

## **Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Church Related Community Workers**

### **1. Introduction**

This paper sets down expectations of Church Related Community Workers within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers of Word and Sacrament and Elders are to be read alongside this document.

### **2. Basis of Union**

The foundation for the conduct of Church Related Community Workers is in the Basis of Union, Paragraph 22,

‘Some are called to the ministry of Church Related Community Work. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be Church Related Community Workers in a post approved by the United Reformed Church, are then commissioned and inducted to their office to serve for a designated period. This commissioning and induction shall be in accord with Schedules D and F. Church Related Community Workers are commissioned to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God’s will for the well-being of the community, and to endeavour to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world. Their service may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary, and in the latter case their service is given within the area of a synod and in a context it has approved.

CRCWs make promises as laid out in Schedule F, in particular they promise to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise; to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God’s will for the well-being of the community; to take their part in the councils of the Church and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world, and as a church related community worker of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour to always build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.’

### **3. Standards of professional behaviour**

#### **3a. Personal integrity and health**

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.

- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise eg when children or adults are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, or when there is a safety issue affecting the whole community.
- To safeguard people and protect the more vulnerable by attending and refreshing mandatory URC Safeguarding training (basic, intermediate and advanced) and having a working knowledge of the URC's Safeguarding Policy and Guidance (Good Practice 5) and its code of conduct in working with children and adults at risk (Appendices A3 and A4).
- To be aware of and maintain appropriate boundaries by undertaking mandatory URC Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training and promoting safe and healthy relationships with those they come in contact with.
- To exercise care and sensitivity in seeking counsel from colleagues and to protect the identity of third parties unless permission has been granted.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR).
- To observe the URC's Gift Policy for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and to account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others.
- Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 Section 3.3.10).
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

### **3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues**

- To support the ministry of other CRCWs and Ministers of Word and Sacrament and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- To sever all professional ties with a previous post and refer any requests or enquires of previous posts to the interim moderator or new CRCW.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
- To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past posts.
- To welcome retired colleagues as members of the pastorate.

### **3c Relationship with Elders, members and others**

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.

- Not to seek to influence inappropriately a pastorate in the call of a new Minister.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another CRCW or a Minister of Word and Sacrament and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from colleagues or other professionals who may offer specialist advice if in doubt about one's competence to deal with an issue or situation.
- To consult and liaise with the church Safeguarding Coordinator (or the Synod Safeguarding Officer if a coordinator has not been appointed or been available) when a safeguarding concern, allegation or incident arises.
- To consult with colleagues, Elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- To observe proper boundaries in relationships and not to enter into a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to meet alone with a child, a young person, children or young people under the age of 18. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

### 3d Relationship with Councils of the Church

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of Synod and the pastoral care of synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator, or where appropriate the Secretary for Ministries, when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To undertake mandatory training including Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training, Safeguarding Training at an appropriate level, Pastoral Supervision and any other mandatory training deemed appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement.
- To be aware of the guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by the Education and Learning Committee.

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