

Stipend Review

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Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	16/1. The Council receives the report. 16/2 The Council directs the task group, in consultation with the Stationing Committee, to continue the work recognising the impact of the consequences outlined in paragraph 7.
Methodist Council objective that this paper supports	5. Resources for the Church: the use of God's gifts (including Oversight and Leadership)

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	The paper reports back from the task group that was asked to scope the proposal to rethink the funding of stipends.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding of stipends is a secondary consideration to how ministers are stationed in the first place. • The context for stationing is the increasing number of vacancies. • Changing stationing and the consequential impact on funding are major decisions with certain inevitable consequences. The Council commitment to these outcomes is sought before further work is undertaken.
Background Context	2021 Conference Papers: Changing patterns of ministry , Looking to the future Notice of Motion 2018/205: Stationing Matching (see Appendix A)
Consultations	Council task group on the funding of stipends

Summary of Impact

Financial	All parts of the Connexion are affected by how stipends are funded.
Wider Connexional	Decisions about stationing would affect all parts of the Connexion and all ministers.

Stipend Review

1. The Council established a task group comprising the Connexional Secretary, the Director of Finance and Resources and several members of the Council to scope the proposal to rethink the funding of stipends in further detail. This was in the light of the paper “Looking to the Future” presented to the 2021 Conference and the Notice of Motion 2018/205 (appendix A).
2. The group has met and agreed there is a need for the Council to consider the broader issues before further time is spent on this issue. This paper summarises the key issues the group discussed.
3. There was a broad consensus that the stationing of ministers based on the needs of the Church (however this may be interpreted) rather than simply on the basis of ‘ability to pay’ would be an ideal for the Church to aspire to. However, unless the Church is willing to accept the consequence of such a decision, further work in this area will be wasteful of time and energy.
4. The issues concerning stationing of ministers are distinct from the issue as to how they are funded. Resolving stationing has to come first before the issue of funding can be addressed.
5. The context for stationing is that the decline in the number of active ministers exceeds the decline in the number of posts, leading to an increase in vacancies. An increasing number of posts will go unfilled and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
6. Ministers could be stationed based on one or a combination of three of the following overarching approaches:
 - Ministers go where the money is
 - Ministers go where the need is
 - Ministers go where they like

It should be noted that the 2021 Conference reconfirmed a commitment to itinerancy and that “Methodist ministers are connexional people who are available to the Conference for deployment for mission according to the needs and priorities of the Methodist Church” (see Changing Patterns of Ministry p314). However, in reality our practice is normally to station only to appointments that make a commitment to funding for a 5 year post.

7. Whilst it will take time to develop the necessary proposals to put before the Conference, changing the approach to stationing will almost certainly have two consequences:
 - Some circuits that already have vacancies will find it even harder to fill those vacancies
 - If ministers are stationed to circuits that cannot afford the appointment, funding will need to be made available. However this is achieved, it will involve some parts of the Connexion paying more for ministry but receiving less time from a minister.
8. Given this inevitability, is the Council committed to recommending to the Conference a proposal that would see some circuits much less likely to fill vacancies? Is the Council similarly committed to proposing to the Conference that some parts of the Connexion should pay more towards ministry but receive less from a minister? Without such a commitment, further work on this issue is not recommended.

***RESOLUTIONS

- 16/1. **The Council receives the report.**
- 16/2 **The Council directs the task group, in consultation with the Stationing Committee, to continue the work recognising the impact of the consequences outlined in paragraph 7.**

Appendix A
Notice of Motion 2018/205: Stationing Matching

The Conference directs the Stationing Committee to consider:

(a) how circuit profiles offered into the stationing matching process might be scrutinised so that those accepted for the process meet the needs of the wider Connexion, as well as those of the Circuit concerned.

(b) how the broader stationing issues that the Methodist Church is currently facing might be tackled - in particular, the funding of ministerial appointments and the needs of the most deprived parts of the Connexion, and report to the Conference of 2019.

The Conference further directs the Methodist Council to work with the Stationing Committee in consideration of part (b) so as to ensure coherence with the work being undertaken on a Connexional Financial Strategy.

Background

The number of circuit stationing profiles for ministers submitted to the Stationing Matching Group now significantly exceeds the number of ministers available to be matched to an appointment. This is making the work of the Stationing Matching Group challenging and demanding, as it seeks to deploy ministerial resources fairly across the Connexion.

The Conference adopted the Motion.