

The Movement of Ministers

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2 Introduction

This document is a revision of the first version of the Movement of Ministers following the introduction of new Synods. It replaces *Guidelines for Declaring and filling a vacancy* and *Interim Moderators in the United Reformed Church*. It includes an overview of the process from the time a minister receives a call to another post to the end of an induction period when a new minister has been called. This document does not deal with Church Related Community Workers, who are the subject of a parallel document 'The Movement of CRCWs'.

3 The Outline Process

Preparing to declare a post vacant

Minister receives a call and informs the pastorate and the Synod

Concurrence is given by the Synod, co-ordinated by the Synod Clerk

Appointment of Interim Moderator(s)

Visit by members of the Pastoral Committee (or equivalent) sometimes with the Synod Moderator

Identifying of the Pastorate Call Group

Preparation of Pastorate Profile and Summary Profile

Visit by Synod Moderator

Draft Terms of Settlement (including housing arrangements)

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g. 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.

6 The Appointment, Responsibilities and Role of Interim Moderators

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". Such person has in the past normally been a minister or retired minister, but sometimes an elder may be appointed. 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 may be invited to the Pastoral Committee to report on the state of the pastorate during the time of ministerial transition.

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 [Manual 2 (3) iii]. In a pastorate involving more than one church each may have its own Interim Moderator, and if so a co-ordinating Interim Moderator may be appointed. 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 district, insight into the needs and aspirations of the local church, time and a readiness to exercise the role.

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, intensifies and in many instances flourishes during the time of transition.

Responsibilities

The role of the Interim Moderator will have to be negotiated. 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 and will vary from person to person. In some areas a small number of specialist Interim Moderators are being trained to carry out this role. So, the responsibilities of Interim Moderators normally include:

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- 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. Overseeing and co-ordinating the planning of the Induction Service in consultation with the Synod, Synod Moderator and future minister
- h. Advising on what is appropriate at each stage.

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.

7 Special cases: Ordinands, married couples, advertised posts, fixed term appointments, health issues.

Experience gained from a variety of special cases enables the Synod Moderators' meeting to offer guidance and support to ministers, pastorates and Interim Moderators. For further information beyond that given contact one of the Synod Moderators.

Ordinands - see Appendix 6 for guidelines for Interim Moderators in introducing an ordinand to a pastorate. Ordinands prepare their Personal Profiles in time for interviews with the Synod Moderators normally in September of their final year of training. The October Synod Moderators' meeting then seeks to offer each ordinand a suitable pastorate to consider. Most ordinands receive a call within their final year of training. Before proceeding to ordination and induction the Synod should be satisfied that training has been satisfactorily completed.

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 enables 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 Pastoral Committee for determining the pastorate and its scoping, drawing up terms of settlement and declaring a vacant post
- b) Appointment and Role of Interim Moderator(s)
- c) Synod Moderators' Role with Pastoral Committee and Synod
- d) Movement of Ministers
 - i. at each monthly meeting Synod Moderators give consideration to ministers seeking a call. NB Description of Process in Assembly Reports 2004 (See Appendix 10)
 - ii. ordinands are given priority - their profiles usually come to the October meeting
 - iii. the process deals with ministers seeking a call, occasionally it begins with pastorates. NB A summary Personal Profile for each minister and a Summary Pastorate Profile for each pastorate are circulated to each Synod Moderator.
 - iv. sometimes there are specific requests from ministers (they receive a list each month of vacant posts, and can view Summary Pastorate Profiles on the website)
 - v. sometimes specific requests for named ministers are received from a pastorate
 - vi. as appropriate, consideration is given to ministers from other churches with a certificate of eligibility
 - vii. occasionally, settled ministers are challenged to consider a call to a particular pastorate
 - viii. Decisions about introduction are the result of Synod Moderators' collective discussion
 - ix. A full Pastorate profile, or more than one, is offered to a minister. In some cases the same profile is offered to more than one minister, in this case a deadline is set by which ministers have to express their wish to proceed.
 - x. A minister's full personal Profile is send to the Interim Moderator for consideration by the Pastorate Call Group. NB More than one ministers profile may be offered, however, the pastorate can choose only one to pursue.
 - xi. The minister meets with pastorate call Group and the Interim Moderator
 - xii. The minister meets with congregation and preaches with a view
 - xiii. The Church meeting(s) decide on whether to offer a call. NB procedures for voting should be discussed and agreed in advance.
 - xiv. Concurrence is sought from Synods
 - xv. A Criminal Records Bureau disclosure has to be obtained by the minister
 - xvi. The Induction Service is planned, co-ordinated by the Interim Moderator
 - xvii. General
The timetable is unpredictable and may be lengthy.

