

THE SUPERVISION POLICY (2021-26)

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope

This Reflective Supervision Policy provides a framework for and an outline of the requirements for the supervision for all ordained ministers in the active work, those in designated lay roles and those who supervise under this policy. It draws on learning from the implementation of the draft (DSP) and interim (ISP) policies and from extensive research into that implementation conducted in 2018 and 2019-20. By 2024, in the light of pilot studies, the policy will be extended to cover those in further specified lay roles and offices (whether employed or voluntary). Those in these lay roles are encouraged to embrace reflective supervision as soon as there is capacity for it to be offered.

Because the policy now extends to both ordained ministers and those in specific lay roles the policy refers to oversight/management and minister in oversight/manager. There is no implication that these are equivalent processes or roles.

This Reflective Supervision Policy (RSP) is intended to run from 2021 to 2026 and to be reviewed at the Conference of 2026 in the light of further experience. Because reflective supervision in the Methodist Church has been designed to support culture change from an isolated and vulnerable practice of ministry towards supported and accountable practice it is important regularly to review its implementation and to learn from experience as part of the responsible exercise of oversight in the life of the church.

1.2 What is reflective supervision?

Reflective supervision is defined by this policy (RSP) as a form of pastoral supervision adopted within an organisational structure. It is understood as an exploratory and reflective process in which one or more ministry practitioners covenant to meet together with a trained, resourced and approved supervisor to reflect on their vocation and practice. The intention of such regular and focused reflection on practice is to provide support for the responsible exercise of the grace of ministry. Studies have shown, and the Methodist Church's own research has endorsed, that to be effective such supervision needs to be frequent, open and supportive.¹

The research undertaken by the Ministries Team (MT) during the Interim Supervision Policy (ISP)² period has demonstrated the effectiveness of reflective supervision through:

- Providing reliable relational accompaniment that supports the wellbeing and flourishing of ministry practitioners
- Underpinning the risk assessment, boundary alertness and role clarity that help support the safeguarding of everyone in church life
- Providing skilled and intentional space for discerning what God is saying both to individuals and to the Church as a whole in a period of accelerating change

¹ Extract from the National Crime Agency paper CEOP Thematic Assessment The Foundations of Abuse: a thematic assessment of the risk of child sexual abuse by adults in institutions. 2012. Accessed 02/02/17: www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOPThreatA_2012_190612_web.pdf

² A discussion of this research is provided in the section 4 of the report, above

1.3 A means of grace

The introduction of compulsory supervision into the life of the Methodist Church has provided some much needed ligaments and sinews by which those in ministry are being held together and to Christ in ways that promote trust, healthy accountability, safeguarding and flourishing amongst all concerned, and in ways that are helping us recover spaces in the life of the church for listening, together, to what God is saying in this time and place.

John Wesley believed in both instituted and prudential means of grace.³ Instituted means of grace included, for him, the reading of Scripture, prayer, fasting, Holy Communion and conferencing.⁴ Conferencing, so understood, was an innovation of Wesley's, and was conceived as means of Christian accountability in which members of the body of Christ are held together and to Christ, the head. The bands and classes of the early Methodist societies provided forums in which Christians could be accountable to one another under a common discipline of discipleship. Bands were differentiated for different groups in order to give those facing similar challenges contexts for appropriate sharing. Some groups were peer led and others facilitated by designated leaders. Prudential means of grace were, for Wesley, any disciplines or context-specific rules that helped disciples grow in grace.

Reflective supervision is not a practice that can be lifted wholesale from Methodist history but it is a form in which conferencing is now being experienced as a means of grace. This policy provides context-specific rules that govern the practice of reflective supervision to support its continued implementation as a prudential means of grace that benefits the whole connexion.

1.4 A contribution to oversight

- 1.4.1 The ISP characterised the role of reflective supervision as making a contribution to watching over one another in love:

This "watching over one another in love" is the means by which the members of the body of Christ remain true and faithful to the calling of the Church. In the British Methodist context it is a corporate and shared activity undertaken by the Conference and by groups and individuals working on behalf of the Conference that is commonly referred to as 'oversight'.

- 1.4.2 The DSP began with the assumption that superintendent ministers should supervise their circuit colleagues and District Chairs their Superintendents, and that, where numbers would make that impossible, alternates should be appointed. The assumption was that this structure would strengthen accountability and relationships between colleagues. The ISP gave Districts the choice of following this model or adopting a flatter structure whereby most ordained ministers would not be supervised by their minister in oversight.
- 1.4.3 The majority of people supervised under the DSP and the ISP have been part of an oversight structure as ordained ministers, but have not been part of a management structure. In most organisations in which there is a management structure supervision is not normally offered by the manager in order to ensure that there is a safe space for the practitioner to reflect beyond the space in which issues of performance are monitored and addressed.

