

# Paper H1

## General report

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Mary Thomas <b>dso-s@wessex.org.uk</b> Nicola Furley-Smith <b>ministries@urc.org.uk</b>
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To update on the work of main Ministries Committee and its five sub-committees: Accreditations sub-Committee, (CRCW and SCM), Assessment Board, Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committees.
<b>Main points</b>	To update General Assembly on work of the sub-committees of Ministries Committee.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Ministries Report to General Assembly 2023.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Ongoing consultation across the denomination.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	None.

### 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 sub-committees.

#### Membership:

Convenor: Mary Thomas

Secretary: Nicola Furley-Smith

Nominated members:

Gill Bates, Chris Kellertt, Terry Jin, Lesley Moseley,  
Convenor of the Accreditations Sub-Committee: Paul Dean  
Convenor of the Assessment Board: Bill Gould  
Convenor of the MOM Sub-Committee: David Coote  
Convenor of RMHS sub-Committee: Paul Whittle  
Leadership in Worship Advocate: Maggie Kirkbride  
Synod Moderator: Jamie Kissack

In attendance:

Head of Children's and Youth Work, Secretary for Education and Learning and the Development Worker for CRCW and SCM.

## 1. Discipleship

The Committee continues to do its work as part of the discipleship department at Church House as we seek to support those who provide leadership in local churches, partnerships and other mission settings. We believe that this leadership, which includes ordained and commissioned ministry as well as lay preachers, worship leaders, lay pioneers and elders, is key in fostering a culture of discipleship across the Church. Collaboration across discipleship and Committee with colleagues from the mission committee in developing discipleship has become the norm:

**Paper I2 resolution 31c GA 2023** asked the Mission and Ministries Committees and the Synods to reflect on how the Church could better demonstrate its commitment to people experiencing poverty and marginalisation in allocating resources for ministry and mission. As part of the commitment of both Committees, work will focus on helping Synods to listen to the marginalised where often churches have not understood the language of poorer communities. The committee is aware of the ongoing work in North Western Synod, and supports the adaptation of that strategy for different context in other Synods. The committee considered whether Synods should be strongly urged to prioritise the 13 new pioneering posts for areas of deprivation. It was aware that to make this a criteria for granting such posts would simply add another priority for Synods in the difficult task of managing the deployment process.

**Paper I4 resolution 39 GA 2023** Three applications have been received from Synods for one of the six ecumenical posts outside of deployment to reinvigorate the URC's ecumenical vision. These posts are intended to redress the balance of the URC absence in Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Two have been granted, with a third pending. A further three will be granted next year.

**Paper H2 Assembly Executive 2024** affirmed liminal ministries, both lay and ordained, including but not limited to Chaplaincy, and asked Ministries and Mission Committees to consider how such ministries may be supported and developed, returning to Assembly Executive in 2025 with a report and proposals. A task group has been agreed between both committees to move this work forward.

Further collaboration has happened with Worship, Faith and Order, Finance Committee and the Safeguarding Committee on Safer Recruitment, culminating in the joint Worship Faith and Order/Ministries resolution to mandate promises for all who engage in public ministry.

## 2. Policies and processes

The committee is mindful that, since its last full report, it has produced a raft of policies and processes to support the values and work of the Church. It has not undertaken this work lightly. Policies are important because they define what is and is not acceptable and, when created in the right way, will provide transparency and accountability, protect those who exercise ministry within our churches, allow for consistent and efficient decision-making, provide a framework for fairness, ensure compliance with the law, and limit risks.

The committee believes it has caught up with the backlog of work, and looks forward to the development of new ministries to support the life and mission of the Church, including those that support Resolution 51a (GA 2023) to create new Christian communities, as well as new ways of supporting existing ministries so that we may truly be a flourishing church God intends us to be.

## 3. Well-being

Ministry is not and has never been easy. In today's world, it can seem a lonely experience. Not only are ministers likely to have fewer colleagues than might be the case in other forms of work and may have been true in ministry even ten years ago, but the changing nature of ministry means there is less clarity regarding the expectations and realities of a minister's role.

