

Draft Reflective Supervision Report

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Resolutions	<p>36/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>36/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the attached Supervision Policy.</p> <p>36/3. The Council recommends that the Conference directs all keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans to conduct a review of supervisory relationships by the Conference of 2024 in order to ensure that all those who wish to be supervised by someone other than their manager/minister in oversight are matched with another approved supervisor.</p> <p>36/4. The Council recommends that the Conference directs that a review of the implementation of the policy, including its extension to relevant lay roles, to be brought to the Conference of 2026.</p>

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purposes of this draft report are:

- To share with the Council the proposed attached Supervision Policy;
- To explain the recommendations of the Supervision Reference Group (SRG) in the light of research into the implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy;
- To provide budget lines for the consideration of the Strategy and Resources Committee (Report, Section 7 – to be completed).

1.2 The Supervision Reference Group is grateful to:

- The Ministries Committee for their commendation of the report and for their guidance which has been incorporated into the policy;
- All those who took part in the research in 2018 and 2019-20;
- Dr Lynette Harborne who undertook the qualitative research in 2019-20;
- All those supervisees, supervisors, trainers and keeper of supervision implementation plans whose commitment has enabled the implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy.

1.3 **The Council is asked to:**

- a) recommend the policy
- b) identify any areas for further consideration/clarification for the consideration of the Supervision Reference Group

1.4 **The attention of the Council is drawn, in particular, to:**

1.4.1 **the following general points:**

- a) The overwhelmingly positive reception of supervision where implemented, and the benefits being experienced in line with the hopes of the 2017 Interim Policy (Report, Sections 4.2, 4.4).
- b) The good progress made in implementation and the need to support and extend good practice amongst supervisors and supervisors of supervision further to assure the benefits identified. (Report, Section 4.3).
- c) The proposed name change to 'reflective supervision' and the need to amend standing orders to ensure consistent and updated usage of the term 'supervision' as reflective supervision becomes embedded into our culture. (Report, Section 3.2)

1.4.2 proposed responses to the questions raised in the 2019-20 research (Report, section 4.5):

- a) **Supervision by Ministers in Oversight:** the shift away from the default expectation that superintendents and chairs automatically supervise their own colleagues to ensure that ministers have the genuine option to be supervised by another approved supervisor in order to ensure the principles of openness and support.
- b) **MDR and supervision:** the proposal that MDR and supervision are both an important part of the ecology of accountability and support for ordained ministers; that MDR becomes more focused; and that training be provided to ministers in oversight in order to participate effectively in giving feedback through MDR.
- c) **Time and Travel Costs:** allowing flexibility in delivery of supervision (either 6 x 90 minutes + 2 additional supervisions if needed) or 9 x 60 minute supervisions + 3 additional supervisions if needed) but not reducing the total time spent in supervision in order to maintain the principle of frequency.

1.4.3 the formal extension of the policy to those in lay roles: (Report, section 5)

- a) the expectation that lay pioneers and lay pastors working between .5 and full time be added to supervision implementation plans by 1 September 2022.
- b) the choice to be made, for those working less than half time in such roles, and in other relevant roles, between 1:1 supervision; group supervision and reflective management, with the expectation of scoping and piloting in 2021-24 with full implementation by 1 September 2024.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT (2015-21)

2.1 In the Report to the 2015 Conference of the Past Cases Review, a case was made for supervision as being an important tool for addressing the weakness identified in the Methodist Church in relation to support and accountability for safe practice. Reference was made to research evidence that the effectiveness of supervision is linked with its *frequency, openness and supportive* character: 'Studies have demonstrated that one of the most effective safeguards within organisations or professional settings is to provide frequent, open and supportive supervision of staff.'¹

It was not argued in the 2015 Report that supervision would be a panacea that would on its own eliminate abuse from church life, but that it would be a key tool, alongside others

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

such as a new Code of Conduct for ministers, that would help to change a culture from one which is often one of isolated and vulnerable practice, to one of accountability, support and more safety both for ministers and for those amongst whom they work.
(Supervision Report to the 2017 Conference)

- 2.2 Following a pilot period during which two districts implemented the draft policy approved by the Methodist Council in October 2016, a report was brought to the 2017 Conference and an Interim Supervision Policy was adopted for the period of 2017-20 during which it was envisaged that all ordained ministers would be brought under the policy and that the provision of supervision for those in appropriate lay roles be explored. This period was extended by the Methodist Council of January 2019 to the end of August 2021. The Council also approved some policy updates concerning the principles governing supervision in relation to part time working, sabbaticals, parental leave, sick leave, the ministry of ecumenical colleagues who are authorised to serve (AM) and the supervision of supervision. Arrangements were also clarified by the Council for ministers with permission to reside overseas, ministers serving in appointments outside the control of the church, ministers working in the Connexional Team, and pioneer ministers, mission partners, armed forces and schools chaplains (lay and ordained).
- 2.3 The principle of extending the policy to lay people with significant pastoral and oversight responsibilities was approved by the Methodist Council in 2019, and in some places those in lay roles with significant pastoral contact or with significant leadership responsibilities have already been included within implementation plans. It is recommended that more work needs to be done to clarify, simplify and resource the ecology of accountability and support for those in a variety of lay roles across the connexion, many of which are very part time, in order to make practical the extension of the principle of offering reflective supervision to all those in appropriate roles. Recommendations are made in this report about how this principle can be widely implemented by 2024.
- 2.4 In 2019-20 a piece of research, approved by the Methodist Council, was commissioned into the implementation and impact of the policy with the intention of helping the SRG understand how to support implementation on the ground and how to shape policy from 2021 onwards. The key findings of this research are reported here in Section 4 together with the findings of an earlier focus group conducted amongst nine district chairs. The findings of these research projects justify continued investment in supervision for those in ministry for the safety and flourishing of all concerned, and for the sake of the health and mission of the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) as a whole. These findings also shape the direction of travel of the new policy (RSP). The Ministries Team is grateful to all those who have contributed to the research and who have helped to implemented the ISP and shape the new policy (RSP).

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 The approach to supervision (known as the process of supervision) adopted by the 2017 Conference was described as an exploratory and reflective process. Its aims were described as being:

Normative:

- to explore the practices and habitus of ministry within the horizon of God's mission
- to ensure good practice in ministry which enables the flourishing of all and to challenge and manage any poor practice
- to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Formative:

- to explore creative approaches to demanding issues of ministry and relationships as they arise;
- to contribute to the continuing vocational and professional development (CPD) of ministers.

Restorative:

- to ensure that the vocation and work of the minister is valued and nurtured;
- to ensure that health and well-being issues for ministers are addressed.

3.2 **It is proposed now that supervision in the Methodist Church be known as *reflective supervision*** (following Leach 2020). This clearly distinguishes it from *oversight*, *management* and *elective pastoral supervision*.

3.3 **Oversight** is here understood to refer to the processes by which the Church is held together and to Christ through the Conference, through the personal ministry of those appointed to oversight roles on behalf of the Conference, and through the collegial and representative bodies that oversee aspects of the Church's work on behalf of the Conference. Oversight has a family resemblance to reflective supervision in the sense that both are directed towards making spaces in the life of the church for discerning what God is saying that the Church might 'serve the present age.' The various committees and councils of the Church, led by those appointed to oversight roles, exercise discernment in order to set direction for the Church and for particular churches and projects. In reflective supervision, those in ministry seek to discern with their supervisor, what God is saying about their own particular part in this work for particular times and places.

3.4 **Management** has various expressions in the life of the Methodist Church. Most lay roles are subject to management and some ordained roles (eg oversight tutors; members of the Connexional Team). At the moment there is no connexional set of guidelines for management that applies across the whole Church, in this report the core features of management are understood to be:

for the purpose of addressing professional practice and professional development issues in relationship to an employee/office holder's performance and accountability. It should operate in relation to their job description and contract of employment or to a letter of understanding in relation to a deployed minister. It should include:

- *Task management and determination of work priorities;*
- *Personnel functions, eg the management of holiday, sick leave, negotiation of revised terms and conditions;*
- *Appraisal (either line management appraisal or Ministerial Development Review)*
- *Monitoring and meeting of training needs;*
- *Adjustment of working patterns to accommodate welfare needs²;*
- *Provision of the required resources for the work to be accomplished.*

Consideration is given later in this report (para 5.5.3) to the extent to which reflective practice could/should form part of line management where that is offered. Although some managers may already provide significant reflective space to employees/ordained ministers that is highly beneficial, and others might be encouraged to do so, it is never appropriate for reflective supervisors to encroach into task and performance management.

3.5 **Pastoral Supervision** has a family resemblance to reflective supervision in that it addresses normative, formative and restorative dimensions of practice and pays attention both to the

² Methodist Council Report MC|19|16

needs of supervisees and to the safety and wellbeing of those they serve. It is contrasted with reflective supervision in that it is an elective practice that practitioners choose and contract for themselves beyond the organisational structure in which they are deployed/employed.

- 3.6 **Reflective Supervision:** Whilst pastoral supervision is elective, reflective supervision is mandatory. The Conference determines the character of reflective supervision, its purposes, its frequency, and the ways in which it contributes to oversight in the life of the Church. The RSP understands reflective supervision to be a means by which ordained ministers and those in specific lay roles are supported in the accountable exercise of ministry through reflecting on the normative, formative and restorative dimensions of their work and vocation. Reflective supervision is understood in this report to be part of a responsible exercise of grace, and one of the ligaments through which the body of Christ is held together and to Christ and strengthened for ministry and mission.