³ Rack, H D, 2011, *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Nashville TN: Abingdon Press: 855-858, [§40.1-7]

⁴ Rack, H D, 2011, *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Nashville TN: Abingdon Press: 855-858, [§40.1-7]

- 1.4.4 The 2019-20 research has demonstrated that positive accountability and the strengthening of relationships between colleagues is being supported through supervision relationships with supervisors who are not the ministers in oversight/manager. In addition the research revealed a persistent concern amongst some ministers that being supervised by their minister in oversight means that they are/may be less open in supervision than they would otherwise be. This is compounded where supervisors and supervisees are allocated to one another without any realistic say in whether or not the relationship might work.
- 1.4.5 The balance that needs to be struck is between the conditions for openness and trust that enable supervisees to share at a realistic level, confront the real challenges they face, and take responsibility for addressing issues in their own practice that require attention, and the responsibility of those in oversight to ensure that such issues are addressed for the sake of the safety and flourishing of the whole church and those the church is called to serve.
- 1.4.6 The priority in reflective supervision is to preserve openness and trust in the supervision relationship. For that reason in this policy we now shift the burden of expectation about who supervises whom. From 1 September 2024 no-one will be expected to receive reflective supervision from their minister in oversight unless this is their preference.
- 1.4.7 The mechanisms for ensuring that ministers in oversight/managers have opportunity to raise issues with their colleagues for exploration in supervision and to monitor the progress of those issues are:
- through MDR/annual appraisal
 - through oversight meetings/routine management
 - through receiving Agreed Records of supervision - ministers in oversight/managers will receive Agreed Records of supervisions and will be able to challenge colleagues who persistently do not raise issues for exploration with their supervisor that the minister in oversight/manager considers critical.

1.5 A covenanted practice

Like the early Methodist societies, classes and bands that were governed by rules in order to fulfil specific purposes, those engaged in reflective supervision make a covenant for working together that is regularly reviewed and that records their discussion and agreement around four key topics:

- Purpose and function
- Ethos and relationship
- Form and process
- Boundaries and expectations

Connexional forms for the purpose of covenanting should be downloaded from the MCB website completed and stored in the supervisee's supervisory file⁵. Covenants should be revisited at least annually, providing an opportunity to evaluate what is working well and what needs to be addressed in the supervisory relationship.

⁵ The supervisory file contains the current Covenant Form, all Agreed Records and any formal reports required by other bodies. For information on storage and access to supervisory files see Policy Section 4.

1.6 The purpose and function of reflective supervision

1.6.1 Reflective supervision in the Methodist Church has three main functions:

- to support the wellbeing and development of those who minister;
- to safeguard the interests of those amongst whom ministry is exercised, including those of children and vulnerable adults;
- to ensure that the 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.

1.6.2 Effective supervision in this context rests on three pillars⁶

Normative:

- Shared theological reflection on the practices and vocation of ministry within the horizon of God's mission and within the Methodist Church's standing orders and doctrinal standards
- The shared identification of risks to self and others and the Methodist Church and the identification of steps to ameliorate those risks.

Formative:

- Support for lifelong learning, formation and development in ministry through shared reflection and identification of ongoing development needs;
- The exploration of creative approaches to demanding issues of ministry and relationships as they arise.

Restorative:

- Ensuring that the vocation and work of the minister is shared, valued and nurtured;
- Ensuring that health and wellbeing issues for ministers are monitored and addressed.

1.6.3 The research that the Ministries Team has conducted has underlined the mutually reinforcing impact of these three dimensions of reflective supervision.⁷

⁶ Adapted from Inskipp and Proctor, 1995, *Art, Craft and Tasks of Counselling Supervision: Professional Development for Counsellors, Psychotherapists, Supervisor and Trainers* Pt.2: Becoming a Supervisor, 2nd edition: Cascade.

⁷ See above, Report para 4.4.4

1.7 The Ethos of the Supervisory Relationship

- 1.7.1 The fulfilment of these purposes relies not only on the shared understanding of supervisor and supervisee about what they are doing in supervision, but on the trust that is created in relationship. It is important, therefore, that care is taken to ensure that supervisor and supervisee feel able to work together to achieve the purposes above and are willing to collaborate in order to create an ethos⁸ that is:



Figure 1: The ethos of reflective supervision

- 1.7.2 No-one, therefore, should be required to work with a supervisor or supervisee with whom there is not a reasonable chance of establishing the necessary trust. Circuits and Districts should work together with each other, and with connexional officers where necessary, to establish viable arrangements for those who cannot be effectively supervised locally.
- 1.7.3 Because supervisors and supervisees collaborate in creating this ethos, both need to be briefed/trained before entering into supervision. Supervisors must be nominated, trained, approved and re-approved according to the policy and supervisees must have access to appropriate briefing with opportunity for exploring their questions and clarifying expectations, before entering supervision under the policy for the first time.
- 1.7.4 Because supervision relies on establishing sufficient relational safety for the supervisee to be able to share at a realistic level it is important that training in supervision equips supervisors to work across differences of culture, gender, sexual orientation and theological approach and to explore potential barriers to relational safety at the outset of supervision relationships and as they arise.

