the Synods who are responsible for work with children and young people, mission, and education and learning: Children and Youth Development Officers+ Team (CYDO+), Training and Development Officer+ team (TDO+), Mission Enablers Network (MEN).

Structure
The February 2025 Assembly Executive Paper A2 distinguished between committees of the URC which have a broad and overarching programmatic concern for the life of the church and supporting the resourcing of this and described them as 'Core Committees'. These are distinct from those committees which have a much narrower, specialist function, to resource the church in their specialist areas (including at times giving advice or assisting more generalist committees in specialist aspects of their work).

The Faith in Action Committee is a Core or Programme Committee with sub-committees it shall determine from time to time in response to the strategic priorities set by the General Assembly. Initially, they will following specialist sub-committees reporting to it with the staff member allocated to work with each committee shown in brackets:

- Children's and Youth Work Programme Enabling Group (tba)
- Interfaith Enabling Group (tba)
- Commitment for Life Reference Group (tba)
- Net Zero Task Group (tba)
- Legacies of Slavery Task Group (tba)
- Equalities, Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging Committee (Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action).

Each committee member will be connected to a sub-committee, liaising with the staff member and acting as a link person to seek items for the meetings and ensure reporting processes are effective.

The committee will be a focussed, strategic committee that meets three times a year, twice online and once in person. Meeting times to be arranged with the committee once created, aware of Resolutions 10-12 from General Assembly 2021 encouraging meetings with online access and out of normal working hours.

It is important the membership of the committee reflects the diversity of the URC.
In order to enable the committee's work to really affect the life of the URC, members

should have an active interest in their area of focus, both in their local church and Synod, and have a desire to see the URC grow in faith and size.

Summary notes will be produced from each meeting and sent to Synods to keep them informed of the work of the Faith in Action Committee, and creating a direct link for responses and ideas to feed in from the Synods.

Once a year, the committee will come together with the networks connected to the Faith and Action department (CYDO+ team, TDO+ team, MEN). This Forum will be for a shared meeting to ensure two-way communication between the committee, the Faith in Action team and the Synods. Each Forum meeting will have a specific theme connected to the URC's current priorities. This Forum will also offer the opportunity for the committee and the networks to meet separately as well as together.

Relationship with the wider denomination
The committee's role is to encourage positive relationships between local churches, Synods and resource the wider denomination.

The annual Forum with the connected networks will allow for the sharing of the work of the Faith in Action team, and hearing ideas and work growing from the local congregations and Synods, challenging Synods and local churches to respond and engage with Assembly programmes and areas of development

Delegated authority
The General Assembly delegates its authority to the Faith in Action Committee to take any necessary decisions on its behalf to further the day-to-day work of the Assembly in relationship to the following functions of the Assembly:

iii to conduct and foster the ecumenical relationships of the United Reformed Church;
iv. to support and share in the missionary work of the Church at home and abroad.

Links with the wider church
The committee ensures that the URC is represented on relevant ecumenical, national and international umbrella bodies. It nominates appropriate individuals to serve with these organisations, receives their reports and discerns next steps. It also oversees the membership budget to cover subscriptions.

External relations
The committee has a prophetic role in developing the denomination's advocacy in the public sphere, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Inclusion
The committee has a co-ordinating role in ensuring that the work of its sub-committees draws together all areas of inclusion, such as legacies of slavery, anti-racism, intergenerational worship.

Safeguarding
Safeguarding is at the heart of all our activities as a church. A member of the Faith in Action Committee will be responsible for ensuring that safeguarding is on the agenda for the committee and its work.

Risk management
The Faith in Action Committee will review the Risk Register as it relates to its key responsibilities, at least once per year but will add additional risks as and when they arise.

Interim arrangements
We are seeking delegated authority to the previous convenors of predecessor committees and the staff team to take any necessary decisions before the new committee is formed. This would be in order to respond to any situations or issues that arise post-GA but prior to the new FiA Committee being appointed, in order to ensure continuity of the work of the Faith in Action team.