4 RESEARCH

4.1 Between 2018 and 2020 two projects were undertaken:

- In 2018 a focus group was held by the Connexional Director of Supervision with nine early adopting District Chairs.
- In 2019-20 a larger scale project was undertaken by an independent research to gain feedback from a wider sample through focus groups and semi-structured interviews, and, through a questionnaire sent to all those expected to be in supervision by the end of December 2019.

4.2 The 2018 Research

The 2018 research findings are published in Leach, 2020, *A Charge to Keep: Reflective Supervision and the Renewal of Christian Leadership*, Nashville TN, Foundry Press. The findings concern the impact of reflective supervision in terms of the normative, formative and restorative impacts identified by the 2017 Interim Supervision Policy (ISP); the dispositions, skills and knowledge needed by supervisees, supervisors and those supervising supervision; and the issues of institutional culture change raised by the introduction of the supervision implementation policy.

4.2.1 The restorative impacts of reflective supervision

In the 2017 report hopes were articulated that reflective supervision would result in:

- reduced symptoms of isolation and stress amongst its ordained ministers; and
- less anxiety . . . as ministers share responsibility for risks, priorities and hard decisions with their supervisors.

The key themes to emerge under this heading in the 2018 research were summarised in the words of participants:

- *"A great boon to my sense of wellbeing"*
- *"The gift of concentrated, unadulterated time"*
- *"Holy ground"*
- *"Its removed some of the isolation"*
- *"Rather than it festering"*

There was good evidence that participants were feeling less stressed. They were sleeping better, felt more emotionally available for the work and for their families, and they reported better mental health, energy levels, headspace and resilience. They also reported interventions they themselves had made when supervising others to support ministerial well-

being such as a referral to a GP and a supported return to work. They felt that supervision had clarified their role and emboldened them to take action to support others' wellbeing.

Beyond this, they expressed a sense of feeling valued in the supervision relationship and of finding supervision to be a means of grace in which they were encountering God and reconnecting to their own sense of purpose and vocation. They also articulated a sense of vocation in offering supervision as they took time to listen to God's calling in their supervisees' lives.

4.2.2 The formative impacts of reflective supervision

In the 2017 report hopes were articulated that supervision would support the following formative outcomes:

- a more intentional use of ordained ministers' time through the opportunity that supervision provides for ministers to think theologically and practically about priorities;
- better communication as those in oversight become more aware, through supervising others, of the challenges being faced on the ground.

Two kinds of data emerged under this heading. First, evidence that supervision had helped participants work on their own skills, strategies and stuckness:

- "Helped me take some more steps"
- "More skill and wisdom"
- "Better practice"

Second, that supervision was helping them appreciate things about the issues and approaches on the ground:

- "Workload"
- "Anxiety and fear"

Overall, there was good evidence that work in supervision had had practical consequences and resulted in changed priorities. This was connected with the findings under the restorative heading. By bringing the issues about which they were "festering" (as the group called it) to supervision, these participants found that they were not only freed from worry about them but were actually able to address the situations they found stressful in a timely and time efficient way. This evidenced the missional character of the supervision being offered in the sense that supervisees were coming away from sessions intentionally focused, not on themselves, but on their work. They were also seeing their oversight work in different perspective because of their growing appreciation for the issues on the ground, but also for the unconscious drivers that were paralysing their supervisees. In particular they had become aware that part of their role as supervisors was to help supervisees identify what they could change from their position in the system. The naming and containment of fear and anxiety and the prioritisation of work were the two key examples.

4.2.3 The normative impacts of reflective supervision

In the 2017 report hopes were articulated that supervision would support normative outcomes such as:

- a more robust handling of risks in church life, including those relating to safeguarding through explicit attention to risk identification and risk management in supervision;
- more safety for everyone in church life through heightened awareness in supervision of boundaries, expected conduct, role clarity and the use of power;

- more safety for everyone in church life through the opportunity in supervision to explore the unconscious factors that sometimes undermine best intentions;
- clearer lines of accountability in which the responsibilities and roles of ministers in oversight are better understood and are routinely operated in practice.

Two kinds of data emerged under this heading. First, there was direct evidence of improved risk assessment, role clarity and healthy attitudes towards accountability.

- *“Hopefully not too risky!”*
- *“Detangling my roles”*
- *“It’s not an ‘Oh no. Are you checking up on me?’ kind of accountability”*

There was considerable discussion in the focus group of early suspicions of the ISP that it would be a controlling and negative experience of compliance that would not directly contribute to reducing abuse and bullying in the life of the Church and that might change the culture of relationships between colleagues in a negative way. However, participants expressed something of a conversion experience through the training and the experience of receiving supervision in which they realised that the process of being held to account, while challenging, can also provide a secure base from which courageous and risk-taking ministry can be exercised – including in relation to making early interventions in situations of potential risk of harm. They felt that the need to attend, in supervision, to dual roles, risks, the use of power and the nature of boundaries, had itself helped them use power more transparently and helped them identify both what their own roles were, but also what was not their work. This group, formed of district chairs who were mostly (though not exclusively) supervising their own superintendents, also felt that it was not a huge barrier to work with their own superintendents, and in general they felt that the supervision space had increased trust between them and their superintendents.

Second, there was evidence of new ministry norms emerging through extended engagement in supervision.

- *“Enabling the Spirit to do the work”*

The new norm of having a regular, bounded and intentional space for reflection was perceived to be working against a ‘fixit’ culture of ministry in which leaders are expected/expect themselves to come up with instant solutions to complex problems and take on responsibilities that ought to be shared with others. Instead, participants expressed the way in which the approach taken in supervision models non-anxious ministry that can take a step back. Because the supervisor does not have a problem solving (management/oversight) role and focuses upon the agency of the supervisee, they perceived that this kind of accompaniment was helping them focus on how to engage the agency of others rather than overfunction into presenting ‘gaps’. In a declining church in which there are many ‘gaps’ appearing this seemed an important counterweight and a way of helping ministers keep on making spaces to hear what God is saying and take time to respond, rather than simply reacting to perceived pressures.

4.2.4 The dispositions, skills and knowledge of supervisees, supervisors and supervisors of supervision.

Although the original training of supervisors and briefing of supervisees had been based on a set of stated transferable and specific skills, the focus group data provided evidence of the dispositions, skills and knowledge (DiSKs)³ in actual use in effective reflective supervision in this context. There are a number of uses for this data:

³ These are discussed and summarised in Leach, J, 2020

- 1 Clarifying the DiSKs of supervisees can support more effective supervisee briefings and help supervisors identify how to support their supervisees in making best use of the supervision space.
- 2 Clarifying the DiSKs of supervisors means that tools can be devised for the nomination of those likely to be effective supervisors. Whilst skills can be learned and knowledge imparted, the necessary dispositions are innate or longer in formation and cannot be taught in a short skills based course.
- 3 Clarifying the DiSKs of those who supervise supervision (and help train new supervisors through supervising their early practice) revealed that this was an area of skill development that was not well supported in the first policy period. Consequently supervisors have not had as much skill development support as to embed firmly the supervisor stance and the full toolkit as might be desirable.
- 4 Finally, clarifying the DiSKs of supervisees reveals some of the dispositions that will need to be demonstrated by those candidating for ministry or interviewing for relevant lay roles. If supervision is mandatory for such groups of people, the dispositions of a supervisee are key indicators of their suitability for such work.

4.2.5 Supervision and culture change in the Methodist Church in Britain

The 2017 Supervision Report expressed the hope that supervision would contribute to a change of culture in the life of the Methodist Church in Britain, notably from a culture of *isolated and vulnerable practice, to one of accountability, support and more safety both for ministers and for those amongst whom they work*. The evidence presented above already suggests attitudes towards accountability were changing amongst those in supervision, that supervisees were feeling more supported in their work, and that they were undertaking more regular and realistic risk assessments in relation, not only to safeguarding matters, but in relation to the use of power, respect for boundaries and role clarity. There was also evidence of new norms emerging, such as a less ‘fixit’ approach to presenting problems and a more central role for collaborative discernment in decision making. The ability to articulate the dispositions, skills and knowledge needed by supervisors and supervisees also gave the opportunity to articulate clearly the ethos of supervision as it was being practised. This can be summarised as:

<i>Prayerful & Non-anxious</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framed in prayer • Holding open a space for holy listening • Trusting in God, the process and the wisdom of the supervisee • Non-defensive in bearing with complexity and mess
<i>Embodied & Relational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentive to the supervisee, their awareness, and their sense of vocation • Attentive to embodied experience and body language • Using embodied methods of learning and supervising
<i>Playful & Reflective</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going beyond superficial answers • Inviting deeper self awareness • Being emotionally available for the learning of the other through interpersonal engagement
<i>Collegial & Non-coercive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked of all who minister (even if offered within a framework of oversight) • Focused on supporting the agency of the supervisee and aware of power dynamics in the relationship • Working in an evidential and transparent way

<i>Compassionate & Courageous</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attentive to the feelings and needs of the supervisee • Challenging of risky practice or concerning behaviour evidenced in supervisions • Naming and addressing breaches of the supervision covenant
<i>Excentric & Missional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on the wellbeing, development and accountability of the supervisee as a minister • For the sake of those not in the supervision room as well as the supervisee • Framed by the missional purposes of God’s love and justice
<i>Intentional & Boundaried</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlining expectations clearly and inviting adult participation • Structured and regular • Prepared for and followed up • Accountable within the framework of the relevant policy and the agreed Supervision Covenant • Attentive to dual roles

The ability to articulate the character of reflective supervision in this way enables the Methodist Church in Britain to ask questions about the ways in which reflective supervision is aligned to, or in tension with other processes of oversight, management, leadership and formation in the life of the church. Culture change in organisations not only requires policy alignment – for example, alignment of the supervision policy with processes of appraisal or of supervision during probation – but shared core values and the cultivation of core dispositions across the organisation.

