**The United Reformed Church**

**(Northern Province) Trust Limited**

**Role Description and Person Specification**

**Ecumenical Officer**

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| Job Title | Ecumenical Officer |
| Reporting to | Line Manager – to be suitably experienced in ecumenical matters. The post holder is responsible to the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church and is a member of the Synod’s Field Team. Ecumenical activities are overseen by the Synod’s Mission & Discipleship Committee. |
| Location | The post holder will have a base in the Synod Office in Newcastle with the flexibility to work from home. |
| Travel | Travel across the north east, with occasional travel across UK |
| Working hours | Part time - 17.5 hours per week with 23 days annual leave pro rata, plus bank holidays, in line with the Synod handbook. Working times are to be agreed and may include evening and weekend work. The Synod expects a reasonable level of flexibility, the extent of which depends on its needs. The post holder may be required to work additional hours in which case time off in lieu (TOIL) will be awarded by agreement. TOIL can only be accrued for up to two days per month, anything in excess of this is only given with prior authorisation.  Being available for external training courses as required and out-of-hours meetings and activities is required. |
| Terms of appointment | Permanent – Part-time position subject to DBS clearance |
| Job Summary | The post-holder will be responsible for the provision of support to the churches of Northern Synod and the North East Region in their relationships with one another, through encouraging and developing the principles and practices of ‘wider’ ecumenism throughout the Synod and Region.  The post-holder will work closely with the Synod Pastoral and the Mission & Discipleship committees and Field Team officers, local churches, ecumenical colleagues and those in the wider denomination. An Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Reference Group has been set up and meets regularly to support the post holder. |
| Key Relationships | The post-holder will be required to work closely with the relevant committees and officers of the synod, local churches, ecumenical colleagues and those in the wider denomination. A feature of the post, is developing links and relationships with relevant local groups and communities, the NE Churches Acting Together (intermediate body) and Churches Together in England (where necessary). |

**Core duties - overall aim of the post:**

1. To work in the United Reformed Church Northern Synod towards the goal of visible unity as Christ chooses.
2. To develop and implement the Synod policy on ecumenical commitment, in its various expressions, particularly within local church groups.
3. To support the Mission & Discipleship Committee, Field Team, and others in developing constructive and practical approaches to Synod’s relations with ecumenical partners.

**Job description**

**A          Development**

1. To work alongside ecumenical partners to encourage and support local ecumenism creatively, especially Churches Together Groups and Local Ecumenical Partnerships.
2. Encouraging, sometimes initiating, ecumenical consultation on deployment, grouping of churches and sharing resources ecumenically and in the Synod.
3. To work with the Admin Team (especially the Synod Trust Officer) to ensure appropriate and up to date information is maintained for LEPs, Sharing Agreements and other relevant records.
4. To foster the relationships between LEPs and the Synod for the benefit of both, ensuring that reviews take place according to the individual constitutions and in line with good practice and NECAT’s latest policy and practice.
5. To stay up to date with contemporary ecumenical practice and developments as well as technical constitutional matters and be a source of expertise for the Synod.
6. To share resources and information with churches and Synod colleagues appropriately, participating in Synod activities as required.
7. To encourage and initiate new ecumenical developments of all kinds.
8. To participate in Assembly ecumenical URC networks, e.g. the Israel-Palestine Task Group of the Assembly Mission Committee, with the approval of the Moderator and line manager.

**B          Communication**

1. Maintain good channels of communication and consultation with local churches and stakeholders using appropriate forms of communication and contributing to the variety of Synod communications, including on-line.
2. To ensure effective information sharing between local churches, Synod and the Trust relating to ecumenical developments or specific church arrangements.
3. To establish a network of supporters/advocates to be points of contact in their church groups for ecumenical issues.
4. To support NECAT and local/regional networks and share information from and with the URC, by bringing appropriate matters from these bodies to the Synod, committees, team colleagues and local churches.
5. To alert the Synod to issues and concerns that may surface in ecumenical networks and advise upon appropriate action in conjunction with the Moderator and other relevant Synod Officers.
6. To participate fully in the Synod Pastoral and the Mission & Discipleship Committees, reporting to and agreeing with the latter work plans for development.
7. Deputising for the Moderator at ecumenical meetings and events when requested by the Moderator.
8. Maintain regular communication with the URC Deputy General Secretary (Mission) and the URC Mission Support Officer on all important ecumenical matters.

**C        Management**

A line manager will be appointed by the Trust on the recommendation of the Synod Executive.

**D Person Specification**

1. A good working knowledge and understanding of the theology, ethos and structures of their denomination.
2. A good understanding of the basic structure and ecclesiology of the other mainstream denominations.
3. An ability to work in an ecumenical setting.
4. A passion for working together with Christians from other traditions.
5. A commitment to ecumenical working and a deep respect for the different beliefs, practices and ways of life of the Churches and able to balance this with their commitment to their own denomination.
6. Ability in administration and organisational skills, especially to work through details of constitutional matters.