1.8 The form and process of the supervisory relationship

- 1.8.1 Reflective supervision is an intentional process that has a particular form and shape. Although there are many ways of describing the processes of supervision in the wider helping professions⁹ during the period of the ISP the Methodist Church has built the foundations of a shared connexional vocabulary on which this RSP now rests.

⁸ Derived from original research amongst nine District Chairs in 2018

⁹ See for example, Michael Carroll, Hawkins and Shohet, Page and Wosket

1.8.2 The process of supervision adopted under this policy is based on the published supervisory processes of Leach and Paterson¹⁰.

Hosting and Containing – listening, non-anxiously to the supervisee and to the Holy Spirit	Hosting and Containing	Welcoming, praying, settling, re-establishing the relationship	Tracking and Monitoring – How is my supervisee? How is the dynamic between us? How are we using the time today and across the year? Are there any significant risks or follow up actions needed?
	Focusing and Eliciting	Identifying how the time should be spent today; drawing out enough information to establish a purposeful focus and goal for the session	
	Exploring and Imagining	Using appropriate methods and tools to help the supervisee reflect on a key issue/situation in ways that will support the agreed goal of the session	
	Bridging and Enacting	Ensuring that the supervisee has time to select and risk assess strategies and identify/rehearse their next practical steps	
	Reviewing and closing	Spending time naming the outcomes, completing the Agreed Record, ensuring there is a next session in the diary, entrusting the work to God.	

Figure 2: The Process of Reflective Supervision

1.8.3 This table offers a way of structuring a supervision session. The Greenwich Foot Tunnel Model¹¹ conceptualises these processes as a journey that echoes John Wesley’s approach to pastoral visiting, involving constant prayer (before, during and at its conclusion) and a series of key questions to be asked in the expectation that God might visit.

1.8.4 Each supervision should provide opportunity for:

- Reconnecting with God, self and the supervisor
- An update on any agreed actions from previous supervisions
- Substantial attention to at least one issue, explored in a pattern similar to that described above

¹⁰ Leach and Paterson 2015, 2nd edition, *Pastoral Supervision: A Handbook*, London SCM Press: 35-61

¹¹ Leach, J, 2020, *A Charge to Keep: Reflective Supervision and the Renewal of Ministry*, Nashville TN: Foundery Press: 157-163

- Attention to risk in relation to potential harm to self or others or the mission of the Church (whether or not this becomes the focus of the session).
- The recording of explicit actions in relation to safeguarding, fitness to practice and any other matters for referral.

1.8.5 Over time a series of supervisions should provide for rounded attention to the whole ministry practice of the supervisee including:

- The vocational identity and development of the practitioner.
- The practitioner's aims and priorities in their ministry context.
- Key relationships in the ministry context and the practitioner's approach to them.
- The health, resilience and wellbeing of the minister.
- Equality and diversity issues.
- Learning, development and support needs for existing or new roles.
- The supervisory work in which the minister is engaged both under this policy and more informally.

1.9 Boundaries and expectations of the supervisory relationship

1.9.1 Safe practice in supervision relies on clear boundaries and expectations. These are established between the supervisor and the supervisee as they covenant together but rest on the boundaries and expectations set by the Methodist Church.

1.9.2 In this policy the Methodist Church sets boundaries for the supervisory relationship and expectations concerning the scope and purpose of supervisions (see paras 1.6-1.8 above) and practical matters like the frequency and duration of meeting (see section 3 below).

1.9.3 This policy also prescribes the way in which information may enter and leave the supervision space to/from the supervisee's ministry context, and to/from the supervisee's manager/minister in oversight and establishes the boundaries of confidentiality for reflective supervision. Information about note taking, record keeping and reporting into other processes is set out in section 4.

1.9.4 It is important that supervisor and supervisee talk through the implications of these expectations and boundaries in the particularities of their own contexts, naming any potential role conflicts and clarifying expectations of each other and of other named parties. Formal descriptions of these roles are provided in section 5.

1.9.5 Who may bring issues to the supervision space?

- The main burden of the supervision agenda rests on the supervisee who should identify significant practice issues to bring to supervision that, over time, reflect the breadth and depth of their vocation and work. In selecting important issues for reflection the supervisee should routinely pay attention to feedback from colleagues and from others amongst whom they work.
- The supervisee should expect that on occasion their minister in oversight/manager will ask them to reflect in supervision on issues they have identified. These may be identified through a formal appraisal process or in any routine oversight conversation. If the minister in oversight/manager is their supervisor, the minister in oversight/manager should not use supervision to

raise issues of concern with their colleague but raise these in a separate oversight meeting.