4.2.6 It should be acknowledged that whilst the data provided by this first focus group was encouraging and suggestive, it was particular and limited in a number of ways:

- Only nine people were involved (although their experience of being supervised and supervising under the policy amounted to some 700 hours in total);
- All were district chairs and were both offering and receiving supervision in districts that had rolled out early;
- All were receiving external reflective supervision under the policy and were not being supervised by their own minister in oversight;
- There was no triangulation of the research – ie it was not supported by supervisee perspectives beyond the group nor by quantitative data concerning compliance figures in the districts represented.

4.3 The 2019-20 Research

4.3.1 **Design:** The 2019-20 Research was therefore designed to produce triangulated research results that would take account of supervisee and supervisor perspectives at other points in the system than the viewpoint already provided by district chairs and to investigate the degree of implementation in all districts. The research was also designed to pay particular attention to the difference in experience (if any) between those supervised by a minister in oversight and those supervised by someone else, and to the experience of being supervised amongst those who also supervise, and those who do not supervise others. An independent researcher, Dr Lynette Harborne, was commissioned to undertake the project.

4.3.2 **Aims:** The explicit aims of the 2019-20 research, set by the Methodist Council, were to establish:

- The degree to which implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy (ISP) had taken place.
- What might need to be done to ensure a high level of implementation.
- The degree to which supervision was delivering the benefits identified.
- Any unintended consequences that would need to be addressed.
- The ways in which the policy could be improved, including its relationship with other processes in the life of the church.

4.3.3 **Methodology:** The research approach included the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data in order to establish the extent to which the policy had been implemented as intended (by January 2020), and in order to gain feedback from those being supervised, those supervising, and perspectives from a variety of voices into the reception of the policy in the life of the church and suggestions for improvement.

4.3.4 **Methods:** The data collection and analysis process included the following methods:

- Questionnaires
- Focus groups
- Individual semi-structured interviews
- Examination of documents

4.3.5 **Implementation of the Policy – Data Gathering**

Implementation data was gathered in two stages. In April 2019, a SurveyMonkey questionnaire was sent to all ministers in District A and District B; a total of 105 were sent and 71 were returned (67.62%). In January 2020 a second questionnaire was sent to all other ministers in the MCB and any lay people known to be supervising/receiving supervision (1692 questionnaires sent, 819 replied, 48.40%).

The first questionnaires were sent to two districts who had not been part of the original pilot but who had been amongst the first to roll out the policy. This was in order to have time to gather further data from these districts through focus groups. The second questionnaires (in less depth) were held back until January 2020 in order to get as good a survey picture as possible of the compliance rates at the latest stage possible that would allow data analysis in time to inform the drafting and scrutiny of the new policy.

The total response rate to the implementation questionnaire was 49.58%

4.3.6 **Implementation of the Policy - Findings**

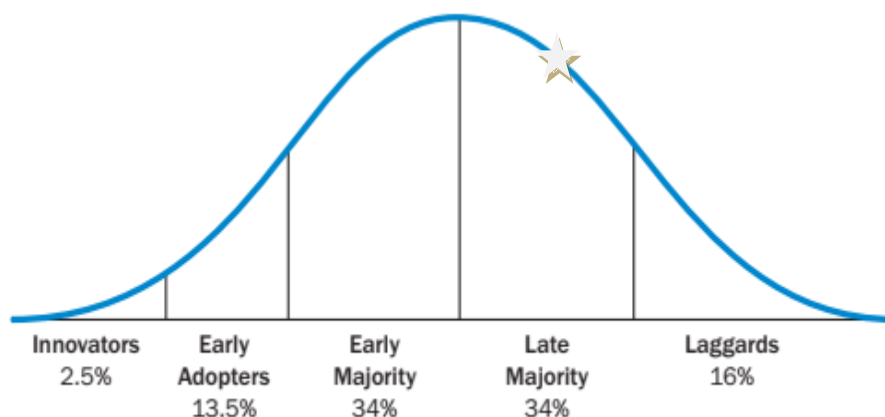
- The numbers of those in supervision across the connexion by January 2020, on the basis of the returned questionnaires, was 68.20%. (District A (32) 96.97%; District B (30) 81.08%; all Other Districts: (545) 65.55%.)
- The pattern varied considerably from district to district. The range of implementation was from 100% in three districts to 25% in one district.
 - Group A (pilot districts) averaged 88.34% compliance
 - Group B (early adopters) averaged 69.31% compliance
 - Group C (other northern districts) averaged 82% compliance
 - Group D (remaining districts) averaged 56.11% compliance
 - Those not in district appointments 50% compliance

- Amongst those receiving supervision, the number receiving at least the recommended minimum number of supervisions was 84.35% In District A, 30 (96.77%) and in District B, 26 (83.87%). In the other districts the number was 456 (86.69%).

4.3.7 Implementation of the Policy – Discussion

To achieve an implementation rate overall, by January 2020, of 68% of whom 84% are receiving the full number of supervisions expected is a good start within the four year period of the policy. There were some delays to the original (and rather ambitious) timeline for implementation and this affected the % adoption reportable in January 2020.

Everett Rogers⁴, in his work on innovations in organisations suggests the following pattern:



Plotting the research findings onto this graph, overall, across the connexion, it is clear that the adoption of supervision (in January 2020) was well into the 'late majority' stage although the pattern across districts was uneven. In nine districts implementation was complete, or fluctuating little short of the 100% mark due to changes in stationing, sickness or where there were one or two pockets of resistance. Five districts were still working in the early majority area; sixteen districts were working in the 'late majority' area. It is notable that, with one exception, all the Group D districts (the latest to roll out) were working either in the early majority or the late majority section. 151/250 people who answered that they were not in supervision gave the reason as being because supervision was not yet, or was just in the process of being, rolled out in their context. It may be that if an implementation survey were conducted now this would demonstrate significant advances in most of those districts although the impact of COVID-19 on supervision has not been measured and this might also have had an impact.

Of the remaining 99/250 responses where people were not in supervision, 32 had alternative supervision arranged in appointments outside the control of the Church or were being supervised as probationers; 4 were on sick leave and so not in supervision. More concerning from an implementation perspective were the 63 responses that indicated that supervision had not been offered to them (though it had to others in their contexts) due to of a lack of supervisors, because they had moved districts and been overlooked, because they had requested a different supervisor from the one proposed, because of a lack of contact from their allocated supervisor, or, in one case, because their superintendent had suggested that supervision was irrelevant and unnecessary.

The research found that attitudes towards supervision are having some impact upon implementation figures. The findings from all the questionnaires, the focus groups and

⁴ Everett Rogers, 2011 [1962]. *Diffusion of Innovations*. 5th ed. New York: Free Press.

individual interviews confirmed that the majority of participants hold a very positive attitude to supervision in principle and there were many comments to the effect, 'about time ...'

Other repeating positive comments included:

- *I hated the idea of supervision ... but on this the Church has been right.*
- *We desire to be more accountable in our ministry.*
- *I am SO grateful.*
- *I would like to thank the Connexion for giving us what I feel is a gift which is enhancing what I do and enhancing me as a person.*

More evidence of positive attitudes are provided by the combined answers to the two questionnaires to the following questions in which participants were asked to rank on a scale of 0-5 the extent to which supervision has made a positive impact for them personally in each area. Recorded here are the percentages of respondents who scored +3 to +5:

- 436 (75.69%): improved connection with God's presence and own sense of vocation.
- 420 (73.04%): improved wellbeing and reduced anxiety and stress.
- 400 (69.57%): improved ability to use time more intentionally.
- 393 (68.23%): improved ability to identify and manage risk.
- 426 (73.83%): improved ability to clarify role and boundaries.
- 425 (74.00%): improved ability to think through unconscious dynamics.
- 376 (65.28%): improved relationship with colleagues.
- 410 (71.30%): improved sense of accountability.
- 509 (88.21%): confidence in the quality of supervision being received.

Some participants highlighted difficulties and made suggestions for improvement but this did not affect their overall enthusiasm for supervision. There was also anecdotal evidence that attitudes had become more positive as supervision became more embedded.

It was also clear, though, that there was some apathy and even hostility towards supervision amongst a minority.

Examples of negative attitudes included:

- *A waste of time*
- *I don't see the need for supervision in this way*
- *Thank you for adding one more thing to the list of stuff to do*
- *I would prefer to be line managed than supervised. I have lost confidence in the wider connexion to support me in ministry*

The data from Districts A and B were examined to identify any link between age and attitude but this was not found to be statistically significant. Equally the initial formation that participants had received was almost exclusively Methodist training in Britain so no implications could be drawn about any possible influence on attitudes from particular training pathways. Similarly the low numbers of BAME participants made any variations in answers statistically insignificant.

In the combined data the following factors were identified as having an impact on implementation:

1. Lack of effective briefing for supervisees: resistance to supervision amongst some supervisees was being experienced by supervisors and the sense that supervision briefings had not conveyed effectively to those due to receive supervision (but not be trained in it) what supervision would be like in practice. In some cases the briefing of supervisees had not happened at all.
2. Being allocated your minister in oversight as your supervisor: whether or not the supervisor was the minister in oversight was consistently seen by supervisees as having a significant impact on their willingness to engage in supervision at all, or their ability to engage to best effect.
3. Allocation versus consultation: the quality of consultation in the districts concerning the model of implementation adopted and who would supervise whom had had a significant impact on attitudes to supervision, both positively and negatively.
4. Attitudes of senior leaders: the impact on compliance of the attitude of senior leadership was emphasised. Changes in district leadership at key points had also had an impact in some districts.
5. Financial considerations: some districts had the financial resources to buy in senior supervisors and bridge gaps in internal provision but others did not. It was observed that the Conference had made the decision to implement the policy but without a full audit of the costs involved and without the power to release or deploy funds locally to bridge gaps.