As office holders, ministers (ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers) are self-directed and enjoy a valued and valuable sense of autonomy. However, when the place of 'work' is also the home and in the blurring of boundaries between ministerial life and personal life, ministers need to make time for their own self-care and ensure a healthy work/life balance.

Wellbeing is more than just 'feeling good'. A positive wellbeing involves the interplay of a number of factors. Physical, emotional, and spiritual health, together with the availability and quality of personal and professional relationships, within the wider context of vocation, all contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing.

It can be hard to regulate hours served and to know whether you're 'at work' or not. Such pressures are often felt by ministers' partners, children and wider family and friendship networks, and can be unseen by others.

The value of an ongoing personal supportive relationship in which issues to do with their ministry can be shared in complete confidence, usually on a one-to-one basis, has been recognised by many ministers. The Church is committed to support in ministry, particularly people or places that can help ministers to reflect healthily on their current ministry and their vocation.

3.1 After an initial slow start, **Pastoral Supervision** has been embraced by almost all who are required to undergo supervision. Testimonials state ministers have found it fruitful and supports and affirms their wellbeing, as well as developing their ministry as they reconnect with their ministry vision, discerning what God is saying to them in their particular context. The tiny minority who have not yet found their supervisor are actively doing so.

3.2 Although ministers are no longer required to engage with the Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal, all ministers are encouraged to regularly reflect on their ministry. To this end, the Committee has given a lighter touch to the **Local Mission**

**and Ministry Review (LMMR)** to include an annual reflection by the minister of the local church's Living Document. The purpose is to reflect helpfully within pastoral ministry, which has few obvious successes and failures. Ministry is about planting seeds, often in secret, without knowing what the nature or timing of the harvest is to be. That is often not in our hands. The goal of this scheme is to find a way of echoing God's praise for all that is good in ministry, and to help people address whatever can be improved.

**3.3 The Churches Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS)** is available to all ministers (stipendiary and non-stipendiary) and Church Related Community Workers, as well as those who have been formally accepted as students for ministry of the United Reformed Church, from the time of acceptance until ordination or commissioning. Counselling is also available to ministers' spouses/partners and children over the age of 18; in fact, all who make up the minister's household, except children. This service is designed to maintain confidentiality, and the names of those who use the service will not be known to their denomination.

**3.4** Every minister is entitled to take up to two weeks' study leave per year for formal and informal learning and refreshment opportunities. This can include retreats and other means of spiritual nourishment, as well as other forms of learning. Our Resource Centres for Learning can also provide details of available courses. Ministers are encouraged to take up these opportunities designed to enable ministerial flourishing.

The pressures of ministry can creep up on anyone, even for those who are flourishing. Much of the above is about what ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers can access. The committee will be exploring wellbeing resources to support the other formal ministries of Church.

## **4. Reviews**

Three reviews have been, or are being, undertaken on behalf of the committee:

### **4.1 SCM Review**

In February 2024, Assembly Executive agreed the change in focus for Special Category Ministry to that of 13 new pioneering posts (one per Synod) to intentionally grow new Christian communities. Pioneering is not primarily about solving the problem of decline, but about people who are living out of calling and seeking to respond faithfully to the Spirit. With the intentional introduction of pioneering, URC stands at a threshold moment. We are transitioning from what we once were in some big and transformative ways. But we haven't arrived at what we might become next. This means we haven't discovered the benefits and advantages of the new thing yet. We carry the burdens of doing Church together in smaller and more resource-scarce ways, but we haven't yet realised what the good things are, or the up-side of this new thing we are becoming. Pioneers recognise that their primary call is to see new communities of disciples emerge in new contexts. They are not mission enablers with a general remit for mission in a place; their call is more focused. Their gift is to start with context, and allow that to shape church.

