

# Paper Y1

Peter Meek and Helen Lidgett

## The Immigration Health Surcharge

United Church 2015  
Church 2015  
Reformed Church 2015  
Church 2015



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### Basic Information

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Contact name and email address</b> | Helen Lidgett<br><a href="mailto:clerk@urc5.org.uk">clerk@urc5.org.uk</a>  |
| <b>Action required</b>                | Decision   |
| <b>Draft resolution(s)</b>            | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Mission Council values the contribution being made to the ministry of the United Reformed Church by those ministers who have come from overseas.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Mission Council is concerned to learn of the imposition of the Immigration Health Surcharge, which increases the fees involved in renewing a visa to £1270.20 per person for a three-year period.</b></li> <li>3. <b>Mission Council instructs the General Secretariat, advised by the Ministries Committee and anyone else they wish, working collaboratively with ecumenical partners where possible, to make representations to Her Majesty's government to review their present policy about the Immigration Health Surcharge.</b></li> </ol> |

### Summary of Content

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Subject and aim(s)</b>                   | The Immigration Health Surcharge                             |
| <b>Main points</b>                          | That government policy should be reviewed.                   |
| <b>Previous documents</b>                   | None   |
| <b>Consultation has taken place with...</b> | East Midlands Synod Enabling Group; Secretary for Ministries |

### Summary of Impact

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Financial</b>                  | Removal of a burden applied to some of our ministers, and presently borne by central Church funds. |
| <b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b> | Other churches would benefit in the same way that we would.  |

# The Immigration Health Surcharge

1. The East Midlands Synod Enabling Group (SEG) recently heard with great concern of the costs being faced by one of our ministers, whom we called three years ago from a CWM partner church, to renew the visas that enable the minister and family to remain in this country and continue to work as a minister of the United Reformed Church.
2. In this particular case, the total bill amounted to £6351 for minister, spouse, and their three children (£1270.20 each). This amount includes a new charge introduced last year, the Immigration Health Surcharge, which must be paid (by the individual not the church or an employer) before the rest of the visa renewal process and related payments can proceed. Currently the health surcharge is 200 pounds per person, per year of the visa applied for – thus £600 per person in this case, about half of the total sum mentioned above. Failure to pay and renew the visas could result in deportation for overstaying. Synod, with the help of Ministries at Church House, took immediate steps to ensure the minister had the money to pay by the due date.
3. We quickly realised that another of our ministers would face the same charge a month later, although as a single person the total is £1270.20, of which £600 is the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS).
4. Earlier this year the Assembly's Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee agreed to reimburse those of our ministers affected by this surcharge, by paying them a sum equivalent to the IHS element of their visa renewal costs, and this policy was implemented with immediate effect.
5. The Synod Enabling Group was, however, alarmed at the implications for partnership in the world church when ministers from overseas whom we have called to serve with us face unexpected and constantly increasing costs for visa renewal. As this issue will affect other ministers of the United Reformed Church and other churches, it agreed to ask Mission Council to take this matter up with the government, and a resolution to this effect is now brought forward by the Moderator and Clerk of the synod.

