

Paper H1

Ministries Committee

Age of application for
non-stipendiary ministry

United Church 2015
Church 2015
Reformed Church 2015
Church 2015



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Basic Information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Gethin Rhys gethin.rhys@ntlworld.com (until 1 November 2015) ministries@urc.org.uk (from 1 November 2015)
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Recognising that people are working longer in many occupations and that UK legislation has changed in recent years to enable people to work without fear of age discrimination, Mission Council acting on behalf of the General Assembly resolves to remove the age related entry qualifications with regard to non-stipendiary ministry.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To remove the age limit for applications for candidacy for non-stipendiary ministry.
Main points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The age limit should be removed 2. Clarifications regarding candidacy and assessment procedure 3. Synods reminded of the need for regular review of NSMs 4. Consequential matters relating to non-stipendiary CRCW ministry referred to CRCW sub-committee.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council Nov 2014, Paper X1, minute 14/32. Mission Council May 2015, Paper H1, minutes 15/2, 15/21
Consultation has taken place with...	Since May 2015 Mission Council – with the Secretary for Education & Learning, West Midlands Synod, Ministries committee and Ministries' NSM working party. Previously – as detailed in Paper H1 (above).

Summary of Impact

Financial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some additional cost if an additional panel is required at assessment conferences due to an increased numbers of applicants. 2. Training each additional NSM will cost c £10,000 (Education & Learning budget – Secretary for E&L has indicated that this will be found if suitable applicants come forward).
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Brings NSM candidacy conditions closer in line with Church of England and a number of other ecumenical partners.

Age of application for non-stipendiary ministry

1. The Task Group mandated by Mission Council met on 14 August 2015. It came to a consensus on a way forward, and commends to Council the resolution submitted by West Midlands Synod:
Recognising that people are working longer in many occupations and that UK legislation has changed in recent years to enable people to work without fear of age discrimination, Mission Council acting on behalf of the General Assembly resolves to remove the age related entry qualifications with regard to non-stipendiary ministry.
2. In commending this resolution, the Task Group wishes to draw attention to the following points:
 - a) The Task Group believes that all applicants for NSM should explore at an early stage the various routes into accredited Christian ministry (SM, NSM, local leadership, etc.) and that it should be made clear that these ministries, while different, are all equally valid.
 - b) The Task Group believes that older candidates should be required to undergo the same standard of training (subject to accreditation of prior learning) as younger candidates, including the current requirements regarding level of theological education, placement hours, and a measure of collegiate experience to enhance ministerial formation. These requirements are onerous and should be fully explained to applicants at an early stage so that an informed choice may be made as to whether, and how, to proceed.
 - c) Assessment Board should be asked to assess older candidates on the same basis and in the same way as younger candidates. This already includes for all candidates an assessment of personal robustness in meeting the challenges of ministry. As with all candidates, it shall be for the medical assessor to raise any medical issues that might be of concern.
 - d) The Task Group reminds synods that all NSMs (of whatever age and in whatever sphere of service) should be required to engage in regular review of their ministry with the synod. The Task Group has asked Ministries committee to bring further recommendations on this to a future Mission Council or Assembly.
 - e) The Task Group commends to all synods the practice of West Midlands Synod in reviewing all older ministers (part-time SM and NSM) in active service to ensure that they can continue, in a system parallel to that of accreditation committee for full-time SMs. This involves a review prior to age 68, enabling continuation for up to three further years (to age 71), and then annual reviews. These reviews need not be onerous, but should be serious in intent.
3. The resolution applies to ministry of word and sacraments and CRCW ministry. However, the Task Group did not consider CRCW ministry specifically, and suggests that any consequential questions relating to that ministry be referred to the CRCW sub-committee.

