

# Paper H5

## Active Minister's Policy

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the revision to the Active Minister's Policy as in Appendix 1.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The paper is a revision of the policy agreed at General Assembly 2018.
<b>Main points</b>	The paper introduces two new categories of active minister to reflect current practice: a) in a lay post for which they are receiving a salary not under the Plan for Partnership but where the synod has requested the status of active; b) authorised to perform the functions of ministry on a limited basis as specified in an agreement between the General Assembly and the minister and with the approval of the Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of Ministries.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Active Minister's Policy 2018.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	None as this is a revision of current practice.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

#### Introduction

1. The United Reformed Church values the contribution of its ministers.
2. For the most part, clarity about who is and who is not an active minister is easily established. However, there are times when it is important to have a clear definition. This includes such areas as safeguarding, mandatory training and discipline.

3. Even with a clear definition there will be rare instances when it is not entirely clear whether an individual should be defined as an active minister. The definition provides for this by identifying the synod as arbiter in such instances.
4. Assembly Executive is asked to approve the definition in order to provide clarity as to who has the privileges and responsibilities of being an active minister.
5. The Roll of Ministers will continue to include others who are rightly listed but not undertaking an active role, mainly retired ministers who do not wish, or are not able, to remain active.
6. Some external appointments are within the gift of the church to the wider church, such as some Higher Education chaplains, and others are external appointments to which lay and ordained people from any denomination can apply. If a post is the former, then a minister can apply for that post but should inform their synod and the synod shall request the status of active. This addresses the issue of accountability between the church and the ordained.
7. Any minister who wishes to undertake external appointments to which lay and ordained people from any denomination can apply will need to inform the synod and the synod shall request the status of active. This addresses the issue of accountability between the church and the ordained.
8. The category of active minister can change within the course of a ministry. In most cases this will be because a minister moves from one kind of ministry to another.
9. Applications that do not fit the given criteria of the policy should be approved by Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of ministries;
10. A minister may move from the active to non-active list for a variety of reasons but still remain on the Roll of Ministers. This includes, for example, a minister who informs the synod that he or she no longer intends to perform the functions of ministry, instances of ill-health determined by an independent occupational health assessment or during a disciplinary process.
11. The synod will be responsible for updating the list on the URC database as changes occur.
12. Where a minister serving in a General Assembly post requires an application to remain as an active minister when moving on from that post, the synod in which they hold their Church Membership shall make that application.

### **Definition of an active minister**

A minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker is considered active if they are on the URC roll of Ministers and at least one of the following applies.

They are:

1. In a pastorate or post for which they are receiving a stipend (either full or part) from the United Reformed Church (e.g. deployed post, SCM post, Assembly appointment) under the Plan for Partnership.

2. In non-stipendiary service in a recognised ministry post (e.g. model 1, 2, 3 or 4 or Local NS CRCW).
3. Exercising a ministry with another organisation within the gift of the church to the wider church to which they have been inducted by the URC where possible (e.g. chaplaincy, educational establishment, ecumenical body) and for which they receive a stipend, salary or serve in a voluntary capacity.
4. In a lay post for which they are receiving a salary not under the Plan for Partnership but where the synod has requested the status of active.
5. Providing recognised voluntary service on behalf of the Church (e.g. Interim Moderator, serving on a synod or area committee, representing the URC on an external body).
6. Not in a formal position but whose expertise and experience means that, enjoying the confidence of Synod Officers, they are asked to undertake pieces of work from time to time.
7. Frequently leading worship in a church other than where they are a member (this criterion does not apply in the case of Church Related Community Workers).
8. Categories 1-7 but authorised to perform the functions of ministry on a limited basis as specified in an agreement between the General Assembly and the minister and with the approval of the Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of Ministries.
9. Applications that do not fit the criteria 1-7 which are approved by Accreditations Sub-Committee Committee.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether or not a minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker falls within any of the seven descriptions given above the judgment shall be made by the minister's synod, which may delegate the responsibility to one of its committees. Any appeal against the decision of a synod in this respect should be lodged with the Clerk to the General Assembly under Section 9 of the Rules of Procedure.