

Paper F3

Non-stipendiary Church Related Community Work (NS CRCW) ministry

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	To approve a variation to NS CRCW ministry as it was defined and agreed by General Assembly 2004.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council resolves that ‘locally called and locally appointed’ non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers would be expected to follow an individually designed training path as determined by the Education and Learning Committee in consultation with the RCL that is relevant to their local context and local opportunities.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	While the academic and professional training path for non-stipendiary CRCWs is to the same standard as for stipendiary CRCWs for the general models, the aim of this paper is to remove the training restrictions for locally called, locally appointed non-stipendiary CRCWs.
Main points	This will hopefully increase the potential for church members engaged with local community development initiatives to be called, trained and accredited into a recognised ministry. The actual training requirements will be for the Education and Learning Committee to determine.
Previous relevant documents	The Report to Mission Council about Church-Related Community Work (September 1998); Church Related Community Work (CRCW) as a Non-Stipendiary Ministry (General Assembly 2004).
Consultation has taken place with...	CRCW programme sub-committee (six meetings since May 2018), ministries committee (three meetings since September 2018), Education and Learning committee (September 2020), Northern College (four meetings since January 2018), CRCWs (ongoing). The General Secretary.

Summary of impact

Financial	Cost of training. Students expenses.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Potential NS Certificates of Eligibility applications. Common Awards programme more widely available to potential students from other denominations.

1. The present situation

1.1. In 2004, General Assembly agreed to extend the principles of non-stipendiary ministry to CRCW ministry. This was ratified by the 2005 General Assembly including the consequential changes to the Plan for Partnership.

Resolutions included;

- ‘non-stipendiary CRCW candidates would be expected to follow the same training path as for stipendiary CRCWs’,
- ‘The minimum level of qualifications and achievement of the stated core competencies to become an accredited stipendiary CRCW would also be applicable for accredited Non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers’,
- ‘NS CRCWs service is given within the area of a District or area Council and in a context it has approved’, with District responsibilities ‘To appoint, or to concur in the appointment of, non-stipendiary ministers and church related community workers to their particular service and to review this service at stated intervals’,
- ‘The calling and Commissioning of NS CRCWs would follow the same process as for a stipendiary CRCW which in turn observes and is similar to the protocol for calling Ministers of Word and Sacraments’,
- ‘The procedures and decisions required to transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service for ministers of Word and Sacraments also apply for the transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary church related community work,’ and,
- Non-stipendiary CRCWs would be fully recognised as part of the CRCW programme and therefore be included in all the support networks and events available to accredited CRCWs via the CRCW Office. The agreements made by all parties in The CRCW Covenant would also be deemed to be applicable to NS CRCWs, apart from those referring to The Plan for Partnership (section 11, i & ii.).

1.2. There are two significant differences in the understanding of NS CRCW ministry to the accepted view of NS ministry of Word and Sacraments (NS MWS) that have been agreed by General Assembly;

- a) Within NS CRCW Model One: ‘There is a specific case for ‘locally called and locally appointed’ CRCWs, as has already been recognised for some non-stipendiary ministers of Word and Sacraments within that Model One. This case is particularly strong in the field of community ministry where people may have lived, worked and developed relationships with local residents for the majority of their lifetime in their neighbourhood, and who subsequently demonstrate a calling to the ministry of Church Related Community Work, but as a particular service and calling back within their specific neighbourhood. Whereas the vast majority of CRCWs see their lifelong calling as being to the whole church, there are nevertheless one or two CRCWs who have been commissioned in recent years who have demonstrated a strong calling back to their own neighbourhoods, plus a

few others who have been unable to pursue a potential calling because of the present unavailability of a particular route to exercise community ministry in their own neighbourhood.'

- b) Within NS CRCW Model Three: 'ministers and church related community workers in secular employment and church related community workers working for the URC or other Christian organisations or denominations. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or District or area Council.'

This is a wider-embracing understanding of Model Three of NSMs 'working in secular employment' which was 'extended to embrace those URC-accredited CRCWs who may work for and receive remuneration from other denominations, Christian agencies or para-church organisations as church related community workers but still retain their URC local church membership and relationships. They could still be recognised as URC NS CRCWs but as being employed and paid by these other organisations.'

2. Clearing the way for local NS CRCW ministry

- 2.1. Although 'locally called and locally appointed' NS CRCWs are permissible under the 2004 GA Resolutions, it has been the lack of a 'locally trained' context which has been a major barrier to becoming an accredited local NS CRCW. In fact, the absence of a 'locally trained' option has been the main reason for at least one NS CRCW candidate not going forward from Assessment Conference and a number of other potential candidates not pursuing a call.
- 2.2. Observations and information from CRCWs in local contexts, from requests to the CRCW Office by local churches for support with their local community initiatives, and from stories of disciples demonstrating their faith in action in their neighbourhoods via the 'Walking the Way' initiative, all indicate that there are numerous church members present and engaged with various neighbourhood and community initiatives in their locality. Only a few of these Christian community activists and volunteers will pursue a potential call to CRCW ministry anywhere in the URC, either stipendiary or non-stipendiary, but there may be a much larger number of people who might consider a call to become a NS CRCW if they can access the required training and continue to minister in their local context for the required minimum of ten hours per week.
- 2.3. The resolving by Mission Council (November 2018), acting on behalf of General Assembly, to authorise a Model Four NS ministry for Word and Sacraments has opened up locally trained options for NS MWS overseen by the Education and Learning (E&L) committee.
- 2.4. Using a similar framework, and in a similar way to the E&L committee agreeing that, 'someone who is called to Model Four NS MWS would undertake the same assessment processes and be assigned to a Resource Centre for Learning (RCL) for their Education for Ministry (EM) One, even though the formation and equipping is undertaken locally', The Revd Dr Noel Irwin, Tutor in Public Theology and Church Related Community Work at Northern College, in association with the Principal of Northern College, Secretary for Ministries and the CRCW

Development Worker is exploring and writing paths for qualification for NS CRCW ministry for those who are called to NS (Model One) CRCW.

- 2.5. While there is an ongoing debate as to what exactly that qualification will look like, including the breadth of community development professional standards that should be upheld, there is general agreement between the different parties that a Diploma level academic standard is not required for this particular model of NS CRCW ministry. (A Diploma in Contextual Theology is the minimum qualification to become a stipendiary CRCW.)
- 2.6. Consequently, Mission Council is being asked to add this Resolution to the criteria for NS CRCW ministry and to allow the E&L committee to determine exactly what the level of qualification will be.
- 2.7. For all other models of NS CRCW ministry other than 'locally called, locally appointed', non-stipendiary CRCW candidates would be expected to follow the same training path as for stipendiary CRCWs and the minimum level of qualifications and achievement of the stated core competencies to become an accredited stipendiary CRCW would remain as being applicable for accredited non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers.
- 2.8. A specimen role description and person specification, the guidance for Synods to appoint a NS (Model One) CRCW and the monitoring and review process for this particular local NS CRCW ministry are available on request to:
steve.summers@urc.org.uk