





- 2.2 Synod initiates discussion with the pastorate with a view to appointing an Interim Moderator (or sometimes more than one to churches in a joint pastorate or LEP). The role and duties of Interim Moderator(s) should be clearly defined. If more than one Interim Moderator is appointed it is advisable to choose one of them to play a 'coordinating' role.
- 2.3 Ahead of the departure of the minister the Interim Moderator will chair any meetings about the future and will be the point of contact with Synod and the Synod Moderator.
- 2.4 Synod and the Synod Moderator arrange one or more meetings with the Elders, or other appropriate pastorate group, to explain the process of the movement of ministers and to discuss the mission needs and the scoping of the vacant pastorate.
- 2.5 After consultation with all involved the Synod decides on the shape of the pastorate and its scoping. "Scoping" is the term used for determining the ministry allocated to each pastorate. Thus, a pastorate may be scoped for a full-time or part-time Minister of Word and Sacraments or other form of ministry.
- 2.6 A 'pastorate call group' (also known as a vacancy group) is identified by the pastorate to help them through the process. Often this group is composed only of elders (some or all of the serving elders). However, others may be invited to take part to enable appropriate representation including, if possible, a mix of ethnicity, gender, age etc. In a multi-church pastorate, it is advisable to have at least one pastorate call group representative of each of the congregations in the group. In order to be most effective, it is

- 2.10 The summary profile (one for the whole pastorate) is prepared and agreed.
- 2.11 A copy of the full profile and summary profile should be sent to the Synod Office electronically for the Synod Moderator.
- 2.12 When a pastorate profile and summary profile are completed, scoping agreed and Terms of Settlement approved in draft form, then Synod will declare the pastorate free to seek a minister and the Synod Moderator will seek a candidate through the Synod Moderators' meeting.

### **3. Seeking and issuing a call**

The best current practice for the movement of ministers follows the process given here. The basic framework will be adapted for particular circumstances, e.g. group pastorates, team ministries, ecumenical or 'special' situations. The process should be regarded as confidential to those involved.

- 3.1 The Synod Moderators meet 11 times per year to consider the movement of ministers. When the vacant post has been declared and the Pastorate Profile and summary have been prepared, the Synod Moderator gives information about the vacant post to the Synod Moderators' meeting using the Summary Pastorate Profile. The vacant post is advertised through the monthly emailing to all serving ministers before any consideration of an introduction. Ministers can view all Summary Pastorate Profiles via the website [www.urc-profiles.org.uk](http://www.urc-profiles.org.uk) . If candidates can be identified, or if any ministers have asked for it, they are shown the full Pastorate Profile and asked about letting their name go forward. Ministers seeking a move may be shown more than one profile, from which they may choose one to pursue.
- 3.2 If a candidate agrees, his/her Personal Profile is given to the pastorate. Sometimes the minister attaches a covering letter for the pastorate call group to indicate why they feel they would like an introduction. If several ministers wish to be introduced, their Personal Profiles are given to the pastorate which has to choose one with whom to proceed. (See Appendix 7 for a description of the process as printed in Assembly Reports 2004 page 120.) It is important for the pastorate to understand that this is a call process and not competitive interview.
- 3.3 An invitation may then be given to the candidate to meet the Interim Moderator and pastorate call group. These meetings/interviews should be confidential and carefully handled; some guidance is offered in Appendix 7. Members of any ministry team and ecumenical representatives may be met at this point and the manse may be seen.
- 3.4 If the candidate and pastorate call group both agree, the candidate should be invited for a weekend, to include meeting with appropriate groups, leading of services, social gatherings, etc. Consideration should be given as to whether joint services in a group pastorate might be more appropriate than leading worship several times in different locations.
- 3.5 Church Meeting(s) (with the Interim Moderator(s) chairing) will take place as soon after the weekend visit as possible normally within a week. The pastorate call group are free

but not obliged to make a recommendation to the Church Meeting(s). If the candidate is willing to accept the call, the acceptance is provisional until Synod concurrence is given in writing. Email correspondence is sufficient. A provisional acceptance should therefore be communicated to the Synod Clerk as soon as possible, with a request for concurrence again in writing.