Next steps towards full implementation

- 1) Clarification of the relative roles of districts, the Ministries team and the learning network in relation to the briefing of supervisees.
- 2) Connexional support be made available to districts during 2020-21 for implementing the supervision policy where this has proved difficult.

4.4 **The Benefits of Supervision:** The degree to which the 2019-20 research found that the ISP had delivered the benefits anticipated will be discussed under the restorative, formative and normative headings already used to analyse the 2018 data.

4.4.1 **Restorative Impacts:**

On a scale of 0-5 questionnaire participants were asked to rate the extent to which supervision had had a positive impact in the following areas. Reported here are scores of +3-+5:

- 436 (75.69%): improved connection with God's presence and own sense of vocation.
- 420 (73.04%): improved wellbeing and reduced anxiety and stress.
- 376 (65.28%): improved relationship with colleagues.

The combined findings indicated that participants were aware of the beneficial impact on supervision on both their individual health and wellbeing and also that of the organisation as a whole. The opportunity to share problems and difficulties and to celebrate and learn from what has been successful was acknowledged to decrease feelings of isolation, reduce the risk of mental health issues and increase a sense of empowerment and resilience, all of

which contribute to reducing defensive attitudes, to better planning and decision making and improved relationships. The ability to stay with uncertainty and inaction with increased equanimity was also specifically mentioned.

There was also acknowledgement that participants had learnt that the MCB recognised its duty of care and wanted to provide support and create a culture of reflection and spiritual awareness in which its ministers would flourish.

Overall, the 2019-20 research endorses the findings of the 2018 research that supervision is producing the restorative effects named as aims by the 2017 Report:

- “reduced symptoms of isolation and stress amongst its ordained ministers” and
- “less anxiety . . . as ministers share responsibility for risks, priorities and hard decisions with their supervisors,”

And that this was being achieved through the provision of a safe space with clear boundaries and sense of contract/purpose; preparation beforehand by both parties; meeting in a confidential space; planning dates ahead; the techniques of listening and reflecting; the feeling of talking to someone who understands; the skills and challenges of the supervisor.

Where the supervisor was not trusted or was not considered empathetic, committed or skilled, or was holding additional roles to that of supervisor the possibility of restorative impacts was vitiated. This was most commonly associated with supervision by a minister in oversight. Repeating comments, across the data sets were:

- *Being supervised by one’s own superintendent minister is restrictive*
- *Superintendents are not always best placed to offer supervision*
- *My supervisor is also the minister I work alongside so I wasn’t able to bring everything into supervision.*

Comparing this evidence with that gathered in 2018 it should be acknowledged that the data here is informed by supervisees being supervised by their ministers in oversight as well those doing the supervising. Also, it should be acknowledged that there are differences in relationship between chair/superintendent and superintendent/circuit colleague and that when supervision is undertaken within these relationships different pressures are experienced. For example, when superintendents supervise circuit colleagues it is more likely that they have direct experience of their colleagues and also receive the views of others in the circuit that may influence the direction of supervision in ways that undermine trust. When chairs supervise superintendents, this is less of a problem but a concern arises about how things said in supervision may influence stationing outcomes.

4.4.2 Formative Impacts

On a scale of 0-5 questionnaire participants were asked to rate the extent to which supervision had had a positive impact in the following areas. Reported here are scores of +3-+5:

- 400 (69.57%): improved ability to use time more intentionally.
- 425 (74.00%): improved ability to think through unconscious dynamics.

The 2017 report articulated the hope that the introduction of supervision would result in:

- a more intentional use of ordained ministers' time through the opportunity that supervision provides for ministers to think theologically and practically about priorities;
- better communication as those in oversight become more aware, through supervising others, of the challenges being faced on the ground.

Time management was amongst the most frequent issues brought to supervision. Practical outcomes were named as understanding ministry, better action planning, better decisions, increased clarity and focus, better interactions, awareness of different facets of a situation and improved time management. There was evidence of an improved ability to reflect on unconscious dynamics operating in ministry and it was clear that relationship issues with individuals and churches, difficult conversations and situations of conflict featured heavily amongst the issues brought to supervision. The explicit question about improved theological reflection was not asked although informal evidence from the observation of supervision during training sessions is that supervisors need help to ask more nuanced theological questions in order to facilitate this.⁵

Supervisor perspectives were not as prominent in this data as they were in the 2019 data. Clearly, though, the 2019-20 data points to a perception amongst many supervisees that they are overloaded. This came up both as an issue in supervision as illustrated above, and as an issue about supervision, including the need to travel to and from a distant supervisor:

- *It would be good if someone could find something that could be given up to make time for this work*
- *It has added to it (workload) but not a problem. I see the value of it.*

4.4.3 Normative Impacts

- 410 (71.30%): improved sense of positive accountability.
- 393 (68.23%): improved ability to identify and manage risk.
- 426 (73.83%): improved ability to clarify role and boundaries.

The subject of accountability is core to the normative dimension of supervision and it was clear from the findings that the MCB is undergoing a change in understanding of what this means. The evidence shows awareness that the introduction of supervision in the MCB was a result of the Past Cases Review. Many of the comments indicated that participants recognised that the MCB is expressing a firm commitment to a change of culture and is adopting a systemic approach to the introduction of supervision in the church. In a culture where supervision is embedded as a core principle, a commitment to mutual accountability can develop as a normative concept, consistent with the Methodist principle to 'Watch over each other in love.'

There was also acknowledgement that the inclusion of questions about safeguarding and risk on every supervision agenda and Agreed Record had value. This was seen as helpful in maintaining awareness of the centrality of accountability, as was the opportunity to anticipate potential difficulties and minimise actual risk. An understanding and appreciation of the change in culture in identifying and naming such issues was demonstrated and there was evidence of earlier interventions in bringing safeguarding matters to the attention of District Safeguarding Officers. The point was also made that, by the time a safeguarding

⁵ Leach, J, 2020, *A Charge to Keep: reflective supervision and the renewal of Christian leadership*, Nashville TN: Foundery Press

issue was brought to supervision, it may already have been passed to the relevant safeguarding officer.

There was, however, confusion expressed across all districts about the role of Agreed Records and the contribution they make to accountability, particularly where there is not follow up of any kind from the minister in oversight of issues named on those forms. In general, though, the findings of the 2018 research were endorsed by the 2019-20 research that supervision is making a positive impact in respect of the normative outcomes identified as aims in the 2017 Report:

- a more robust handling of risks in church life, including those relating to safeguarding through explicit attention to risk identification and risk management in supervision;
- more safety for everyone in church life through heightened awareness in supervision of boundaries, expected conduct, role clarity and the use of power;
- more safety for everyone in church life through the opportunity in supervision to explore the unconscious factors that sometimes undermine best intentions;
- clearer lines of accountability in which the responsibilities and roles of ministers in oversight are better understood and are routinely operated in practice.

4.4.4 In summary, the overwhelming evidence is that where the policy is being implemented the benefits are in line with those identified as aims in the 2017 report, and that it is beginning to establish a culture of ministry that is less isolated and vulnerable and safer for everyone involved. Further it should be noted that the three legged stool model of supervision evidences a mutually reinforcing set of positive impacts. Although there is some 'in principle' resistance amongst some supervisees and supervisors, this is not a significant block to implementation in most contexts. However, some key issues are emerging that need attention if supervision is to be offered in ways that maximise the considerable time, effort and commitment that are asked of everyone involved.

4.5 Issues of Concern/Areas for Improvement

The three most frequent issues raised across the 2019-20 data sets were:

- 1 Difficulties experienced when the supervisor is the minister in oversight
- 2 The relationship between supervision and Ministerial Development Review (MDR)
- 3 Issues of time and travel costs

4.5.1 Difficulties experienced when the supervisor is the minister in oversight

- 4.5.1.1 The 2019-20 research revealed that of those responding, 243 (46.20%) were being supervised by their minister in oversight; 245 (46.58%) by another Methodist supervisor; and 38 (7.22%) by an externally qualified and paid supervisor (mostly district chairs and senior connexional officers).
- 4.5.1.2 The chief concern about being supervised by a minister in oversight was the heightened sense of vulnerability experienced by some supervisees when asked to engage in reflective supervision with a person who has a significant oversight role, or with whom they worked closely. There is some evidence in the differential between compliance in Districts A and B that compliance is higher where this is not the expectation.
- 4.5.1.3 Initially, the expectation underpinning the Draft Supervision Policy that recommended that ministers in oversight supervise their own colleagues was in order to strengthen accountability and improved colleague relationships. However, the questionnaire data suggests that the positive benefits experienced when being supervised by the minister in

oversight/another Methodist supervisor are only marginally different in these areas, whereas the overall sense of satisfaction with the quality of supervision offered is higher when being supervised by another Methodist supervisor.

