



Progress

To date the Methodist Church has trained some 490 people to offer reflective supervision. These are a mixture of lay people with relevant skills and experience (eg from coaching or counselling backgrounds), and licensed and ordained ministers who have demonstrated strong skills around the work.

We have also briefed some 2,000+ people who are in receipt of reflective supervision.

From September 2020 it was expected that all ordained Methodist ministers (from the most senior to the most recently ordained) would be in reflective supervision under the Interim Supervision Policy and those plans have been achieved.

How does this affect you as steward?

We are now at a stage where it will be easy to notice that ministers of the Church will have regular appointments in their diaries for receiving supervision.

Ministers who work full time will be expected to receive the equivalent of 6 x 90 minute sessions per year and those who work part time to receive at the very least an hour a quarter.

Our research has demonstrated that the regular opportunity to share in supervision benefits the overall welfare of ministers, supports ministers in developing strategies for new or difficult situations and in learning from reviewing their practice, and helps support risk assessment in safeguarding and other matters.

So we hope that you will be able to support and encourage your minister as supervision becomes an important part of their ministerial life for the sake of the flourishing of the whole Church.

You may like to chat to your minister about their experiences so far, and how you can best explain to others what this particular form of supervision is and why it works in our church context.

Further information and resources

- If you would like to know more about the Methodist Church's policy, please look at the supervision pages of our website: www.methodistchurch.org.uk/supervision/
- If you would like to know more about pastoral supervision and how to find your own supervisor, please look at the website of the Association of Pastoral Supervision and Education (APSE): www.pastoralsupervision.org.uk/
- If you are interested in training as a pastoral supervisor there is information about how to do this on the APSE website.

To find out more, try:

- Leach, J, 2020, *A Charge to Keep: reflective supervision and the renewal of Christian leadership*, Nashville TN: GBHEM

This book reflects on the benefits and models of introducing reflective supervision into a denominational context and reflects on the relationship between reflective supervision and oversight.

- Leach & Paterson, 2015, *Pastoral Supervision: A Handbook*, London: SCM

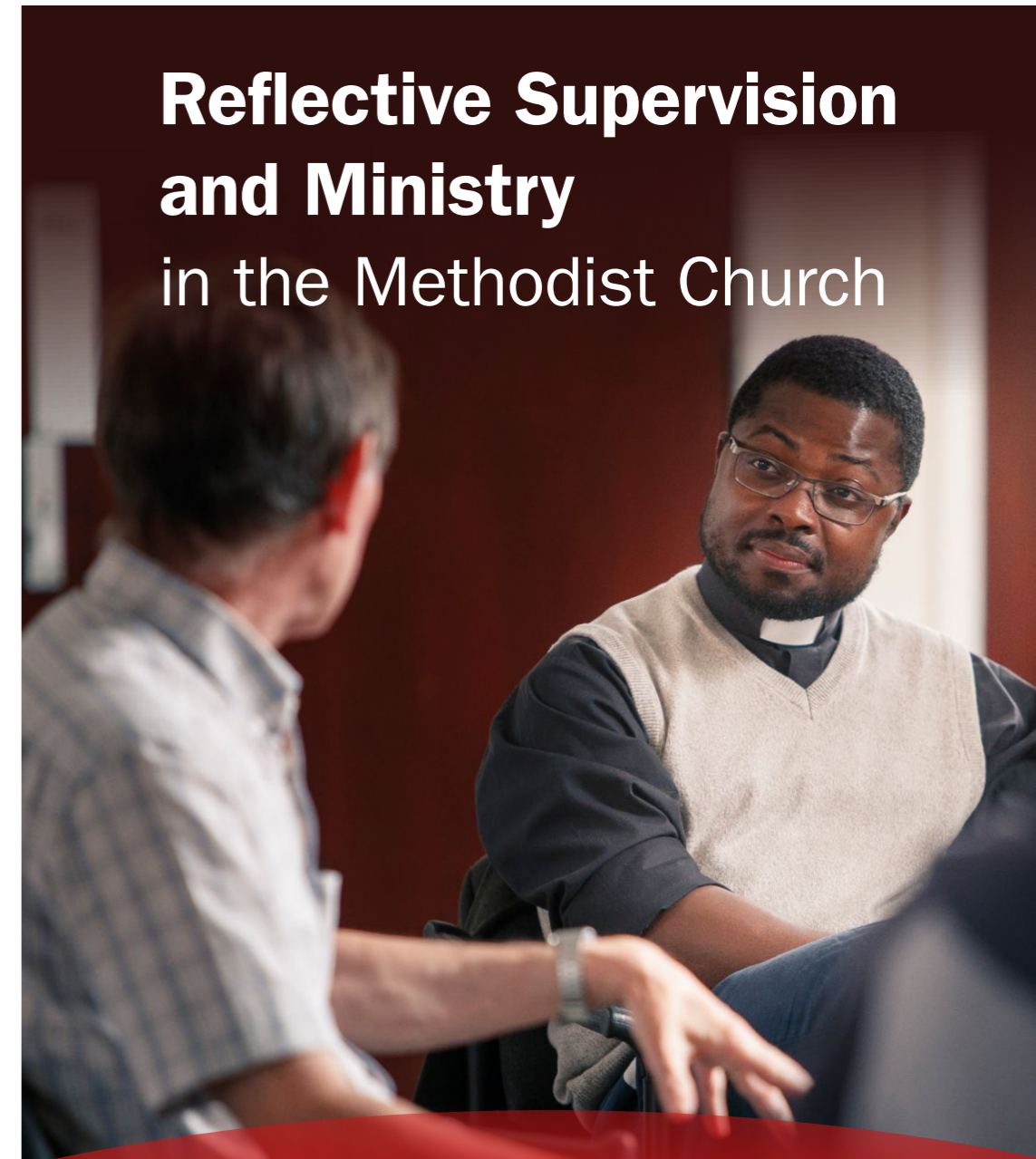
This is the best-selling text on the nature of pastoral supervision. It contains many tools and exercises and offers practical guidance grounded in biblical reflections.



