

## 49. Flexible Retirement: Implementation

1. The report Policy on phased and flexible retirement for presbyters and deacons, adopted by the Conference of 2007, stated that the necessary changes to Standing Orders would be brought to the Conference of 2008. Exploration of the probable nature of these changes has led to the conclusion that, because they involve some complex issues concerning the nature and expression of our ordained ministry, a longer period of development is necessary.
2. It will be important to maintain the proper mutual accountability between the minister and the Church (as outlined in SOs 700 and 701). At present the Standing Orders governing the situation of supernumeraries (particularly SOs 502, 792(3) and 793) do not take account of flexible retirement. SO 792(3) does not permit a minister not in the active work to have pastoral charge of a local church. This is designed to ensure that proper accountability can be maintained. Where a presbyter or deacon had entered on flexible retirement the nature of their accountability will need to be clarified.
3. It is therefore possible that the relationship between 'being in the active work' and 'being in receipt of a stipend (or pension)' will need to be re-examined, as the report on *The Covenant Relationship* to be found elsewhere in the Conference Agenda (Item 29; in particular paras. 25, 35) also suggests. It is this piece of work, which has broader ramifications than this particular issue, that has proved impossible to carry out during this connexional year.
4. It is therefore proposed that the Standing Orders concerning Flexible Retirement and related matters be brought to the Conference of 2009 after a period of consultation with Circuits and Districts; and that the first opportunity to be given permission to retire under those Standing Orders be at the Conference of 2010.

### \*\*\*RESOLUTION

- 49/1.** The Conference adopts the Report.