08 April 2022

**The Methodist Church reaffirms its opposition to Conversion Therapy**

The Methodist Council has reaffirmed its opposition to Conversion Therapy in any form at its recent Council Meeting. The Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, presented a policy written as a result of the 2021 decision made by the Methodist Conference, the governing body of the Church, to immediately ban conversion therapy anywhere within the Methodist Church.

Dr Hustler told the Council that the Methodist Church’s policy, following the direction of the Conference, is that no such therapy should take place on Methodist Church premises or in the name of the Methodist Church. Dr Hustler explained to members that this policy does not prohibit pastoral conversations with people who have questions about their sexuality, making it clear that this would be an ‘open exploration with no significance being placed on any particular perceived outcome as being preferable’.

 The Methodist Church took part in a recent Government consultation on Conversion Therapy stating it supported a ban on Conversion Therapy and saying: “In adopting the Memorandum of Understanding of Conversion Therapy our position is that any conversion theory assumes that a particular sexual orientation or gender identity is preferable. This assumption is at odds with our position affirming dignity and worth to people whatever their sexuality or gender. Therefore, we ask the Government to remove the conscience clause for over 18’s and ban conversion therapy in all situations”.

The Assistant Secretary of the Conference, the Revd Michaela Youngson said, "The Methodist Church position is that, regardless of government decisions, it is not permitted for conversion therapy, including trans conversion therapy to take place on Methodist premises, and that no conversion therapy can take place in the name of the Methodist Church.