

NSM Working Group Report to Ministries

1. Introduction

In February 2015 Ministries Committee, with the endorsement of Mission Council in May 2015, decided to establish a new Working Group on Non-stipendiary Ministry with the following terms of reference:

- i. To canvas the synods in order to understand current practice with regard to the appointment and review of ministers in non-stipendiary service.
- ii. To canvas the synods with regard to any retirement practice and planning that is currently in place, and to seek contributions from retired ministers who served in a non-stipendiary capacity indicating what was, or what might have been, helpful.
- iii. To reflect on the established 3 models of non-stipendiary service and advise on their usefulness or otherwise, and to consider whether alternative models might better serve the church and the ministry.
- iv. To identify Best Practice with regard to the appointment, review and retirement of ministers in non-stipendiary service, in order that the Ministries Committee can encourage the support and use of this ministry.
- v. To consider whether there should be an age limit for candidating or ordination and if so what that age or ages should be.
- vi. To consider any other matters that affect the support and utilization of ministers in non-stipendiary service and make recommendations to the Ministries Committee for any improvements.

It will be seen that few if any of these considerations are new, and it is hoped that the historical outline provided here will assist in avoiding reinventing the wheel, while also being aware of how intractable are some of these issues and the questions raised by the broader context of ministry in the United Reformed Church in the 21st century.

2. Approach

The Working Group consulted with

- a) all 13 Synods
- b) Revd. Fiona Thomas, Secretary for Education and Learning
- c) Revd. Rosalind Selby, Principal Northern College
- d) Revd. Neil Thorogood, Principal, Westminster College
- e) Faith and Order Committee
- f) CRCW Programme Sub-Committee

3. A Brief Historical Overview

Because the experience of NSM training, review and retirement amongst the Synods is so varied the Task Group felt it important to remind Ministries Committee of the current state of play with regard to NSMs within the United Reformed Church.

- 3.1 Prior to 1972 neither the Congregationalist or Presbyterians had a formal scheme for non-stipendiary ordained ministry. The 1972 Basis of Union and Structure draw a distinction only between 'full-time' and 'part-time' ministry, with a clear priority being given to full-time in terms of, for example, automatic membership of District Council and Synod. The opportunity was offered to Lay Pastors to seek ordination, but it was also declared by Assembly in 1978 (and had been foreseen in the union negotiations) that no new Lay Pastors would be trained or accredited, so that ministry was expected to die out.

- 3.2 The Assembly of 1973 recognised the possibility of ordination, after successful completion of training, to part-time rather than full-time service as a Minister of Word and Sacraments, but the Basis and Structure were not altered to reflect this change.
- 3.3 In anticipation of the union with the Churches of Christ, General Assembly in 1980 refined the three models for auxiliary ministry (within the Churches of Christ. The title Non-stipendiary ministry was considered too cumbersome) into four, as follows:
- (a) *one or more Auxiliary Ministers may serve in a congregation as a team (after the manner of those elders in the Churches of Christ who exercise a ministry of Word and Sacrament);*
 - (b) *An auxiliary minister may exercise pastoral charge of a local congregation;*
 - (c) *One or more Auxiliary Ministers may serve as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches, and sharing the functions according to their gifts and availability;*
 - (d) *one or more Auxiliary Ministers could be set apart to be a focus for mission in their place of work, or leisure, where there is little or no Christian presence. These Auxiliary Ministers would be under the special care of the District Council, and would be members of one of the local churches.* (Reports to Assembly 1980, pp 55-6, para 94.2).

It is interesting to note that the 1982 General Assembly noted that ministry under model (a) was limited in its nature and scope (Reports to Assembly 1982, p. 96 para 127) and therefore required a shorter course of training. Should the Minister later move to another form of ministry, additional study will be required. (Resolution 10, p. 103). It also requested the institution of a Post Ordination Training Scheme for all stipendiary ministers in full-time service, and – as far as may be practicable in their circumstances – to all auxiliary ministers (Reports 1982, p. 69 para 50). This would include seven days of study per year and a sabbatical of three months approximately every ten years. This was approved by Assembly 1984 for implementation from autumn 1985 (Record 1984, p. 23).