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

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)?

Give a brief history of the church. Describe, as to a prospective minister, what is distinct about the pastorate and the communities it serves, the characteristics of this pastorate in its setting, its theological outlook and worship style and the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation(s).

B. PRIORITIES FOR THE PASTORATE

What are the mission priorities for the pastorate?

What is the mission or vision statement?

What different opportunities are there in the various sections of the pastorate?

Bear in mind the Five Marks of Mission

TELL	Proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom.
TEACH	Teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers.
TEND	Responding to need by loving service
TRANSFORM	Seeking to transform unjust structures of society
TREASURE	Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation

This section will need expansion for united churches or Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

Appendix 4 Aid to drafting Terms of Settlement

Draft Terms of Settlement should be considered by the Synod prior to declaring a vacant post, and then later discussed with any prospective minister. Agreed Terms of Settlement can also assist the process of monitoring during a ministry, and form the basis of any agreed changes. Terms of Settlement are a local expression of the Plan for Partnership, which is the basis on which ministers act as office holders within the Church. The latest edition of the Plan for Partnership for Ministerial Remuneration can be found on the URC website www.urc.org.uk. Go to 'Our work', then 'Ministries'.

Pastorate name:

Scoping

Is the post fully scoped (i.e. 100%) or part time? If part time, specify what proportion it is.

Stipend

The General Assembly of 1993 passed the following resolution:

Assembly believes that the payment of special stipend supplements by churches is no longer justified and calls upon ministers and churches to bring an end to this payment as soon as possible.

Is it proposed to pay any supplement to the basic stipend? £..... p.a.

(NB The pastorate is responsible for corresponding additional NI payments.)

Is any additional paid work agreed (by Synod and pastorate)? (see Plan for Partnership Section 8) £.....p.a.

Housing (see Plan for Partnership)

(NB In some areas responsibility for manses lies with District or Synod.)

Is a manse provided? If so indicate what sort of house it is.

What accommodation has it, e.g. number of rooms - downstairs /study / bedrooms / type of heating / garage, garden etc.? (see Plan for Partnership Appendix D National Manse Guidelines and Assembly Guidelines for Manses Assembly Record 2003).

What is its address?

Indicate how it is situated in relation to the church(es), shops, schools etc

What public transport is available?

Is the pastorate willing to consider changing the manse if asked?

If there is no manse at present, is the pastorate in a position to provide one?

Is the pastorate willing to consider payment of a housing allowance in lieu of provision of a manse?

If YES will the pastorate follow the full guideline given in the Plan for Partnership Appendix B?

Travelling (see Plan for Partnership)

Is the regular use of a car considered necessary? Where a minister does not provide a car but the regular use of a car is considered necessary, it is the responsibility of the local church to provide a suitable vehicle. The costs of private motoring shall be borne by the

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minister under locally agreed arrangements (paragraph 6.3.4.3 Plan for Partnership). Will such a vehicle be provided?

If so, complete Section A.

If the minister wishes to provide his/her own vehicle, complete Section B.

A. If a vehicle is to be provided, state make & type of car, size and year

What annual figure is budgeted for: depreciation, maintenance and running costs?

What arrangement is proposed for private mileage by the minister?

Will there be any limitations on private mileage?

B. If the minister provides the vehicle; will the agreed national rate be paid?

Will these arrangements be reviewed annually? If NO, what basis of review is proposed?

Administration (see Plan for Partnership)

Office Expenses

Office expenses, including postage, telephone (including mobile phones and internet), computer equipment, stationery and any other expenses necessarily incurred on church business shall be reimbursed in full to the minister.

On what basis will these sundry expenses be met?

Is the minister expected to pay for private telephone calls? (There is a Tax and National Insurance charge if this is not the case.) What will be the arrangements for doing this?

Education for Ministry

The pastorate must clearly understand that all URC Ministers of Word and Sacraments are expected to undertake annual study as part of their continuing education. In the first three years of ministry, it is compulsory for ministers to take part in Education for Ministry 2. (Report to General Assembly 1998 p.124) This comprises two residential weekends a year as part of a 14 day study leave programme and as well as time with a Pastoral adviser and a Synod programme of study for new ministers. During the rest of their ministry, Ministers are strongly urged to devote two weeks per year to Education for Ministry 3 (Page 126 General Assembly 1998). Ministers attending a weeklong course should not be expected to lead worship on the following Sunday (a study Sunday). For non-stipendiary ministers, a 'week' means two weekends each lasting from Friday evening until Sunday tea-time.)