### **4.2 CRCW**

The Theos Report (2023) highlighted the real opportunities for URC churches to draw further on CRCWs as catalysts of holistic local mission. As a result, the Committee has now set up a task group to review of the CRCW programme to

determine any learning points which will assist the Church as it explores what it means to be a flourishing church.

#### 4.3 Non Stipendiary CRCW locally

In November 2020, following on from the increase in applications for NSM Model 4 (ministry of the Word and Sacraments), Mission Council agreed a ministry of 'locally called and locally appointed' non-stipendiary Church Related Community Worker. Candidates would be expected to follow an individually designed training path, as determined by the Education and Learning Committee in consultation with the RCL that is relevant to their local context and local opportunities.

While the academic and professional training path for non-stipendiary CRCWs is to the same standard as for stipendiary CRCWs for the general models, the aim of the new model intended to remove the training restrictions for locally called, locally appointed non-stipendiary CRCWs.

In reality, the hope was that there may be a much larger number of people who might consider a call to become a NS CRCW if they can access the required training and continue to minister in their local context for the required minimum of ten hours per week. This has not yet come to fruition.

In 2021, the Assessment Board interviewed one potential candidate for NS locally called locally appointed CRCW ministry but, at the conference, it was deemed by the RCLs that the ministry would not meet the English Standards Boards (ESB) standards, and the assessors approved they should begin to train for NSM Model 4.

There have been no other applications for non-stipendiary CRCW ministry since 2004.

As part of a consultation on Education for Ministry (EM1) provision, discussion focused on NS CRCW in all forms, and reasons why potential candidates are not coming forward. This included:

- a) the training requirements at present require a professional qualification.
- b) the difficulty in establishing posts which meet the ESB standards.

The outcome of this part of the consultation is for Northern College to revise the current model of locally called, locally appointed in line with a NSM CRCW Model 4

#### 5. Lay Preaching

After a hiatus of 18 months, the Committee is blessed to have Maggie Kirkbride as the Advocate for Worship Leading. The Synod Lay Preaching advocates continue to meet twice a year. They have approved a Handbook for Worship Leading and Lay Preaching. It has been written primarily for those who have been commissioned as an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher or appointed as a Locally Recognised Worship Leader within the URC. It will also be helpful for those who, up to 2021, were appointed to be Locally Recognised (or Synod Recognised) Lay Preachers.

The worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God. Worship is at the heart of the life of the United Reformed Church and each of its congregations. Worship is vital. It is the single most important thing the Church does. It is through worship that God first makes Godself known to the church (see Basis of Union, paragraph 13). It is through this encounter with God that we are

given the strength and inspiration to witness, evangelise, and serve. The United Reformed Church is richly blessed to have a growing ministry of worship-leading and lay preaching within our churches.

## 6. Call and vocation

Call and Vocation remains very much on the Committee's agenda. Enquirer's Events advocating ministry of the Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Work, Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, Assembly Accredited Lay Pioneers and Children's and Youth Work remain popular, particularly for the first three named ministries, and hearing the stories of those who discerning what God is asking of them is a real privilege. However, the best advocacy for all these ministries undoubtedly comes from those who are already engaged in them, and the Committee will be looking ways in which we can support Synods and individuals in their encouragement of others' exploration of what God is asking of them.

## 7. Thank you

We continue to be so blessed to have ministers of the Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, Elders, Lay Preachers and Lay Pioneers who serve so faithfully. The work of Ministries could not be achieved without the expertise and commitment of the volunteers who make up the Ministries Committee and its sub-committees. Our thanks go to those who will have retired from our committee since General Assembly last met: Stuart Scott and Sally Willett.

## Accreditations (CRCW&SCM) 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. It supports the work of CRCW ministry.