Average Positive Impact on a scale of 0-5	Supervised by Minister in Oversight	Supervised by another Methodist supervisor
Sense of connection to God/Vocation	+3.17	+3.36
Reduced anxiety	+3.22	+3.27
Improved time management	+2.93	+2.99
Improved risk assessment and risk management	+2.91	+3.04
Improved role clarity	+3.11	+3.25
Improved awareness of unconscious dynamics	+3.03	+3.20
Improved relationships with colleagues	+2.90	+2.80
Improved sense of being accountable	+3.12	+3.05
Satisfaction with quality of supervision offered	+3.76	+4.16

4.5.1.4 It clear that for some supervisees, it is not a problem to be supervised by their minister in oversight. However, the qualitative evidence did suggest that for particular individuals, whether or not they are required to work with their minister in oversight will make the difference between engaging at all as a supervisee or engaging effectively.

4.5.1.5 The wider supervision literature suggests that the benefits of being supervised by someone outside your immediate team are:

- The opportunity to hear a voice and perspective from outside the team;
- The additional relational safety created when dual roles do not need to be managed;
- A reduced power differential between the supervisee and the supervisor;
- The opportunity to examine a broader range of issues in depth including team dynamics, any issues of conflict within the team, and the relationship with the minister in oversight.

4.5.1.6 The ISP allowed for alternative arrangements to be made where supervisees were unhappy with the suggested allocation of a supervisor. The data suggests that more active consultation and engagement with supervisors and supervisees in the management of supervision implementation plans results in better matches and gives supervision relationships a better chance of beginning and being sustained. The issues seem more acute in relation to superintendents/circuit colleagues than in relation to district chairs/superintendents.

- 4.5.1.7 Work with keepers of supervision implementation plans undertaken by the supervision implementation team during 2020-21 identifies that districts with plans not predicated on ministers in oversight supervising are able to be more flexible in matching supervisors and supervisees and in covering gaps created by stationing etc.
- 4.5.1.8 In the qualitative research, some connexional voices expressed the concern that the desire to be supervised externally might reflect a continuing culture of seeking to avoid accountability. The evidence in the data of the patchy implementation of MDR and continued questions about its role and effectiveness might also be interpreted in this way. However, there is good evidence in the data of a shift of attitudes towards a healthier sense of accountability, whoever the supervisor is. Clarification of the role of ministers in oversight in relation to the receipt of received records and the ability to raise issues of concern directly with colleagues that they might take to supervision would help strengthen appropriate oversight. The ecology of structures of accountability and support for ordained ministers is discussed further at 4.5.2
- 4.5.1.9 **The value of external supervision:** The most significant margins in this data were between those supervised by Methodist trained supervisors and those supervised by externally qualified supervisors. This may be partly attributed to the perspective achieved and the sense of safety in working with someone outside of the system. However, it is also the case that externally qualified supervisors are required to have a higher level of training and experience than those the Methodist Church has trained and approved internally.

Average Positive Impact on a scale of 0-5	Supervised by Minister in Oversight	Supervised by another Methodist supervisor	Supervised by an externally qualified supervisor
Sense of connection to God/Vocation	+3.17	+3.36	+4.03
Reduced anxiety	+3.22	+3.27	+3.89
Improved time management	+2.93	+2.99	+3.79
Improved risk assessment and management	+2.91	+3.04	+3.76
Improved role clarity	+3.11	+3.25	+3.95
Improved awareness of unconscious dynamics	+3.03	+3.20	+4.05
Improved relationships with colleagues	+2.90	+2.80	+3.68
Improved sense of being accountable	+3.12	+3.05	+3.63
Satisfaction with quality of supervision offered	+3.76	+4.16	+4.55

4.5.1.10 Although one or two people suggested in their answers to questionnaires/in focus groups that supervision ought to be provided externally for all ministers, the expense of this is likely to be prohibitive in most contexts. A more realistic approach is to respond to the requests for continuing supervisor development to enhance the skill sets of supervisors. A further action to improve supervisor support and development is to ensure that those supervising supervision have some further training in how to do this. It is a commonplace of professional development that recency of training and frequency of practice support good practice. As the practice of supervision becomes embedded in the life of the church it may be most supportive of the benefits to supervision to support the development as supervisors of those for whom this is vocational, and who already demonstrate aptitude and a desire to make reflective supervision a stable part of their ministry. The focus group data showed that some people were only supervising one or two people. This makes it difficult to sustain and develop a professional skill set. Supervising 4-8 people is likely to result in more consistent attention to practice development and a sense of identity as a reflective supervisor.

4.5.1.11 Since 2017 bursaries have been provided for an average of six individuals each year to engage in a diploma in supervision and so become externally qualified and this is helping to sustain the numbers of senior supervisors and trainers that the Methodist Church will need going forward, there is a need for a more general programme of supervisor development, and in particular for targeted support for supervisors through group supervision of supervision. The increased use of digital platforms should make this a realistic proposition but it would rely on the training of identified Methodist supervisors as group supervisors – a specialist skill set that builds on the skill set of the 1:1 supervisor.

4.5.1.12 In the light of the above it is recommended that

- the burden of expectation shifts towards the selection and training of new supervisors who have the relevant transferable skills and dispositions, rather than expecting that all/most superintendents should supervise their own colleagues.
- from September 2021 Annual Supervision Covenants should include the need for a conversation about the supervisory relationship and explicit consent of the supervisee to be supervised by their minister in oversight.
- by the Conference of 2024 all keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans should conduct a review of all supervisory relationships in order to ensure that all those who wish to be supervised by someone other than their manager/minister in oversight are matched with another approved supervisor. This might be achieved incrementally as staff move appointments, or in a single 'reshuffle' exercise. It is not recommended that Districts that have only recently rolled out supervision disturb newly formed supervisory relationships before 2023-24 unless there is a specific request or general consensus to do so.

4.5.2 Supervision and MDR

4.5.2.1 The research conducted in 2019-20 into the implementation of the Interim Supervision Policy revealed a lack of clarity about the relationship between supervision and MDR, a lack of confidence in MDR and concerns about the sustainability of both processes. The research report recommended that an audit of current practice and a clarification of the relationship between MDR and supervision be undertaken.

4.5.2.2 Additional work has been undertaken by a working party during 2020-21 on the basis of this research and further consultation that observes the following:

- MDR is not evenly embedded across the Connexion;
- Supervision is primarily reflective rather than evaluative and provides support for accountability through reflection rather than being the measurement of performance;
- Supervision relies primarily (and appropriately) on the self-report of the supervisee and is not a substitute for 360-degree review in which the views of lay and ordained colleagues and those in oversight should appropriately provide feedback;
- Both reflective supervision and some kind of 360 review are needed as part of an ecology of support for accountable ministry in which safety, wellbeing and effectiveness are all served;
- Appropriate continuing ministerial development opportunities are also needed in order to support the development needs identified in either supervision or MDR.

4.5.2.3 In light of the above it is recommended that an appropriately adapted approach to MDR should:

- complement the reflective supervision experience offering a space where oversight can be transparently exercised;
- include a robust element of 360-degree feedback drawn from the experience of local church members, peers and the Minister in Oversight;
- pay attention to the requirements of the Ministerial Covenant and the Competencies for Ordained Ministry;
- focus on a particular aspect of ministry within the local context;
- encourage consideration of elements of ministry that may not naturally arise in other ways;
- offer a clear and deliberate opportunity for the “lay voice” to be heard distinctly.

4.5.2.4 The SRG therefore recommends that an effective system of 360 review that enables ministers and those in lay ministry to receive feedback on a regular basis and work on that feedback in supervision and thoroughly appropriate learning development opportunities will help to strengthen healthy engagement in reflective practice that is responsive to local needs and mission priorities without confusing the supervision and oversight roles.

Next steps towards a healthy ecology of support and accountability

- 3) The burden of expectation shifts towards the selection and training of supervisors who have the relevant transferable skills and dispositions, rather than expecting that all/most superintendents should supervise their own colleagues.
- 4) From September 2021 Annual Supervision Covenants should include the need for a conversation about the supervisory relationship and explicit consent of the supervisee to be supervised by their minister in oversight.
- 5) By the 2024 Conference all keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans should conduct a review of all supervisory relationships in order to ensure that all those who wish to be supervised by someone other than their manager/minister in oversight are matched with another approved supervisor. This might be achieved incrementally as staff move appointments, or in a single ‘reshuffle’ exercise. It is not recommended that Districts that have only recently rolled out supervision disturb newly formed supervisory relationships

before 2023-24 unless there is a specific request or general consensus to do so.

- 6) The roles of ministers in oversight are clarified in relation to a more focused approach to MDR and in relation to Agreed Records to ensure that an oversight perspective is regularly fed into the reflective practice of the ministry practitioner; training for engaging in these oversight roles be incorporated into the induction of superintendents and district chairs.
- 7) Consideration is given by the Ministries Team to devising an integrated online system of record keeping for supervision and MDR that makes it easier to protect confidentiality, and ensure the appropriate transfer of Agreed Records and Reports.

Next steps in embedding good practice in supervision

- 8) Identified support be provided for those supervising supervision through the provision of targeted training and group supervision.
- 9) A connexional programme of continuing development for supervisors be designed using online platforms, regional and district communities of practice, and triad online working, concentrating first on those training issues identified in the data and on higher level skill sets:
 - i. the use of creative methods
 - ii. listening theologically
 - iii. supervising supervision
 - iv. supervising by digital means
 - v. supervising cross-culturally
 - vi. soul, role and context
 - vii. additional models/more flexible use of the Greenwich Foot Tunnel
 - viii. balancing support and challenge in supervision
 - ix. working effectively with Agreed Records
- 10) The periodic re-approval of supervisors be based partly on evidence of engagement in continuing development activities, including engagement in training in supervision of supervision where this is part of the supervisory load.
- 11) Investment continues in providing bursary support for strategically identified individuals to be professionally trained in order to support professional standards of supervision.
- 12) The Methodist Church continues to appoint professional supervisors to be used for the supervision of identified senior leaders in order to ensure that external perspectives are part of the system. Those serving in the circuits and districts or in other appointments may receive supervision from a professional supervisor who has been approved by the Methodist Church by negotiation with the relevant keeper of the supervision implementation plan and where funds allow.