- 3.4 The Patterns of Ministry report in 1995 contained reflection on non-stipendiary ministry, and proposed the adoption of a new form of *local ministry*, building on the Churches of Christ model and model (a) of URC non-stipendiary ministry. They would be trained in a way which built on their past experience. *It would not need to be as extensive and prolonged as that for Stipendiary or Non-Stipendiary Ministers. This does not mean that the process of selection of candidates need be in any way casual or lacking in rigour.* (Reports 1995, p. 121, paras 4.5.5-4.5.6 and 6.4). These proposals were rejected by Assembly.
- 3.5 The report also proposed that the distinction between stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministers be removed, except *for administrative purposes* (p 121, para 4.5.8). *There should be equivalent criteria of assessment, and we invite the Training Committee to work towards equivalence of training.*(see also para 6.3, p 127) It should be noted that these recommendations, accepted by Assembly, had been made originally in the context of absorbing model (a) of non-stipendiary ministry into the new, lesser trained, local ministry. The effect of the 1995 decisions, however, was to apply it to all non-stipendiary ministers.
- 3.6 The report also recommended that model (d) NSMs be renamed *Ministers in Secular Employment*, and that this category should include former stipendiary ministers no longer in pastoral charge who *now see their ministry being fulfilled through their work in the world.... It would be for District Councils and Synods to recognise such ministers and to determine whether they should be members of district council and synod.* (Reports 1995, p. 122, paras 4.5.10-4.5.11) This was accepted by Assembly, but the passage regarding stipendiary ministers out of pastoral charge appears never to have been implemented.
- 3.7 The cumulative result of the resolutions passed in 1995 was incorporated into Section K of the Manual as follows *There are three models of non-stipendiary ministry:*

Model I - service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is limited in scope and local in nature.

Model II - pastoral charge of a small congregation, or service as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches.

Model III - 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 District Council.

http://www.urch.org.uk/images/the_manual/K.%20Ministries.pdf

These three established models of non-stipendiary ministry are those for which our NSM students are currently trained. At present we currently have 11 EM1 students who are preparing for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in non-stipendiary service with 68 currently serving the URC

4. Reflecting on those models

- 4.1 In consultation with the Synods it became clear that most NSMs will find themselves exercising a ministry reflecting Model II albeit usually in sole pastoral charge of a small congregation. This reflects the current deployment situation with Synods forced to deploy NSMs in this way to fill gaps in their deployment.
- 4.2 A further consideration for this practice is purely one of finance in that not all Synods have the finance to support NSM ministry outside the local congregation and not all local congregations can afford to pay NSM expenses if they are already paying the expenses of an SM.
- 4.3 Model I still exists although the Working Party understood that no candidates had come forward for some years. This may be because there appears to be a blurred line between Model I and Model II and, as a result, they seem largely to have merged so that there is little distinction between the two models.
- 4.4 Model III. There now seem to be fewer formal opportunities for NSMs to engage in ministry in the workplace than previously. Some candidates are unaware of this model of ministry and may present as candidates for Model II NSM, but, if the opportunity is given, may then express a calling to this type of ministry during training and formation. Indeed, workplace chaplaincy as a Fresh Expression (e.g. Pioneer, MSE, Chaplaincy) is a growing area as a fresh and relevant approach to church.
- 4.5 The current requirement (not always adhered to) is that the sphere of service of a NSM (and thus the Model) should be determined during the application process. This is at least in part to ensure that, given the fact that NSM's are usually geographically constrained, NSMs do not end their training without ministry to be inducted into – a situation which can and does arise. However, the intensive training undergone by NSM candidates will change the candidate and may change their perception of call and enhance the gifts and skills they have to offer, so they should not then be tied to the original sphere of service if an alternative were available.
- 4.6 However, it was felt that RCLs train NSM candidates for ministry in general and not specifically for the sphere previously identified. The Working Group noted that most NSM candidates are trained at Northern, where they spend 6 weekends per annum together. It is more difficult to establish a pattern at Westminster, where training is joint with SM students. NSMs study for 4 years to obtain a degree (Common Award validated through Durham University) and a Living Ministry Programme is undertaken in a church near the students home. The Scottish College (SM, NSM and other students) meets residentially every 5 or 6 weeks.
- 4.7 Changes in career patterns and reduced early retirement opportunities were given by E&L as the main reasons for reduced candidate numbers and drop-outs from training.