Convenor: Paul Dean

Secretaries: Nicola Furley-Smith and Steve Summers

Members: Jacob Bali (SCM post holder), Bill Gould (convenor of the assessment board), Carole Marsden, Alison Micklem, Joanne Patterson (CRCW post holder), Jamie Kissack (Synod Moderator), Mary Thomas (convenor of ministries committee)

1. This second full report of the Accreditations sub-committee (CRCW and SCM) since its formation marks a change of emphasis in our work in the light of policy decisions linked to the Church Life Review. The plan is for Special Category Ministries to continue for the time being, until existing postholders complete their terms. The Joint Secretaries and the committee are working towards facilitating new Pioneer ministries in each Synod, and continuing to support chaplaincies and in a term used by Assembly Executive, 'liminal' ministries.

## 2. Certificates of Limited Service

2.1 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.

2.2 Five new certificates have been issued in the last year (Jessica Marie Ashcroft-Townsley, Yufen Chen, Marcus Llewellyn Griffiths, David George Pitkeathley, Yohan

Song), and three have been renewed (Brian Matthews, Martin Spain, Jonathan Soyars), and no certificates have been closed because of retirement.

2.3 In 2021, it was agreed that, for a period of three years, part-time certificates of limited service of 50% or less would not be counted against a Synod's deployment target. This was renewed in April 2024, and the Ministries Committee agreed to continue this for a further period of three years until 2027.

### **3. Certificates of Eligibility**

Ministers who have come from other denominations to serve in the United Reformed Church make a vital contribution to the URC as a whole. Ministries Committee is responsible to General Assembly for oversight of the projected number of ministers for future years. On the basis of these projections and other relevant factors, decisions are made concerning the number of certificates of eligibility that can be issued to ministers of other denominations for both stipendiary and non-stipendiary service, enabling them to receive a call to service in a pastorate or post.

Since last General Assembly, there have been 36 applications. Six Certificates of Eligibility have been issued in the past 12 months, to ministers from the Methodist Church (2), Church of South India (1), United Church of Zambia (1), Reformed Church of Zambia (1), Presbyterian Church of Ghana (1).

Two NSM Certificates of Eligibility were granted to Noel Irwin (Methodist Church) and Darren Holland (Methodist Church).

### **4. Admission to the roll of ministers of Word and Sacraments (from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)**

4.1 **By ordination and induction:** Gillian Barbara Bailey, David George Cumbers, Margaret Ruth Dewis, Walt Wallace Johnson, Karen Helen Jones, Derek McDonald, John Francis Arthur O'Hanlon, Roberta Mary Ritson, Mark Andrew Rodgers, Louise Sanders, Lesley Jean Thomson

4.2 **By transfer from other churches:** Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal (Church of Scotland), Gilbert Esuh Esambe (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon), Nathan Eddy (United Church of Christ, US).

4.3 **By changes within the Roll of Ministers:** There have been no changes within the roll of ministers.

#### **4.4 Deletions from the Roll of Ministers:**

##### **By resignation**

Alison Mary Dummer  
Richard Turnbull  
Henriette Wentink  
Jennifer Gwendoline West

##### **By transfer to another denomination**

None to report

##### **By deletion under the disciplinary process**

None to report

**4.5 Re-admission to the Roll:** Lance Stone, Karen Knight

**4.6 Jubilee Ministers:**

**Celebrating 75 years of ordained ministry in 2024:**

Peter John Humphrey Brewer  
Malcolm Hill.

**Celebrating 70 years of ordained ministry in 2024:**

Leslie Newton  
Brian Edward Ranford  
Anthony David Tucker.

**Celebrating 60 years of ordained ministry in 2024:**

Robert John Blows, Anthony John Coates, James Ashford Hollyman, Neville Jarrett, Frank Jones, Joseph Ross McLaren, Derek Alan Newton, Robert Freeland Philip, Adrian Stanley John Phippen, Stephen Mitchell Thornton, Derek Geoffrey Wensley.