The **Methodist Church**

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road,
London NW1 5JR Tel: 020 7486 5502
www.methodist.org.uk

© Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) 2020 • Registered charity no. 1132208



Reflective Supervision and Ministry in the Methodist Church

Introduction

In 2015 the Methodist Church in Britain introduced a system of structured reflective supervision for all our clergy. The hope was to provide a regular ‘space’ of supportive accountability for our ministers that would:

- Support ministers in their vocation and practice of ministry
- Safeguard the interests of those amongst whom ministry is exercised, including children and vulnerable adults
- Ensure that ministry offered in the name of the Methodist Church is collegially and accountably reflected upon in the light of God’s mission and the purposes of the Methodist Church.

The return on investment, some few years later, includes:

- Increased clergy well-being
- Reduced clergy anxiety
- Increased trust within the life of the Church
- Strengthened boundaries and role clarity in ministry and oversight
- Increased clergy toolkits for dealing with conflict, change and complex dynamics
- Emboldened clergy to take appropriate risks in mission
- Encouraged clergy to intervene at an early stage for challenging practices that cause harm.

Feedback has been strong and overwhelmingly positive.

What kind of supervision?

Finding a model of supervision that provides realistic support and accountability for all clergy involved redefining the ways in which the Methodist Church used the terms oversight and supervision. It was clear that those with oversight ministries would need to retain responsibility for setting mission direction and ministering the discipline of the Church. And it was also clear that parts of the supervisory task would need to be delegated to others in order to offer regular intentional space to everyone.

In many professions that are ‘people-facing’, reflective supervision is separate from management supervision. Yet evidence from these professions suggest that reflective supervision has an impact upon

practitioner well-being, development and accountability. Work had already been done to define the discipline of pastoral supervision as a spiritually attentive relationship in which regular reflective practice takes place (Leach & Paterson, 2010, 2015). The 2017 Conference therefore adopted a reflective model of supervision as a key way of addressing issues of ministerial support and accountability.

“Supervision as it is being adopted by the Methodist Church is understood as an *exploratory and reflective* process in which a ministry practitioner meets together with a trained, resourced and approved supervisor to reflect on their vocation and practice.”

(Interim Supervision Policy 2017)



Effective supervision rests on three pillars

1. Normative

- A shared theological reflection on the practices and vocation of ministry within the horizon of God’s mission and within the Methodist Church’s code of conduct.
- The shared identification of risks to self and others and the identification of steps to reduce those risks.

2. Formative

- Support for lifelong learning, formation and development in ministry through shared reflection.

3. Restorative

- The exploration of creative approaches to demanding issues of ministry and relationships as they arise.
- Ensuring that the vocation and work of the minister is shared, valued and nurtured.
- Ensuring that health and well-being issues for ministers are regularly addressed.

“I think that supervision is the most valuable and positive thing the Connexion has introduced in a generation (at least).”

Martin Wellings, Superintendent Minister, Oxford