Clearly, both SM and NSM are equally valid but different ministries. Whilst the Working Group was not asked specifically to look at training it cannot help but ask the question as to whether parity of training has also contributed to the lack of people offering themselves for NSM. The table below indicates the numbers accepted for training.

Accepted	Years of EM1	No.	Notes
2012-13		0	
2013-14	2, 4	2	2 yr person completed; 1 still in EM1
2014-15	4 (all)	3	All still in EM1
2015-16	2,4	2	Both still in EM1
2016-17	2,2.5,4,4	4	Will start EM1 in September 2017

4.8 With the removal of the age limit on candidating for non-stipendiary ministry, three people have been offered two year programmes of EM1. In each case they had recently completed theological courses as independent students and/or through TLS. Whilst it is possible that we are seeing a slight increase in people coming forward for non-stipendiary ministry, it is hard to say if this is a trend rather than part of the usual variations which we see from year to year. However, the area of ministry which is preferred and is growing in some Synods is that of Local Church Leadership but this is very much left to the Synod to administer training. Synod Local Church Leader training, supported by the URC Church Leadership Course and the History and Ethos of the URC Course, under the supervision of an experienced minister, is less intensive but equips Local Church Leaders for exercising ministry in the 21st century without having to go away to college for 4 years.

4.9 Given the increase in the number of local church leaders, or equivalent, across the denomination the Working Group sees scope in a new model of ministry which would not require a candidate to be residential in one of the colleges but which would largely be done by training in situ, including study and reflection, being overseen by an experienced minister. This would be a local ordination, and, if a later transfer to another area of ministry was required, further training may be considered. This would also require the commitment of local ministers to tutor such a course. There could be an annual gathering of NSMs trained in his way for mutual support and encouragement.

5. Appointment

5.1 In consultation with the Synods it was clear that appointment of NSMs varies from Synod to Synod. Whilst Synods need to give consideration to the strategic role an NSM can play within the life of the Synod this is sometimes at odds with the kind of ministry the candidate themselves wishes to exercise. Perhaps one of the key questions when considering ministry which follows Model II (b) is whether this ministry can be exercised by a lay person.

5.2 The Working Group offers the following comments:

5.2.1 Appointment as an NSM is necessarily different to that of a stipendiary ministry – while (in theory at least) a stipendiary minister has no geographic limitations, a non-stipendiary minister will need to serve in the area in which they live and work. Thus, the process is one of appointment, and whilst a candidate's sense of calling will need to be taken into consideration, it does need to be balanced with the strategic overview of the particular Synod. In addition, it is perhaps more likely that a candidate for non-stipendiary ministry may feel a calling to ministry other than in a congregational setting e.g. ministry in secular employment (MSE) or chaplaincy.

5.2.2 The amount of time that the candidate can offer on a regular basis will also need to be considered.

5.2.3 Considerations during candidating process. The candidate for non-stipendiary ministry may, or may not, have a felt a calling to a particular area of ministry. Allowing for the discernment of the Spirit during the candidating and training process, consideration needs to be given to possible deployment after training. Any possible sphere of ministry needs to be flagged up during the candidating process. If there does not seem to be any possible appointments, there needs to be a frank discussion between Synod Moderator or a designated representative (e.g. Synod pastoral advisor, training officer) and the candidate as to whether it is right to take the call further.

5.2.4 Considerations during training. Training and formation may lead to a change in the way the ordinand considers they are called. There need to be regular conversations with the Synod Ministries Committee (Synod Student and Candidates Committee or equivalent) so that any discussion about a likely appointment can be on-going throughout training.

5.2.5 The Working Group reflected on whether NSM training has become too standardised and does not actually give the flexibility for ministry in the 21st century. Because training is largely concentrated in either Cambridge or Manchester, it is not as easily accessible from some parts of the UK. Indeed, the Working Party would ask Ministries Committee and Education and Learning Committee to look again at requirements for training suggesting that four years of training may not be necessary for all models of NSM. Accreditation of prior learning and life experience needs to be acknowledged.