- 3.6 The minister will normally have a current Disclosure and Barring Service/Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme disclosure as these are issued every 5 years. The Ministries Office at Church House will be able to advise.
- 3.7 The Interim Moderator(s) works with the pastorate, Synod Officers, newly called minister and Synod Moderator to co-ordinate the preparation of the (Ordination and) Induction service, which is under the auspices of the Synod. The Interim Moderator may also work with the incoming minister on an induction process.

## **4. The Appointment, Responsibilities and Role of Interim Moderators**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The ministry of Interim Moderators has been recognised from the foundation of the United Reformed Church. Their purpose is to provide a continuing mutual link between the wider church and local pastorate during a time of ministerial transition. A function of a Synod is “to appoint, in consultation with the local church and the Moderator of the Synod, from among its members an Interim Moderator during a pastoral vacancy”. It is important that the Interim Moderator be able to act and to be seen as a neutral person – someone outside the local situation. The Interim Moderator needs to be objective and sensitive to the church’s tradition, theological stance and ways of operating. The agreement of the local church in the appointment is essential. The Synod is responsible for the training and support of Interim Moderators. The Interim Moderator is the point of contact for the Synod Moderator and may be invited to report on the state of the pastorate during the time of ministerial transition to the Synod Pastoral Committee (or equivalent).

### **4.2 Appointment**

When a minister receives a call to another pastorate or post, or is within six months of retirement, or for any other reason is leaving the pastorate, then the Synod initiates discussion with the local church and the Synod Moderator and appoints an Interim Moderator(s). The role and duties of the Interim Moderator should be agreed and clearly defined. Care should be taken in choosing a person with experience, knowledge of the area, insight into the needs and aspirations of the local church, time and a readiness to exercise the role. In a multi-church pastorate, each may have its own Interim Moderator and, if so, one of the interim Moderators should act as a co-ordinating Interim Moderator.

Best practice is for clearly defined terms of service to be agreed by all parties at the beginning. An appointment for a year at a time is helpful. All will then understand the time available to be used, the cost of the operation (Interim Moderators’ expenses are paid by the receiving local church) and the tasks which can be undertaken by the Interim Moderator. One of the first needs will then be to determine who will be

responsible for what the Interim Moderator is unable to do. Note that the oversight by Elders and Church Meeting continues and, in many instances, flourishes during the time of transition.

#### 4.3 **Responsibilities**

The role of the Interim Moderator will vary. Some will simply be responsible for the process of introducing a candidate, others may be willing to lead worship, chair all church meetings, make emergency pastoral visits, preside at the ordination and induction of elders and attend social functions. All of these depend on the availability of the Interim Moderator. So, the responsibilities of Interim Moderators shall normally include:

- a. Chairing Elders' Meetings, Church Meetings or special groups where the calling of a minister is discussed
- b. Chairing all meetings with prospective ministers
- c. Providing a mutual link between the Synod and the local church
- d. Providing a mutual link between the Synod Moderator and the local church
- e. Providing a mutual link between the prospective minister and the local church
- f. Aiding the drafting and negotiating of Terms of Settlement, including housing provision
- g. Encouraging consideration of any relevant issues as a new minister is sought, in particular the denomination's Equal Opportunities Policy (Appendix 8), noting that there is a helpful and important document 'Equalities Training for Churches in Vacancy' in the equalities section of the URC website.
- h. Informing both prospective ministers and/or the Church Meeting/Pastorate Call Group and the Synod Moderator of any decisions.
- i. Overseeing and co-ordinating the planning of the Induction Service in consultation with the Synod, Synod Moderator and future minister
- j. Advising on what is appropriate at each stage.

#### 4.4 **The Role**

The question of how much leadership to give and of what nature is difficult to prescribe because it has to be assessed in the light of varied circumstances. In this period, it can be helpful to reflect on such matters as the sense of 'bereavement' that the loss of a minister might bring, the anxiety about a time without a minister and any underlying conflicts that might have emerged during the previous period of ministry. This time can also be an opportunity for hidden gifts within the elders and members to be released in leadership, worship and pastoral care etc.

The transition time is not just a waiting time; the church can develop. The Interim Moderator can help the church grow in awareness and confidence in the process and be prepared to address difficult issues. If this growth and development does not occur the church will be restricted in its vision for the future.

