

Ministries Committee

General Report

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Nicola Furley-Smith: ministries@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	Main area of focus since General Assembly 2018 and subcommittee reports.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Ministries report to General Assembly 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	Ongoing consultation across the denomination.

Summary of Impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

General Report

The committee is responsible for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work, lay preaching and eldership. It is concerned with central care and conditions of service, chaplaincies in industry, higher and further education, prisons and in the armed forces and 'special category' ministry. It has concern for the pastoral support of ministers, church related community workers and lay preachers, including supervision, appraisal, self-evaluation and counselling. It oversees the Assessment Board and is assisted by four subcommittees.

Convenor: Paul Whittle

Secretary: Craig Bowman (to 2019), Nicola Furley-Smith (from 2019)

Members:

Martin Camroux, Allison Claxton, Stuart Dew (to 2019) Sam Elliott (from 2019), Stuart Scott (from 2019), Sally Thomas (to 2019), Sally Willett (from 2019), Peter Meek (synod moderator to 2019) Jacky Embrey (synod moderator from 2019), Anne Bedford (convenor of the Retired Ministers' Housing subcommittee), Ewen Harley (convenor of the assessment board to 2019), Bill Gould (convenor of the assessment board from 2019), Pamela Ward (convenor of the maintenance of the ministry subcommittee to 2019), David Coote (convenor of the maintenance of the ministry subcommittee from 2019), Russell Furley-Smith (convenor of the accreditation subcommittee), Simon Loveitt (convenor of the CRCW programme subcommittee), Jenny Sheehan (leadership in worship advocate).

1 The changing face of ministry

Ministry is about building up the church. Ministry should be people-shaped, even mission-shaped, but it is always God-shaped. What matters is that we, as disciples, must never forget that our calling is always a partnership between ourselves and God, and between ourselves and one another. Therefore, our calling to be God's companion is always the subtext of our vocation to ministry within the church. Since March 2020, how we 'do' ministry within the United Reformed Church – how we support local churches and individuals both inside and outwith the church community to be the people of God – has been challenging. We are so blessed to have ministers of word and sacraments, church related community workers and lay people who have risen to the challenge and embraced new ways of being church as we tackle the current crisis.

2 Pastoral Supervision

- 2.1 Following General Assembly 2018, Ministries Committee established a working group to explore the requirement for ministers of word and sacraments and church related community workers of the United Reformed Church to have regular pastoral supervision, and how such a scheme may be introduced.
- 2.2 The Group conducted an initial period of high-level consultation during the summer and autumn period. The intention was to be as open as possible, capturing a wide range of ideas and views without prejudging the outcome, and include internal URC stakeholders, ecumenical partners and specialists in pastoral supervision.

- 2.3 The Group reviewed the feedback received and discussed the key issues, principles and dilemmas, including finance and capacity, that were emerging, and then set out a series of propositions which were tested with Ministries Committee, Mission Council and others over the autumn of 2019. The outcome of this further consultation is the resolution on pastoral supervision.

3 NSM Model 4

- 3.1 In November 2018, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, authorised a model 4 non-stipendiary ministry which provided for locally ordained ministers of word and sacraments. It directed the Ministries Committee to ensure that plans for this model of ministry were appropriately complementary to other ministries of the church – including stipendiary ministry, current models of non-stipendiary ministry, local leadership (recognising that this is currently directed by Synods) and the eldership, including the specific role of authorised elders.
- 3.2 Mission Council ruled that the training for this model of ministry need not be bound by the standard set out in resolution 37 of General Assembly 1997, and that further training might be required before an NSM model 4 could transfer to other models of non-stipendiary or to stipendiary ministry.
- 3.3. Mission Council instructed the Ministries and Education and Learning Committees to implement model four non-stipendiary ministry in consultation with the Assessment Board and the Resource Centres for Learning.
- 3.4 The Assessment Board in April 2020 assessed two candidates for NSM Model 4, with further expressions of interest pencilled in for the November Assessment Conference.

4 Extension of stipendiary ministerial service beyond the fixed retirement age

The decision of Mission Council (2018) to define what it means to be an active minister of word and sacraments has led to a review of the current policy of full-time work beyond the normal retirement age to include the additional criteria of being able to take up a new full-time ministry, where possible. Deployment figures, demographics and financial resources suggest that the number of stipendiary ministers we can afford to support is not much larger than the number we expect to have in the coming years. Therefore, convention dictates that any ministry beyond the normal retirement age will need to be termed to allow for those in training to enter and exercise ministry, and will be the decision of the Accreditations Committee (CRCW and SCMs), whose role it is to monitor ministry figures. The change in policy and process is subject to a resolution.