The Working Group suggests that the RCLs and E&L Committee look again at training requirements for NSMs and whether the training for NSMs should have a) basic core components and b) follow specific training for Model I, II or III or other models. This may or may not include obtaining a university degree.

5.2.6 First appointment as NSM. During the final year of formal training, before the main LM Placement, further discussions should take place with the designated Synod officer in charge of ministerial training. These should focus on a suitable initial appointment that fulfils both Synod needs and the ordinand's sense of call.

5.2.7 In the case of Model I & II appointment is to a local church. In the case of Model III (MSE) the ordination and induction shall be in a local church for pastoral support and encouragement. However, it is recognised that Model III is focussed outside of the local church.

5.2.8. Any subsequent appointment should be considered by the Synod Ministries Committee/Synod Pastoral Committee in consultation with the Moderator, the NSM and the local congregation and, in the case of Model III ministries (Ministers in Secular Employment), representatives of those organisations to which it is intended that the minister should relate.

5.3 The Working Party supports the idea of a formal appointment process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry. See Appendix 1

6. REVIEW

6.1 Of the 13 Synods consulted only 7 had any formal Synod Review for NSM. One Synod's review was ad hoc.

6.2 All Synod Moderators expressed the view that a formal review that was consistent across the denomination would be helpful. It was agreed that whilst reviews assess the current achievement of a ministry, they also allow support for the minister whose ministry was being reviewed.

6.3 Seven of the Synods tracked the reviews for strategic purposes so that a review did not automatically allow the NSM ministry to continue ad infinitum.

6.4 All Synods which reviewed their NSMs stated that a review was normally conducted after three or five years and occasionally after one year.

6.5 Three of the Synods tied in their review in where possible with LMMR although it was recognized that MASA is a confidential review and did not allow the pastorate/workplace to feed their views into such a review.

6.6 All Synod which reviewed their NSMs stated that the review was normally conducted by the Synod Ministries/Pastoral Committee or equivalent.

6.7 The Working Party supports the idea of a formal review for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry. See Appendix 2

7. RETIREMENT

7.1 There is, at present, no retirement process for NSMs. However, good practice dictates that it is right for all ministers to be able to lay down their ministries at an appropriate time.

7.2 The Working party supports the introduction of a retirement process for NSM akin to that of Duty to Consider for SMs in part-time posts. See Appendix 3

8. OTHER MATTERS

8.1 The Working Group affirms the decision of Mission Council in 2016 to remove the age limit of candidating for Non-Stipendiary Ministry.

8.2 The Working Group requests the Ministries Committee and Education and Learning Committee to look again at the training needs of transfers from NSM to SM. Indeed, if the NSM training has been equivalent training for SM, the Working Party questions why further training is needed. It does acknowledge, however, that other transfers from one model of ministry to another (e.g. into chaplaincy, returning from a period of secular employment into ministry) may require further training.

The Working Group is grateful to Revd. Gethin Rhys and Mrs Irene Wren who began as part of the group but who had to tender their resignations for personal reasons.

9. Recommendations:

- 1. The Working Group sees scope a new model of ministry which would not require a candidate to be residential in one of the colleges but which would largely be done by training in situ, including study and reflection, being overseen by an experienced minister. This would be a local ordination, and, if a later transfer to another area of ministry was required, further training may be considered. This would also require the commitment of local ministers to tutor such a course. There could be an annual gathering of NSMs trained in his way for mutual support and encouragement.**
- 2. The Working Group therefore suggests that the RCLs and E&L Committee look again at training requirements for NSMs and whether the training for NSMs should have a) basic core components and b) follow specific training for Model I, II or III. This may or may not include obtaining a university degree.**
- 3. The Working Party supports the idea of a formal appointment process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry. See Appendix 1**
- 4. The Working Party supports the idea of a formal review process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry. See Appendix 2**
- 5. The Working Party supports the idea of a formal retirement process for all NSMs as on-going support for their ministry. See Appendix 3**
- 6. The Working Group requests the Ministries Committee and Education and Learning Committee to look again at the training needs of transfers from NSM to SM. Indeed, if the NSM training has been equivalent training for SM, the Working Party questions why further training is needed. It does acknowledge, however, that other transfers from one model of ministry to another (e.g. into chaplaincy, returning from a period of secular employment into ministry) may require further training.**