- The supervisee should expect that on occasion their supervisor may raise an issue with them that arises from their shared work together or that seems to be conspicuously missing from their shared work.
- Nothing may be referred into supervision via the supervisor by a minister in oversight or other third party. Ministers in oversight always have the responsibility to raise issues of concern directly with the colleagues they oversee.

1.9.6 What may the supervisor share beyond the supervision relationship?

- The supervisor is responsible for the completion with the supervisee of an Agreed Record at the close of each supervision. This should be sent immediately to the nominated third party.
- Nothing may be communicated by the supervisor to any minister in oversight/manager or other third party except that which is recorded on Agreed Records. In the case of serious and immediate risks of harm the supervisor may, if consent is withheld by the supervisee, notify a safeguarding team and/or the minister in oversight of the situation and record that they have done this on an Agreed Record.
- The supervisor will discuss their supervisory relationships with their own supervisor for the purpose of supporting good supervision practice. This should be done regularly as a matter of good practice, and as a matter of urgency if there are significant risks and serious matters of judgement involved.
- The supervisor may reflect with others on the issues arising in supervision that indicate generic issues to which the Methodist Church might need to pay attention. This should only be done without reference to individual circumstances and should not be done in ways or contexts that do not protect supervisee confidentiality.
- Trainee supervisors may need to record supervision sessions and write verbatim accounts of their work for discussion with their own supervisors/trainers. Recordings and verbatim accounts should only be made with the written consent of supervisees and used only for the purposes of learning. They should be anonymised before being shared. They should be kept securely and destroyed when the training need ends.
- Reflective supervisors are required to submit reports to named processes. These should only ever be sent once the supervisee has had opportunity to comment and sign them. Such reports include:
 - Reports into MDR/appraisal processes
 - Reports on supervisor development for those in training as supervisors
 - Reports during probationary periods concerning the supervisee's ability to make effective use of supervision

2 Who may supervise?

2.1 Approval to supervise

2.1.1 All those who supervise under the RSP must have been trained as a supervisor and briefed to supervise under the Methodist Church's policy. There are two routes.

- Successful completion of the Methodist Church's course, *Responsible Grace*. This six month course includes training in reflective supervision, practise in training triads and with volunteer supervisees, assessment, and briefing to supervise under the policy.
- Recognition of previous qualifications and experience and/or professional memberships of supervision accreditation bodies, eg APSE, BACP with appropriate briefing or additional training as recommended by the appointed connexional officer.

2.1.2 Approval for those trained by the Methodist Church lasts for 5 years. Re-approval is subject to:

- Remaining in good standing with the Methodist Church
- Evidence of engagement in approved continuing development in supervision as determined by the appointed connexional officer.

2.1.3 Approval for those accredited by other bodies is subject to their remaining in good standing with these bodies.

2.2 Who may supervise whom?

2.2.1 From 1 September 2024, no supervisee may be required to be supervised by their minister in oversight/manager.

2.2.2 During the initial covenanting for every supervision relationship there should be a discussion about working together that enables either party to indicate concerns. If the relationship is unlikely to be fruitful, the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan should be informed and alternative arrangements made.

2.2.3 Where the minister in oversight/manager is also the reflective supervisor, particular care will be needed to ensure

- That the supervisor stance is maintained by the minister in oversight without straying into other roles
- That power dynamics in the relationship are monitored
- That the supervisee has other contexts in which to explore any issues that cannot appropriate be brought into this supervisory relationship

2.2.4 At least annually every supervision covenant should be reviewed and opportunity given for either party to indicate how well they feel the arrangement is working. It is hoped that supervision relationships can usually last at least three years but if either party feel the arrangement needs to be ended, the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan should be informed and alternative arrangements made. Supervision relationships may last longer than three years if both parties feel the relationship is still productive.

2.2.5 No-one may supervise a close family member nor receive the Agreed Record for such a person.

2.2.6 If a potential supervisee feels that they would be better supervised by a professional supervisor who is externally appointed, rather than by a Methodist trained and approved supervisor, they should raise this with the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan, together with their reasons. The keeper of the SIP may give permission for an external arrangement subject to the following conditions being met:

- Good grounds being given (eg the desire to train as a professional supervisor; an existing supervisory relationship which it would be inappropriate to disturb at this time; particular material needing to be processed that requires professional expertise; a traumatic history that makes working within the Methodist system particularly challenging).
- Identification of a suitably qualified and briefed external supervisor whose accreditation has been approved by the appointed connexional officer
- Funds being identified locally to pay for the arrangements
- The details being noted on the SIP

2.2.7 Those in the following roles should normally receive supervision from an externally appointed professional supervisor in order to ensure that highly sensitive material is not routinely recycled within the Methodist system:

- The Presidency
- The District Chairs
- The Warden and Deputy Warden of the MDO
- The Connexional Safeguarding Officer
- The Connexional Director of Supervision

2.2.8 Those supervising the supervisory work of others (supervision on supervision; supervision of trainee supervisors) should receive specific training in how to offer this.