5 Funding Other Ministries

- 5.1 Two Synods, Mersey Synod and the National Synod of Wales, are piloting the scheme whereby ministry and mission fund monies can be released to Synods to support ministry other than stipendiary ministry of word and sacraments and

church related community work. This ministry could be either full, part-time, sessional or expense-only work. The projects range from regional officer to pastoral worker to youth worker and family and community worker. A review will take place in the autumn to evaluate whether this scheme should be rolled out to other Synods.

- 5.2 A further development sees the partnership with Mission Committee in exploring lay pioneer ministry which is happening in many of our churches, with one conference held in February and another planned for July.
- 5.3 Additional work has begun on the accreditation of other lay ministries. Accreditation is not merely about determining whether we are meeting or exceeding the minimum standards of that ministry, but provides support and validation for those undertaking the ministry as part of their discipleship.

6 Gift Policy

The Ministries Committee began considering gifts to ministers following an enquiry regarding a bequest to a minister of the United Reformed Church. The committee has considered the propriety of this, and offers the gift policy for discussion and resolution.

7 Thank you

The work of Ministries could not be achieved without the expertise and commitment of the volunteers who make up the Ministries Committee and its subcommittees. Our thanks go to those who will have retired from our committee since General Assembly last met: Allison Claxton, Stuart Dew, Ewen Harley, Peter Meek, Sally Thomas and Pamela Ward. However, perhaps the most significant change in the Ministries Committee has been the departure of Craig Bowman back into pastoral ministry. We are indebted to Craig for his care and wisdom in guiding the Ministries Committee in their shaping and support of the variety of ministries within the United Reformed Church.

Accreditation Sub-committee

Maintaining the roll of ministers, this sub-committee accredits those applying for inclusion after training, and those coming from other denominations. It is concerned with numbers and recruitment. It also deals with applications for special category ministries.

Convenor: Russell Furley-Smith

Secretary: Craig Bowman (to 2019), Nicola Furley-Smith (from 2019)

Members: Susan Durber, Ewen Harley (convenor of the assessment board to 2019), Bill Gould (convenor of the assessment board from 2019), Rob Moverley (from 2019), Andrew Prasad (synod moderator), Paul Whittle (convenor of ministries committee)

Introduction

- 1.1 This is the final report of the Accreditation Sub-Committee. We look forward to being part of the new Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) Sub-Committee, particularly as it will bring closer working practice between CRCW and Special Category Ministries.

Certificates of Eligibility

- 2.1 Certificates of Eligibility are issued so that ministers of other Churches might be introduced to a pastorate in the URC and, if called, enter our roll of ministers. The ministries committee is responsible to General Assembly for oversight of the projected number of ministers for future years, and for deciding each year, on the basis of these projections, whether certificates of eligibility may be issued.
- 2.2 In light of projections it was agreed that 10 certificates for Stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacrament would be available for issuing between 2017 and 2019. In fact, only six certificates were issued during this period.
- 2.3 In light of future projections, it has been decided to continue offering certificates, with up to five being available in 2020.

Certificates of Limited Service

- 3.1 Certificates of Limited Service allow a minister of another denomination to serve in, and be paid by, the URC, in a specified post only and for a limited period of time. They provide a flexible way of responding to particular local ministry needs and opportunities.
- 3.2 Three new certificates have been issued in the last two years, and none have been renewed or extended.

Special Category Ministries

- 4.1 Special Category Ministry posts are broadly of three kinds, to enable Synods to provide ministry outside existing deployment quotas: new or priority areas of outreach where pioneering work is required; chaplaincies; innovative ministry in unique situations.
- 4.2 It was agreed by Mission Council in 2014 that the number of SCM posts (full-time equivalent) should not exceed 8% of the total number of stipendiary ministers available. This means, at the moment, that there is a limit of 25 FTE SCM posts.
- 4.3 Currently (March 2020), there are 21 SCM posts (20.75 FTEs).
- 4.4 The administration of SCMs has been done diligently and efficiently since its inception by Mary Stacy. She is now retiring, and we acknowledge the debt of gratitude the denomination owes to Mary for her many years of service.

