

Ministries Committee

Pastoral Supervision for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle: moderator@urceastern.orguk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 25 General Assembly adopts the policy for pastoral supervision as contained in this paper.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	The Past Case Review Learning Report requires Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers to engage in pastoral supervision. This policy outlines how this is to be achieved.
Main points	The paper sets out <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a definition of pastoral supervision for the United Reformed Church b) who should engage in pastoral supervision c) frequency d) financial implications.
Previous relevant documents	None.
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission Council, Synod Moderators.

Summary of Impact

Financial	About £100k annually.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Methodist Church, APSE

1. What is Pastoral Supervision?

- 1.1 Pastoral Supervision, as defined by the Association for Pastoral Supervision and Education (APSE), is ‘a preventative rather than curative service offering care for the carer through creative, restorative support. It encourages a reflective, developmental, even transformational, approach to life in an attentive, safe, confidential, intentional, contained space. This theological/spiritual approach is psychologically informed, contextually sensitive and praxis based, thereby enabling the supervisee to be the best that they can be for those they serve.’

It is designed for people who care professionally through listening to others and who are aware that their emotional and spiritual life impacts, and is impacted by, their work, so that they carry an emotional burden of others: for example, clergy and lay church leaders, pastoral carers, nurses, doctors, care workers, social workers, teachers, politicians and employers.

- 1.2 Pastoral supervision enables:
- development of skills and self-awareness
 - strengthening of vocational identity
 - reconnection with vision
 - clarification of ethical dilemmas
 - interpretation and handling of situations differently
 - boundary management
 - receipt of encouragement and feedback
 - discharge of feelings and recharging of energy
 - healthy work/life balance
 - discovery of new perspectives regarding group/team dynamics.

Reflecting with a trained pastoral supervisor helps a practitioner grow in pastoral competence and confidence, so maintaining their capacity to meet each person and situation with energy, resilience, compassion and courage.

- 1.3 Pastoral Supervision is not:
- spiritual accompaniment – for the sole or primary purpose of exploring the spiritual life and development of the supervisee(s). Aspects of this may arise in Pastoral Supervision, but are not the main focus.
 - counselling – for the purpose of helping the supervisee(s) gain insight into their personal dynamics, or helping the supervisee(s) to resolve or live more positively with their psycho-social limitations. Aspects of this may arise in Pastoral Supervision and, if necessary, the supervisee(s) may be encouraged to seek counselling support.
 - line management – for the purpose of addressing professional practice and development issues in relationship to the performance and accountability (whether paid or voluntary) of the supervisee(s) to their employer. Aspects of this may arise in Pastoral Supervision, but are not the main focus.

2. Pastoral Supervision in the URC

- 2.1 The Past Case Review Learning Report (Mission Council, November 2018) recommended that regular supervision be made part of a minister’s practice in order to encourage reflection about boundaries and practice, create a safe space to consider difficult issues and, ultimately, help to keep pastoral contacts safe. In

accepting the recommendations of the Past Case Review, the need for pastoral supervision to be required of all United Reformed Church ministers was agreed.

- 2.2 The Ministries Committee has, therefore, been exploring how the United Reformed Church might utilise pastoral supervision to better support its ministers.

Pastoral supervision is commonly said to have restorative, formative and normative functions (Francesca Inskipp and Brigid Proctor – 1988). It therefore will enable ministers to reflect on their work-life balance, explore healthy habits and look after their health and wellbeing (restorative); to learn and develop through reflecting on their practice and that of others (formative); and to be attentive to accountability and ethical working (normative). Supervision is also 'affirmative', giving ministers support and affirmation, and encouraging realistic self-appraisal without becoming overly self-critical or self-judgmental.

Michael Paterson, Director of the Institute of Pastoral Supervision & Reflective Practice, speaks of pastoral supervision 'encouraging a conversation between soul, role and context'. Pastoral supervision uses reflective practice as a tool for ministers to grow through their experience, or come to terms with it. It promotes personal growth in the service of a minister's practice, resourcing the minister to better carry out their role and to further God's mission.

- 2.3 We have set out a proposal for a denomination-wide scheme of pastoral supervision. This paper uses the term 'ministers' to refer to both Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers, and makes no distinction between the two regarding the type of pastoral supervision required.

3. Capacity and Resourcing

- 3.1 The principal obstacle to this goal of a denomination-wide scheme of pastoral supervision is a good supply of appropriate supervisors.
- 3.2 APSE advertise the services of around 60 supervisors across the UK, with some uneven geographical spread – there are 16 in London and the south east, nine in the south west, but just three in the north west.
- 3.3 There are hundreds of supervisors registered with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), although not all of these will be experienced in supporting those working in a faith setting.
- 3.4 The denomination will therefore also seek to identify ministers and lay people who might have the requisite gifts to become a supervisor, and encourage them to undertake training in order to support this scheme.

4. Constituency

- 4.1 The aspiration of the Ministries Committee is that, eventually, all United Reformed Church ministers considered by the denomination to be on the roll of 'active ministers' should be required to receive pastoral supervision. However, it is mindful of the issue of capacity and resourcing. It has therefore defined those who should engage in pastoral supervision as those who are in a pastoral relationship with a local congregation as a minister of word and sacraments or church related

community worker, chaplains who are not already receiving professional pastoral supervision through their current role, synod moderators, General Assembly appointments, and Special Category Ministers. Retired ministers who are not active and accredited lay preachers will not be required to receive pastoral supervision. Synods who use different models of Ministry, e.g. Local Church Leaders, should decide whether they wish to apply this scheme to them.