4.5.3 Issues of Time and Travel Costs

- 4.5.3.1 The third frequently raised issue across the 2019-20 data sets was that of time and travel costs. Various suggestions were made: reducing the frequency of supervision, reducing the time from 90 minutes to 1 hour, and some supervisees made the point that travel times were unreasonable and costly.

- 4.5.3.2 However, although reflective supervision does take time and requires preparation, the overwhelming evidence, already presented, is that for most supervisees the time is well spent. Travel times can be useful for preparation and digestion of what has happened in supervision and some supervisees expressed this. However, where travel times and costs are a problem, this can be ameliorated by the increased use of digital technology. COVID-19 has necessitated this and thinking has advanced about how to supervise well using digital means. Supervision training is now being delivered online and, whereas in the research data there was little evidence of use of this means, many of the barriers to its use are now removed as we have all become more adept.
- 4.5.3.3 The positive benefits of supervision in other contexts, and in the 2018 research data, are demonstrated to be related to the frequency of supervision that allows a relationship of trust to be built and the reduction of anxiety through a sense of continuous accompaniment. The ISP already condensed the number of supervisions required from 10 x 1 hour to 6 x 90 minutes. Adjustments have already been made for those in part time appointments. This report does not, therefore, recommend that the threshold be lowered but that a flexibility be introduced into the system to allow for either 9 x 1 hour supervisions or 6 x 90 minute supervisions, evenly spaced through the year, totalling not less than 9 hours. It is suggested that the requirement for 2 face to face meetings per year be retained (COVID-19 permitting) and that those supervising the supervisory work of others make use of the permitted 3 additional hours of supervision per year to ensure that they reflect regularly and effectively on their work in this area.

4.6 **Items for Audit/Further Research**

In addition to the issues explored in section 4.5 above, the 2019-20 research identified two issues for further investigation: the collection of statistics and the experience of BAME ministers.

- 4.6.1 The research suggested that in order to ascertain the long term impact of supervision on accountability, safeguarding and risk reduction, the number and nature of safeguarding incidents, complaints and discipline cases and the data on stress-related illness should to be monitored and current statistics produced.

In practice, the data about sickness and complaints and discipline matters are only available connexionally, in the first instance, once statutory sick pay becomes relevant and in the second instance, once a matter is referred connexionally; most matters are dealt with locally and statistics are not available. It will be possible, however, to reference safeguarding statistics in future research although correlation with supervision practice will be difficult to establish.

- 4.6.2 The experience of supervision training of BAME ministers and the question of cultural transferability: further research was recommended in order to investigate this question.

The number of BAME participants in the research was statistically insignificant. There was anecdotal evidence that the proportion of those approved to become supervisors was lower in the BAME cohort than in the general population of trainees, although again the number was very small. Two other relevant comments were made. One BAME woman clearly expressed the view that she didn't know what supervision was for and stated that the MCB needed to take an honest look at how it treats ethnic minorities. This was echoed in a comment by a non-BAME woman that there needs to be an exploration of varying cultural experiences. Both these comments add weight to the view that this is an issue for further investigation.

- 4.6.3 There are, at least, four separable issues being raised here:

4.6.3.1 Is supervisee briefing genuinely inclusive?

- Is the Methodist Church in Britain communicating effectively and explicitly enough with new supervisees about the purpose of supervision and the role of the supervisee?
- Is this being done in ways that provide a good space for discussion of the assumptions and prior experiences that supervisees bring to supervision including cultural and embodied ones (is supervision a space in which I will be told what I am doing wrong? Is supervision a space in which I honour an elder and listen to them? am I being sent to supervision because I cannot be trusted?)?
- Is this being done in ways that allow prospective supervisees to explore the issues that come up for them personally in being asked to entrust themselves to a supervisor allocated to them by the Methodist Church in Britain? Anyone who routinely experiences the culture of the MCB as 'silencing' of their embodied or cultural perspective will need a lot of reassurance and some actual experience of relational safety in order to be able to use the space of supervision as it is intended.

The evidence of the 2019-20 survey is that the MCB is not yet taking enough care in the preparation of supervisees, nor, in all cases, in the matching of supervisors and supervisees, and that more energy should be invested in supporting supervisees for entering and making good use of supervision. Such care should include the naming of power and difference and the opportunity for discussing what will make it possible for a supervisee to bring their full self to a supervisory relationship with an awareness that this may have particular resonance for BAME participants.

4.6.3.2 Is supervisor training paying enough attention to power and difference in terms of race?

The second issue concerns the care we take in preparing supervisors to work in ways that alert them to the power dynamics embedded in the social construction of embodiment, including race? The building of an effective supervision relationship cannot be 'colour blind' (any more than it can be gender-blind) but must seek to encourage the full presence of the supervisee. Naming ethnic, cultural and racial realities in ministry and in supervision can be difficult for supervisees if these are not invited and welcomed by the supervisor. Unconscious signals can speak very loudly and supervisors, supervising across difference, who have role power as a supervisor (and perhaps as a minister in oversight as well) as well as cultural power (being white, being indigenous, being male, being heterosexual) need to be hyper-alert to opening the space for their supervisee.

Some knowledge is needed, such as knowledge of different cultural communication styles and cultural expectations in relation to meeting with perceived seniors; skills are needed in building relational safety across difference; an attitude of intercultural humility is essential.

Supervision training and supervision of supervision should help supervisors develop a higher degree of alertness to difference and its potential impact and develop a higher degree of comfort amongst supervisors in helping a supervisee name and reflect on related issues without making assumptions, but without assuming either that issues of vocation, spirituality, identity and communication have no relevant cultural, racial or ethnic dimensions.

However, it should be noted that the knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable a supervisor to work sensitively across difference are generic and should be part of ongoing training for all in ministry rather than being a specific expectation only of those supervising.

4.6.3.3 Are the tools of reflective supervision itself culturally transferable?

The third issue concerns the care we take in reflecting on the reflective and exploratory process of supervision to see whether there are any assumptions embedded within it that make it difficult for BAME supervisors to succeed in the training. There is no evidence in the broader supervision literature that the processes of reflective/pastoral supervision are intrinsically problematic for BAME ministers, either as supervisees or as supervisors. In fact, interest in providing the kind of exploratory and reflective space that reflective supervision offers has been expressed by overseas Conferences, precisely because it offers a different kind of space than their current leadership practices make available. It may be that a higher profile for the discussion of issues of power and difference in the training, will itself, help to open for discussion, questions arising in the training that BAME participants wish/need to explore.

4.6.2.4 Are expectations about leadership and ministry in the MCB clear enough to be reflected on in ways that support those formed in other cultures and Conferences?

The fourth issue concerns the normative expectations of ministers and church leaders and the role of the supervisor in helping supervisees explore their exercise of ministry in relation to these expectations. There are undoubtedly many unspoken white, British, expectations about what leadership is and is not, about the appropriate exercise of authority; about what the culture of a Methodist Church should be; and about what a Methodist minister should be and do - assumptions that are not codified and are rarely discussed except when relationships have broken down. The clearer expectations about leadership and ministry can be made, the easier it is for different expectations to be identified and brought into dialogue before relationships break down. The 2018 research which identified the ethos of the reflective supervision that is being practised in the MCB enables a discussion of the broader ethos of oversight and leadership in the life of the Methodist Church in Britain. Such a discussion might fruitfully involve those from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and might provide the basis for material that might help brief ministers arriving to serve in Britain as mission partners or by transfer, and help engage local churches and circuits in conversation with them.

Next steps towards a more inclusive church

- 13) Those responsible for preparing new supervisees for supervisory relationships be trained to pay particular attention to creating relational safety for BAME participants, and ensuring cultural clarity about the nature of supervision within the context of oversight in the MCB for participants formed in other cultures/churches.
- 14) Broader work emerging from the Inclusive Church agenda be incorporated/referenced in the Initial Training for Supervisors to ensure that relational safety is created for BAME participants and to ensure that cultural expectations concerning the nature of supervision in relation to oversight are explored.
- 15) Covenanting for working with difference in supervision be given higher profile in the initial training of supervisors and particular training be offered to the training teams on how to name and make space for issues of power and difference as they arise in supervision and in the training space.
- 16) Any regular consultation with BAME ministers and those from other cultures and Conferences should include feedback on experiences of reflective supervision and training for it, in order to support improving practice.

5 The extension of the Supervision Policy to lay roles

- 5.1 The clear evidence provided by the 2019-20 research that reflective supervision, where implemented, is delivering the intended outcomes, highlights the importance of reflective supervision in supporting a renewed culture of ministry. It is important, for the sake of the safety and flourishing of everyone concerned that opportunities for reflective supervision are extended to those in relevant lay roles. It is also important that, as lay and ordained people increasingly need to work together in ministry teams, that a common culture of ministry is established that complements the ethos of reflective supervision.
- 5.2 It is already the case that some lay people in ministry roles are being supervised as part of district supervision implementation plans. Some lay people have been trained as supervisors and under the policy they must receive supervision on that supervisory work. Some other lay roles have already been brought under the policy, namely chaplains employed by Methodist schools and Armed Forces chaplains and family workers.
- 5.3 The desirability of providing reflective supervision for those in lay ministry needs to be balanced with a properly scoped way of delivering it. There are an unknown number of people in relevant lay roles in circuits and churches, many of whom are part time. Some are effectively supported and managed and others not. There are no connexional guidelines for the management of lay roles beyond the stipulations of SO 570. It is important that the proposals for the extension of reflective supervision to those in relevant lay roles take into account the whole ecology of support for the accountable exercise of lay ministries.
- 5.4 It is proposed that, by 2024, this policy will be extended to cover all those in relevant lay roles and offices (whether employed or voluntary). A staged approach and possibly a mixed economy will be proposed.