It follows that good relations with the Interim Moderator are not enough if they inhibit the kind of in-depth appraisal and discernment for ministry, which may be essential for the future. It is better to take time in order to reach a fruitful outcome.

The Interim Moderator also has a role in helping a candidate through the process and in reflecting on it, whether or not a call is issued.



## **Appendix 1 Notes for a visit at a time of ministerial transition**

Visits to a pastorate by the Synod Moderator and representatives of the pastoral committee (or equivalent) enable everyone involved in the process of the movement of ministers to have a clearer understanding of what is involved. These visits can explain the process, clarify the role of the Synod, Interim Moderators and Synod Moderators, review the ministry needs of the pastorate, review the draft pastorate profile and prepare the way for the introduction of possible candidates. What follows are headings, which should be covered in one or more of these visits.

- a) Explanation of the Synod's responsibilities through the pastoral committee (or equivalent) for determining the pastorate and its scoping, and declaring a vacant post
- b) Appointment and role of Interim ModeratorSng the pastorate



administration, youth and children, leadership, evangelism, social involvement, music, reconciliation, theological range, ecumenical commitment

iii. Terms of settlement, manse, any other relevant comments

iv. Positive aspects of vacancies

v. The need to keep congregation informed of process and steps being taken whilst keeping confidentiality.



## Appendix 3 PASTORATE PROFILE

### TO BE COMPLETED BY PASTORATES SEEKING A MINISTER

A well-produced Pastorate Profile can help in the introduction of a minister. It is useful to those who are seeking to make an introduction and to any minister who is trying to understand the characteristics of the vacant pastorate. It should be written with care after Elders have discussed each section and have consulted other leaders and representatives of local churches concerned.

Before indicating their expectations for a new ministry, the Elders should examine the life, work and theological outlook of their church(es) and the leadership they need from a minister. This paper should be taken as a guide to the questions they should ask and to the content of the resulting Profile. It is not a form to be filled in, although specific statistics are asked for in certain places.

Pastorate Profiles are normally produced electronically and can be sent to the Synod Moderator in that form. A few pictures and perhaps a map may help you to present your church and its setting. The profile, and any supporting documents, should not be over-extensive. If it is not available electronically, please make suitable arrangements with your Synod Office.

The name of the pastorate and, where appropriate, the names of the local churches concerned should be at the front of the Profile or at the head of the first page.

At the end of the Pastorate Profile indicate who were involved in its preparation and add the date.

Most Synods are now working to Local Mission and Ministry Reviews (LMMR) that need relatively minor adaptation when needed as a pastorate profile.

*Once a Pastorate Profile has been prepared, a summary version is also needed. There is a pro forma for this, which should be obtained from your Synod Office. For examples, please see the summary profiles website [www.urc-profiles.org.uk](http://www.urc-profiles.org.uk)*

*Please note that you must complete the pro forma, with the whole pastorate on one side of A4, within the constraints set by the form.*

The component parts of the full Pastorate Profile (however it originates) are:

- (i) What are we here for?
- (ii) Where are we going?
- (iii) How will we get there?

These are unpacked into the following sections:

- (i) Where are we? Who are we? What do we do? What are we here for?
- (ii) What are our resources? What are the opportunities? Where are we going?
- (iii) How will we get there? What do we need?

(The numbers in brackets marked with an \* refer to the notes provided at the end to give additional guidance for those who require it).

1. Where are we? Mission Context

1a. Name of the pastorate and the churches involved.

1b. Describe the context (e.g. rural, country town, suburban, inner city, urban priority area, city centre etc.) and adding other relevant detail (e.g. local employment, culture, deprivation)

1c. Describe the population of the communities being served:

(a) numerically - with other relevant detail (e.g. growing / static / declining)

(b) by social composition (e.g. age, ethnicity etc.)

1d. Describe the ecumenical scene

(a) What other churches are in the area?

(b) What are relationships like?

(c) Are there any local formal arrangements (e.g. local covenants)? (\*1)

2. Who are we?

2a. Give a brief pen portrait of the pastorate, including key points in its history; what is distinctive about the pastorate, its theological outlook and worship style.

2b. Number on roll- total .....

number up to 11.....

12-18 .....

