

Personnel Files for Ministers - update on progress and proposals for further development

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	For decision
Draft Resolutions	<p>97/1. The Council receives this report.</p> <p>97/2. The Council agrees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The data set out in the table contained in Section 3 together with the proposed access arrangements represents the core information to be made available to all ministers in the active work in phase 1 of this project; 2. That phase one of the project be implemented in the London District in January 2016; 3. That phase two consists of the implementation of the core information to all other ministers in the active work across the Connexion, to be completed by January 2017 (subject to the outcomes from Phase one of the project); 4. That phase three consist of the implementation of the following modules: Module 1 - The candidating process; Module 2 - The period of initial ministerial training; Module 3 - The period of probation; Module 4 -Disability and impairment; Module 5 - Stationing and appointments; Module 6 - Permission to become supernumerary. 5. That the Ministries Committee retain oversight of the detailed implementation of the modules contained in phase 3, informed by the protocols set out in section 6 below. 6. To receive annual update reports on progress.

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To provide all ministers in the active work with access to core personal information held on them in electronic format.
Main Points	Following a pilot in the Diaconal Order, core personnel information held in the connexional database to be accessible to ministers in the active work stationed in the London District from January 2016, and thereafter to all ministers in the active work. Following this, it is proposed that data relating to 6 key areas of the individual minister's relationship to the Conference be included, after consultation with the Ministries Committee.
Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)	MC/09/49 Personnel Files for Ministers MC/10/74 Personnel Files for Ministers MC/12/74 Personnel Files Update Reports to the 2009, 2010 and 2013 Conferences 'Personnel Files for Ministers'
Consultations	The Ministries Committee and District Chairs.

Summary of Impact

Financial	The proposals can be funded from existing resources.
Personnel	The proposals accord with recommended practice in this field.
Legal	The proposals conform to the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
Wider Connexional	The proposals would be applicable to ministers in the active work across the Connexion.
Risk	The proposals set out arrangements for the holding and management of personal data which accord with the Data Protection Act and therefore are designed to minimise risk in the accessing and storage of personal data.

1. Background

- 1.1 The 2013 Conference received a report entitled 'Update on the pilot for the Personnel Files for Ministers Project'. In this report it was noted that a pilot had taken place with the Diaconal Order, whereby all electronic data contained in the Minutes of the Conference relating to an individual deacon was made available in the 'Cascade' database. This is the database used to hold all personnel data for members of the Connexional Team.
- 1.2 The report noted that the pilot had been successful, in that the relevant data had been transferred from the connexional database (which holds all electronic personnel information on ministers) to the Cascade system, and that individual deacons had been able to access this without difficulty, with the opportunity to remedy any factual inaccuracies easily.

2. Progress since the Pilot

- 2.1 The learning from the pilot was carefully evaluated, and it was also noted that developments in software and access meant that it had recently become much easier for all ministers to have access to the data stored about them on the existing connexional database. It was also noted that if this database was used in preference to the Cascade system, there would only be one place where personnel information was stored, thus avoiding the need for regular data transfer and the potential for errors in this process. Recent developments in information technology also allowed secure remote access to the connexional database, thus dealing with concerns about data security.
- 2.2 The Ministries Committee received updates on progress at meetings in September 2014 and January 2015. At the latter meeting it was agreed that the connexional database be used in preference to Cascade, and that the project be fully implemented on this basis. The Ministries Committee further agreed the data fields which would be available to every minister initially, and that the project be implemented firstly in the London District (as phase 1), so that the revised approach could be carefully evaluated before the project was fully introduced across the Connexion. The scope of the data fields available in phase 1, and access levels as agreed by the Ministries Committee, are shown below in paragraph 3. The Committee also agreed that a reference group consisting of a District Chair, a Superintendent and minister be established to work with the Connexional Wellbeing Adviser (the project manager) on the further development of this work. This reference group has scrutinised carefully the developing proposals contained in this report.

3. Scope of the data to be included in Phase 1 of the project

- 3.1 The table below shows the 20 fields which have been identified for phase 1 of the roll out of Personnel Files for Ministers. Of these fields, 19 already exist on the connexional database in the format described in the table. These are fields 1-12 and 14-20. Field 13 'Emergency contact details' is new.

(i) 'View only' Access requirements

- a) All 'data subjects' (ie ministers) will have view only access to fields 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. They will also enter data into fields 2, 8, 9, 12 and 13 and will have responsibility for the data held in these fields. In addition, they will enter data into fields 7, 10 and 11 which will be moderated by the Conference Office.
- b) A Superintendent will have view only access to fields 1-20 for all ministers in the active work stationed in their Circuit.
- c) The District Chair will have view only access to fields 1-20 for all ministers in the active work stationed in their District.
- d) The Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order will have view only access to fields 1-20 for all deacons (including probationer deacons).
- e) Designated individuals in the Connexional Team will have access to fields 1-20 in accordance with the requirements of their role. This will be managed by the Conference Office.

