

# TRAINING PROCESS FOR LOCAL PREACHERS IN THE ARMED FORCES

## Training as a Local Preacher in the Armed Forces

This Guide describes the process of discerning the call of a Local Preacher (LP) for a member of the Armed Forces (AF) including civilians working for the MOD where they are not able to follow the normal Methodist process<sup>1</sup> due to the nature of their service. It is though based on that process and the step numbering is equivalent but there are subtle differences in nearly every step. There are two assumed options at each Stage: 1) the individual is worshipping and training to preach in a local circuit, or 2) they are worshipping in a military or naval chapel.<sup>2</sup>

### Why it differs

The nature of a Service career means that the individual is likely to move regularly and often at short notice and will be in both of those situations at different times. The other characteristic of worship that impacts on this is that within the AF Methodism is categorised with other denominations in a Chaplaincy Group.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the Chaplain with oversight of the LP at many stages may not be a Methodist and in many military and naval environments there is just a single Chaplain and all worship is interdenominational.

It is these differences in how the individual is employed that means the mentor is likely to routinely change during this process, hence establishing an AF LP Tutor<sup>4</sup> to provide continuity for the candidates through their time. It is equally quite possible to move from the conventional pathway to this Armed Forces pathway and vice versa at any stage (and almost any step) and the process is designed to be flexible.

### Training as a Worship Leader

Worship Leaders are appointed by individual churches, but the relatively ecumenical setup in the Forces may mean some individuals wish to complete the Worship Leader course to enable them to support their Chaplain or to explore future church leadership roles. If the Chaplain believes they are suitable and decides that the Methodist Worship Leader Course is appropriate they should discuss the candidate with the AF LP Tutor who will register them and support them through Modules 1-4 of Worship and Preaching, keeping the Minister informed of their progress and record their status in the relevant area of the East Solent & Downs (ES&D) plan until they move onto a circuit plan. In effect this is part of Steps 1, 2, 8, 22 and 24 in the process below. Where a potential Worship Leader is in a standard Methodist Circuit it is expected that they will follow the normal circuit processes.

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<sup>1</sup> As laid down "Training Requirements for Local Preachers" dated April 2019. The Standing Orders containing definitive requirements are available on the [Methodist Church website](#).

<sup>2</sup> This includes garrison and establishment chapels around the world, but also could include temporary places of worship on operations or in a ship at sea.

<sup>3</sup> In the RN and RAF this is as part of the Free Churches group i.e. not Church of England or Roman Catholic and in the Army there is a different structure in place where all denominations sit alongside each other."

<sup>4</sup> In line with the usual Methodist process the tutor does need not to be a local preacher, or resident in the ES&D circuit, although currently they are.

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The AF LP Tutor will also keep the Methodist Forces Board updated with any candidates that are using this process.

### Further Information

For any clarification please contact the LP Office via [localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:localpreachers@methodistchurch.org.uk) or on 020 7467 3774 or the AF LP Tutor – Cdr Mark Barton RN on [markbartonrn@gmail.com](mailto:markbartonrn@gmail.com) who will support the process through the East Solent and Downs (ES&D) Circuit.<sup>5</sup> Nothing in this process means that an individual wishing to become a LP cannot train by the standard LP route if they are worshipping and preaching in a Methodist Circuit and that Circuit is willing to take them through the process.

	Description	Standing Order
	<b>First Steps</b>	
1	A person indicates to a Minister or Chaplain that they wish to explore the call to become a Local Preacher in the Methodist Church.	564
2a	The person has a conversation with the AF LP Tutor regarding the process of discernment and training.	564
2b	The AF LP Tutor will liaise with an appropriate Minister or Chaplain <sup>6</sup> to arrange the conduct of a discernment interview and to ensure that the individual is a member of the Methodist Church. This will include ensuring that the Minister or Chaplain is aware of this process and the differences from the standard procedure and if appropriate is aware of the duties and responsibility of a Local Preacher.	
2c	The agreed Minister or Chaplain conducts a discernment interview and explains the duties and responsibilities of a preacher, the demands it places on the person and the need to reassess their other commitments. The paper <a href="#">Competencies for a person requesting a note to preach</a> (available on the Methodist Church website) will be a helpful reference in this discussion.	
	<b>On Note</b>	
3	The Minister conducting the discernment interview liaises with the AF LP Tutor and provides a recommendation to the Tutor for the	564

<sup>5</sup> This Circuit has agreed to act as the enabler for all of these candidates and is within the Southampton District, which is the District with leadership responsibilities for the Armed Forces. The Tutor is currently a member of this Circuit.