19-30 .....

31-50 .....

51-70 .....

71+ .....

Number of adherents ..... (\*2)

Average attendance at main act of worship on Sunday .....

Average attendance at worship over a week .....

2c. Changes in the roll over the last five years-

(a) Additions: on profession of faith .....

by transfer .....

(b) Losses: by death .....

by transfer .....

by removal from the roll .....

2d. Number residing-

(a) within one mile of church building .....

(b) over three miles from church building .....

2e. Number of serving Elders .....

Number of non-serving Elders .....

3. What do we do?

Pattern of worship (Sunday, midweek, styles, venues etc.) (\*3)

Pattern of care and nurture (teaching the faith, discipling etc.)

Pattern of leadership & decision making (elders, church meetings, ministry team) (\*4)

Pattern of work with different groups (children, young people, elderly, community etc.) (\*5)

Pattern of partnership with others (ecumenical and secular) (\*6)

Other activities

4. What are we here for?

What is your mission statement (value statement, vision statement etc)? (\*7)

What is the biblical basis for your mission purpose?

5. What are our resources?

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

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

What financial resources are available? (include your latest set of accounts)

6. What are the opportunities?

1. If the church is a united church or Local Ecumenical Partnership a more detailed description of the partnership can be given here.
2. If it helps to give a better understanding of the fellowship of the church the number of households represented by the combination of members and adherents can be given here.
3. The worship/devotional life of the church could be described in the following areas:



# Pastorate Profile Summary

Ref. Number:

## **Pastorate Details:**

Name of pastorate:

Churches in pastorate:

Date of declaration of vacancy:

Scoping (%) & Term:

**Mission Context:** (e.g. inner city/urban/suburban/market town/rural; population size and composition; ecumenical scene etc.)





in preaching; ready and able to foster skills, techniques and experience in others so that they might lead worship and preach well.

**A pastor:** sharing with others, especially Elders, in sustaining care; making time to walk in love alongside people; rejoicing and grieving with others through listening deeply and offering





incurred for business purposes. The Pastorate will also pay a Fixed Car Allowance in accordance with the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration. At the time of entering this agreement the allowance is £1200 p.a., subject to a deduction for tax and National Insurance paid to the Minister in twelve equal monthly instalments through the Maintenance of the Ministry Payroll Office.

***[OR The Pastorate will provide a car for the Minister and will be responsible for all maintenance, servicing, repairs, tax and insurance. The Minister will reimburse the Pastorate for all private mileage at the rate advised from time to time by the URC Finance Committee.]***

Other travelling expenses will be reimbursed on the basis of costs actually incurred, upon submission of a written claim, and subject to annual review in the light of recommendations from the Synod and/or the URC Finance Committee.

## **6. Administration, telephones and computer**

The Pastorate will reimburse the Minister for all administrative expenses, including stationery and postage, upon submission of a written claim. Telephone(s) and access to the internet via broadband will be provided by the Pastorate. Details of telephone services including broadband will be agreed prior to the Induction. The Minister will reimburse the Pastorate for private telephone calls.

A computer will be provided by the Pastorate and should be upgraded or replaced to an appropriate modern standard at intervals throughout the period of ministry. Specification for the computer will be negotiated and agreed initially prior to induction.

## **7. Reimbursement of Expenses**

***[For the purposes of expenses, shared costs relating to the Manse, car, and administration, etc. shall be split in the proportion of X% (X URC): Y% (Y URC): Z% (Z URC). Shared costs should be claimed by the Minister from the Treasurer at X URC. Expenses relating solely to one identifiable congregation within the pastorate should be claimed from the Treasurer at that church.]***

The Minister shall submit a written claim for the reimbursement of expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in the performance of the Minister's duties on an agreed regular basis and not less than quarterly. Except for minor expenditure, all claims should be accompanied by a receipt. The Pastorate will reimburse properly claimed expenses without undue delay.

## **8. Education for Ministry**

All United Reformed Church Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake annual study as part of their Education for Ministry and will support the Minister in taking leave for this purpose.

When a Minister moves from one placement/appointment to another they may take, by agreement with the relevant Synod Officers, up to four weeks Education for Ministry time in that year (rather than the normal two weeks' allocation) to allow them to undertake specific learning that will assist their induction into the new post/appointment.

