

# Paper H2

## **Ministries committee**

Guidelines on conduct and  
behaviour for authorised elders

United Church 2017  
Church 2018  
**Reformed**  
Church 2018  
**Church**

# Paper H2

## Ministries committee

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for authorised elders

### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urceastern.org.uk">moderator@urceastern.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, adopts the guidelines on conduct and behaviour for authorised elders contained in appendix 1 of this paper.</b>

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To adopt guidelines presented to Mission Council in May 2017.
<b>Main points</b>	To set guidelines on conduct and behaviour for those appointed to serve as authorised elders.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper H3 at Mission Council May 2017.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The document was presented to Mission Council in May 2017. No comments have been received beyond those made at the time.

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	None
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	No direct immediate impact.

# Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for authorised elders

1. At the May 2017 meeting of Mission Council the ministries committee, as requested by General Assembly, presented a draft of guidelines on conduct and behaviour for authorised elders.
2. A few comments were made, and the draft was broadly welcomed. No further comments have been received.
3. Ministries committee has therefore made some very minor amendments to the document presented in May 2017 and now presents the guidelines for adoption.
4. The committee has already recommended that authorised elders should be asked to sign the document when they come into office, as a matter of clarity and good practice. But, even if a particular authorised elder has not signed, the Guidelines still apply, in the name of the Church, to that person.

## Appendix 1

### Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for authorised elders

#### Introduction

In 2016 the General Assembly agreed that the pattern of presidency at the sacraments if the minister in pastoral charge is not available should be as follows:

1. The Church Meeting may invite another Minister of Word and Sacraments
2. If such a minister is not available, the Church Meeting may invite an elder (or accredited lay preacher) authorised by the synod, in accordance with the provisions of §25 of the Basis of Union: elders of the local church and accredited lay preachers regularly conducting worship there should be considered first
3. Authorisation for such presidency by the synod, normally of members from within the congregation concerned, should be for an initial period of three to five years (according to synod judgement), including a probationary year on first appointment, with the possibility of renewal. Before renewal there should be consultation by the synod with the congregation, and a review of its needs.

Authorised Elders in this document refers to those appointed by the synod under 2 above, whether elders or lay preachers. Such appointees agree to abide by these guidelines on conduct and behaviour.

## Faithful living

Those appointed will take account of the need to model a Christian lifestyle including:

1. Live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity
2. Be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given
3. Avoid doing anything to undermine the spiritual health of another
4. Regard all persons with equal respect and concern and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation
5. Refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material
6. Work collaboratively with ministers/CRCWs, elders, members and lay preachers where appropriate
7. Seek advice from others if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation
8. Engage positively with all the councils of the church.

Authorised elders will:

9. Remember that the worship of the local church is an expression of the worship of the whole people of God
10. Treat honourably the traditions and practices of the United Reformed Church
11. Be sensitive to the particular patterns of worship life in the congregation for which they are authorized
12. Undertake such training as determined by the synod in line with the requirements of General Assembly
13. Engage positively with the review process at the end of the probationary year and at the end of the appointment period
14. Hold a valid Disclosure and Barring Service certificate or comply with an alternative Ministries Office disclosure process where this is not possible
15. Be supportive of any changes the church and synod may wish to make at the end of the appointment, recognising that changes within the pastorate may mean there is no ongoing need for an authorised elder or that it is appropriate for someone else to take on the role.