

Criteria for Mission Projects

Introduction

There are two general avenues by which a Mission Project may come about and, whilst the following criteria may not be directly relevant to all mission projects, all mission projects must support the first two statements of the Synod's Local Church Mission Criteria:

1. *is outward looking and is actively seeking to reach new people for Jesus Christ*
2. *is committed to encouraging and enabling people to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ*

The two avenues by which a Mission Project may come into being are as follows: -

- 1) An existing outreach project which is based within a Church setting but the pressure on the congregational life means that the 'church' can no longer function as an ecclesiological entity, under the rules and regulations of the United Reformed Church. However, its outreach activity is viable. For example, a Mental health drop in with Art therapy courses; or those who are temporarily housed due to domestic violence and 'church' run a drop-in centre for coffee and chat where children can play safely.
- 2) There is a no mission at present but there is a request, either ecumenically or community based which needs accommodation. For example, Food Bank distribution, local School needing after school clubs, drop-in centre for homeless etc

Any person or group can be the catalyst to a Mission Project: an individual lay person, a church (usually through its church meeting), Minister/CRCW/LCL, Pastoral Committee, Synod. All have access to the Synod Council through the Director of Mission Projects and are not reliant on approval from any other group listed above or otherwise.

On accessing a Mission Project, the following is a guide for the Director of Mission Projects and the Synod Council in finding a common benchmark for its prayerful consideration. However, it is not exclusive and there may be variation depending on each individual circumstances. It also acknowledges this is 'work in process' and, as more potential opportunities arise, then the clearer it will become about the appropriate formulating criteria.

However, the bedrock of all potential Mission Projects, and of church life, as agreed by the Synod, must include the first two Criteria of the Synod's Local Church Mission Criteria.

(see overleaf)

Criteria for Mission Projects:

A. Synod's Local Church Mission Criteria:

Is there evidence that the project is both

- a) outward looking and is actively seeking to reach new people for Jesus Christ
- b) committed to encouraging and enabling people to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ

and

B. Individual Mission Project criteria:

Is there evidence relating to:

1. **Vision.** A clearly articulated vision, including aims, of the mission which has been envisaged through:-
 - (i) faithful prayer,
 - (ii) study of the Word
2. **Objectives.** Understanding of how this vision might serve the needs of a/the community? Including exploratory conversations which have taken place with potential groups/partners who might be interested in participating in the MP? For example, local Council, Local Churches Together, other nearby United Reformed Churches
3. **Premises.** How the premises might be used and where any 'sacred space' might be retained or set up?
4. **Funding.** Has consideration been given to potential funding needed – whether for personnel or buildings or other resources?
5. **Volunteers.** That there are some who would be prepared to be an active Christian presence on site, and who see the potential for this presence to be their new 'frontline'?
6. **Management.** Thought about who might be the project manager?
7. **Contingency Planning.** Acknowledgement of existing barriers to developing a MP and how these might be overcome?

The above criteria illustrate the range of issues which need to be considered by the local congregation, the minister/CRCW/LCL (if there is one) and, if appropriate, the relevant Pastoral Committee, when thinking about the development of a Mission Project. This is not to say that each point must be fully developed or worked out but, rather, that each is an indication of issues which will be looked at by the Mission and Development Officer, the Synod Director of Mission Projects and, finally, as the decision-making body, by the Synod Council.

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