

Paper F1

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Elders

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle (Committee Convener) moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council adopts the revisions to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers and the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders as laid out in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	An update of all the three papers in light of the Mission Council decision (July 2020) on mandatory pastoral supervision for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs and in line with the URC's Policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk (5th Edition) (GP5).
Main points	An update to include the place of mandatory training safeguarding in all three policies.
Previous relevant documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of ministers of Word and Sacraments (2010)2. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers (2010)3. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders4. Good Practice 5 (2020).
Consultation has taken place with...	URC Safeguarding Adviser.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
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External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.
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Background

1. The decision of Mission Council (July 2020) papers that pastoral supervision for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers should be mandatory has necessitated revisions to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers to reflect best practice as outline in the safeguarding document Good Practice 5.
2. These papers have not been revised since 2010.
3. Similar revisions have been made to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders in order to be consistent in our expectations of the behaviour and conduct in all three ministries.
4. In order that papers on pastoral supervision could be sent out in a timely manner following Mission Council July 2020, the revisions have already been made and Ministries Committee is now asking Mission Council to agree to their adoption.

Appendix 1

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Ministers of Word and Sacraments

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Ministers of Word and Sacraments within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of Church Related Community Workers and Elders are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of Ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph two,

'Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United

Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.'

The relevant promises in Schedule C are:

- a) 'to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise';
- b) 'to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the church in its mission to the world; and
- c) as a Minister of the United Reformed Church 'to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'.

3. Standards of professional behaviour

3a Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.
- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise eg when children or adults are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, or when there is a safety issue affecting the whole congregation.
- To safeguard people and protect the more vulnerable by attending and refreshing mandatory URC Safeguarding training (basic, intermediate and advanced) and having a working knowledge of the URC's Safeguarding policy and guidance (Good Practice 5) and its code of conduct in working with children and adults at risk (Appendices A3 and A4).
- To be aware of and maintain appropriate boundaries by undertaking mandatory URC Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training and promoting safe and healthy relationships with those they come in contact with.
- To exercise care and sensitivity in seeking counsel from colleagues and to protect the identity of third parties unless permission has been granted.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR).
- To observe the URC's gift policy for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and to account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others.
- Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.

- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues

All Ministers:

- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another Minister and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
- To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past pastorates.

Ministers in pastoral charge:

- To support the ministry of other Ministers and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To sever all professional ties with a previous pastorate and refer any requests or enquires of previous pastorates to the Interim Moderator or new Minister.
- To welcome retired colleagues and those Ministers serving the wider church as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c Relationship with elders, members and others

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- Not to seek to influence inappropriately a pastorate in the call of a new minister.
- To work collaboratively and value the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from colleagues or other professionals who may offer specialist advice if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consult and liaise with the church Safeguarding Coordinator (or the Synod Safeguarding Officer if a coordinator has not been appointed or been available) when a safeguarding concern, allegation or incident arises.
- To consult with colleagues, Elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- To observe proper boundaries in relationships and not to enter into a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to meet alone with a child, a young person, children or young people under the age of 18. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d Relationship with Councils of the Church

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of synod and the pastoral care of Synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator, or where appropriate the Secretary for Ministries, when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To undertake mandatory training including Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training, Safeguarding training at an appropriate level, Pastoral Supervision and any other mandatory training deemed appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement.
- To be aware of the guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by the Education and Learning Committee.

Appendix 2

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Church Related Community Workers

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Church Related Community Workers within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers of Word and Sacrament and Elders are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of Church Related Community Workers is in the Basis of Union, paragraph 22,

‘Some are called to the ministry of Church Related Community Work. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be Church Related Community Workers in a post approved by the United Reformed Church, are then commissioned and inducted to their office to serve for a designated period. This commissioning and induction shall be in accord with Schedules D and F. Church Related Community Workers are commissioned to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God’s will for the well-being of the community, and to endeavour to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world. Their service may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary, and in the latter case their service is given within the area of a synod and in a context it has approved.

CRCWs make promises as laid out in Schedule F, in particular they promise ,to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise; to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God's will for the well-being of the community; to take their part in the councils of the Church and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world, and as a church related community worker of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour to always build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.'

3. Standards of professional behaviour

3a. Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.
- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise eg when children or adults are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, or when there is a safety issue affecting the whole community.
- To safeguard people and protect the more vulnerable by attending and refreshing mandatory URC Safeguarding training (basic, intermediate and advanced) and having a working knowledge of the URC's Safeguarding policy and guidance (Good Practice 5) and its code of conduct in working with children and adults at risk (Appendices A3 and A4).
- To be aware of and maintain appropriate boundaries by undertaking mandatory URC Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training and promoting safe and healthy relationships with those they come in contact with.
- To exercise care and sensitivity in seeking counsel from colleagues and to protect the identity of third parties unless permission has been granted.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR).
- To observe the URC's gift policy for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and to account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others. Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues

- To support the ministry of other CRCWs and Ministers of Word and Sacrament and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.