**Celebrating 50 years of ordained ministry in 2024:**

George Clifford Graham Bembridge, Bernard Alan Collins, Richard Frank Davis, Anita Margaret Evans, Peter Heckels, Walter John Houston, David Howlett, Ann Frances Jackson, Anthony Roger Lee, William Dick McNaughton, Gerald Christopher Moule

**4.7 Ministers who have retired from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024:**

Martin Paul Belgrove, Alexander Donald Brown, Mitchell Stewart Bunting, Charles Le Mesurier Croll, Patricia Davis, Paul Bruce Dean, John William Downing, Jacqueline Gaylor Embrey, Peter Leslie Flint, Rowena Elaine Francis, Carla A Grosch-Miller, David Anthony Herbert, Derek Munro Hopkins, Michael Nathaniel Jagessar, Leonora Henriette Jagessar-Visser't Hooft, Peter John Lyth, Donald Alexander Stormonth Macalister, Dawn Mather, Rickey Lynn Mearkle, Jennifer Millington, Rachel Morag Poolman, Alan Philip Poolton, Pauline Rate, Stuart Peter Scott, Rosalind May Selby, Andrew Russell William Sellwood, Gregory Thompson, Kirsty Elizabeth Thorpe, Paul Raymond Whittle.

**4.8 Ministers who have died from 4 July 2023 to 10 April 2024:**

Listed elsewhere

**5. Admissions to the roll of Church Related Community Workers  
(from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024):**

**5.1 By commissioning:**

Alice Victoria Louise Gilbert

**5.2 Deletions from the roll by resignation and / or transfer to another denomination or by the disciplinary process:**

There have been no deletions to the roll.

**5.3 CRCWs who have retired from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023:**



## 6. Roll of Assembly-Accredited Lay Preachers

**6.1 The following have received Assembly accreditation between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 as a result of having completed a URC course of study or having prior accreditation from another denomination:**

04 Yorkshire – Bruce Edwin Hale

05 East Midlands – David Neil Dennis, Claire Ette, Simon Charles Michael Goodman

06 West Midlands – Rachel Louise Morrall, Rachel Coward

07 Eastern – John Driver, Jean Alison Summers

**The following have received Assembly re-accreditation between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024:**

None to report

**6.2 Deletions from the Roll of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers by resignation, removal and / or transfer to other Churches or death from 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024:**

Maria Anne Mills, David Noon, Janet Mary Parkinson

**6.3 Lay Preachers Retired from 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024:**

Gerald Leslie Gibbs, Jacqueline Haws, Deborah Jane Hoddinott,

Nancy Beatrice McOnie

### Assessment board

Convenor: Bill Gould

Secretary: Nicola Furley-Smith

Members: Liz Mullen (2), Keith Reading (3), Jamie Kissak (4), Liz Sharples (5), Samuel Silungwe (5), Mark Tubby (7), Sohail Ejaz (7) Gerald England (8), Sue McCoan (10), Martyn Neads (10), Simon Loveitt (11) Mercy Nimako (11), Jan Adamson (13)

Because of the spread of candidates across the Synods we have also needed to call upon the services of previous assessors: T Ewen Harley (13)

### Flow of candidates

Since the 2023 report, two Assessment Conferences have been held (November 2023, March 2024), all in-person Assessment Conferences in the traditional in-person format. Overall, 12 candidates were considered by the Board, of whom nine were accepted. One candidate was already in training and transferred from NSM 4 to NSM 1-3. One candidate was brought back to the following Assessment Conference for a final decision. Most of these candidates begin their EM1 training programme in the September after their acceptance, but, because of the portfolio nature of their training format, the NSM4 candidates are able to formally enter the training programme at other times of the year.