Every ten years, Ministers are encouraged to undertake up to three months sabbatical leave in negotiation with the Synod re timing and pastoral cover.

Is it proposed, or would the pastorate be willing, to offer the minister a book allowance in regard to education for ministry, say within the range of £150 - £250, and help towards the cost of ministers' summer schools etc.?

Other

The pastorate shall honour the holiday entitlement in the Plan for Partnership. 'Ministers are entitled to 5 weeks holiday in each calendar year and one further Sunday away from the pastorate. When a minister only serves for part of a year the holiday provision is pro rata. One week of holiday may be carried forward to the following year. Holiday entitlement is not affected by sick leave, in-service training courses or sabbatical leave. Such periods of leave/absence may result in more than 1 week's holiday being carried forward into the following year.' (paragraph 7.1 Plan for Partnership) The pastorate should state it will be

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responsible for its share of removal expenses as in the Plan for Partnership (Appendix C - The receiving local church is responsible for paying the costs of removal. Where the removal is within the United Kingdom reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost incurred (subject to a maximum reimbursement of £1,000) is available from the Ministry and Mission Fund and application should be made via the MoM Office.)

General

The pastorate accepts the United Reformed Church policy to grant maternity pay and parental/adoption leave.

The pastorate accepts the declaration of Equal Opportunities contained in the URC Employment Practice report accepted by General Assembly 1990 and notes the provision for a grievance procedure (see Appendix 8).

The pastorate will review these terms every two years and is willing to renegotiate these terms during a particular ministry, providing the minister and the Synod agree to changes.

Agreed at the Elders' Meeting on.....

Signed
Church Secretary

Signed
Synod

Signed
Minister

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 an ordinand 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 The Synod Moderators will take care to identify the pastorates that are genuinely suitable for a student according to agreed criteria:

- x a reasonable role description
- x a good Interim Moderator
- x openness on the part of the pastorate to receiving a student and responding supportively to his/her ministry
- x availability of a neighbouring minister with the gifts to offer meaningful support

When the Synod Moderator first proposes the name of a student, the Interim Moderator should check with the local church leadership through the church secretary/ies that the pastorate is willing to consider an ordinand. This will usually have been covered by the Synod Moderator during a visit according to the above criteria, but should be clarified before an introduction is effected.

2 A first consideration of the ordinand's personal profile and an invitation to an initial exploratory meeting with the pastorate call group should normally take place within 3 weeks of introduction. This will ensure that, if either or both parties conclude that there is no basis for proceeding further, the ordinand is available for introduction at the next Synod Moderators' meeting.

3 The Interim Moderator should try to be available in a supportive role for the ordinand and the pastorate through each stage of their exploration together. This is particularly important when there may be need for clarification of how the Church's settlement process operates. Specifically the Interim Moderator should make space for:

3.1 Briefing the ordinand about the context and any special factors in the pastorate, unpacking the pastorate profile as appropriate. This may involve responding to questions of:

- x theology and worship style;
- x pastoral practice, especially baptismal policy;
- x relationships between the congregations in the pastorate; ecumenical relationships;
- x the manse and terms of settlement.

3.2 Being present to ensure a creative and reflective engagement with meetings of the pastorate call committee, special interest groups, and informal gatherings of church members. These should include penetrating discussion about:

- x priorities for mission and patterns of delivery;
- x serious pastoral and local church life issues - including baptismal policy
- x leadership patterns
- x gender matters.

3.3 Making arrangements for a daylight visit to the community/ies served by the congregation/s in the pastorate. Where possible this might include an opportunity to meet with non-church community leaders and representatives of ecumenical partners.

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3.4 Ensuring the suitability of overnight hospitality arrangements, especially if the ordinand is visiting alone, and that there is sufficient and appropriate relaxation and reflection time built in to the timetable.

3.5 Learning from the ordinand 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:

- x local schools' choices
- x retirement or sheltered housing provision
- x 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.