2.2.9 It is recommended that all supervisors normally work with at least two supervisees. In order to maintain some continuity of practice and embed the supervisor stance it is hoped that usually supervisors will aim to work with between four and eight supervisees.

2.3 Who must be supervised?

2.3.1 All ministers in the active work in, (or Recognised and Regarded as being in,) Full Connexion, all probationers, those supernumeraries undertaking significant pastoral responsibility under a letter of understanding (SO 792(2)) and all those authorised to exercise ministry on behalf of the British Methodist Conference (under SO 733 or 733A).

2.3.2 All chaplains in Methodist Schools (whether Methodist or of another denomination; whether lay or ordained); arrangements to be overseen by the Schools' Visitor.

2.3.4 All Methodist chaplains and family workers in the Armed Forces (whether lay or ordained); arrangements to be overseen by the Secretary of the Forces Board.

2.3.5 All tutors with oversight responsibility for Methodist student ministers; arrangements to be overseen by the Head of Ministries.

2.3.6 All ministers with permission to reside overseas, to serve in an appointment outside the control of the Church or with permission to be without appointment; arrangements to be overseen by the SAC and the relevant District Chair.

- 2.3.7 Ordained ministers of other churches authorised to serve by the Conference (Authorised Ministers) shall be included in the relevant SIP and supervised under the policy unless exempt under an equivalent scheme approved by the connexional ecumenical officer and the connexionally appointed officer for supervision.
- 2.3.8 All mission partners who are ordained, and lay people who are serving in appointments in which they have significant pastoral responsibility that is not line managed; overseen by the Director of Global Relationships.

From September 2022

- 2.3.9 All pioneer ministers (whether lay or ordained) who are working .5 to full time.
- 2.3.10 All lay pastors working .5 to full time

From 2024

- 2.3.10 Those in other lay roles who have significant pastoral contact with individuals and families at points of vulnerability (pastoral workers, family workers, community workers) and those pioneer ministers and lay pastors with significant representative authority working less than half time, according to a pattern of reflective supervision/group supervision/reflective management as determined by the Methodist Council.

3 Practical arrangements for supervision

3.1 Frequency and duration for full time workers

- 3.1.1 Everyone working full time who is subject to this policy should receive not less than 9 hours of supervision spread evenly through the year. By mutual agreement between supervisor and supervisee this may be either
- 6 x 90 minutes
 - 9 x 60 minutes
- 3.1.2 Additional supervisions, up to three further hours, (either 2 x 90 minutes or 3 x 1 hour) may be negotiated in appropriate circumstances eg where the supervisee is also a supervisor and needs supervision of supervision; when a supervisee is under particular pressure; if there is need for an 'emergency' supervision for any negotiated reason.
- 3.3 **Supervision of supervision:** those engaged to supervise by the Methodist Church as external supervisors or who are offering supervision as the main ministry they offer to the British Methodist Church receive supervision on supervision equivalent to 10% of the time they offer as supervisors (eg, if supervising six ministers six times per year for 90 minutes they receive at least 4.8 hours of supervision during the year for this work) but not less than an hour per quarter.
- 3.4 **Part Time Workers:** For those working part time engagement in supervision should be proportionate and appropriate to the role being exercised. However, in order to achieve the objective of frequency and maintain a realistic supervisory relationship no-one subject to this policy should be supervised for less than one hour each quarter.
- 3.4.1 Those working half time or less should receive not less than one hour of supervision per quarter.
- 3.4.2 Those working between half and full time should receive between one and two hours supervision per quarter.

3.5 Mode of supervision

3.5.1 Supervision should be 1:1 unless a group is authorised by a connexional officer under a pilot scheme for the purposes of exploring the appropriate use of group supervision. Those leading supervision groups will need either to have a professional qualification /accreditation in supervision or to have received connexional training in group supervision

3.5.1 Normally there should be at least two face to face supervisions per year.

3.6 Sabbaticals

3.6.1 Any minister on sabbatical is entitled to receive their full quota of supervision but may, by negotiation with their supervisor, miss a quarter of their annual quota during that three month period.

3.6.2 Any minister on sabbatical who supervises should not undertake all the supervisions for their supervisees during the sabbatical year but should make appropriate and proportionate arrangements for the supervision of their colleagues. This should be by negotiation and should take into account each supervision relationship. In some cases it may be important to prioritise the continuity of the relationship and for the supervisor to conduct all the supervisions in an adjusted timetable; in other cases it may be appropriate for two or three supervisions to be offered by an alternative supervisor in order to balance the workload of the supervisor. Overall the supervisor should aim to reduce their supervision load in a sabbatical year by a quarter.

3.7 Parental Leave

3.7.1 Any minister on parental leave (SO 807A-C) should normally continue to be supervised on their 'keeping in touch' days.

3.7.2 Any minister who supervises who takes parental leave for more than two months should notify the keeper of the relevant Supervision Implementation Plan so that alternative arrangements can be made for their supervisees.