(ii) Permission to amend data

- a) Fields 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 are the responsibility of the Conference Office and may only be amended by a designated person from that Office.
- b) All other fields are the responsibility of the individual minister, both in terms of entering initial data and keeping this up to date, moderated as appropriate by the Conference Office.

Description of the Data Field	What is the source of the data?	Who is responsible for keeping this data up to date?	Who will have access to this data?
1. Title (eg The Revd, Deacon)	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The minister• The Conference Office• The minister's Chair• The minister's Superintendent• Development and Personnel (D and P)
2. Called name	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The minister• The Conference Office• The minister's Chair• The minister's Superintendent• D and P
3. Formal first name (for formal publications such as Minutes of Conference – ie name and any initials)	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The minister• The Conference Office• The minister's Chair• The minister's Superintendent• D and P
4. Surname	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The minister• The Conference Office• The minister's Chair• The minister's Superintendent• D and P

5. Gender	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
6. Date of birth	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
7. Home telephone number	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
8. Minister's mobile number (for work purposes, if disclosed)	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
9. Minister's web address (if s/he has one)	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
10. Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House number/name • Street name • Town • Postcode • Country 	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
11. Office address (where applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House number/name • Street name • Town • Postcode • Country 	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
12. Work email address	Connexional database	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
13. Emergency	The minister	The minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister

contact details Fields: Name Mobile Landline			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
14. The Circuit in which the minister is stationed	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
15. Status: (one of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deacon without appointment • RR Deacon • Presbyter • Probationer Presbyter • Probationer Deacon • RR Presbyter • Without appointment • Deacon 	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
<i>To be released after 15th May each year</i> 16. Post-September Status: (one of the following) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deacon without appointment • RR Deacon • Presbyter • Probationer Presbyter • Probationer Deacon • RR Presbyter • Supernumerary presbyter • Without appointment • Deacon • Supernumerary deacon 	Connexional database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
17. Current appointment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deacon • Chaplaincy • District Chair • Without 	Connexional Database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P

Appointment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supernumerary Deacon • Connexional Team • Presbyter • Appointment not within the control of the church • Superintendent • Supernumerary Presbyter • Principal • Evangelism Enabler 			
18. Year of entry (under SO 800)	Connexional Database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
19. Year of Reception into Full Connexion/Ordination	Connexional Database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's Superintendent • D and P
20. Year in appointment	Connexional Database	The Conference Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minister • The Conference Office • The minister's Chair • The minister's superintendent • D and P

4. The current position

- 4.1 Progress with phase 1 is going well, and the IT development work required to provide ministers with secure access to the connexional database is currently taking place. This will happen via the existing web portal used for property consents/returns, statistics for mission etc. A significant advantage of this approach is that ministers will already be familiar with it, and should therefore find navigation straightforward. It is intended that all ministers in the London District will have access to their personnel records (as set out in the table above) with effect from January 2016. This will cover all ministers in the active work. A communication exercise will take place in November so that all ministers stationed in the London District are aware of this, and there will be the opportunity to raise any questions or issues of concern as part of this process.
- 4.2 In addition, in Phase 1 the Chairs of the London District will have access to data relating to ministers stationed in the District, and Superintendents will be able to access data relating to ministers in their Circuit. The aim of this is to allow appropriate office holders to have access to data which will assist them in their oversight.

5. Future developments

- 5.1 The implementation of phase 1 will allow for the capture and evaluation of any learning that arises. It is then intended to offer ministers access on a District by District basis as phase 2 (including the Diaconal Order), so that all ministers can view the information held on them as defined in the table above. A time-phased implementation plan will be developed based on the learning from Phase 1. At this stage it is hoped that phase 2 will be completed by early 2017. It is also intended that ministers will be able to update certain personal fields themselves as necessary, such as emergency contact details. The majority of data will be updated only by specifically authorised members of the Connexional Team.
- 5.2 Phases 1 and 2 consist of providing access to existing data already held about a minister on the Connexional database. These data fields constitute standard 'personnel' data and should present no difficulties in terms of access and content. Once these phases are completed, it is necessary to consider what additional information not already contained on the database should be included.
- 5.3 In 2010 the Conference took the decision to implement personnel files for ministers on the basis that these be held and maintained by the Secretary of the Conference and his or her delegated representatives (Resolution 34/1 (b)). Resolution 34/1 (a) stated that:

The Conference adopted the principle of developing and maintaining personnel files for presbyters and deacons, underpinned by the following objectives:

- *to enable personal and professional development;*
- *to foster mutual accountability;*
- *to assist in the provision of care by the connexion to the individual presbyter or deacon;*
- *to contribute to the appropriate provision of information within the connexion;*
- *to provide essential safeguards;*
- *to keep historical records;*
- *to work within the provisions of the Data Protection Act and any other relevant legislation*

- 5.4 In light of this resolution it is proposed that the following modules be developed as an additional phase.