- To sever all professional ties with a previous post and refer any requests or enquires of previous posts to the interim moderator or new CRCW.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past posts.
- To welcome retired colleagues as members of the pastorate.

3c *Relationship with Elders, members and others*

- To regard all persons they come into contact with with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- Not to seek to influence inappropriately a pastorate in the call of a new Minister.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another CRCW or a Minister of Word and Sacrament and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from colleagues or other professionals who may offer specialist advice if in doubt about one's competence to deal with an issue or situation.
- To consult and liaise with the church Safeguarding Coordinator (or the Synod Safeguarding Officer if a coordinator has not been appointed or been available) when a safeguarding concern, allegation or incident arises.
- To consult with colleagues, Elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- To observe proper boundaries in relationships and not to enter into a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to meet alone with a child, a young person, children or young people under the age of 18. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d *Relationship with Councils of the Church*

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of Synod and the pastoral care of Synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator, or where appropriate the Secretary for Ministries, when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To undertake mandatory training including Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training, Safeguarding training at an appropriate level, Pastoral Supervision and any other mandatory training deemed appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement.
- To be aware of the guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by the Education and Learning Committee.

Appendix 3

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Elders

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Elders in relation to Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers and CRCWs are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph two,

‘Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.’

The relevant promises in Schedule C are

- a) ‘to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise’
- b) ‘to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the church in its mission to the world, and
- c) as a minister of the United Reformed Church ‘to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’.

Elders ‘share with Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the elders’ meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They are ‘associated with ministers in all the councils of the Church’. Elders promise at their ordination to ‘accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church’ and promise ‘to perform its duties faithfully’.

Elders and members receive ministers at their induction or CRCWs at their commissioning ‘as from God’ to serve among them and with them in the world. They promise to pray for the Minister/CRCW, to seek together the will of God and ‘give due

honour, consideration and encouragement, building one another up in faith, hope and love’.

Members promise, ‘in dependence on God’s grace, to be faithful in private and public worship, to live in the fellowship of the church and to share in its work’, and to give and serve, as God enables them, ‘for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world’ They also promise ‘by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will’ all the days of their life’

3. Standards of Christian behaviour

3a *Personal integrity and health*

- To live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity.
- To be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given.
- To be aware of the need of Ministers, Elders and members to have appropriate boundaries that safeguard personal and spiritual health and welfare, to promote healthy relationships with others and not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.
- To undertake URC safeguarding training as appropriate and have a working knowledge of the URC’s Good Practice 5.
- To recognise the need for Ministers, Elders and members to have a healthy lifestyle and to balance demands on Ministers’/CRCWs’ availability and accessibility with respect for Ministers’/CRCWs’ time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise, eg with regard to the safety of children and adults at risk, and to respect Ministers’ needs to maintain that same confidentiality.
- To exercise care and sensitivity when seeking counsel from others and in discussion about pastoral concerns, in order that the identity of any person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).

3b *Relationships with Ministers*

- To work collaboratively with Ministers/CRCWs and Elders and members in all aspects of the life of the pastorate.
- To support the Ministers/CRCWs, through prayer, encouragement and partnership, including honouring the terms of settlement with regard to holidays, financial benefits and continuing training.
- To regard all persons with equal respect and concern and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation, including Ministers/CRCWs.
- To honour the Ministers/CRCWs currently called to serve and not invite or encourage other ministers to be involved in the life of the church or to offer pastoral care without the Ministers’/CRCWs’ consent.
- To refrain from raising pastoral issues with a previous Minister/CRCW.
- To respect the work of previous Ministers/CRCWs and deal honourably with their record.

- To welcome retired Ministers/CRCWs as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c *Relationship with Elders, members and others*

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from others if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility and to support the direction of church life initiated through the Ministers/CRCWs, Elders and Church Meetings.
- Not to enter a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to be alone with a child or children or young people or adult at risk in a place quite separate from others. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d *Relationship with councils of the Church*

- To recognise that the pastorate is part of the wider United Reformed Church and that the Ministers/CRCWs are committed to play their part in the wider councils of the Church and in ecumenical relationships.
- To engage positively with all the councils of the church.
- To participate in synod's consultation and review of the pastorate as appropriate.