

Paper H5

Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) revised

Ministries Committee

Basic information

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Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 25 General Assembly adopts the revised Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) and commends it for use in local churches/pastorates.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<p>When the Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) was introduced into the URC in 2008, it was envisaged as a reflective look at the whole life of a local church that would guide its future life in the way God is calling it. Each church was encouraged to write its Living Document which would assist the Synod by making it aware of their needs thus enabling the Synod to make informed decisions when awarding grants and loans.</p> <p>However, instead of being a tool to be used for support and accountability, it became people-hungry and difficult to implement and onerous.</p> <p>This paper gives a lighter approach to the writing of a Living Document.</p>
Main points	<p>It is now clear that removing the Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal component of LMMR may not have been helpful, as this removed a useful tool for both pastorates and ministers to reflect on the Living Document, thus removing the 360° review of its life and witness in a local setting.</p> <p>This revision invites the church/pastorate, and where there is a minister in place, to reflect on its life and witness on an annual basis as part of its whole life discipleship.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Papers C and C1 Mission Council 2008.

Consultation has taken place with...	Synod Moderators.
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Summary of impact

Financial	
External (eg ecumenical)	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 God calls us into ministry. In the United Reformed Church, those who are called by God to ministry of the Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Work have that sense of call tested. The Church gives authority for the exercising of that ministry.
- 1.2 The basic theological concept behind ministry review is that we are all accountable to God, and to each other as the Body of Christ, for the way we use his grace-given gift of ministry. In the New Testament, discipleship themes regarding the full use of gifts and talents in God's service, good stewardship and the need for each of us to play our proper part in the life of the Body so that it grows and develops, show the need to review where we are and our vision for the future.
- 1.3 The assurance of God's grace helps us to continuously recommit in his service.

2. Wellbeing

- 2.1 Ministry is not, and never has been, easy. The pressures of ministry can creep up on any of us, even for those of us who are flourishing. Most ministers are self-directed: we are in control of our own diary and enjoy a valued and valuable sense of autonomy. However, when the 'workplace' 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.
 - 2.2 The care and wellbeing of ministers is crucial to the health of the mission of the church. Healthy, fulfilled, maturing, joyful ministers who feel valued and supported are an enormous gift to God's church. A sense of being cared for and loved will give energy and vigour when they face ministerial or pastoral challenges.
 - 2.3 The wellbeing of ministers has been high on the church's agenda for many years, now with the introduction of pastoral supervision. Wellbeing is more than just 'feeling good'. A positive wellbeing involves the interplay of 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.
3. When the Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR) was introduced into the URC in 2008, it was envisaged as a tool to be used for support and accountability for ministers (both ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers) within the Church. This support is built on the foundation of the covenant relationship between pastorate/post and minister as agreed in the Terms of Settlement. This relationship shapes ordained ministry within the United

Reformed Church along with Education for Ministry 2, Education for Ministry 3, Resilience Courses, Refresher Courses, Synod staff support, Churches Ministerial Counselling Service, Occupational Health and, of course, Pastoral Supervision.

3.1 The URC is committed to adding to the wellbeing toolbox.

4. **LMMR – where we are**

4.1 However, when the General Assembly adopted the URC Policy for Pastoral Supervision, the Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal component of LMMR was dropped as it was felt 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 requirements¹.

4.2 However, it is now clear that removing the Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal component of LMMR may not have been helpful, as this removed a useful tool for ministers to reflect on the pastorate's Living Document, thus removing the 360° review in a local setting.

4.3 Every viable local church has a God-given purpose which will depend on its location and the resources it can marshal; these will change with time. So, in looking to the future, churches should be encouraged to reflect upon their sense of purpose. This is what the Mission part of the LMMR intends to do. LMMR should not be seen as onerous, but as a useful tool in helping churches flourish. Ministries would still consider the writing and updating of the Living Document a worthwhile exercise.

4.4 The LMMR Strategy (Ministries Committee Consultation 2017) suggested each LMMR focused on four core provisions for churches and minister to address:

- What does the pastorate/team seek to do by way of mission and service in the next identifiable period (eg five years)?
- What tasks and activity are necessary to ensure that happens?
- Which of these tasks and activities do we expect the minister to do?
- Who will do the others, or ensure that they are carried out?

However, in light of LMMR experience and reflection, Ministries wishes to change those core questions to:

- What do we do?
- How do we do it?
- Whom do we do it for?
- What value are we bringing?