3.8 Sick leave

3.8.1 Ministers and employees who are signed off sick may not engage in supervision.

3.8.2 Any supervisor who is signed off sick may not supervise. Where this persists for more than two months, alternative arrangements should be made for the affected supervisees by the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan.

3.9 Suspension

3.9.1 Where a minister who supervises is suspended alternative arrangements should be made by the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan for the supervision of their supervisees.

3.9.2 The supervision arrangements for ministers who are suspended should be reviewed by the keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan in consultation with their minister in oversight.

3.10 Ministerial probationers

3.10.1 Reflective supervision is part of the ecology of support and accountability for the probationer as set out in the Covenant for Probation (<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/ministries/probationers/handbook-for-probation/>)

- 3.10.2 Probationers should receive a briefing on the nature of reflective supervision under the policy as part of their induction into an appointment for which the Keeper of the Supervision Implementation Plan is responsible.
- 3.10.3 Probationers must be supervised by a person already approved to supervise under the policy (since 2017) and who has attended a training day preparing them to work specifically with a probationer. The supervisor may or may not also be the superintendent minister and need not be a member of the Circuit Leadership Team.
- 3.10.4 Rather than providing a report to an MDR or other appraisal process, the supervisors of probationers are required to provide an evidential report concerning the developing ability of the probationer to make effective use of supervision under the policy. This will form part of the Circuit Leadership Team's report to the Probationers' Committee in each year of probation.
- 3.10.5 Agreed Records of supervision are kept and copied to the District Probationers' secretary as the third party in the case of those being supervised by their Superintendent, and as an additional third party where this is not the case.
- 3.10.6 The responsibilities of probationers and those who supervise them are set out at 5.8 and 5.9 below.

4 Notes, Records and Reports

- 4.1 A supervisory file shall be kept for each person in supervision.
- 4.1.1 The file shall contain:
- The current signed covenant for supervision
 - Signed Agreed Records
 - Any formal reports to/from the supervisory process eg from/to appraisal processes; supervision training processes; a probationers' committee
- 4.1.2 The supervisee has access to the supervisory file and may keep a copy. The supervisor and the nominated third party also keep a copy/have access to the file.
- 4.1.3 The nominated third party and should normally be the minister in oversight/manager. This would not be appropriate if the minister in oversight is closely related to the supervisee or if there has been a breakdown of relationship between the parties, of which their District Chair is formally aware. In this case, and in all cases where the minister in oversight/manager is the supervisor, the nominated third party is appointed by the keeper of the SIP.
- 4.1.4 The file shall be kept as a sensitive document subject to GDPR requirements
- 4.1.5 At the end of a supervisory relationship all copies of the file are either posted by recorded delivery or sent as a password protect electronic file to the new supervisor/third party - or to the keeper of the SIP if the new supervisor/third party is not yet known.
- 4.1.6 For ministers retiring from the active work or ceasing to be in Full Connexion, copies of the file are sent to the Chair of the District to where the minister will reside. The file will be held until the minister's death and then destroyed by the Chair. The file's content may be drawn upon for purpose of giving reference should the minister wish to move back into active work.
- 4.1.7 For those ceasing to be in Full Connexion a right to erasure may be applied for, advice should be sought from The Conference Office before agreeing to such a request.

4.1.8 For lay employees who come to the end of their employment with the Methodist Church the Supervisor's file should be sent to the employer who will retain the file, with their employment record, for six years before being destroyed. The files content may be drawn upon for purpose of giving references.

4.1.9 If a supervisee dies in service the files should be destroyed by those holding them.

4.2 Reports

4.2.1 Annual reports to MDR/appraisal process are compiled from the Agreed Record on the forms provided. The supervisee should have the chance to comment on any report made before it is sent and sign to confirm they have seen it. The MDR team also send a report to the supervisor that has been seen and signed by the supervisee.

4.2.2 Reports may be required from supervisors by a safeguarding investigation or competence or complaints procedure. These should be compiled on the basis of Agreed Records.

4.2.3 Those supervising probationers will need to write an evidential report on the ability of the probationer to make appropriate use of reflective supervision based on the expected competencies for those ready for ordination and to be received into Full Connexion.

4.2.4 Those supervising trainee supervisors will receive reports from the training team and need to report on their supervisees' engagement in supervision of supervision and on their dispositions, skills and knowledge as a supervisor.

4.3 Informal note-taking

4.3.1 It is good practice for supervisors to keep their own informal notes of supervisions for the sake of tracking and monitoring the supervisory relationship. These are to be kept in a locked filing system or in a password protected electronic format. Supervisors should be aware that these notes are subject to rights contained in the Data Protection Act 2018, for example the right to Subject Access Request (SAR).