5.5 What model of supervision?

5.5.1 One to one reflective supervision?

The provision of reflective supervision 1:1 for all lay roles would support the outcomes outlined above and the principle of collegiality between and equality of lay and ordained colleagues in ministry. There are already some lay employees receiving 1:1 supervision and the SRG believes that those identified in 5.2 below who are working between 0.5 and full time should be incorporated into the policy as a matter of priority. However, 1:1 supervision is unlikely to be an appropriate way forward for all those engaged in lay ministry as many roles are very part time. Effective supervision relationships rely on frequency and so it is not viable to reduce the time involved to less than 1 hour per quarter. With requirements for management meetings on top, these arrangements would not be proportionate for those working 10 hours per week or less. Trained and approved supervisor numbers would need to increase significantly, or those already approved would need to take on more supervisees in order to make this feasible for the numbers of people involved.

5.5.2 Group supervision?

Group supervision delivers benefits to participants in the creation of a community of practice as well as in providing reflective space that can serve restorative, formative and normative outcomes. The need for frequency, and the demands of group process require that groups need to meet for at least 2 hours each quarter in order to be effective. Supervision groups of this kind would be appropriate for between 6-10 participants. Such

groups require expert facilitation in order to enable the desired outcomes and sufficient reflective space for each group member. The implementation of this model for lay workers would require significant investment in the training of group supervisors or the recruitment of professional group supervisors. For some, the time demand would be disproportionate (double that in 1:1 supervision); for others, working full time, there might not be sufficient space for them to explore their own material often enough. It should be noted that it is never appropriate for team leaders/members to supervise their own teams because the power dynamic of the team mitigates against the safety needed in the space for it to be open enough to address the real issues.

Some desire to revisit the use of group supervision in the Methodist Church was expressed in the 2019-20 data. This was withdrawn at the close of the pilot because, without significant training for group supervisors and without clear guidance about team dynamics, participants found the groups unsatisfactory. It may be that group supervision can be introduced effectively for some lay employees but further scoping work would be needed to identify how this might be resourced, and to identify for whom it might be most appropriate.

5.5.3 Reflective management?

A third approach, particularly for those in very part time roles, might be to introduce a system of management that includes a reflective component. This would combine the functions of management and reflection and replace the stipulations of Standing Order 570 (9). This approach would require considerable investment in the development of an appropriate model of management that would reflect the ethos of reflective supervision, and investment in the training of managers for that purpose. Questions around the identification of appropriate managers and quality assurance of that management would need to be addressed.

5.6 Which lay roles?

Reflective supervision is most useful for supporting roles in which the personal presence and qualities of the practitioner are key to the integrity and safety of the practice. Ordained ministry is one such practice. Although there are many other ministries that are crucial to the life of the Church, those roles prioritised to receive reflective supervision in this policy are those in which there is a significant level of representative authority (lay pastors, lay pioneers) and/or pastoral contact (family workers, children's and youth workers, chaplains, pastoral assistants).

5.7 Representative authority

Representative authority is indicated by the kinds of power a role carries for decision making and influence in the life of a community. Such workers may not necessarily have significant 1:1 pastoral contact with individuals but will have significant opportunities to shape communities and will be looked to for leadership and guidance. In so doing they need to manage a range of risks to themselves and others and the health of the community. They may be looked to as a leader in the wider community and may need at times to speak in the name of the Methodist Church. They need to be attentive to the handling of power, confidential information, conflict and group dynamics and to the spiritual and theological direction of their community within the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Church. Lay pastors and lay pioneers are examples of these kinds of roles. It is expected that others who have delegated responsibility for aspects of a church's mission or ministry (eg responsibility for messy church, or junior church) will exercise that ministry within an

accountable structure in which there is opportunity to reflect on their own practice in the context of their team.

5.8 Pastoral Contact

Significant pastoral contact is indicated by the expectation that an office holder or employee will engage at depth with individuals, couples and families in ways that mean that complex personal and interpersonal and other needs will become apparent. In these roles workers need to be attentive to power dynamics, safeguarding issues, the need to refer, boundary issues, the handling of confidential information, the work of the Spirit in the lives of those they accompany and the impact upon themselves of being exposed to the pastoral needs of others. Pastoral workers, youth workers, community workers, lay chaplains, lay pioneers, theological college tutors, are examples of the kinds of roles that fall under this definition. It is expected that those engaged in other forms of pastoral work in the life of the church do so within an accountable structure (eg to the local pastoral committee) and have regular opportunity to reflect together with peers on the work and its impact upon them.

5.9 Practical Issues

- 5.9.1 For those who are employed the obligation to engage in reflective supervision will need to be negotiated contractually. New contracts for relevant roles should include this obligation and commitment with effect from 1 September 2024.
- 5.9.2 Reflective supervision will need to be offered to those in lay roles in ways that are proportionate to their hours and that meet local needs.
- 5.9.3 In bringing new people into supervision it is important to explain the rationale for supervision and to help people understand what supervision is, what their responsibilities are as a supervisee and how to make good use of the supervisory space.
- 5.9.4 Where the employee is in 1:1 supervision or group supervision it is not appropriate for their line manager to be their reflective supervisor unless this is explicitly and exceptionally negotiated. The line manager should, however, receive a copy of the Agreed Record.

Next steps towards the supervision of those in lay roles

- 17) By 2022 the RSP be extended to lay pioneers and lay pastors with significant representative authority who are working between .5 and full time; and by 2024, the Reflective Supervision Policy be extended to cover all others in relevant lay roles and offices (whether employed or voluntary).
- 18) The Connexional Team be mandated during 2021-22 to gather data on existing lay roles and to propose a costed ecology of management and reflective supervision appropriate to the type of role and the number of hours worked. A pilot group of group supervisors be identified and trained for use in group supervision of lay employees or for the supervision of lay pastors working between .5 and full time be created.
- 19) In 2022-23 additional supervisors are nominated and trained to supervise those identified as needing 1:1 supervision; pilot supervision groups are established and the experience evaluated; training is piloted for reflective management, should this be part of the mixed economy proposed.

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| 20) | During 2023-24 a revised model is developed on the basis of pilot and approved by the Methodist Council to be rolled out in Districts as supervisors/group supervisors/reflective managers become available. |
| 21) | During 2025-26 a survey is undertaken to establish degrees of implementation and impacts which is presented to the 2026 Conference as part of the auditing of the policy. |

6 The Culture of Supervision and the Body of Christ

- 6.1 It is apparent from the research discussed above that reflective supervision is changing the culture of ministry in the Methodist Church. At its most positive that culture change has been expressed as being more relational, more spiritually attentive, more collegial and more accountable. It will be important for the church to keep reflecting on the ethos of reflective supervision in relation to the ethos of the church as a whole and of the patterns of leadership it wants to encourage if reflective supervision is to be in tune with the song the whole church is singing and the song is to give glory to God.
- 6.2 More prosaically, supervision is a term used in the Standing Orders long before the advent of the Draft Supervision Policy; over the course of the last five years we have come to distinguish more carefully the practices of oversight from the practices of supervision. It is now time to revisit the Standing Orders in a systematic way in order to remove any confusion from the 30 references to supervision that are now anachronistic.
- 6.3 Finally, reflective supervision, as seminal writers on the subject, Hawkins and Shohet, affirm, belongs within learning organisations⁶. As disciples, committed to learning, a fundamentally important feature of the body of Christ must be openness to discerning where God is leading. For John Wesley, conferencing (the meeting together of disciples for discerning the work of the Spirit, whether in classes or bands or in the Conference itself) was an instituted means of grace alongside the reading of Scripture, prayer, fasting and holy communion.⁷

The experience of supervisees and supervisors as discussed in this report is that supervision is providing a space for discerning what God is saying to individual ministers in the contexts and roles in which they are placed. It is also the case that through supervising a range of ministers, supervisors are becoming aware of patterns in mission and ministry that reflect movements of the Spirit and require a response.

In this sense, not only might each supervision be a place of discernment, so also, might reflection on what is being discerned in multiple supervisions reveal what God is saying to the church as a whole, through the truth telling that is happening in the safe spaces that supervision is making possible.

It is completely inappropriate for supervisors to pass on to anyone the personal details of what they have heard in the context of supervision unless it is transparently recorded that this will happen on the Agreed Record. However, it is important, if reflective supervision is not merely to provide support and accountability for individuals, but also to strengthen the mission and ministry of the body of Christ, for there to be forums for reflection on the patterns and movements of the Spirit being discerned.

To be intentional about allowing reflective supervision to strengthen the body of Christ in this way, there need to be prayerful and intentional forums of supervisors convened, not only for the purposes of reflecting on good practice, but for the purpose of hearing what

⁶ Hawkins and Shohet, 2006, 3rd edition, *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, Maidenhead: OUP: 216

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

God is saying in the supervision space. Such a meeting already regularly happens at connexional level and should be encouraged within communities of practice of supervisors in districts and regions also.