During the rest of their ministry, Ministers are strongly urged to devote two weeks per year to Education for Ministry (Report to General Assembly 1998, pages 124 and 126).

The Pastorate will encourage the Minister to attend an annual Synod School, for which the **[Pastorate/Synod]** will pay.

The Pastorate will encourage the Minister to take Sabbatical Leave as recommended in the Plan for Partnership.

For any Sundays involved in the provision above, the Pastorate is responsible for arranging and paying for pulpit supply.

The Pastorate will offer an annual allowance of £250, payable against actual expenditure on books, resources and computer software.

### **9. Mandatory training**

All active United Reformed Church Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake mandatory training as part of their Education for Ministry. This will include Safer Sacred Space Boundary training (Mission Council November 2013) and Safeguarding Training (GA 2018).

Pastoral Supervision (Mission Council July 2025) is also a requirement and the minister is expected to arrange pastoral supervision in line with guidance from URC Ministries Department. The minister and supervisor are expected to share their agreement with the Synod Moderator *[or nominated person]* who will report annually to the Secretary for Ministries. The pastorate agrees to pay X% of the cost of s7(t)7(o)-6(n)-6(n)-s4435.6y X/P MCID 6-BDC q(o)-6(f)7( )

keeping as well as pastoral care of both the Minister and the Pastorate. It is not sufficient to simply ask the local church for permission or indeed to go absent without permission.

## **12. Renegotiation and Review**

The Pastorate and minister are willing to re-negotiate these terms of settlement during the





## **Appendix 7 Interim Moderator's Notes for introducing a Minister or an Ordinand**

These notes are to assist the Synod Moderator in ensuring that an Interim Moderator is aware of all the special factors that might obtain when a minister is being introduced to a vacant pastorate. Most of the following would be expected in the normal pattern of introducing a minister to a pastorate. Some elements are particularly sensitive where the introduction of an ordinand is concerned.

1      ̄b̄e.00000912 0 612 792 reW\* nBT/F3 12 Tf1 0 0 1 113.8 612.95 Tm74020021 g80)-6(a)-6(st)7((

3.5 Learning from the minister if there are any special dietary or disability needs to be borne in mind when arranging hospitality or the provision of meals; or any particular personal or family information needs that would facilitate reflection and decision about a possible invitation. This might include:

- local schools' choices
- retirement or sheltered housing provision
- availability of specific specialist medical services

4 Candidates should be given clear and precise travelling directions, especially if coming by road. These should include contact telephone numbers in the event of last minute hitches or getting lost. Travelling expenses should be identified and paid swiftly by the pastorate. The pastorate can claim back for two visits to the pastorate (the first being the initial visit and the second being the preach with a view) from the Maintenance of Ministry Office at Church House.

5 Candidates should be clearly informed of:  
the decision-making process including the timetable of response,  
the method of reflection and voting, especially if more than one congregation is involved  
the agreed majority required for a call to be sustained

6 The Interim Moderator should make clear arrangements with the minister how s/he will make known the outcome of an initial exploratory meeting or a church meeting. If this is agreed to be done by telephone it should always be confirmed by a letter attached to an email. In the case of an offer of a call the minister should also reply in writing.

7 The Interim Moderator should ensure that, in the event of a decision not to proceed at any stage of the introduction, a detailed de-brief of the process, discussions and reactions should be sent to the receiving Synod Moderator within one week. This is designed to enable a supportive de-brief of the candidate and to assist the Synod Moderators in the next stage of exploring appropriate introductions.

8 After a call to the pastorate is given and accepted, the Interim Moderator is a key person in a number of practical matters:

- to ensure concurrence has been given and received by the Synod;
  - to arrange a date for the service of ordination and induction, which is suitable for the Synod Moderator, minister, pastorate and Synod;
  - putting together the order of service in consultation with the minister and the local pastorate, and with the agreement of the Synod Moderator; all parties should agree the content and order before printing deadlines are identified. For the ordination of an ordinand, a representative of the training college should be invited;
  - to ensure that the manse is in good order and ready for occupation, cleaned and with all systems checked to be working; this is especially important if the manse has been let to tenants after a minister has left or is subject to building works;
- There may be times when an Interim Moderator has a role in the handing over of records and contact lists relating to the pastorate; this is especially important in respect of confidential information regarding sensitive pastoral issues.