The Roll of Ministers of Word and Sacraments

Admission to the roll of Ministers of Word and Sacraments (from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2020)

- 5.1 By ordination and induction:
Catherine Atkinson, Jacob Bali, Edward Bellingham, Lisa Maria Browning, Cristina Cipriani, Joanne Clare-Young, Alex Clare-Young, Fiona Elvins, Helen Everard, Alma Fritchley, Helen Garton, John Grundy, Cara Heafey, Tessa Henry-Robinson, Julie Kirby, Amanda Linney, Andrew Mudharara, David Scott, Memona Shahbaz, Barnabas Shin, Alison Smith, Paul Stein, Daleen ten Cate, Joshua Thomas, Gillian Thomson, Jennifer Travis, Christine Watson and Naomi Young-Rodas.
- 5.2 By transfer from other churches:
Confidence Bansah (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana), James Fields (Church of Scotland) and Terry Jin (Presbyterian Church of Korea).
- 5.3 By changes within the roll of ministers:
There have been no changes within the roll of ministers.
- 5.4 Deletions from the roll by resignation and/or transfer to another denomination or by the disciplinary process
Nicholas Adlem, Heather-Ann Adlem, Janet Lees, Jonathan Morgan, Brian Norris, Timothy Poh, Adrian Skelton, Eric Wain, Roger Whitehead and Steven Whiting.
- 5.5 Re-admission
There have been no readmissions to the roll.

Roll of Church Related Community Workers

Admissions to the roll of Church Related Community Workers (from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2020)

- 6.1 By commissioning:
Maria Lee, Andrew Littlejohns, Joanne Patterson
- 6.2 Deletions from the roll by resignation and/or transfer to another denomination or by the disciplinary process
Diane Benson, David Twine

Roll of Assembly-accredited Lay Preachers

- 7.1 The following have received Assembly accreditation between 1 February 2018 and 31 January 2020 as a result of having completed a URC course of study or having prior accreditation from another denomination.

North Western	Margaret Dexter-Brown (re-accredited), Deborah Hoddinott (re-accredited), Stuart Hoddinott (re-accredited), Christopher Whitehead
Mersey	Kevin Hogan, Andrew Jeens
Yorkshire	Debora Story
East Midlands	James Hodkinson, David Litchfield
Eastern	Graham Watson
Wessex	Maggie Larkin, Phebe Mann
Thames North	David Akoli, Frank Atta-Dankwa, Joseph Dankwa, Kathleen Laing, Olaoluwa Lawal, Joan Manning, Valerie Williams
Wales	Sarah Edwards
Scotland	Brian Kirkwood, Nicola Robinson

- 7.2 Deletions from the Roll of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers by Resignation, Removal and/or Transfer to other Churches:

There have been no deletions from the Roll of assembly Accredited Lay Preachers

Assessment Board

Convenor: Ewen Harley (to 2019), Bill Gould (from 2019)

Secretary: Craig Bowman (to 2019), Nicola Furley-Smith (from 2019)

Members: Peter Rand (to 2019), Lis Mullen, Stuart Radcliffe (to 2019), Keith Reading, Jamie Kissack (from 2019), Dan Morrell (from 2019), Sohail Ejaz (to 2019), Mark Tubby (from 2019), Faith Paulding, Gerald England (from 2020), Pat Oliver (to 2019), Bridget Akinyombo, Karen Campbell, John Danso, Sue McCoan, Lesley Charlton (to 2020), Mercy Nimako (to 2019), Jill Shelton to (2019), Jan Adamson (from 2019).

Commitment and thanks

1. The members of the Assessment Board, lay and ordained ministers or CRCWs, are identified by Nominations Committee, drawn from all Synods, each for a five-year period, to be representative of the whole church, with a broad mix of male and female, young and old. While not all assessors are called in any given year to serve on assessment panels, all make themselves available for a period of intensive work to discern God's will for the candidates and for the whole URC. Their commitment and willingness to add to their usually already busy workload is a matter for grateful thanks, and is greatly appreciated by the Church. In this year, particular thanks are due to the retiring Convenor, Ewen Harley (after five years), the Committee Secretary, Craig Bowman (after 11 years), and Catherine Price, a personal development analyst who undertook psychometric testing of candidates (after several years). Their very substantial accumulated knowledge of the candidates and the whole assessment process, and the wisdom and grace with which they have applied their experience and skills, have been exemplary, and warmly recognised by candidates, assessors and Synod link officers.

