

# Paper H2

**Ministries Committee**

**Funding Additional Ministry**

United Church 2017  
Church 2017  
Reformed Church 2017  
Church 2017

# Paper H2

## Ministries Committee

### Funding Additional Ministry

#### Basic Information

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<b>Action required</b>	Decision
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Mission Council authorises the Ministries Committee to explore with the Finance Committee the funding of a pilot scheme for Funding Other Ministry within two synods. When the funding is arranged the Ministries Committee will draw up the details of the scheme in consultation with the synods identified and seek any necessary advice from the Resource Sharing Task Group.</b>

#### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Authorising a pilot scheme to release funds from the Ministry and Mission Fund to support additional local expressions of ministry, including lay ministries.
<b>Main points</b>	It is projected that by 2025 there will be approximately 30 fewer stipendiary ministers available to serve the United Reformed Church than we would expect to be supporting as determined by previous General Assembly resolutions. Action can be taken to close this gap through the welcoming of ministers of other churches. However in response to previous pressure to make funding available to support lay and other local ministries there is now an opportunity to consider making money available for these without impacting on serving stipendiary ministers. Mission Council is asked to give permission for a pilot in two synods to explore the details and impact of such a scheme.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Ministries update to Mission Council, May 2017 Ministries: resolving some issues, Mission Council minutes, October 2016 Various reports to General Assembly, notably Patterns of Ministry (1991), Patterns of Ministry (1995), Future Patterns of Ministry (2002), Equipping the Saints (2004), Challenge to the Church (2008), Resourcing Ministry (2012), and Stipendiary minister numbers and deployment (2016)
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Within Ministries Committee, with Finance staff, and at previous Mission Councils

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	To be determined in consultation with the Finance Committee. An initial commitment of £75,000 per annum is suggested.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Potential for ministries to be developed locally with ecumenical partners.

## Funding Additional Ministry

### Background

1. In 2012 the Ministries Committee presented a proposal to General Assembly that would have enabled the Ministry and Mission Fund (M&M) to pay for ministry other than as a Minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) in stipendiary service.
2. In making the proposal it was recognised that there was no new money available to support lay and other ministries, therefore finding funds to pay for such ministry would require identifying where current spending could be adjusted to release money.
3. At that time there were three ways in which central finances supported ministry across the denomination:
  - Through the payment of stipends for ministers in deployed posts and General Assembly appointments.
  - Through the payment of stipends for ministers in Special Category Ministry posts approved by the Accreditation Sub-Committee
  - Through grants made via synods to support ministry in workplace and higher education chaplaincies.
4. The 2012 proposal offered the option of allowing synods to use a proportion of the money identified to pay for stipends in their synod to give grants to meet the cost or part-cost of other ministry. The Assembly did not accept the proposal. This paper does not intend to rehearse the various reasons why that outcome was reached.

### The current situation

5. Since 2012 the number of stipends available to the church through the generous giving of the M&M fund has continued to decline in line with General Assembly policy and a consistently declining membership across the denomination.
6. Through the retention of a Normal Retirement Age (NRA) for ministers in stipendiary service, the ordination of 'home-grown' ministers and the occasional use of a Certificate of Limited Service (CLS), the necessary reduction in the number of supported stipends has been managed whilst matching the number of ministers available to serve in stipendiary posts.

7. However in the past couple of years the picture has changed. The number of retirements has been considerably higher than the number required to maintain the balance and this imbalance will continue for several years leading to a projected shortage of approximately 30 ministers by 2025.
8. One way to address this shortage is by granting Certificates of Eligibility (CE) to ministers of other denominations, in order that they can transfer onto our roll and become ministers of the United Reformed Church. This is a course of action we have taken in the past and it can provide good results. Not only can it deliver good ministry for an extended period of time but it can also bring gifts and experience into the United Reformed Church from sister churches in these islands and around the world.
9. Nonetheless, the granting of Certificates of Eligibility is not without its challenges. Some ministers from other traditions find it difficult to transition into our church and the move from another part of the world can be more difficult than some ministers expect.
10. Although the Accreditation Sub-Committee is seeking to strengthen the induction provided for ministers coming through the CE route, adding a large number of ministers to our roll in a short period of time could exceed the capacity of synods to provide adequate support. The Ministries Committee has therefore supported the issuing of up to 10 CEs over the next 3 years but has deliberately chosen at this time not to undertake a course of action that would completely close the predicted gap.