Date of Conference		No. of Candidates	Number accepted
Nov-23	CRCW	0	0
	Stipendiary Ministry	1	0
	Non-Stipendiary Ministry	2	1
	Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4	0	0
	Transfer NSM4 to NSM 1-3	1	1

TOTAL		4	2
Mar-24	CRCW	0	0
	Stipendiary Ministry	4	3
	Non-Stipendiary Ministry	1	1
	Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4	2	2
TOTAL		7	6
GRAND TOTAL		9	7

## Students in Training, by Synod as of 31/03/2024

Synod	Name
<b>02 North Western</b>	
<b>CRCW</b>	
	Joanne West
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4</b>	
	Aftab Mughal
<b>Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Tom Miller
<b>03 Mersey</b>	
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Rita Griffiths
<b>05 East Midlands</b>	
<b>Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Simon Cross
<b>06 West Midlands</b>	
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Rachel Coward
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4</b>	
	Julie Caroline Jefferies
<b>Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Clare Nutbrown-Hughes
	Edward Lyne
	Stephanie Grace Atkins
<b>07 Eastern</b>	
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Robert Dart
<b>Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Jo Moreira
	Machrina Ejaz
	Maria Jung Youn Lee
	Tina Louise Wilson
<b>08 South Western</b>	
<b>Non-Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Rachel Leach
<b>09 Wessex</b>	
<b>Stipendiary Ministry</b>	
	Abigail Ann Perrow

Simon Peters  
Siobhan Louise Antoniou

## 10 Thames North

### CRCW

Rachel Joanne Harvey

### Stipendiary Ministry

Azeem Qadir Bakhsh  
Carolina Davey  
Joseph Amoah

## 11 Southern

### CRCW

Carol Clack

### Non-Stipendiary Ministry

Joyce Edeki

### Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4

Susan Ann Knight

### Stipendiary Ministry

Maurice Philips Omorojie  
Yukyung Kim

## 12 Wales

### Stipendiary Ministry

Kate Elaine Wolsey

## 13 Scotland

### Non-Stipendiary Ministry 4

David Townsend  
Eilidh Young  
Margaret Winifred Higton

## Students in Training statistics as of 31/03/2024

	Students in Training	Anticipated entry into URC Service			
	Mar-24	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>STIPENDIARY</b>					
Northern College (RCL) CRCW	2		1		1
Northern College (RCL) MWS	8	2	2	3	1
Scottish College (RCL)					
Westminster College (RCL)	10	4	1	2	3
<b>Subtotal</b>	20	6	4	5	5

<b>NON-STIPENDIARY</b>					
Northern College (RCL)	2				2
Scottish College (RCL)	2			1	1
Westminster College (RCL)	3			1	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	7			2	5
<b>NON-STIPENDIARY 4</b>					
Northern College (RCL)	2	1	1		
Scottish College (RCL)	2	1	1		
Westminster College (RCL)	2	1	1		
<b>Subtotal</b>	6	3	3		
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

MWS: Ministry of Word and Sacraments

CRCW: Church Related Community Worker

## 2. Training activities

2.1 The Board has affirmed that all students must be exposed to, and assessed in, at least some in-person format in the course of their EM1 programme, even if it means some delay in completion of the originally prescribed programme, as direct personal involvements must remain a long-term characteristic of any ministry. This affirmation was needed as a result of complications and problems that had arisen as a result of the earlier period of necessary, but temporary, predominance of distance learning during the Covid-19 period while ordinands were continuing their EM1 programme.

2.2 The Board convened two annual assessment interview training consultations, attended not only by new Assessment Board members but also, **and predominantly by, Synod Representatives**, to satisfy the considerable needs for appropriate training for **Synod and local panel members who consider possible candidates earlier in the assessment process. The consultation further strengthens the links between the Board and Synods. They were both facilitated by the Revd Mary Thomas and Revd Lis Mullen.**

2.3 There were also training sessions in June 2023 and April 2024 for Board members and Synod Representatives on neurodiversity and autism awareness. The Board is awaiting Racial Awareness training, although some members have undergone this training due to other roles within the denomination.