## **Appendix 8 A meeting of the Pastorate Call Group and the Minister**

In the context of discovering God's will regarding the filling of a vacant pastorate, the care taken over a meeting of the pastorate call group and the minister is vital. When a candidate visits a pastorate, there should be more than one opportunity for informal contact with a wide range of members (including children and young people) and, if possible, adherents.

### **1. The preparation**

Ensure that all relevant papers are available. This will comprise correspondence; minister's personal profile (not for general publication); pastorate profile including draft Terms of Settlement. The pastorate call group should include a good mix of ethnicity, age and gender if possible. A comfortable venue, with freedom from distraction and a friendly atmosphere should be chosen. Well before the meeting the Interim Moderator(s) should consult with the pastorate call group and the minister to decide what form the meeting will take. It is important that this is not determined solely by the pastorate call group and that the minister has significant input into the arrangements for the meeting and is happy with them before the meeting takes place. Prior to the meeting the pastorate call group with the Interim Moderator(s)

## **Appendix 9 Equal Opportunities Policy**

The United Reformed Church believes that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day.

**For the United Reformed Church's Equal Opportunities Policy please see**

<https://urc.org.uk/equal-opportunities>



Your priorities in ministry  
Your view of community development

# Appendix 11 Orientation for Incoming Ministers to Methodist and United Reformed LEPs

## Introduction

LEPs can be among the most exciting churches in which to serve as a minister. At their best, they are growing and developing situations that enable congregations and community to see the church fulfilling Christ's prayer "that they might be one." However, each LEP has a different constitution that sits alongside "normal" denominational practice and allows for creative development. It is therefore necessary for incoming ministers of either denomination to understand the practice of the specific LEP to which they have been called, or in which they have been stationed. This means that it is necessary to understand:

- the differences between the LEP, and the Methodist and United Reformed Churches;
- the expectations of the wider church structures on the LEP;
- how and why the original Constitution and Sharing Agreement are implemented now.

## The orientation process

- a) As part of the orientation process a URC minister will be expected to attend the orientation course on understanding the Methodist Church course in the same way that a Methodist minister will be encouraged to attend the History and Ethos of the URC.

The course will include:

The different processes used for "calling" (United Reformed Church) and "stationing" (Methodist Church) ministers.

The different roles and understandings of leaders and ministers in the two churches at congregational, Circuit and District levels.

The different understandings of local church governance and authority in relation to decision-making, pastoral care and worship.

Different accounting and church years have implications for local decision-making and the relationship of the local church to the Circuit and District. The United Reformed Church works on a calendar year (January to December), while the Methodist Church uses the "Connexional" Year (September to August)

Different rules, practices and laws concerning property.

Differences around communion practices (for example: how, and by whom, the elements are served to the people and lay presidency), baptism, and transfer of membership.

- b) Reading essential documents will be helpful. They include:

The Constitution or Declaration of Intent.

The Sharing Agreement. (NB: Please be aware that Sharing Agreements are drafted according to the Sharing of Buildings Act 1969. They are legal documents and might not appear to reflect the dreams and hopes in local situations for equality and goodwill.)

Practice Documents. Where these exist, they might include terms of reference for committees, processes for electing Elders / Stewards etc.

Annual Reports

Minutes of meetings with powers of governance such as Elders and Church Meeting, Church Council, and Joint Councils.

## **APPENDIX 12 Group voting procedures**

1. General Assembly 2018 passed the following resolution (resolution 28): General Assembly encourages a flexible approach to how ministerial calls are issued and concurred, noting the variety of existing practice and the provisions of sections 1(1)(b), 1(1)(c), 2(1)(vii), 2(4)(A)(iii) and 2(4)(A)(vii) of the Structure of the URC.

2. The Manual (Section B Structure) states:

*1.(1)(b) Where two or more Local Churches together, and in consultation with the synod, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share resources and ordained ministry, they may, with the approval of the synod, form an association known as a group of churches with a structured relationship and a constitution governing the way in which they relate to one another as to the sharing of both resources and the ordained ministry. Each church within the*



