

GENERAL SYNOD**‘Growing Younger and More Diverse’ - Hearing and Responding to the Voices of Young Adults (18-25)****Summary**

In July 2023, Synod passed a motion (re: GS 2298 A & B) which called for greater engagement with the voices of children and young people, and the development of strategic engagement activities with young adults aged 18-25. This was taken to Archbishops’ Council in its Autumn 2023 meeting, where funding was approved for the Education Office to take this work forward.

In July 2024, GS2366 was presented in relation to the first of the recommendations in relation to the voices of children and young people. As a result, that paper’s actions will now be implemented in future groups of sessions as agreed with the BC.

This paper focuses on the second element of this work in relation to young adults and is intended to enable Synod:

- To consider the practicalities of engaging young adults’ voice in a systematic and well-planned way to inform debates and thinking on a range of issues
- To hear from young adults (currently Synod members) about their vision for increased voice and development activities to support their engagement in all debates and processes
- To receive a proposal for engaging up to 200 young adults drawn from across all dioceses in a formal engagement and personal development programme to deepen our national engagement with the voices of young adults.

The initial development funding is already in place to commence this work, but the ongoing commitment will require ongoing funding if Synod approves for the further implementation of what has already been agreed in principle in July 2023.

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To take this work forward, **MR KENSON LI to move** that this Synod:

- a) welcome the voice of young adults (aged 18-25) across dioceses and commit to hearing and responding to their voices on a range of items of business in each subsequent group of sessions, employing a range of methods, including surveys, reports, and videos
 - b) invite the formation of a group of up to 200 young adults drawn from across all dioceses to support the leadership development and faith journey of young adults who will provide a regular 'voice' to synod
 - c) request at least three and up to five young adults as representatives of this group at each session of Synod under Standing Order 122.1 recognising this group to be the successor to the Church of England Youth Council
 - d) welcome the work being done across the whole church to become 'younger and more diverse' ensuring young adults are at the centre of this mission, and encourage more young adults to consider standing for election to Synod in subsequent quinquennia.
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Implementing GS2298 Outline

1. Having agreed in July 2024 that the voices of children and young people would be heard and responded to in future groups of Synod sessions, there were rightly voices calling for the prompt implementation of the second element of GS 2298 in relation to young adults.
2. This paper is intended to outline the planned methodology for implementation of this work through the creation of a diverse group of approximately 200 young adults (18-25), drawn from every diocese. This group would have the following aims:
 - To equip and resource young adult leaders in their discipleship journey, character formation and leadership knowledge, skills and understanding
 - To grow a vibrant and diverse national network of young adults drawn from across all dioceses and reflecting a church that is younger and more diverse
 - To enable robust data collection and accurate presentation of young adults' voices and opinions into particular Synod agenda items
 - To provide an early engagement in encouraging more young adults to consider standing for election in subsequent quinquennia.
3. This group would meet termly and use both face to face (once annually, potentially in two province groups) and online methodologies (all) for meeting together. As Chair of the National Society for Education, Bishop Jonathan Frost will support the executive NSE team leading this work and attend the group's termly events.

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4. The membership of this group would need to reflect our aspiration to be 'younger and more diverse' and reflect our work on belonging and inclusion, making sure under-represented voices are engaged in the group
5. The safeguarding arrangements for this group would be of paramount importance, in order to create safe spaces, clear structures of support and accountability to enable young adults to engage effectively with a wide range of topics (including those that may be or become controversial) within safe environment. Such arrangements would relate both to the national leadership of the group, and the local relationship with each young adult's diocese.
6. As a result of the work of this wider group, at least three and up to five young adults would then act as representatives of the group at each session of Synod (under Standing Order 122.1) and be enabled to input the voices of young adults (from the wider group) in a systematic way to agenda items.
7. This systematic input could include speaking in debates, but would also include opportunities for presentation of the wider group's views on particular agenda items as agreed with the Business Committee so as to inform Synod's thinking in a systematic way..
8. Detailed advanced planning for this input would be required with the Business Committee, and much like the work in relation to the voices of CYP, this would be overseen and implemented by the National Society for Education team. This would enable timely collection and collation of data through surveys etc., and clear presentations reflecting a church that is younger and more diverse.
9. There would be opportunities for every diocese to play its part in this work (with the approximate number of 200 being based on drawing around 5 young adults from each diocese into this group). These young adults would then have the opportunity to speak into local leadership contexts at a diocesan level as well.
10. In addition to the group of young adults speaking into Synod, it would also provide a leadership development opportunity for these 200 young adults, deepening their discipleship and equipping them in advocacy. This leadership development programme would underpin the effective gathering of the young adults' voices and opinions.
11. There would be need for the smaller group of 3-5 young adult representatives from this group, to be pastorally supported, encouraged and equipped to input effectively into agenda items across a group of sessions. It is acknowledged that some of the agenda items that Synod is likely to address in the coming years will have particular complexities through which these young adults would need to be well supported, both nationally, and within their own diocese contexts.
12. The effective implementation of this work would in addition offer each diocese the opportunity to encourage more young adults to consider standing for election in subsequent quinquennia.
13. The motion commits us to well-planned and systematic engagement with the voices of young adults in future group of sessions, such that there would generally, be at least one item where these voices were heard and responded to. This requires wise

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planning between the National Society for Education and the Business Committee to ensure that the item (s) selected is/are confirmed within a reasonable time scale to be presented in a variety of formats to support the work of Synod. There may be a range of issues that are likely to come up over the coming groups of sessions that could be commissioned, so that future thinking and debates could become well informed by the voices of young adults.

14. It is suggested that a group of 'subjects' upon which to commission this work should agreed through liaison between the National Society for Education and the Business Committee, to enable timely planning and implementation of this approach, and to ensure that this systematic engagement is fully embedded in each future groups of sessions. This will mean that henceforth, every subsequent group of sessions will have a reliable, diverse and representative structural methodology through which to hear and respond to the voices of young adults on a range of items.
15. While the National Society for Education will take the lead on the operational implementation of this work, it will continue to be shaped in deep partnership between Education/Vision & Strategy/Ministry as part of our ongoing commitment to collaborative working across these departments.