

“Love Matters” Update

The paper (GS 2321) circulated to Synod members was produced for the Synod meeting in July 2023. This acts as an update so that Synod members are aware of what has taken place since then.

- 1) The Report has been welcomed by a very broad base of organisations working with children and families. It has also been welcomed by leaders of other faith communities.
- 2) His Majesty’s Government has promised a formal response to the Report alongside their response to the Report of the Children’s Commissioner for England on Families. This response is still awaited.
- 3) The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Annual debate on December 8th 2023 focussed on the report and its recommendations.
- 4) Following workshops on the Report at the College of Bishops’ meeting in September 2023, and some initial presentations to Diocesan Synods, an 8 page briefing paper with suggested Bible readings and questions for discussion has been produced and is available from the date of this General Synod. It is designed to be used in Deanery Chapter meetings; Home Groups etc.
- 5) Young People who engaged with the research for the report were keen to help develop a Children and Young People’s version / resource. This takes the form of a short video (1 for Primary and 1 for Secondary age) and worksheets that could be used in schools or church children and youth groups. It is hoped this also will be available from the date of the General Synod (or very soon afterwards).
- 6) Ongoing discussions about many of the recommendations have taken place. The Parents’ Promise are working on material for use in schools to be available in 2025. There is consideration of how this might be used with baptism families and marriage couples.
- 7) The recommendations around Youth Justice and the Family Courts have been taken up by the Ministry of Justice and by the Head of the Family Courts Division.
- 8) Coram have developed their Charter for Children and include ideas from the report. Coram are committed to working with taking recommendations forward in their areas of work.
- 9) Good conversations have been held with Ministers from the Department for Work and Pensions on a range of the recommendations. The ending of the Two Child Limit is still not in sight but serious consideration of other areas around child poverty is under way. The review of the Family Test is taking the Report’s recommendations seriously.

- 10) A number of Diocesan Synods have had presentations / discussions around the Report. We understand this has also happened at Deanery level in a small number of cases.
- 11) The Children's Commissioner is pointing people to the Report as fully complementary to her own and encouraging the recommendations to be followed through.
- 12) Initial work is being undertaken on what a church Family Test might look like.

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