4.3.2 Informal notes should be destroyed at the end of the Supervisory relationship. These records are not passed on as part of the Church's processes.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 A **Supervision Reference Group** shall be appointed for the period 2021-26 to:

- monitor implementation
- oversee the collection and interpretation of data concerning lay roles and appropriate pilots for the supervision/management of lay roles not yet covered by the RSP
- bring a policy and a plan to the Methodist Council in 2023-24 for the implementation of supervision for such lay roles
- bring a report to the Conference of 2026 reviewing the implementation of the policy and making further recommendations in the light of experience.

5.2 Officers appointed within **the Connexional Team** shall be responsible for:

- advocating for reflective supervision and supporting its development as a core practice within the MCB;
- overseeing all supervision implementation plans (SIPs)

- managing the Connexional Team SIP
- overseeing the training and approval of supervisors
- ensuring that resources are available for the briefing of supervisees and the continuing development of supervisors
- managing the connexional aspects of the budget for supervision;
- working with the Supervision Reference Group on pilot projects, research and policy development

5.3 Keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans

5.3.1 Keepers of SIPs are responsible for:

- ensuring that an appropriate team works with them to manage the implementation of supervision within their area of responsibility and keep the SIP up to date
- consulting appropriately with supervisors and supervisees to establish appropriate supervision relationships for all those subject to the policy who are under their oversight
- appointing third parties for those who are supervised by their minister in oversight
- nominating for training appropriate and sufficient supervisors to meet needs
- collaborating with connexional officers and other keepers of SIPs to problem solve working across circuit and district boundaries where necessary
- ensuring that anyone new to supervision is properly briefed with adequate opportunity to clarify expectations and explore hesitations
- ensuring that those appointed to supervise on their SIP are approved by the Methodist Church to do so
- supporting good practice amongst supervisors
- keeping an updated live record of all supervision relationships and third parties
- ensuring that all nominated third parties are clear about their responsibilities
- notifying connexional officers of the names of those sharing the responsibility of keeping records up to date
- discussing any non-standard arrangements for supervision with the appointed connexional officer, eg for those ordained in other churches, those requesting external supervision; those in appointments outside the control of the church.

5.3.2 Those responsible for overseeing SIPs are as follows:

- Connexional SIP – the Secretary of the Conference
- District SIPs – the Chair of the District
- Armed Forces – the Secretary of the Forces Board
- Methodist Schools – the Schools' Visitor
- Mission Partners – the Director of Global Relationships

5.4 Ministers in oversight/managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that all those, subject to the policy, whose work/ministry they oversee, are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this supervision policy
- modelling good practice in receiving in supervision and taking responsibility for their part in the supervision relationship
- receiving the Agreed Records of their colleagues; reading them and responding to any referrals or matters of concern
- raising with their colleagues any issues they wish them to discuss in supervision
- monitoring the Agreed Record to follow up issues they have asked their colleagues to explore in supervision
- raising with their colleagues any oversight concerns they have about their ministry that in their view have not been adequately dealt with in supervision
- feeding their perspectives into the MDR process

5.5 Third Parties

5.5.1 Third parties are appointed by the Keeper of the SIP in cases where the supervisor is the minister in oversight/manager in order to prevent a closed loop of supervision in which there might room for bullying or collusion.

5.5.2 Third parties should be briefed by the Keeper of the SIP on their role

5.5.3 Appropriate third parties include the supervisor of the minister in oversight (where this is not also a minister in oversight); an alternate supervisor within a District; an experienced supervisor from another District/area of work.

5.5.4 Where the supervisee is a probationer the Agreed Record should always be copied to the District Probationers' Secretary who shall act as the third party or as an additional third party if the superintendent is not the reflective supervisor.

5.5.5 The third party is responsible for:

- Receiving the Agreed Records of those who are being supervised by their own minister in oversight/manager and reading them to ensure that
 - Regular supervision is taking place
 - A range of appropriate issues are being explored over time
 - Issues of risk are being attended to
 - Formal actions are being followed up
 - Supervision of supervision is happening (if relevant)
- Raising issues with the supervisor concerned if seeing evidence that
 - There is insufficient attention to the boundaries of supervision, e.g. supervision is being used to deal with oversight matters
 - Bullying might be happening within the supervisory relationship
 - Fitness to practice issues might not be being named or tackled
 - Supervisions are not taking place

- The focus of the supervisions (over time) is too narrow or is directed towards matters that need referral elsewhere, e.g. counselling or spiritual direction

5.5.6 Third parties who are also the supervisor of the individual named on the Agreed Record as supervisor may raise issues arising from these Agreed Records with the supervisee concerned during supervision of supervision.

5.5.7 Third parties who do not supervise the individual named as supervisor on the Agreed Record will need to initiate a meeting to discuss their Agreed Records. This should happen at least once a year.