## A scheme

11. Over the past five years the possibility of releasing money to support other ministries has continued to be raised. With the perceived gap between what the M&M fund might be able to provide and what is likely to be needed for stipends in the coming years, it seems right to look again at making M&M funds available to support other ministry.
12. Previous Ministries Committee reports to General Assembly<sup>1</sup> have encouraged synods and local pastorates to consider alternative ministries alongside Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs. Although progress has been made with regard to this there is a recognition that opportunity is limited in many places by the lack of resources.
13. Whilst some individual churches or group pastorates may have the funds to pay for alternative ministry and leadership on a part-time or even full-time basis this is beyond the reach of most churches, for whom the first call on their financial resources rightly remains the M&M fund. In some places lay people can be identified to exercise such ministries in a voluntary capacity but very often the lack of available volunteers thwarts such enterprises.
14. Some synods have been able to provide funding to support local ministry and leadership. This money has come from investments, legacies or through a synod levy on local churches in addition to their contributions to the M&M fund pledge, but it should be recognised that not all synods have been able to offer such funding.
15. It is believed that providing synods with funds that can be used to support lay ministries will enable such ministry to happen in settings that would otherwise be

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<sup>1</sup> Patterns of Ministry (1995), Equipping the Saints (2004), Challenge to the Church (2008)

impossible and would encourage the development of multi-skill teams as envisaged in Challenge to the Church and Equipping the Saints. These ministries could be sessional work, part-time or possibly full-time posts. Examples of such ministry could include, but would not be limited to:

- Family worker for 2 days/week in a local church
  - Pastoral assistant for one session/week in a local church
  - Community worker employed by a group of churches
  - Local church leader remunerated for a day/week
16. If Mission Council is supportive the overall figure available for deployment would be reduced by a figure to be agreed after further discussion and consultation. The reduction would be translated into a monetary value which would take account of the true cost of ministry (i.e. stipend plus NI and pension contributions). Presently that figure is approximately £37,000 per stipendiary post.
  17. For sufficient funds to be made available to synods to be worthwhile it is suggested that the number of potential deployed posts be reduced by thirteen (one per synod) creating a fund of almost £500,000. Consultation with the Finance Committee is necessary to establish whether such a sum could be identified in what is already a very tight budget. Previous General Assembly and Mission Council decisions on the affordability of ministry need to be considered along with the reality of expected future finances.
  18. This fund would then be available for synods to use for making grants to local churches to support other ministries, or for workers to be employed by the synod to work with local churches.
  19. One of the intentions in such a scheme is to support other ministries in places where the financial resources are limited. Taking this seriously would suggest that grants would be made available on a proportional basis rather than each synod having access to the same amount. The Resource Sharing Task Group would appear to be a relevant body for deciding on the shares each synod should receive from the fund. No consultation has yet taken place with the RSTG and it may be that this is not felt to be an appropriate forum to determine this and an alternative will need to be sought.
  20. The fund would be held centrally. Applications from local churches, or groups of churches, would be submitted via the synod. Those applications that synod endorses would receive their funding from central funds via the synod. This would parallel the process for Higher Education and Work Placed Ministry grants, and would allow those synods that have the resources to make their own grant funds available at the same time.
  21. It is recognised that some synods might prefer the entire scheme to be administered centrally. However, as funds are quite limited, it is likely to be necessary for synods to filter and prioritise the applications from its area and the above proposal would allow for this. Additionally, if the fund is held centrally, unspent money can be carried forward to future years.

## Further discussion

22. These proposals are based on an assumption that M&M funding will remain at the levels predicted, taking into account a reduction related to a decrease in the Church's overall membership. Further consultation with the Finance Committee and Synod Treasurers needs to take place to determine the stability of this position.

23. The synods will have important advice to give, not only on the general intention and the concrete proposal suggested in paragraphs 15-21 above, but also on the capacity and willingness of local churches and synod folk to manage the support of such posts (e.g. in HR and training needs).

## Pilot

24. Subject to satisfactory consultation with the Finance Committee the Ministries Committee suggests that it would identify two synods to act as pilots for the scheme. The detailed working arrangements for the scheme would be developed in consultation with those two synods.
25. An initial fund of £75,000 would be made available for other ministries within the two synods. Advice is to be sought from the RSTG as to the proportions available to each synod from this arrangement.
26. The arrangements agreed with the pilot synods should provide the outline of a scheme proposed for all 13 synods. This will include the administration of a scheme as well as the proposed proportional distribution of the funds available.