

# Paper D2

DGS (Discipleship)

Spending priorities within  
Education & Learning

United Church 2015  
Church 2015  
Reformed Church 2015  
Church 2015



# Paper D2

## DGS (Discipleship)

### Spending priorities within Education & Learning

#### Basic Information

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<b>Action required</b>	For information
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

#### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To report adjustments to the E&L budget with reference to longer-term considerations.
<b>Main points</b>	Steps towards a flat budget in 2016 Budgeting for education for discipleship in future years
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Challenge to the Church (Assembly 2008) Equipping the Saints (Assembly 2004)
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Secretary to Education & Learning Secretary for Ministries

#### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	No increase to budget
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None

# Spending Priorities within Education & Learning

1. Mission Council in November 2014 decided that the Education & Learning budget should be increased by up to £130,000 from 2015 to 2018 in order to maintain full time students at current levels and restore full funding to RCLs. The Treasurer reminded the Council that to effectively ring-fence part of the budget in the context of dropping income would lead to cuts having to be made elsewhere.
2. The moderator of Southern Synod then proposed that recommendations should be brought about priorities for education and learning that will *support the well being and future vitality of the Church's recognised ministries*.

## Education & Learning Budget 2013: Consequences

3. This saw a reduction of £200,000 in order to comply with the Assembly decision of 2012 *Reshaping the 2013 Budget*.
4. This was achieved by a package of measures involving
  - 1) The temporary reduction of funding to RCLs
  - 2) Restructuring of TLS
  - 3) Cutting EM2/3 funding
5. This last saving was effected by halving the EM3 allowance and moving Refresher courses into EM3 funding.
6. In addition, an attempt has been made to tailor the financial support to EM1 students to their family income, in order to more fairly distribute the Church's resources to those in greater need.
7. Staff time has also been cut at Church House in an attempt to cut costs.
8. The chart illustrates how the EM3 take-up has evolved over the years 2011 – 2014.
9. The only mandatory training at the moment is Sacred Safer Space, which is not funded from ministers' EM3 allowances.

## Education & Learning Budget 2016:

10. The Finance Committee has asked that the total budget for 2016 be £1,697,800
11. Currently, by staffing Ministries and Education & Learning differently, and by reducing the frequency with which the committee meets from three to two per year the planned expenditure is within £7300 of budget.