5.6 Reflective supervisors are responsible for:

5.6.1 Offering supervision according to the policy

- Ensuring that they offer reflective supervision regularly as prescribed by the policy.
- Ensuring that the supervision happens in an appropriately confidential and safe space with attention to any particular issues that might affect relational safety e.g. dual relationships/power differentials related to EDI/issues of difference
- The building of a supervision relationship that can be an effective and supportive place of accountability for the ministry they exercise.
- The identification of blocks to the creation of an effective supervision relationship and the development of strategies to address this.
- The following of an appropriate supervision process to ensure that important issues are explored and addressed appropriately
- The identification and use of effective tools for opening up a realistic and helpful exploration of the supervisee's work, taking into account their learning style
- The encouragement of supervisees, helping them identify further support or learning opportunities where necessary
- The identification of areas of risk in the supervisee's practice with attention to relevant codes of conduct and ethical frameworks
- Ensuring that they follow the Methodist Church's safeguarding policy concerning relevant matters that arise in supervision
- The challenging of poor or dangerous practice and reporting it when necessary
- The identification of issues that need further support, eg through spiritual direction or counselling
- Ensuring that they maintain the confidentiality of the process and only refer issues to third parties through the mechanism of the Agreed Record
- Ensuring as far as they can that the ending of any supervision relationship is properly negotiated

5.6.2 Handling the supervisory file according to the policy

- Making and regularly auditing a supervision covenant with each supervisee in order that they establish the expectations and boundaries of their work together and regularly review how it is going
- Ensuring that Agreed Records are made at the close of each supervision and are regularly sent to the Third Party.

- Ensuring that required reports are completed in good time and with the knowledge of the supervisee
- Ensuring that the supervisory file is kept as a sensitive document according to the provisions of GDPR
- Ensuring that that at the termination of any supervision relationship the supervisory file is passed on securely or destroyed as specified in para 4 above.

5.6.3 Taking responsibility for their own development and fitness to practice as a supervisor

- Ensuring that they receive regular supervision on their supervisory relationships and practice
- Engaging in regular continuing development activities
- Notifying the Keeper of the SIP if they are unable to continue supervising or need to take a significant break

5.6.4 Taking responsibility for communicating issues with the relevant connexional officers that arise in supervision or that concern the supervision policy

- Engaging constructively with researchers or communities of practice that are focused on supporting good practice in the supervisory process or consulting in order to address the generic issues that arise in the supervisory process
- Reporting to the connexionally appointed officers problems with the supervision policy itself

5.7 Reflective supervisees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are available for supervision regularly as prescribed by the policy and prioritising agreed times.
- Flagging with the Keeper of the SIP any anticipated problems working with the supervisor who is proposed.
- Raising any problems about the supervisory relationship with their supervisor if possible, and with another responsible officer if that proves impossible or unproductive (eg District Chair, the designated connexional officer)
- Requesting any additional supervisions should the context or nature of their work make this necessary.
- Travelling to meet their supervisor except when other arrangements have been made,
- Preparing responsibly for supervision ensuring that it is a productive use of their own and the Church's time and resources
- Raising with their supervisor issues that are significant and worthy of reflection from across the range of their practice (and if relevant, also, in relation to their supervisory work).
- Working with their supervisor to explore dimensions of risk in their work including those relating to safeguarding self and others; the use of power by self and others and the negotiation of boundaries
- Working with their supervisor to explore aspects of their own awareness and development

- Reflecting with their supervisor on their own vocational journey and wellbeing
- Collaborating with their supervisor in producing accurate and useful Agreed Records and Reports as detailed in the Policy
- Taking any formal actions within the timeframe agreed with the supervisor as recorded on the form and reporting the outcomes at the next supervision
- Reflecting between supervisions on the issues raised in supervision and taking responsible action in relation to them.

5.8 The supervisors of probationer ministers

5.8.1 The supervisors of probationer ministers are responsible for the functions of a reflective supervisor outlined at 5.6 above.

5.8.2 In addition, the supervisor of a probationer minister is responsible for

- Ensuring that they understand their role(s) in relation to the probationer and others responsible for their development and have clarified their understanding in discussion with the probationer and others when signing the Probation Covenant.
- Providing evidence to the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT) concerning the supervisee's ability to make appropriate use of supervision as part of the formal reporting process on probationers.

5.9 Probationer ministers

5.9.1 Probationer ministers are responsible as supervisees under the policy as outlined at 5.7 above.

5.9.2 In addition they are responsible for signing their Probation Covenant and checking that they understand the responsibilities they have in relation to the roles of supervisor, minister in oversight and befriender. Checking that they are clear whether their minister in oversight is also their supervisor or not and how this dual role will be managed.

6 Addressing problems with the supervision process

6.1 If any supervisee is unhappy with the supervision they are being offered they should in the first instance discuss the matter with their supervisor and secondly with the Keeper of the relevant Supervision Implementation Plan

6.2 In cases where the matter cannot be resolved locally, the connexionally appointed officer responsible for supervision should be consulted.

6.3 Concerns about policy issues should be addressed to the connexionally appointed officer responsible for supervision or to any member of the Supervision Reference Group.