

CWM general secretary granted UK visa

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CWM General Secretary Rev Dr Collin Cowan has been granted a visa permitting him to live and work in the UK.

The move means Dr Cowan, who took up his post as general secretary in January of this year, can move with his family from Jamaica to London and continue his role alongside secretariat staff at CWM's Ipalo House office.

CWM has welcomed the UK Border Agency's decision to grant the visa after a lengthy application process.

Dr Cowan's official start to work in London at the beginning of the year was compromised following UKBA delays in issuing CWM a Certificate of Sponsorship enabling him to apply for a three-year non-renewable visa.

The certificate was finally issued on 29 March this year.

Since January, Dr Cowan has been carrying out his new role from an office in Jamaica.

These difficulties have sparked concerns over the wider issue of CWM's ability to effectively employ international staff - and honour its commitment to recruiting a secretariat that reflects its membership - in the future.

Due to the fresh concerns, CWM's trustees were asked to reconsider the issue of the location of the secretariat - despite having made a decision to remain in London at their extraordinary meeting in October 2010.

The trustees are due to make a final decision on location when they meet in Durban, South Africa in June this year.

Dr Cowan said: "We are most grateful for the support of our ecumenical partners and initiatives of our UK-based churches, which have helped considerably to bring us to this place."

He added: "This has been a long process, but it is now over and my family and I can get settled in the UK in short order."