Revd. Sue Cossey
Revd. Nicola Furley-Smith
Revd. Heather Pencavel
Revd. Paul Whittle
April 2017

APPENDIX 1

PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT

1. In the case of an ordinand, a suitable post should be identified at the point of candidating allowing flexibility throughout training.
2. A suitable role should be identified by the Synod Ministries Committee/Synod Pastoral Committee in consultation with the Moderator, the NSM and the local congregation and, in the case of Model III ministries (Ministers in Secular Employment), representatives of those organisations to which it is intended that the minister should relate.
3. The Contract should be drawn up by the Synod Ministries Committee/Synod Pastoral Committee in consultation with the Moderator, the NSM and the local congregation and, in the case of Model III ministries (Ministers in Secular Employment), representatives of those organisations to which it is intended that the minister should relate.
4. The Contract should include:
 - a. Precise details of duties expected to be carried out (while recognising that these may alter from time to time)
 - b. Precise details of duties NOT expected of the NSM where necessary
 - c. Expectations with regard to the amount of time per week / month expected to be offered
 - d. Expectations with regard to arrangements for holidays – amount and process for booking – recognising that in a part-time role, holidays may need to be expressed differently from a full time role. (especially important in relation to ministers in full-time employment);
 - e. Arrangements for the reimbursement of expenses (cf. the detailed advice presented to General Assembly 1997 - Reports to Assembly 1997, p104);
 - f. Details of the support arrangements – church / person / support group
 - g. Facilities for ongoing education, including any book grant payable (and by whom)
 - h. What is expected from the minister in the wider church, e.g. committee work. Again it needs to be recognised that some requirements may be incompatible with the NSM's paid employment. Any such work will need to be agreed by NSM and their support organisation
 - i. The procedure whereby the parties to the contract may vary its terms in the light of experience/changes in personal circumstances etc (i.e. it should only be varied with the agreement of all those parties who originally drew up the contract).
 - j. The contract should be, in the first instance, for a period of normally three years and not exceeding five years, should be reviewed by the Synod Ministries Committee/Pastoral Committee in its final year and may be extended for further periods not exceeding five years.

DRAFT CONTRACT
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
XX SYNOD
TERMS OF SETTLEMENT (CONTRACT) AND JOB DESCRIPTION
THE AGREEMENT IS MADE BETWEEN
XX URC (the pastorate) or
XX (the sphere of work)

AND THE REVD XX (NSM)

1. THE SCOPE

The basic pattern for the NSM's time is ? hours a week spread over ? days at XX URC. The post is initially for 3 years, i.e. until (date), with a review conducted by the XX Pastoral Committee commencing at least six months before the end of this term.

2. JOB DESCRIPTION

The NSM will be the XX at XX URC.
The NSM's duties will include:

3. STIPEND

No stipend is payable as this is a non-stipendiary appointment.

4. HOUSING

The NSM will live in his/her own house and no housing allowance is payable.

5. ADMINISTRATION

The Pastorate (XX URC) will reimburse the NSM for all administrative expenses, including stationery, postage, computer consumables and resource materials, upon submission of a written claim. Telephone(s) will be provided by the Pastorate including internet access. The minister will be expected to reimburse the pastorate for private telephone calls. A computer may also be provided (if required) with access via broadband to the internet. Expenses will normally be paid monthly on receipt of a written claim.

6. TRAVEL

The NSM may claim reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses incurred in the execution of his/her duties, at the URC recommended mileage rate.

7. EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

The Pastorate will support the NSM in undertaking EM2/EM3. The NSM will be expected to take two weeks study leave and the Pastorate will encourage attendance at any relevant training days including Ministers' Spring School. The Pastorate agrees to pay for books up to the cost of £? in any one calendar year.

8. HOLIDAY

The Pastorate will honour recommendations for regular weekly days off, and holidays will be by negotiation.

9. DURATION OF CONTRACT

- i) The ministry at XX URC to be until (date)
- ii) Should the NSM or the church wish to terminate the contract, a minimum period of 3 months' notice should be given. The Pastoral Committee and the Moderator should be advised immediately.