5 Candidates should be clearly informed of:

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

6 The Interim Moderator should make clear arrangements with the ordinand 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. In the case of an offer of a call the ordinand 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:

- x to arrange a date for the service of ordination and induction, which is suitable for the Synod Moderator, ordinand, pastorate and Synod.
- x putting together the order of service in consultation with the ordinand 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.
- x 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.
- x 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 9 A grievance procedure

1. The purpose of a grievance procedure for ministers is to give a legitimate place of complaint and to solve the problems as quickly and as simply as possible. A timescale should be agreed in each case which should normally be dealt with inside three months.
2. It is important that grievances are treated seriously, because they are genuine to the person concerned.
3. It is important to discover whether the grievance is legitimate.
4. In the first instance the minister with the grievance should approach the Synod Moderator; however if the grievance involves the Synod Moderator, the minister should approach the Synod Clerk.
5. The Synod Moderator should approach both parties within one month of the request, respond to the grievance and where possible effect a reconciliation. If the Synod Moderator is a party to the grievance, the Synod Clerk or another mutually acceptable person should act.
6. Where immediate reconciliation is not possible, a small independent group should be established by the appropriate council of the church, consisting of lay people and ministers, men and women.
7. Either party should be able to challenge the composition of the group which should reflect the nature of the grievance (e.g. if it concerns equal opportunities, finance, etc. members of the group should be seen to have some knowledge of the issue).
8. The group should then meet with both parties who may be accompanied. The group should again attempt a reconciliation but, if this is not possible, should arbitrate between them.
(Revision of Employment Practice Report 4.7.2, Note D)

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Appendix 10 Personal Profile for a Minister

NB This document is to be completed and controlled by the writer. It may be useful to a Synod Moderator and/or the Interim Moderator, Church Officers and Elders of a pastorate under consideration. It is **NOT** for general circulation.

Surname

Christian names

Address (please include postcode and telephone number)

Date of Birth

Date of Ordination

Spouse: Name

Occupation

Child(ren) Name(s) Date(s) of birth

Any other relevant family information.

Medical: If there are any medical factors that might affect your work, ensure that your present Synod Moderator knows.

Education: Please give dates and qualifications.

Secondary Education

General Higher Education (pre- or post- ordination)

Please list other training courses, other professional qualifications, language or similar skills etc.

Pre-ordination/commissioning Theological Training

Education for Ministry 3 (in-service training undertaken)

Please give details of your life and faith journey, in a chronological form, including ministries and other posts, (paid or unpaid) academic achievements, in-service experiences.

For each post give:

- x its location
- x details of the main duties, responsibilities etc.
- x a description of the particular skills, techniques or experience relevant to this post.

Appendix 13 Minister/CRCW Personal Profile Summary

Contact details:			
Full name:		Preferred name:	
Date of birth:		Date of ordination:	
Present Pastorate:		Date of induction:	
Marital status:		No. of dependent relatives:	
Housing requirements:			
SAMPLE			
Pastorate Preference (e.g. inner city/urban/suburban/market town/rural; team/individual specialism; theological emphasis, worship style, etc.)			
Please obtain this form direct from your Synod Moderator			
Priorities in Ministry:			
Geographical Constraints:			
Relevant or Recent CME:			
Skills and Experience Offered:			
Other Comments (e.g. anything to avoid, health factors, etc.):			

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Stewards in the Methodist Church. It is also important to understand the effect of the differences in the relationship between the minister and the local congregation.

3. The different understandings of local church governance and authority in relation to decision-making, pastoral care and worship.
4. 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)
5. Different rules, practices and laws concerning property.
6. Worship is where the life of the two churches looks most similar, but there are significant 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. It would be helpful to explore the use of "set forms of worship", the status of hymn and service books and the minister's role in leading worship.
7. The relationship between the local church and the wider structures and the different roles, status and authority of leaders. (Methodist Circuit, District and Connexion, Methodist Superintendent, Circuit Stewards and the District Chair; United Reformed Church Focus Groups / Clusters, Synod, Assembly, and Synod Moderators.)

You might also find it helpful to attend one of the local or national courses run for ministers new to LEPs. These are currently organised by the United Reformed Church and some County Ecumenical Officers.

Understanding the practice of the LEP

The following should be set out in the Constitution and Sharing Agreement.

Church Governance / Decision Making and the roles of church leaders and meetings

Ministry including calling or stationing

Worship

Finance

Property

The relationships between the LEP and its minister and the wider structures of the denominations

The relationship with Local Sponsoring Body

Churches with Constitutions may have negotiated them carefully and they therefore require sensitive and careful attention. Some follow more closely the pattern of either the Methodist or the United Reformed Church. But churches differ in the extent to which these are adhered to and it is likely that constitutions will have been adapted with time. For each of these areas you will need to understand:

1. What was originally agreed and why.