<sup>6</sup> This will be either the local Superintendent if the candidate is temporarily in a circuit or the Minister with responsibility for the Service place of worship. Step 2b is included to enable the person to gain an understanding of Methodist practice if the appropriate Minister is not a Methodist.

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	Description	Standing Order
	Tutor to take the ES&D Circuit Local Preachers' Meeting and also a recommendation as to a suitable mentor <sup>7</sup> if they are given a note to preach. The ES&D Local Preachers' Meeting discusses the recommendation.	
4	If the meeting approves the recommendation, then one of the following occurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If the candidate is temporarily in a local circuit the AF LP Tutor liaises with that circuit for them to submit a <b>DBS (Safeguarding) application</b> and that they will enrol the candidate for <b>both</b> the Foundation and Advanced Modules of Safeguarding training at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>b. If the candidate is worshipping and preaching in the military environment then Safeguarding is dealt with by establishment processes.<sup>8</sup> However, the AF LP Tutor will seek an appropriate location for the candidate to enrol and conduct <b>both</b> the Foundation and Advanced Modules of Safeguarding training at the earliest opportunity.</li> </ul>	564A(1)
5	The person is given a written <b>Note to Preach</b> by the ES&D Circuit Superintendent, authorising them to assist a preacher or Minister or Chaplain in the conduct of services within either the Circuit they are temporarily in or the military/naval chapel they are worshipping at. The Note to Preach lasts for 3 months but can be renewed for further 3 month periods by agreement of the Local Preachers' Meeting.	564A(1)
6	The AF LP Tutor will ensure the recommended Mentor is made aware of the decision and is aware of the <a href="#">Guide for Tutors and Mentors</a> . In this initial stage, the Mentor should either share services with the new On Note Preacher or where the candidate was acting as a Church Officer <sup>9</sup> and conducting Services already will provide support in their preparation to enable them to develop.	564A(5)
7	The ES&D Local Preachers' Meeting formally appoints the <b>AF LP Tutor</b> for the new On Note Preacher. They will be the Preacher's accompanist in their theological learning using the Worship: Leading & Preaching course.	564C(1)

<sup>7</sup> This could be a suitable Local Preacher if they are temporarily in a circuit or the Minister if it is a military or naval chapel.

<sup>8</sup> Legally they are part of the place of work and therefore the legal responsibility lies with the employer.

<sup>9</sup> Many services at sea are taken by the Church Officer, which an additional duty for one of the officers onboard, in the candidate is in this role, they will already be taking full services it is though here where they will start to be guided in how to do that better and use more of their own material.

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	Description	Standing Order
8	<p>At the earliest opportunity, the AF LP Tutor informs the Local Preachers' Office of the new On Note Preacher and their Mentor using the <b>Local Preachers' Return form</b>.</p> <p>The Local Preachers' Office enrol the new student and Mentor (if appropriate) onto the Worship: Leading &amp; Preaching course and send them a copy of <b>Worship: Foundations</b>. Worship: Foundations can also be downloaded <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	
9	The person on note prepares and assists in leading worship with their Mentor. The AF LP Tutor will make sure the Mentor is aware of Worship: Foundations and works to enable the On Note Preacher to take on more responsibility for preparation and leading of worship.	564A(5)
10	The person on note commences the Worship: Leading and Preaching course with the support of their Tutor and starts to collect material for their portfolio.	
11	The person on note conducts a full service in the presence of two preachers or Ministers or Chaplains, one of whom must be if possible a Methodist. They may include the Mentor and the AF LP Tutor. A report will be passed to the AF LP Tutor who will present it to the ES&D Local Preachers' Meeting. Feedback is recorded on the Worship & Preaching Feedback Form and discussed with the person on note prior to the meeting. This might be in a completely different church from normal to facilitate the observation.	564A(7)
	<b>On Trial</b>	
12	If the service report, and a report from the Tutor, are agreed to be satisfactory, and the meeting agrees that it is appropriate, the person moves to the status of person On Trial. Note that the person will need to be on trial before they can complete Portfolio A at the end of Modules 1 to 4 of Worship: Leading & Preaching.	564A(7)
13	<p>A period of not less than one year but not more than five years is spent on trial.<sup>10</sup> During this time, the AF LP Tutor will continue to support the person on trial, and ensure that they have a Mentor available for advice and guidance.</p> <p>For the first six months of being on trial, students should prepare their services and sermons in consultation with their Mentors, who should also attend their services as they are able.</p>	564B(1) 564B(5)

