

Paper H6

Renaming of Models of Non-Stipendiary Ministry

Ministries Committee

Basic information

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Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 31 General Assembly adopts the following designations for Non-Stipendiary ministry: Non-Stipendiary Minister and Non-Stipendiary Minister (Local) for ministry of the Word and Sacraments and Non-Stipendiary CRCW and Non-Stipendiary CRCW (Local) for Church Related Community Workers.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<p>Ministries Committee has been troubled in recent years by a lack of understanding of different forms of non-stipendiary ministry by candidates and students who are more aware of their own sense of Call than the Church's discernment and organisation of ministry. This has led to difficulties in training and on into ministry.</p> <p>Renaming the models will reflect how students are trained whilst the designations 1-4 for Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and 1-3 for Church Related Community Workers will be retained for internal purposes only.</p>
Main points	See above.
Previous relevant documents	Section M of The Manual.
Consultation has taken place with...	RCL Principals.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
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External (eg ecumenical)	None.
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1. Non-stipendiary ministry has been one of God's gifts to the churches. Much valuable service has been undertaken within the URC by Non-Stipendiary Ministers (NSMs). It is an important principle that there is an essential parity within the ordained Ministry of the Word and Sacraments (MWS) and within the ministry of Church Related Community Work (CRCW). It is also important that we sometimes respond to God's call to new, emerging and pioneering ministries, as well as chaplaincy ministry. Non-stipendiary ministry has often been that important response to God's call.
2. There are four models of non-stipendiary service for ministry of the Word and Sacraments mentioned in Section M of the Manual:
 - Model 1 – service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is a limited local ministry. We currently have three ministers in this form of service;
 - Model 2 – pastoral charge of a small congregation, or service as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches. We currently have 39 ministers in this form of service;
 - Model 3 – ministers in secular employment. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or Synod. We currently have 11 ministers in this form of service, of which three serve the Synod directly;
 - Model 4 – service in a local setting with training tailored to a specific role description and ministry vision. We currently have four ministers in this form of service.
3. There are three models of non-stipendiary ministry for Church Related Community Work:
 - Model 1 – service in an accredited CRCW posts. They can also serve as part of a team alongside a Minister of Word and Sacraments as in Model 1 above. We have no CRCWs in this form of service;
 - Model 3 – Church Related Community Workers in secular employment and Church Related Community Workers working for the URC or other Christian organisations or denominations. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or Synod. We have no CRCWs in this form of service;
 - Locally training, Locally Commissioned – service in a local setting with training tailored to the specific role description and ministry vision. We have no CRCWs in this form of service.
4. In practice, the majority of NSM Ministers of Word and Sacraments now serve under Model 2, arguably filling gaps in deployment. The denomination has not trained any Non-Stipendiary CRCWs, with only two coming to the Assessment Conference since its introduction, although one candidate starts training in September.
5. Post pandemic, we have seen the number of candidates offering themselves for non-stipendiary ministry increase and, for this, we give thanks.

6. The Colleges train for just two models of non-stipendiary Ministry of the Word and Sacraments:
 - Models 1-3 – normally a Common Awards theological diploma or degree (or a diploma or degree from the University of Aberdeen) alongside placements and a programme of ministerial formation lasting four years. The ordinand is expected, once ordained, to serve where the Synod determines there is greatest need after consultation with both the ordinand and the pastorate. Students are not trained to a particular model of non-stipendiary service.
 - Model 4 – Ordinands normally build a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflective practice in the common tasks of ministry. They may study Common Awards Foundation modules Level 4 for audit or take modules from Aberdeen University in theology. They may take courses tailored to a specific role description. All NSM 4 ordinands undertake a programme of ministerial formation in no less than two years. After ordination the student is expected to serve the church/pastorate/post as described in their application for ministry.
7. Whilst models of service are important, not least as part of the heritage of the United Reformed Church,¹ we do not, at present, designate stipendiary ministers differently according to their form of service, so Ministries Committee suggests we should not do so with non-stipendiary ministers. The only exception to this is for internal Ministries Office administrative purposes to monitor spheres of service for the church for the Active Minister Policy.
8. The Ministries Committee has been troubled in recent years by a lack of understanding of different forms of ministry by candidates and students who are more aware of their own sense of Call than the Church's discernment and organisation of ministry.
9. Non-Stipendiary service is generalist as ministry is generalist and can be undertaken in a variety of settings: local churches, Synods, chaplaincy etc.
10. The Ministries Committee, therefore, proposes to simplify the designations to
 - Non-Stipendiary Minister, and Non-Stipendiary Minister (Local)
Local being the former Model 4
 - Non-Stipendiary CRCW, and Non-Stipendiary CRCW (Local)
Local being the former Model locally trained, locally commissioned with such designations being used for internal URC purposes, but expects such ministers and CRCWs, and the churches and projects they serve, to be referred simply as 'Ministers' and 'CRCWs' as appropriate.

¹ Proposals for Unification were produced and approved by General Assembly in 1980. These Proposals accepted the URC's work on Auxiliary Ministry (1976) to reflect the Churches of Christ tradition, and it was to this Auxiliary Ministry that many Churches of Christ elders were ordained following unification in 1981.