Next steps towards reflective supervision as part of the ecology of the MCB as a learning organisation

- 22) Work on the culture and ethos of the church and patterns of leadership, ministry and formation, undertaken on behalf of the Conference should pay explicit attention to the ethos of reflective supervision and the relationship between reflective supervision and the wider culture of ministry and church life.
- 23) Standing Orders should be revised to standardise the use of the term 'supervision' and, where appropriate, include references to the reflective supervision policy.
- 24) The connexional supervision budget should continue to support meetings of external supervisors for the purpose of listening to what God is saying to the church in the supervision space and to support the MCB as a learning organisation as we reflect on the implementation and extension of the RSP and to feed these reflections into the SRG; regional and district communities of practice should be encouraged to reflect together on what they hear God saying to the Church and to feed this back to district chairs and DPCs.

7 Resourcing the Supervision Policy

In this section the ongoing costs of supervision are presented including the impact of the recommendations above with some assessment of cost effectiveness. Costs of oversight need also to be factored in.

Next Steps	Timing	Estimated Cost
1. Clarification of the relative roles of districts, the Ministries team and the learning network in relation to the briefing of supervisees.	To be implemented from Sept 2021	
2. Connexional Team support be made available to districts for implementing the supervision policy where this has proved difficult.	Began September 2020	
3. The burden of expectation shifts towards the selection and training of supervisors who have the relevant transferable skills and dispositions, rather than expecting that all/most superintendents should supervise their own colleagues.	To be implemented from Sept 2021	
4. By the Conference of 2024 all keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans should conduct a review of all supervisory relationships in order to ensure that all those who wish to be supervised by someone other than their manager/minister in oversight are matched with another approved supervisor. This might be achieved incrementally as staff move appointments, or in a single 'reshuffle' exercise. It is not recommended that Districts that have only recently rolled out supervision disturb newly formed supervisory relationships before 2023-24 unless there is a specific request or general consensus to do so.		
5. The roles of ministers in oversight are clarified in relation to a more focused approach to MDR and in relation to Agreed Records to ensure that an oversight perspective is regularly fed into the reflective practice of the ministry practitioner; training for engaging in these oversight roles be incorporated into the induction of superintendents and district chairs.		
6. The roles of ministers in oversight are clarified in relation to a more focused approach to MDR and in relation to Agreed Records to ensure that an oversight perspective is regularly fed into the reflective practice of the ministry practitioner; training for engaging in these oversight roles be incorporated into the induction of superintendents and district chairs.	To be implemented from Sept 2021	
7. Consideration is given to devising an integrated online system of record keeping for supervision and MDR that makes it easier to protect confidentiality and ensure the appropriate transfer of Agreed Records.	To be considered during 2021	
8. Identified support be provided for those supervising	To be	

supervision through the provision of targeted training and group supervision	implemented from Sept 2021	
9. A connexional programme of continuing development for supervisors be designed using online platforms, regional/district communities of practice, and online triad working, concentrating first on those training issues identified in the data and on higher level skill sets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the use of creative methods ii. listening theologically iii. supervising supervision iv. supervising by digital means v. supervising cross-culturally vi. soul, role and context vii. additional models/more flexible use of the Greenwich Foot Tunnel viii. balancing support and challenge in supervision ix. working effectively with Agreed Records 	Began January 2020	
10. The periodic re-approval of supervisors be based partly on evidence of engagement in continuing supervisor development activities, including engagement in training in supervision of supervision where this is part of the supervisory load.	Implemented from Easter 2021	
11. Investment continues in providing bursary support for strategically identified individuals to be professionally trained in order to support professional standards of supervision.	Ongoing	
12. The Methodist Church continue to appoint professional supervisors to be used for the supervision of identified senior leaders in order to ensure that external perspectives are part of the system. Those serving in the circuits and districts or in other appointments may receive supervision from a professional supervisor who has been approved by the Methodist Church by negotiation with the relevant keeper of the supervision implementation plan and if funds allow.	Ongoing	
13. Those responsible for preparing new supervisees for supervisory relationships be trained to pay particular attention to creating relational safety for BAME participants, and ensuring cultural clarity about the nature of supervision within the context of oversight in the MCB for participants formed in other cultures/churches.	From September 2021	
14. Broader work emerging from the Inclusive Church agenda be incorporated/referenced in the Initial Training for Supervisors to ensure that relational safety is created for BAME participants and to ensure that cultural expectations in relation to nature of supervision in relation to oversight are explored.	From January 2022?	

15.	Covenanting for working with difference in supervision be given higher profile in the initial training of supervisors and particular training be offered to the Training Teams on how to name and make space for issues of power and difference as they arise in supervision and in the training space.	From Easter 2021	
16.	By 2022 the RSP be extended to lay pioneers and lay pastors with significant representative authority who are working between .5 and full time; and by 2024, the Reflective Supervision Policy be extended to cover all others in relevant lay roles and offices (whether employed or voluntary).		
17.	The Connexional Team be mandated during 2021-22 to gather data on existing lay roles and to propose a costed plan of management and reflective supervision appropriate to the type of role and the number of hours worked. A pilot group of group supervisors be identified and trained for use in group supervision of lay employees or for the supervision of supervision. Additional capacity to allow for the 1:1 supervision of lay pioneers and lay pastors working between .5 and full time be created.		
18.	In 2022-23 additional supervisors are nominated and trained to supervise those identified as needing 1:1 supervision; pilot supervision groups are established and the experience evaluated; training is piloted for reflective management, should this be part of the mixed economy proposed.		
19.	During 2023-24 a revised model is developed on the basis of pilot and approved by the Methodist Council to be rolled out in Districts as supervisors/group supervisors/reflective managers become available.		
20.	During 2025-26 a survey is undertaken to establish degrees of implementation and impacts		
21.	Work on the culture and ethos of the church and patterns of leadership, ministry and formation, undertaken on behalf of the Conference should pay explicit attention to the ethos of reflective supervision and the relationship between reflective supervision and the wider culture of ministry and church life.		
22.	Standing Orders should be revised to standardise the use of the term 'supervision' and, where appropriate, include references to the reflective supervision policy.		

<p>23. The connexional supervision budget should continue to support meetings of external supervisors for the purpose of listening to what God is saying to the church in the supervision space and to support the MCB as a learning organisation as we reflect on the implementation and extension of the RSP and to feed these reflections into the SRG; regional and district communities of practice should be encouraged to reflect together on what they hear God saying to the Church and to feed this back to district chairs and DPCs.</p>		
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*****RESOLUTIONS**

36/1. The Council receives the report.

36/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the attached Supervision Policy.

36/3. The Council recommends that the Conference directs all keepers of Supervision Implementation Plans to conduct a review of supervisory relationships by the Conference of 2024 in order to ensure that all those who wish to be supervised by someone other than their manager/minister in oversight are matched with another approved supervisor.

36/4. The Council recommends that the Conference directs that a review of the implementation of the policy, including its extension to relevant lay roles, to be brought to the Conference of 2026.

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 2021-26 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.⁸

The research undertaken by the Ministries Team (MT) during the Interim Supervision Policy (ISP)⁹ 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

1.3 A means of grace

⁸ 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

⁹ A discussion of this research is provided in the section 4 of the report, above

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.¹⁰ Instituted means of grace included, for him, the reading of Scripture, prayer, fasting, Holy Communion and conferencing.¹¹ 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.
- 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

¹⁰ Rack, HD, 2011, *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Nashville TN: Abingdon Press: 855-858, [§40.1-7]

¹¹ Rack, HD, 2011, *The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Nashville TN: Abingdon Press: 855-858, [§40.1-7]

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 and for that reason in this policy we now shift the burden of expectation away from the assumption that ordained ministers and those lay people required to be in 1:1 supervision will not normally be supervised by their minister in oversight/manager unless this is the preference of the supervisee.
- 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 file¹². 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.

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;

¹² 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.

- 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 pillars¹³

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.¹⁴

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 ethos¹⁵ that is:

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ See above, Report para 4.4.4

¹⁵ Derived from original research amongst 9 district chairs in 2018



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 professions¹⁶ during the period of the ISP the Methodist Church has built the foundations of a shared connexional vocabulary on which this RSP now rests.
- 1.8.2 The process of supervision adopted under this policy is based on the published supervisory processes of Leach and Paterson¹⁷.

¹⁶ See for example, Michael Carroll, Hawkins and Shohet, Page and Wosket

¹⁷ Leach and Paterson 2015, 2nd edition, *Pastoral Supervision: A Handbook*, London SCM Press: 35-61

Figure 2: The Process of Reflective Supervision

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.	

1.8.3 This table offers a way of structuring a supervision session. The Greenwich Foot Tunnel Model¹⁸ 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
- 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).

¹⁸ Leach 2020, *A Charge to Keep: Reflective Supervision and the Renewal of Ministry*, Nashville TN: Foundery Press: 157-163

- 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 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, e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 2 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 4-8 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 3 further hours, (either 2 x 90 minutes or 3 x 1 hour) may be negotiated in appropriate circumstances e.g. 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 6 ministers 6 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 1 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 1 hour each quarter.

3.4.1 Those working half time or should less receive not less than 1 hour of supervision per quarter.

3.4.2 Those working between half and full time should receive between 1 and 2 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 2 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 2 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 e.g. from/to appraisal processes; supervision training processes; a probationers' committee

4.1.2 The supervisor keeps a copy of the file and the nominated third party. The supervisee may also keep a copy of the file.

4.1.3 The nominated third party should normally be the minister in oversight/manager. If 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 6 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 by a Safeguarding Investigation or competence or complaints procedure.
- 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, e.g. 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, e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 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.