4.5 We acknowledge that most churches will be regularly reviewing their life, and that is good, but for those who are not, Appendix A offers a useful template for a Living Document. The question raised above can be addressed in section six.

¹ Mission Council acting as GA July 2020 Book of Reports page 166 section 9.1

5. LMMR and Pastoral Supervision – the relationship between the two

5.1 LMMR and Pastoral Supervision are designed with two purposes in mind, as detailed below:

5.1.1 Pastoral Supervision, as outlined in the URC Pastoral Supervision Policy (2023), offers an ongoing, safe space for a minister to reflect on experiences in their ministry, and to formulate responses to them. The intention of such regular and focused reflection is to support a change of culture in the life of the Church from one in which practice is often isolated and vulnerable to one of accountability, support and increased safety.

5.1.2 LMMR should focus more closely on specific aspects of ministry in context. It considers areas of ministry where a closer look can be taken at a particular element of the work. Ministers can often be embedded in a context for several years, and LMMR offers the opportunity to look at aspects of the work over a period of time with perhaps a different focus at each review. The elements of ministry that are selected for review could be carefully drawn from themes discussed during supervision (or indeed those noticeably not discussed) and/or expectations outlined in the Marks of Ministry or those arising from the deployment strategy of a Synod.

6. Accountability

6.1 As agreed at General Assembly 2016, each church or pastorate writes and subsequently updates its Living Document. If churches/pastorates have difficulty in writing their Living Document, they may wish to speak with their Synod Mission Enabler or equivalent.

6.2 It is the responsibility of the Synod, through its appropriate committee, to ensure that each local church and/or pastorate has a Living Document.

6.3 Rather than complicated and people-hungry processes hindering a 360 review, it is suggested that, annually, and at an elders meeting (or equivalent in an LEP), the eldership (or equivalent in an LEP) uses part of one of its meetings to reflect on the four core questions above. In a multi-church pastorate, the elders may wish to come together to look at the document.

6.4 If a minister is in post, the minister will be part of that reflection.

6.5 The minister, as part of their self-care and wellbeing, should reflect upon their ministry within the context of what has been written. They may wish to share this with their pastoral supervisor. They should send their reflection to the Synod Office for their file.

7. The Role of the Synod

7.1 It will be helpful to both the minister for the Synod, through its appropriate committee, at five-yearly intervals, to engage with the church and minister in reflecting on the Living Document.

Appendix A

The Local Mission Review

This is a specially customised version of the United Reformed Church's Pastorate Profile document for particular use by churches who are engaging in a Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR).

A Living Document is a multi-purpose tool for:

- producing a pastorate profile when a minister moves
- undertaking the scoping exercise
- engaging in a pastoral consultation with the Synod and
- seeking financial support from the Synod or other sources.

The component parts of the Living Document are:

- What do we do?
- How do we do it?
- For whom do we do this?
- What value are we bringing?

NOTE: This is not just a form filling exercise. This is about whole life discipleship. We encourage a creative approach – but the points/questions below should be covered. You have great freedom to write up the things you care about most: you can bring out the things you most cherish, but write them up and bring them out within the template.

What do we do?

Town, suburban, inner city, urban priority area, city centre etc and adding other relevant detail (eg local employment, culture, deprivation)

Describe the population of the communities being served both numerically – with other relevant detail (eg growing/static/declining) and by social composition (eg age, ethnicity etc).

Describe the ecumenical scene. What other churches are in the area? What are relationships like? Are there any local formal arrangements (eg local covenants)?

What is your ministry vision or mission statement? Is there a biblical basis for your mission purpose?

How do we do it?

Give a brief pen portrait of the pastorate, who you are, including key points in its history; what is distinctive about the pastorate, its theological outlook and worship style.

What skills, gifts, experiences are there in the church?

What property resources are available? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

What financial resources are available? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

What other resources do you have? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

For whom do we do this?

What are the opportunities for the church?

What are the trends in the life of the church and in the community context?

What challenges does the church face locally?

What are the priorities, the targets, goals, objectives for the next few years?

Priority 1:

Objectives:

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Priority 2:

Objectives:

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Priority 3:

Objectives:

.....

How will we get there?

What plans are there for making progress on the priorities agreed by the church?

What time frame is there for their implementation?

What value are we bringing to God's Mission?

Why are we doing this?

How will the plans be monitored and evaluated?