<sup>10</sup> This 5 year period can be extended if there are suitable circumstances. This would be done in line with SO 564B(3) where it will be managed through Southampton's District Policy Committee (DPC).

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14	<p>The AF LP Tutor will ensure the On Trial Preacher is seen every term (unless they are deployed and it is not possible) and a report presented for the ES&amp;D LP Meeting. This will also cover their progress with the Worship: Leading &amp; Preaching course.</p> <p>Reports of services conducted by a person on trial should always be discussed with the person prior to being presented to the Local Preachers' Meeting. Discussion at the meeting should be conducted in a positive and affirming manner, and the person on trial should be informed of any points raised.<sup>11</sup></p>	564B(6)
15	<p>The person on trial continues with the Worship: Leading &amp; Preaching course, completing Portfolio A. Portfolios are assessed by their Tutor and submitted for moderation by the regional Learning Network. More information on portfolios can be found in the <a href="#">Guide to Portfolios</a>. There are a few additional training elements that should be undertaken by the On Trial Preacher during this period. These will be arranged following liaison between the AF LP Tutor, Mentor and the On Trial Preacher. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of training, both the Foundation and Advanced modules of Safeguarding training must be completed.</b></li> <li>The On Trial Preacher should attend two LP Meetings to understand how they operate.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>The On Trial preacher should conduct at least 4 services in civilian churches (two of which should be reported on) and conduct services in at least 3 establishments or have conducted 7 services in Civilian churches (two of which should be reported on).<sup>13</sup></li> </ol> <p>Where possible item C should be completed between the First and Second Trial services.</p>	565(1)
	<b>First Trial Service and Interview</b>	
16	At a suitable point after the person on trial has completed Portfolio A, they conduct a full service in the presence of two preachers or	566(1),(2)

<sup>11</sup> Geographically it is very unlikely that the On Trial Local preacher will be ever able to attend an ES&D LP Meeting, although they are welcome to do so.

<sup>12</sup> If this is not possible then a conversation should be arranged with a Superintendent Minister and a LP Meeting Secretary so that the preacher training understands how a circuit functions outside the Armed Forces.

<sup>13</sup> There is the risk that an On Trial Preacher is only ever conducting services in one church, whereas there subsequent responsibilities are much wider. This aims to mitigate that and should be just part of the planning of what Services they conduct, ideally they would be later in the training process.