The work of the Board

2. The Assessment Board has an annual meeting, normally in September, at which the progress of all students in training in our three Resource Centres for Learning (RCL) for EM1 (Education for Ministry level 1) is tabled. It also reviews and reappraises particular issues in the assessment process, such as diversity and inequality awareness in 2018 (led by the Revd Dr John Campbell and Ms Alex Bediako), and in 2019 Assessment issues arising from NSM4 and Marks of Ministry decisions of General Assembly. A representative member of the RCLs is invited to contribute to the Annual Meeting, and is a major conduit of information between the Board and the RCLs.
3. Assessors are invited from the Board membership, after training in the annual assessment training conference, to be members of assessment panels for candidates nominated by Synods for training for a Ministry of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs. Each panel has four members, typically comprising two male and two female, two lay and two ordained members, and at an Assessment conference they work in pairs to interview four or five candidates, each candidate having two assessment interviews. The panels come prayerfully to a view of the nature and strength of the call to each candidates, and their suitability for entry to training for EM1, and this is then considered by the whole Board. If the Board supports the candidacy, the candidates are informed at a meeting in Synod, with

Synod officers present. Also formally presented at that meeting is the personalised EM1 training programme, considered in parallel by a panel of the Education and Learning Board, meeting separately with each candidate at the time of the Assessment Conference. If the Board finds it cannot support the candidacy, each candidate is informed in a similar way.

4. The Board also convenes an annual assessment interview training consultation, attended not only by new Assessment Board members, but also by synod representatives to satisfy the considerable needs for appropriate training for synod and local panel members who consider possible candidates early in the assessment cycle. The consultation further strengthens the communication links between the Board and synods. The consultation has been held at High Leigh Centre in this reporting period, facilitated by the Revds Peter Henderson and Mary Thomas. Our thanks are due to them and to the several ministers and others who have contributed to 'role-play' exercises as a key element of practice in the training.

The flow of candidates

5. Since the last General Assembly, three conferences have been held (March 2019, November 2019, April 2020). The planned conference in November 2019 was cancelled due to small numbers. The March 2020 conference was done in virtual mode in April 2020, with special arrangements to support candidates and assessors through the exceptional pandemic circumstances that precluded travel and assembly at that time, though the emergency arrangements were designed to be as far as possible similar to established procedures. A new Personal Development Analyst was engaged for this occasion.

Overall, 27 candidates were considered by the Board, of whom 22 were accepted, 13 in Stipendiary Ministry, five in Non-Stipendiary Ministry 1-2-3, two in Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4, and one for CRCW, with one transfer from Non-Stipendiary to Stipendiary ministry.

Date of Conference	No. of candidates	Number accepted
November 2018	8	7 (SM = 5 NSM =2)
March 2019	10	7 (SM = 4 NSM =2 CRCW=1)
March/April 2020	9	8 (SM = 4 NSM 1-3= 1 NSM 4= 2 Transfer NSM to SM = 1)
Total	27	22

Church Related Community Work Programme Sub-committee

It is responsible for supporting the Church Related Community Work ministry and programme under the terms agreed in the church related community work covenant. This includes the accreditation of churches-in-community.

Convener: Simon Loveitt

Secretary: Steve Summers (CRCW Development Worker)

Members: Leonora Jagessar-Visser 't Hooft, Ruth Maxey, Ann Honey, Marie Trubic, Derek Estill (to 2019), Rosie Buxton (to 2019), Peter Meek (synod moderator to 2019), Dave Herbert (synod moderator from 2020), Paul Whittle (convener of ministries committee)

In Attendance: Samara Andrews (CRCW Programme Administrator)

1. The CRCW ministry

- 1.1 Using Community Development principles, Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) enable churches to strategically engage with, to transform, and to become more relevant to their local neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 Churches participate in CRCW ministry because they believe that the process of community development is an empowering and enabling way to express their faith in action. They do so with the knowledge that engaging in this ministry will not only change local communities, but also congregations. They understand that this journey cannot be neatly pre-planned, but it will certainly be Spirit-filled and exciting.

2. Numbers

General Assembly has set a target of at least 26 Church Related Community Workers across the denomination (a minimum of two CRCWs per Synod) to receive a stipend at any one given time. Currently, 14 CRCWs are in post, and three are at various stages of training.

3. Challenge to the Church

- 3.1 Since CRCW ministry is provided for five years in the first instance, with a possible second five-year term available as the maximum, we are constantly looking for new church-in-community projects.

However, the priority at the moment is to encourage individuals to candidate for this particular ministry.

- 3.2 We are continually working on raising awareness of the opportunities that this ministry offers to individuals, to local churches and to groups of churches. Please see www.urch.org.uk/crcw-projects for more information.

