

## Methodist Church Equality Impact Assessment

### Introduction

The Methodist Church Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is designed to help local Churches/ Circuits/individuals ensure that policies, practices and decisions are fair, inclusive and transparent. The EIA will help to ensure that no individual or group of people is inadvertently disadvantaged or discriminated against because of the way we do things, and that all people can be fully included.

### Purpose

The purpose of an EIA is to review and anticipate any issues or impact our ways of working might have on different individuals or groups of people. It will help to remove or reduce any negative impact and maximise positive impact.

The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed because we believe that God's love is 'for all' and that we are called to live this out.

The **Equality Act 2010** asks for specific consideration of the following characteristics:

Age  
Disability  
Sex  
Gender Reassignment  
Pregnancy and Maternity  
Marriage and Civil Partnership  
Race  
Religion and Belief  
Sexual Orientation



These are known as '**Protected Characteristics**' under the Equality Act 2010.

As Christians, we want to ensure that all people can be safely included within the church's life. So, in addition to the above protected characteristics, you may also want to include other socio economic factors, e.g. unemployment, low wages, the Gig Economy and shift work, rural isolation, mental health issues etc.

The EIA process will provide a record of actions taken to identify, and address, any disadvantage or unfairness in our ways of working. Central to the process is evidence gathering and consultation.

### **Why Does This Matter?**

Because we believe God's love is inclusive of everyone and we want to reflect this in our ministry and mission.

### **Background**

The recommendation for this EIA came from the Justice Dignity and Solidarity strategy (adopted by Conference 2021). Its purpose is to bring about a Methodist Church which is truly inclusive. The strategy aims:

- For a paradigm shift (a profound change) in the culture, practices and attitudes of the Methodist Church so that all Methodists are able to be full participants in the Church's life;
- To eradicate all discrimination and coercive control within the Methodist Church, and for all people to be treated justly and with dignity across the breadth of the Methodist Church;
- For the rich diversity of people within the Methodist Church to be recognised as a cause for thanksgiving, celebration and praise.

The strategy includes mandatory actions for local churches, circuits, districts and the Methodist Council and is designed to embed a culture of justice and respect for all people. To aid this process Equality Impact Assessments will be introduced across the Connexion. We hope that these will become a way of life and an attitude of heart and mind, rather than only a paper exercise.

This document provides guidance on the implementation of the EIA and describes how it should be completed.



## **When to Complete an EIA**

It is good practice to undertake an EIA when developing new policies/procedures or when undertaking a review process. It would be useful to use the EIA as early as possible in the process to allow for any issues or negative impact to be identified and reduced or avoided completely.

When conducting an EIA, be prepared to act on the issues that might arise.  
Small changes or adjustments can probably be made easily.

However, more complex problems may require further thought and support.  
In addressing a negative impact, please ensure that proportionate and reasonable steps are identified and carried out.

Where there are significant budgetary and resource implications, consultation with the local leadership team, and other relevant individuals or committees may be required to agree a suitable way forward.

## **Five Steps to complete a Methodist Church EIA**

- 1) Make sure that you have agreed the purpose of the procedure or policy
- 2) Gather evidence: what existing evidence do you have to inform your impact assessment?  
This could include existing feedback from community groups, feedback from fellowship groups, EDI data monitoring, exit interviews informal conversations etc<sup>1</sup>
- 3) Consult with those who might be impacted
- 4) Complete the EIA and make any necessary changes to help more people participate fully
- 5) Monitor and review all changes, which will also include checking how the new policy or procedure works

In time you might want to set up 'Solidarity Circles' as suggested in the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity  
[Conference 2021 Agenda Volume 3 \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk/conference-2021-agenda-volume-3)