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	Ministers, one of whom must be if possible a Methodist and a church steward or similar suitable positioned person. <sup>14</sup> These may include the Mentor and the AF LP Tutor. The preachers witnessing the service prepare a report for the AF LP Tutor to present to the ES&D LPs' Meeting. This might be in a completely different church from normal to facilitate the observation.	
17	<p>When the first Portfolio has been successfully completed, a panel of three including at least two of: 1) Superintendent of the local circuit they are temporarily located in, 2) the senior Methodist in the appropriate Service (i.e. RN, Army or RAF) and 3) the AF LP Tutor conduct a first interview with the person on trial. This will be recorded and presented to the Local Preachers' Meeting. The purpose of the interview and trial service is to assist the Local Preachers' Meeting in reaching a decision as to whether the person should continue on trial.</p> <p>The person on trial should have the opportunity to share the story of their Christian experience, their call to preach, and any insights, challenges or difficulties they have experienced during their training so far. More information on conducting this interview can be found in <a href="#">Circuit Interviews for Persons on Trial</a>.</p>	566(3)
18	The ES&D LPs' Meeting makes a decision on the continuation (or not) of the person's on trial status. If the decision is positive, the person continues on trial and carries on with the study of Modules 5 to 8 and with building and submitting Portfolio B.	566(1),(2)
	<b>Second Trial Service and Interview</b>	
19	When the person on trial has completed Portfolio B, they conduct a full service in the presence of two preachers or Ministers, one of whom must be Methodist and a church steward or similar suitable positioned person. <sup>15</sup> These may include the Mentor and the AF LP Tutor. The preachers witnessing the service prepare a report for the AF LP Tutor to present to the ES&D LPs' Meeting.	566(1),(2)
20	When Portfolio B has been confirmed as meeting the required assessment criteria by the Local Preachers' office, a second interview is conducted with the person on trial using the same process as the	566(1),(2)

<sup>14</sup> Due to how they are funded some military and establishment chapels have no church stewards but there are equivalent lead members. What is key here is the third person is experienced and also not a preacher or Minister.

<sup>15</sup> See Step 16 for explanation.

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	<p>first.</p> <p>The purpose of this second interview and trial service is to assist the Local Preachers' Meeting in reaching a decision on whether the person on trial is ready and suitable for admission as a local preacher. In order to assist the Local Preachers' Meeting the person on trial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) shall have the opportunity to speak of their growth in knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, and demonstrate a maturing of Christian experience;</li> <li>b) must satisfy the Meeting that they are faithful to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith and to Methodist doctrinal standards (this will include a conversation relating to Wesley's Sermons);</li> <li>c) must assure the Meeting that they will accept and observe the duties of a Local Preacher as described in Standing Order 563 (1)-(4) which should be read at the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>More information on conducting this interview can be found in <u><a href="#">Circuit Interviews for Persons on Trial</a></u>.</p> <p>Note that by this point both the Foundation and Advanced modules of Safeguarding training must have been completed.</p>	
21	<p>If after the second interview, the Meeting is satisfied that the person on trial should be admitted as a Local Preacher, it shall recommend to the ES&amp;D Circuit Meeting that it approves the person on trial for admission as a Local Preacher to be listed as a separate area on the local plan. The paper <a href="#">Competencies for those to be received onto Full Plan as Local Preachers</a> (available on the Methodist website) will be a helpful reference in this discussion.</p> <p>If the meeting determines that they cannot recommend the person on trial to the Circuit Meeting, appropriate pastoral support should be provided. Further guidance can be sought from the Local Preachers' Office.</p>	566(5)
	<b>Admission and Recognition</b>	
22	<p>If a recommendation is made by the Local Preachers' Meeting, the <b>Circuit Meeting</b> is asked to approve the person on trial to be admitted as a Local Preacher for inclusion on the list of AF LPs until they are passed to a local circuit.</p>	566(5)
23	<p>If the recommendation is approved, the AF LP Tutor arranges a Service for the Admission of Local Preachers at an appropriate</p>	566(6)

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	<p>Church, liaising either with the local Superintendent or appropriate Service Chaplains. At this service a Bible (or other appropriate book) and a letter from the President of the Conference are presented.</p> <p>The AF LP Tutor should request the nameplate for the Bible and the letter from the President from the Local Preachers' Office at least six weeks before they are required to allow for any delays.</p> <p>If approval is not granted, further advice should be sought from the Local Preachers' Office.</p>	
24	<p>All LPs are required to participate in <b>Continuing Local Preacher Development</b> and to share this with the Local Preachers' Meeting on a regular basis.</p> <p>They are also required to attend an annual <b>Service of Reaffirmation</b> of their call to be a Local Preacher. This will be appropriate to where they are located.</p> <p>At an appropriate point the new LP will move from being on a special area of ES&amp;D Circuit plan where they are not available for ES&amp;D appointments and onto a local Circuit plan. At that point it will become the preacher's responsibility to move from plan to plan as their career progresses.</p>	563(3)