- 3.3 If you would like to know more, please speak to Steve Summers in the CRCW office, one of the CRCWs in post, on Facebook: www.facebook.com/churchrelatedcommunitywork, on Twitter: [@CRCWteam](https://twitter.com/CRCWteam) or the URC website: urc.org.uk/our-work/church-related-community-workers

4. CRCW News Articles

Since March 2017, two articles per month have been posted on the URC website, with some very interesting insights into the work of CRCWs and their activities. The articles can be found at www.urc.org.uk/crcw-news-events

Maintenance of the Ministry

Sub-committee

Advises on the level of stipend and ministers' conditions of service through the Plan for Partnership. It is also concerned for pensions through its associated Pensions Executive (now known as the Pensions Committee).

Convenor: Pamela Ward (to 2019), David Coote (from 2019)
Secretary: Craig Bowman (to 2019), Nicola Furley-Smith (from 2019)

Members: Keith Berry (to 2019), David Black, Margaret Brock, David Gartside (from 2019), Sue Kirkbride (to 2019), Jean Wyber (from 2019), Chris Evans (convenor of pensions executive), Paul Whittle (convenor of ministries committee), John Piper (assistant treasurer)

1. The MoM sub-committee meets twice a year, but conducts much of its business by emails, as and when a decision is called for concerning stipends or allowances for individual ministers.

2. Plan for Partnership

Our main role is to interpret the Plan for Partnership and to agree such changes as we consider necessary. When situations are referred to us which do not exactly fit the terms of the plan, we try to apply the Plan fairly and reasonably. The situation is considered carefully, and can lead to amendments to the Plan. Sometimes it is decided that the Plan is adequate, or might need a small clarification to make its intent clearer. We have been dealing with some concerns around part-time ministers, and it has been concluded that the Plan will need some clarification.

3. Stipend Increase

Our proposal for the stipend increase each year is based on a formula using the consumer price index (CPI). When the formula was applied in 2019, the CPI increase was 2.1%, producing a stipend increase of 2.7%. This was a similar level to the previous couple of years' stipend increases.

4. Long-term sickness absence

We continue to monitor and improve our care for ministers who, having been on sick leave for six months, come to the end of their entitlement to full stipend. We know that these can be stressful times for those involved, and while we sometimes have painful decisions to make, we strive to bring wisdom and compassion to the judgements that are entrusted to us. We are grateful for the work of Mary Steele in the MOM office, who pays the stipends, alerts us when decisions are needed, organises medical and moderator reports, and deals with all the correspondence.

5. Committee changes

The committee has, since its last report, had a change of convenor, and we record our thanks to the Revd Pamala Ward for her guidance and wisdom in that role. We have also seen changes among members of the committee, and there will be further changes ahead. We again wish to record our thanks to those who have completed, or will complete, their service this year.

Retired Ministers' Housing Sub-committee

This sub-committee continues to be responsible for policy in matters of the provision of retirement housing for ministers, their spouses, widows and widowers. It uses the United Reformed Church Retired Ministers' Housing Society Limited as its agent for the implementation of policy, and the practical steps associated with the provision of housing.

Convenor: Anne Bedford

Secretary: Secretary of Retired Ministers' Housing Society Ltd

Members: Ian Hardie (Treasurer), Malcolm Lindo, Cliff Patten (from 2020) Ken Summers, Simon Walkling (Synod Moderator), Peter West, Paul Whittle (convener of ministries committee), Craig Bowman (secretary for ministries to 2019), Nicola Furley-Smith (secretary for ministries from 2019)

- 1.1 We have welcomed Mr Clifford Patten to join our team, and we look forward to working with him.
- 1.2 This year, we have completed the work on new rules for the Society, and have had them passed by all the relevant authorities. This would not have been possible without the steady work of the General Manager of the Society, Chuka Agbasiere, to whom we owe a great debt.
- 1.3 At the pre-retirement courses for Ministers and their partners, we have endeavoured to explain the foundations of the Society's work, and we have carried out personal interviews for those who are seeking help.
- 1.4 The increasing amount of legislation around property, including issues such as electrical checks and asbestos removal, has absorbed the time of our surveyors, but we have been able to find suitable properties and, in some cases, have helped individuals whose health needs have necessitated a second move.
- 1.5 Considerable work has been done to provide disability adaptations for residents who have become frailer.
- 1.6 We are grateful to individual members, churches and Synods who continue to support our work, and especially those who remember us in their wills.
- 1.7 We will continue to do our best to serve those Ministers and CRCWs who need us.