## Ordinations and commission

		Type of Ministry	Date of ordination	Date into URC	History for Yearbook
Gillian	Bailey	Non-Stipendiary Minister	15/07/2023		Christ Church Milton 2023-
Rodolphe	Blanchard-Kowal	Stipendiary Minister	06/10/2023	03/07/2023	Bexley, Geddes Place & Emmanuel Sidcup 2023-
David	Cumbers	Stipendiary Minister	16/09/2023		All Saints, Burgess Hill 2023-, Haywards Heath 2023-, Hassocks 2023-
Margaret	Dewis	Stipendiary Minister	23/09/2023		Bush Hill Park 2023-; Christ Church 2023-; Lancaster Road 2023-
Nathan	Eddy	Non-Stipendiary Minister	29/01/2006	19/09/2023	St Peter's Church & Chaplaincy 2006-11; Lowestoft North 2011-14; Thames North Synod 2023-
Gilbert	Esambe	Stipendiary Minister	17/12/2014	02/11/2023	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon -2023; Lancashire East Missional Partnership 2023-
Alice	Gilbert	CRCW	26/08/2023		Priesthill and Shawlands CRCW Project 2023-
Walt	Johnson	Non-Stipendiary Minister	29/07/2023		Bolton & Salford Missional Partnership 2023-
Karen	Jones	Stipendiary Minister	09/09/2023		North Staffordshire Group: Burslem; Chesterton; Longton; Tomkin; Uttoxeter 2023-
Derek	McDonald	Non-Stipendiary Minister	12/08/2023		Greenock East URC 2023-
John	O'Hanlon	Stipendiary Minister	22/07/2023		Rivertown URC 2023-
Roberta	Ritson	Non-Stipendiary Minister	22/07/2023		Bellingham LEP; Wark LEP; Horsley Village Church 2023-
Mark	Rodgers	Stipendiary Minister	19/08/2023		West Midlands Synod, Shropshire Team Ministry: Preeshenlle URC, Christ Church URC/PCW, Shrewsbury URC; Church Stretton

Louise	Sanders	Stipendiary Minister	29/07/2023	URC, Oakengates Telford URC, Trinity Newport URC (2023- St Andrew's, Monkseaton 2023- Trinity, Ashington LEP 2023-
Lesley	Thomson	Stipendiary Minister	01/07/2023	Barrhead URC; Stewarton URC; Shawlands URC 2023-

## Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee report

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 Committee.

Convenor: David Coote

Secretary: Nicola Furley-Smith

Members:

Adrian Bulley (DGS Discipleship), Dr Janet Tollington (convenor of pensions committee), Mary Thomas (convenor of ministries committee), Vaughan Griffiths (assistant treasurer).

In attendance: Mary Steele (Payroll)

1. The MoM sub-committee meets twice a year on Zoom, but conducts much of its business by email 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 are considered necessary. When situations are referred to us that 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 what is intended clearer. Since our last report, there have been various suggested changes to the Plan where clarification is considered necessary, and some tidying up. These are also reflected in the Resolution elsewhere in this report. We have also carried out a review of the Fixed Car Allowance which has not been reviewed since its inception, and this review has resulted in the Resolution that is elsewhere in this report.

### 3. Stipend increase

Our proposal for the stipend increases each year is based on a formula using the consumer price index (CPI) plus Average Weekly Earnings (AWE). When the formula was applied in 2023 to provide a recommended stipend increase, the CPI was at 6.7% and AWE was at 7.8%.

### 4. Long-term sickness absence

We continue to monitor and improve our care for ministers who, having been on sick leave for six months, have come to the end of their entitlement to full stipend.

We know that these can be stressful times for those involved, and we do sometimes have painful decisions to make, but we strive to bring wisdom and compassion to the judgments that are entrusted to us. Even at this current time, Covid-19 in the form of long Covid is still, in some cases, impacting on health issues, and sometimes adds to those difficult decisions we have to make. We are grateful for the work of Mary Steele in the MoM office, who pays the stipends, monitors the sickness cases and brings to our attention when decisions need to be made, organises medical and moderator reports, and deals with all the correspondence.

## **5. Committee changes**

The committee has, since its last report, gone through the changes that were brought to General Assembly 2022 to change its membership. These changes have bedded in now, and are working well.