Phase 3. This will allow for appropriate documents to be held on the database to reflect key milestones in a minister's relationship with the Conference:

- Module 1 - The candidating process;
- Module 2 - The period of initial ministerial training;
- Module 3 - The period of probation;
- Module 4 - Disability and impairment;
- Module 5 - Stationing and appointments;
- Module 6 - Permission to become supernumerary.

Whereas phases 1 and 2 centre on access by the minister to existing data fields held on the connexional database (and are therefore relatively straightforward), phase 3 requires the uploading of defined documents for each individual. Phase 3 therefore requires care and skill in ensuring that issues of confidentiality and respect are paramount, and that only appropriate documents are uploaded. For this reason the following protocols are proposed as guiding principles for the holding of this data:

6. Suggested Protocols for handling data

- a) That decisions about what to hold on an electronic file and for how long will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- b) That for each module in phase 3 the scope of the documents which should be uploaded to form part of the individual's personnel file are agreed in principle by the Ministries Committee (so as an example, for the candidating element the documents might include the portfolio and worship reports, amongst others).
- c) That documents may only be uploaded by designated personnel in the Connexional Team (as determined by the Secretary of the Conference), thus ensuring confidentiality and data integrity.
- d) That the Ministries Committee determine who (in addition to the individual minister and unless specified in standing orders) should have access to the uploaded documents - this will usually be limited to the Chair, Superintendent and designated posts in the Connexional Team, depending on the nature of the document concerned.
- e) That as a matter of principle all documents uploaded will remain on the electronic personnel file for the duration of the individual minister's service.
- f) That no documents uploaded will relate to the complaints and discipline process, or safeguarding issues, as these are dealt with under arrangements which are separate to the personnel file and usually set out in standing orders.
- g) That no document will be uploaded of which the individual minister is unaware. This means that documents such as notes concerning a minister written by a Superintendent or Chair as a personal aide memoire will not be included in the scope of the electronic personnel file.
- h) That no documents outside of the parameters agreed by the Ministries Committee and within the spirit of the resolutions of the Conference will be uploaded to an individual's personnel file.
- i) That where archived documents relating to phase 3 exist (for example candidating documentation which may go back a number of years) the Ministries Committee decide whether these should be scanned and uploaded retrospectively. This issue will need to be considered for each of the individual modules of phase 3, and will depend partly on the completeness of documentation available and its quality. As a general principle, historic documents will only be uploaded which meet the specification of each module of phase 3 and these protocols. If a document does not meet this standard it will not become part of an individual's personnel file.
- j) That any concerns or disagreements about the accuracy of data held on the personnel file be addressed to the Secretary of the Conference.

7. Project Plan

Date	Action
November 2015	All ministers stationed in the London District receive notification of the web portal and how they may access it.
January 2016	Access available to all ministers stationed in the London District.
After January 2016	All ministers receive access to the web portal. The actual timescales for this will be dependent upon the lessons learned in phase 1.
(To be decided)	Proposals developed for the detailed implementation of phase 3.

8. Conclusion

The proposals contained in this report seek to implement personnel files for ministers in accordance with the overall spirit and principles agreed by the Conference in 2009 and 2010,

being mindful of the provisions of the Data Protection Act and the report 'With integrity and skill' (agreed by the 2008 Conference).

*****RESOLUTIONS**

97/1. The Council receives this report.

97/2. The Council agrees:

- 1. The data set out in the table contained in Section 3 together with the proposed access arrangements represents the core information to be made available to all ministers in the active work in phase 1 of this project;**
- 2. That phase one of the project be implemented in the London District in January 2016;**
- 3. That phase two consist of the implementation of the core information to all other ministers in the active work across the Connexion, to be completed by January 2017;**
- 4. That phase three consist of the implementation of the following modules:
Module 1 - The candidating process;
Module 2 - The period of initial ministerial training;
Module 3 - The period of probation;
Module 4 -Disability and impairment;
Module 5 - Stationing and appointments;
Module 6 - Permission to become supernumerary.**
- 5. That the Ministries Committee retain oversight of the detailed implementation of the modules contained in phase 3, informed by the protocols set out in section 6 above.**
- 6. To receive annual update reports on progress.**