- 4.2 In cases where it may be unclear whether a particular minister should be required to receive pastoral supervision, the judgement of the relevant synod moderator will be considered final. The requirement to undertake pastoral supervision should be included in a minister's Terms of Settlement.

5. Beginning pastoral supervision

- 5.1 It will be the responsibility of individual ministers to find a supervisor, as the connection between those receiving supervision and their supervisor needs to work effectively. Supervisors should be accredited either by APSE or the BACP, or otherwise approved by the Synod. Information about suitable supervisors will be provided by the Ministries Committee.
- 5.2 As pastoral supervision is introduced to ministers, they will be supported and trained to make the most of supervision. This will be done through Synod Training Days, at EM2 and, for new ministers, through the Resource Centres for Learning.
- 5.3 Briefing material about the United Reformed Church and its existing expectations of ministers will be produced to enable supervisors from outside the denomination to carry out this role. This will include the Marks of Ministry and the Guidelines for Conduct and Behaviour for Ministers.

6. Format

- 6.1 Pastoral supervision in the URC should be conducted on a one-to-one basis between a trained pastoral supervisor and a supervisee minister, not in a group setting. The frequency and pattern of meetings will be decided between the supervisor and supervisee to reflect their agreed programme, but should be no less frequent than every two months, or six times a year. Exceptions will be made for ministries where this regular pattern may not be possible e.g. Armed Forces Chaplains.

7. Contracting

- 7.1 In pastoral supervision, contracting does not simply mean the transactional agreement the supervisor makes to perform their role, but a covenant that reflects a mutual agreement between the supervisor and supervisee about the supervisory process and relationship.
- 7.2 Responsibility for agreeing this contract or covenant will lie with the supervisee minister and their supervisor. Most supervisors will have their own suggested format, and the denomination will produce a model covenant that includes the flexibility for agreeing specific goals and ways of working.

8. Confidentiality and Reporting

- 8.1 Pastoral supervision in the URC is not intended to replicate a professional management relationship. Whilst issues of accountability in relation to the minister's local pastorate and Synod will arise, these are not the main focus.
- 8.2 Supervision will be confidential between supervisor and supervisee, unless the supervision raises concerns relating to safeguarding, or serious legal or wellbeing issues. Supervisors are trained to respond appropriately to such matters, and the URC briefing material will advise of appropriate places to report serious concerns.
- 8.3 More generally, the Synod will need assurance that pastoral supervision is taking place. The minister and supervisor will therefore be asked annually to jointly confirm in writing to the Synod Moderator or the appropriate Synod committee that regular supervision is taking place. Synods will, in turn, report this to the Secretary for Ministries, who will keep a denomination-wide record.
- 8.4 Supervisees are also encouraged to regularly identify any needs or concerns that might be addressed or supported by the Synod or local pastorate, and to report them to the appropriate forum, e.g. the Synod Training and Development Officer.

9. Existing appraisal, review and mentoring

- 9.1 Pastoral supervision should become the principal way of ensuring ministers reflect on their practice and identify appropriate actions to develop and find support. It will therefore replace MASA (Minister's Accompanied Self Appraisal) and any similar requirements.
- 9.2 Pastoral supervision performs a different purpose to spiritual direction and other informal mentoring relationships ministers may have. Ministers are encouraged to continue benefiting from these relationships, but they will not be considered an adequate substitute for pastoral supervision under the requirements of this policy.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 In general, pastoral supervisors charge up to £60 per session. For six sessions per year, the annual cost for an individual minister will be around £360. Across the denomination, using the number of ministers as defined in section 4, this suggests an annual cost of approximately £100k.
- 10.2 The Ministries Committee has considered carefully how this should be funded. Although it is Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly which has agreed that this scheme be mandatory, local pastorates play a crucial part in, and benefit from, keeping their minister well.
- 10.3 Pastoral supervision will therefore be funded jointly by local pastorates and the denomination. Funding will be in addition to the existing allocation for ministerial training. Pastorates are strongly encouraged to pay towards the costs of their minister's pastoral supervision, normally 50%. Remaining costs will be met by Assembly funds. The pastorate share of these costs will be proposed for inclusion in the next revision of the Plan for Partnership.

- 10.4 Where local pastorates feel they have the resources to bear the whole cost of supervision, they are encouraged to do so. Any pastorates who face particular challenges in meeting the cost may make a further request for funding from the denomination through their Synod.
- 10.5 Payment for supervision should be normally made by the minister, and claimed back from the local pastorate on production of the relevant receipts.

11. Implementation, Timing and Next Steps

- 11.1 Synods and local pastorates are asked to begin ensuring their ministers receive pastoral supervision as soon as possible. Our aim should be to have all relevant ministers receiving pastoral supervision within three years.
- 11.2 The potentially limited number of supervisors available means that Synods should prioritise those ministers currently serving in a pastoral role. New ordinands will continue to receive mentoring through EM2, and only be expected to start receiving pastoral supervision from that point on.
- 11.3 The Ministries Committee will produce a number of resources to support this process:
- a list of approved supervisors
 - a model contract
 - advice on the necessary changes to Terms of Settlement
 - guidance for funding pastoral supervision
 - introductory guidance for use at e.g. Synod training days.
- 11.4 Our proposals have placed an emphasis on individual ministers, working with their local pastorate and Synod, identifying a supervisor, establishing a contract and maintaining a productive relationship. Ministers need not wait, therefore, for all these resources to be available before they begin to approach supervisors and integrate pastoral supervision into their ministry. We would also encourage ministers and Synods who are already using pastoral supervision effectively to continue to do so.
- 11.5 Ministries Committee will liaise with Synods to monitor progress regularly during the implementation period, and recommend any additional actions necessary to promote pastoral supervision further.