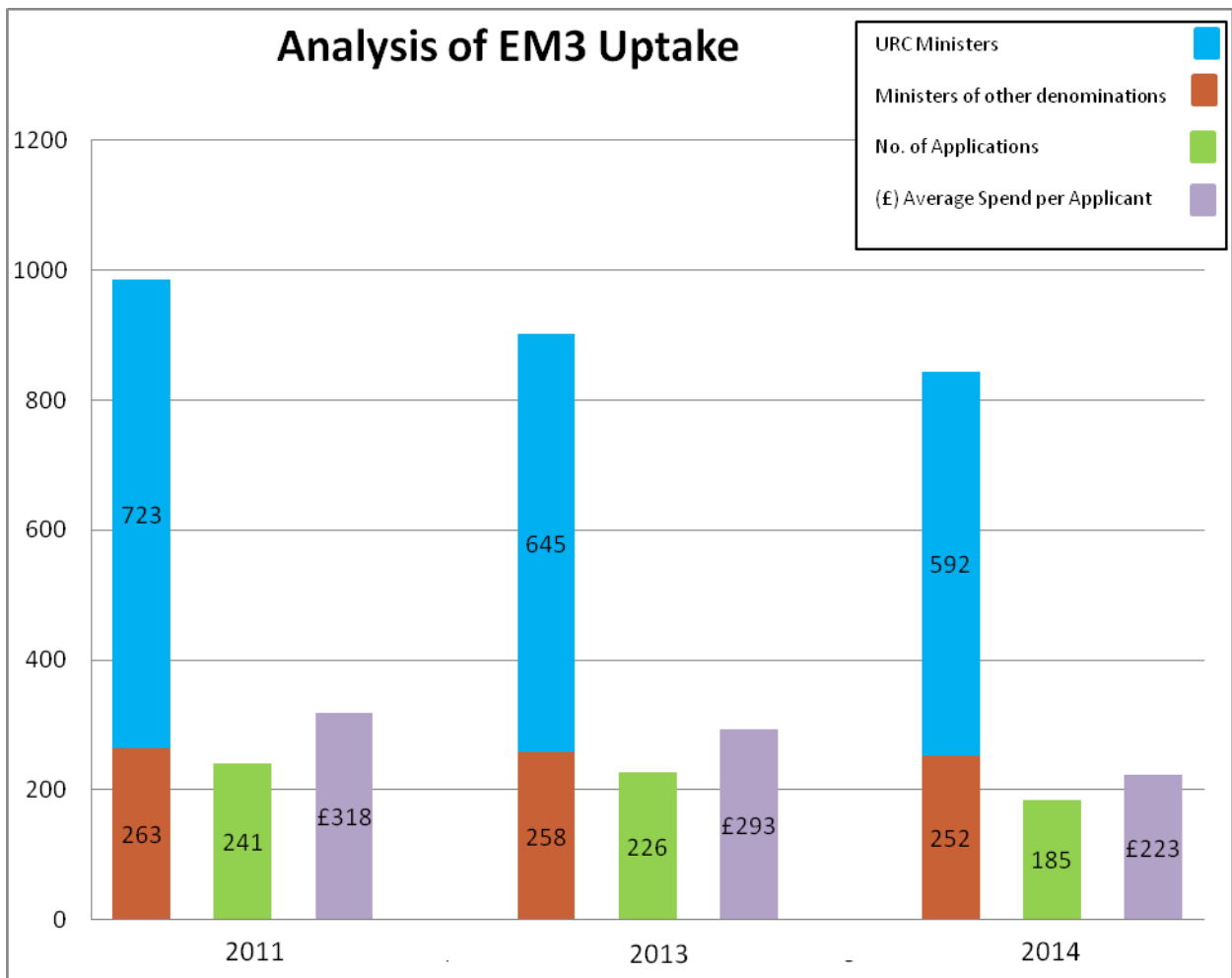
## Setting priorities

12. This committee's budget represents the Church's commitment to the provision of properly prepared women and men for the recognised ministries of the Church. The task of setting priorities that will support the well-being and future vitality of the church's ministries clearly involves more than trimming the budget in the coming financial year.

## Longer Term Considerations

13. General Assembly has repeatedly received and approved reports which encourage more collaborative approaches towards leadership within the United Reformed Church.
14. However, the expectations placed on many ministers of Word & Sacraments have changed little from the days when the Church was many times bigger than it is today, and when the number of single church pastorates was greater. If the number of available ministers to deploy reduced further, the pressure to look for fresh models of ministry would grow.
15. Our recognised ministries have a distinctive nature, yet they need to be fully integrated within Christ's overall call to serve and witness to the world. These ministries of the Church consist of: Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, Church Related Community Workers, Elders, and Ministers of Word & Sacraments, who are all nourished and supported in a number of ways.
16. For the Church to be, in all its various local contexts, a hospitable community of faith will require some culture shifts. Principal among these would seem to be the shift of understanding from a community with a person who ministers to a ministering community.
17. Following on from this, the recognition of the role of a minister of Word and Sacraments may have to be slightly more focussed than the current understanding of minister as a general practitioner. As synod moderators visit pastorates in a time of ministerial transition, they often ask the question, 'What do you want a minister for?' The response is usually that churches expect to receive a pastor-teacher.
18. Patterns of ordination preparation suggest that the Church prepares people to serve as community theologians: to conduct public worship and to build up the faith of the community and to help their fellow disciples wrestle with the implications of faith in the place they find themselves. It is a skilled role which requires rigorous spiritual and intellectual preparation.
19. However, if the United Reformed Church is to accept an emphasis on missional discipleship there will have to be a reconsideration of current patterns of expenditure to ensure that education for discipleship is properly resourced. Assembly Reports have repeatedly emphasised the vital role of lay people in the future vitality and mission of the Church.
20. The amount of funding devoted exclusively to the development of lay people is very small. The rest is dedicated to the support of ministerial education. That part of the work of RCLs is devoted to lay education is without question, but it remains that the overwhelming majority of the Church's budget is devoted to the Church's recognised ministries.

21. Provision by Synods of skilled training teams who resource congregations, elders, lay preachers and ministers' continuing education ought not to be overlooked in addressing the question of how the well-being and vitality of the church's recognised ministries can be supported.
22. The Church is engaging in some deep consideration of issues of our patterns of service to Christ. The Faith and Order Committee in their report to Assembly 2014, and to the present meeting of Mission Council have appealed for thought to be given to the practice of authorised elders.
23. In addition there is a task group working on non-stipendiary ministry, reviewing how this important ministry can be developed in ways that complement other ministries within the Church.
24. Under the influence of the Training Review of 2006, there have been two Big Picture meetings to draw together all those involved in Christian formation and development to consider how that work may benefit from greater co-ordination across the three nations.
25. In the light of all these parallel initiatives, it will be apparent that the simple question of spending priorities within Education & Learning immediately provokes consideration of how the wider landscape of Christian development and growth is changing within the United Reformed Church. The need to balance our budgets in 2016 should not obscure our thinking about the most appropriate ways for us to resource our ministry and witness in the years to come.



A negligible number of ministers from other denominations apply for EM3 funding

% of eligible URC ministers who applied for EM3 funding (including sabbaticals):

2011	33%
2013	35%
2014	31%