10. RENEGOTIATION AND REVIEW

The Pastorate and NSM are willing to renegotiate this contract or the job description during the course of the ministry at the request of the Synod. Any suggested changes from the Pastorate or from the NSM

will be subject to the agreement of Synod. The ministry will be reviewed no later than 6 months before the date of the end of the contract.

11. LOCAL MISSION AND MINISTRY REVIEW

The minister and Pastorate will participate in the Local Mission and Ministry Review agreed by Mission Council in December 2008, previously introduced at General Assembly 2006 and implemented in XX Synod 1st January 2012.

12. THE WIDER UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

The Pastorate acknowledges that ministers are ministers of the whole URC and have a responsibility to serve the wider church as well as their own pastorate. Requests for specific pieces of wider service will be discussed between the elders and the NSM.

13. PLAN FOR PARTNERSHIP

Both NSM and the Pastorate will seek to follow the Plan for Partnership and the provisions of the Basis of Union.

SIGNED: (NSM)

(on behalf of the Pastorate)

(on behalf of the Synod)

DATED:

APPENDIX 2

Review of NSM

Process

1. The review is triggered 6 months before the end of the Term of Appointment by the relevant Synod Committee.
2. The relevant Synod Committee appoint a panel of three to
 - a) meet with the NSM;
 - b) meet the elders of the local pastorate or workplace line manager;
 - c) write a report for the relevant Synod Committee whose role it is to decide to re-appoint or to strategically move the NSM on to another appointment;
 - d) if the decision is to re-appointment, a resolution then shall be taken to the church meeting on behalf of the relevant Synod Committee or in the case of MSE a resolution should be taken to the relevant Synod Committee.

The Review Template

1. The following questions may be helpful for the review
 - a) NSM Review: For the NSM to reflect upon
 1. How do you define your ministry?
 2. How do you structure your ministry in any given week?
 3. What are the things
 - a) that have gone really well?
 - b) that you would like to have gone better?
 4. How would you describe your spirituality?
 5. Your deployment at xxxxxxxxxxxx URCs; is it:
 - a) purposeful (i.e. do you find yourself integrated in the life of the church)?
 - b) affirmed or is your ministry overlooked?
 6. Collegueship – do you feel part of a team?
 7. Independent management
 - a) Are you given a blank canvas on which to operate as a minister, e.g. are you free to show initiative?
 - b) Do you ever yearn to do something but feel powerless?

- c) Would you ever like to consider redeployment?
- 8. How have you made use of your CME budget?
- 9. What do you consider are your trying needs?

Concluding comments, recommendations and encouragements

b) NSM Review: For the Elders/Church

- 1. How do you think the minister is fulfilling his/her ministry in terms of the NSM contract?
- 2. How would you describe the relationship between the minister and the church?
- 3. How do you see the minister developing in the future?
- 4. In the period ahead what personal and/or professional development in the minister would most help the church?
- 5. How is the minister working with, and relating to, the Synod/Synod Committees?

Concluding comments, recommendations and encouragements

APPENDIX 3

RETIREMENT

1. The Duty to Consider procedure will mean the minister in this situation will be contacted by the Synod Moderator at the time of their 67th birthday.
2. It is possible for an NSM to continue in service beyond 67 for fixed periods and convention dictates that such extensions be for one term of three years for ministers under the age of 70 and one year for ministers over the age of 70.
3. A post will be subject to review for a possible extension. Such a review will be conducted by the Synod Ministries/Pastoral Committee using the template for a review. Post-70 Reviews may have a less formal structure, but will always look forward as well as back.
4. Upon retirement, the Moderator shall conduct an Exit interview as with all ministers. which will reach agreement as to what may continue and what will stop, and any boundaries to be observed (e.g. if the Minister remains in the church served).
5. The Moderator shall send a summary of the NSMs ministry to the Moderators of General Assembly for them to record their thanks.
6. Retirement should be celebrated by a service of worship in the Minister's local church or another suitable place. Local churches may need to be encouraged to organise this particularly in the case of a Minister whose service has been in MSE or Chaplaincy, or another context not focussing on a local church.