

Paper R5

Assisting an accused minister

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk
Action required	Adoption of resolution.
Draft resolution(s)	<p>40. Assembly resolves to change Appendix K of Section O to read:</p> <p>6. On receiving the material transmitted by the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline, the Senior Member is to appoint three willing members of the Investigation Panel to form an Investigation Team for that case, and one panel member to assist the accused minister to address the issues and, if required, before the ACD or the DAppC, having regard to geographical proximity to the accused, complainant and likely witnesses as well as to appropriate skills and experience. No Panel member who is related to, belonging to the same local church as, or otherwise closely concerned with the accused minister or the complainant, has any pastoral or personal involvement with the case or is liable to be a witness, may be appointed to an Investigation Team for that case. Subject to these considerations, the Senior Member should also consider the desirability of all members of the Panel having regular involvement with disciplinary cases. The Senior Member may him- or herself serve on an Investigation Team when that appears appropriate.</p> <p>7. Ministers are encouraged to use an Assisting Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel to help gather evidence and draw up their own statement/s, and, either to accompany the minister to the hearing before the ACD or the DAppC or to present the minister's case</p> <p>41. Change Appendix L to read</p> <p>5. No interview with any person outside the Team, whether taking place in person, by electronic means or by telephone, may take place unless at least two members of the Team are present; the person being interviewed must also be offered the opportunity to</p>

	<p>have a friend (or, in the case of the accused minister, a colleague, their assisting Investigation Panel member, or Trade Union representative) present. A note of any interview is to be taken at the time or made immediately afterward, and a copy supplied to the person interviewed for comment.</p>
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Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To offer an experienced and trained member of the Investigation Team to a minister accused for a breach of vows in order to help that minister prepare and, if necessary, present their case.
Main points	Ministers can be overwhelmed if placed into the disciplinary process; some may use a Union representative, others may use a lawyer, many use no one to assist them. Believing that the process should be fair to all sides, the MIND Advisory Group suggests the minister is offered the services of a member of the Investigation Team who can help interview witnesses, prepare statements, help the minister challenge evidence presented by the Investigation Team and, if requested, present the minister's case. Ministers will not be obliged to make use of such a person.
Previous relevant documents	Section O.
Consultation has taken place with...	

Summary of impact

Financial	Expenses for the Assisting Investigator.
External (eg ecumenical)	None.